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PORTRAYALS OF BLACK WOMEN ON TELEVISION & THE SHIFT IN THEIR REPRESENTATION: AN ANALYSIS OF SCANDAL & INSECURE

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PORTRAYALS OF BLACK WOMEN ON TELEVISION & THE SHIFT IN THEIR REPRESENTATION:

AN ANALYSIS OF *SCANDAL & INSECURE*

By

Tyra R. Wooten

B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2017

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication & Media Arts

In the Graduate School

Southern Illinois University

May 2019

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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in the field of Professional Media & Media Management

Approved by:

Dr. Kavita Karan, Chair

Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

April 5, 2019

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Tyra R. Wooten, for the Master of Science degree in Professional Media & Media Management, presented on April 5, 2019, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale

TITLE: PORTRAYALS OF BLACK WOMEN ON TELEVISION & THE SHIFT OF THEIR REPRESENTATION: AN ANALYSIS OF *SCANDAL & INSECURE*

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Kavita Karan

This paper is an in depth research that focuses on the experiences and representations of Black women in popular television shows like *Scandal* and *Insecure*. The research will show how these portrayals effect Black women in society and the impressions of Black women by the viewers of these television shows. Black women have always been the center of misrepresentations in television leading to limitations in character roles and appearances. These stereotypical roles effect how others look at Black women and it can also reflect on how Black women view themselves. The portrayals I will focus on will be stereotypes, occupational roles and physical appearance. An interpretative textual analysis and content analysis will explore two shows that have Black women as the main characters: *Scandal & Insecure*. The analysis will present a historical background of Black women stereotypes and compare their portrayals to *Insecure* and *Scandal*.. I'll determine whether these shows are progressive at shifting away from stereotypes or perpetuating them. I'll also examine the role of television/media with regards to these stereotypes. My conclusion is interesting because both series are written and directed by Black women, Shonda Rhimes and Issa Rae. Nevertheless, with this progressive leadership, these shows have the potential to shift towards improving Black women's representation on television.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Definition: A *stereotype* is "...a fixed, over generalized belief about a particular group or class of people." (Cardwell, 1996).

Stereotypes of Black people were born way before television was created. Majority of these stereotypes were taken from slavery and used Blacks subordinated dispositions to create these generalizations. Before television, these stereotypes were used as a form of entertainment in Black face minstrel shows as a theatrical performance in the 19th century. A minstrel show is a racially, cultural and musically performance that uses white actors in black make-up to act as a caricatured version of African Americans. The racially explicit performance of blackface born of mockery and hatred was immortalized on the greatest stage of all - the silver screen (Hunt 2016). The popularity of these performances spread rapidly that it reached the big screen in 1903 with the release of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It was not until vaudeville acts moved to the big screen that fuzzy hair, big lips, wacky costumes, deep voices, and hurtful stereotypes emerged in films to ridicule the African American population in America and had lasting effects on the legacy of the nation (Hunt 2016). When these stereotypes were used in televisions, it became the social perception for Blacks in America.

The actors in these films had particular characteristics that later became popularized as typical Black people 'behavior'. The main stereotypical characters created in Minstrel shows included: The mammy, coon, Uncle Tom, the buck and tragic mulatto (Bogle 1974). Upon these characters, the mammy and the tragic mulatto related to Black women. As these caricatures were popularized, more stereotypes of Black women had developed over time.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The stereotypes of Black women created from slavery have since been implicated in the everyday televisions shows. These stereotypes are what Patricia Hills Collins calls 'Controlling images' (Hills 1990) in her *Black Feminist Thought* book. The dominant ideology of the slave era fostered the creation of four interrelated, socially constructed controlling images of Black womanhood, each reflecting the dominants group's intentions in maintaining Black women's subordination (Hills 1990). The four controlling images Hills is referring to are: the mammy, matriarch, the welfare mother and the jezebel. These controlling mages, which will be discussed later, have been the foundation of Black women's oppression for decades (Hills 1990). Further, these controlling images have been used throughout entertainment and pop culture but it does not reflect the Black women's population. They are simply blatant caricatures of an African American woman's life, without any form of in-depth understanding of what it means to be a black woman today (Turner 1994).

The following literature review will address the details of these stereotypes of Black women.

2.1 Mammy

Both Bogle (1973) and Hill (1990) agree that the mammy is one of the main stereotypes of Black women portrayed in the media. It shows Black women as the faithful, obedient domestic servant, referred to as mammy. She is usually oversized, dark-skinned and a-sexual (Bogle 1974). She is also is nurturing, caring and is dedicated to helping others, especially White people. By loving, nurturing, and caring for her white children and "family" better than her own, the mammy symbolizes the dominant groups perceptions of the ideal Black female relationship

to elite white male power (Hills 1990). According to Hills, this was created to justify the exploitation of house slaves and justified Black woman's long-standing restriction to domestic jobs.

Black women's experience and those of other women of color have never fit the model of middle-class American and European nuclear families (Hills 1990). During slavery, Black women were working for free alongside men while also doing child care of White and Black children. Post-slavery, Black women have traditionally worked in agricultural labor or as domestic workers. As a result, Black women's paid work has been neglected or overlooked as subordinated status.

2.2 Matriarch

While the mammy represents the Black mother figure in White homes, the matriarch symbolizes the mother figure in Black homes. Moreover, this stereotype shows the Black women as the 'bad' mother. Spending too much time away from home, these working mothers ostensibly cannot supervise their children and are a major contributing factor to children's school failure (Hills 1990). These women are also seen as overly aggressive, unfeminine and emasculate or violate their lovers.

In films, the focus on the Black matriarch is an issue because it focuses on the villainization of the Black matriarch but doesn't address the systemic racism that created these roles (Stewart 2009). The Mynihan Report (1965) contends that slavery destroyed Black families by creating reserve roles for men and women. Black woman taking on the matriarchal role makes them unavailable to conform to womanhood and can be identified as the fundamental source of Black cultural deficiency (Hills 1990). This reversal of roles can also attribute to the strong Black women stereotype of having to partake in both patriarch and matriarch status.

2.3 Welfare Mother

Like the matriarch, the welfare mother is labeled as a bad mother too. But unlike the matriarch, the welfare mother is not aggressive enough and her accessibility is deemed as a problem for her children. She is portrayed as being content to sit around and collect welfare, shunning work and passing on her bad values to her offspring (Hills 1990). The radicalized image of the "welfare queen" is a cultural remnant from the 80s that persists to this day. And it is an image that Americans continue to buy into despite plenty of evidence that suggests otherwise (Stewart 2009). During slavery, Black women were portrayed as breeders because they could produce children as easily as animals. Now that the Black mother is seen as an unfit mother and not able to support them, she's deemed irresponsible for having them. The image of the welfare mother thus provides ideological justification for the dominant group's interest in limiting the fertility of Black mothers who are seen as producing too many economically, unproductive children (Davis 1981).

2.4 Jezebel

The whore or the sexually aggressive woman is again central in controlling images of Black women's sexuality. The image of the Jezebel originated under slavery when Black women were portrayed as being sexually aggressive wet nurses. Jezebel's function was to regulate all Black women to the category of sexually aggressive women, thus providing a powerful rationale for the widespread sexual assaults by white men typically reported by Black slave woman (Davis 1981; Hooks 1918; D. White 1985). The mammy, matriarch. welfare mother and jezebel, all have the common theme of controlling the Black women's sexuality and fertility.

2.5 Sapphire

Like the matriarch, the sapphire is portrayed as sassy, overly assertive, and argumentative nature. A defining feature of the sapphire is the control and emasculation of Black men (West, 2008). The sapphire caricature portrays Black women as rude, loud, malicious, abusive and overbearing (Pilgrim 2008). The sapphire stereotype, on the other hand, was both assertive and comical, depicting a woman who browbeat her male, romantic partners and was usually obsessed with status-climbing (Kretsedemas. (2010) Unlike the other stereotypes, this one was born in a minstrel audio radio show. The term "sapphire" was given to the angry Black woman stereotype when the TV series.

Amos 'n' Andy (1951-1953) was broadcast on television, starring a character named Sapphire Stevens. The show has two white actors who portrayed the characters Amos Jones and Andy Brown by mimicking and mocking Black behavior and dialect. Sapphire was the epitome of the angry Black woman stereotype and because of the show's popularity, the name stuck (Harris-Perry 2011: 52).

2.6 'Tragic" Mulatto

Unlike any of the above stereotypes, this one is mostly based solely on Black women's appearance. Bogle (1973) describes her as the "moviemaker's darling. She is usually seen as the acceptable Hollywood version of the Black women because she has whither features including skin and hair. Usually the mulatto is made likeable-even sympathetic (because of her white blood, no doubt)- and the audience believes that the girl's life could have been productive and happy had she not been a "victim of divided racial inheritance (Bogle 1973).

Black women in America have always had to wrestle with derogatory assumptions about their character and identity (Harris-Perry 2011). These assumptions shape the social world that Black women must accommodate or resist in an effort to preserve their authentic selves and to

secure recognition as citizens (Harris-Perry 2011). Harris-Perry further explains that Black

women must accommodate or resist these stereotypes to secure recognition as citizens. The

stereotypes alone are powerful but when they're broadcast on television, its major problem

because society uses them as an outlook to create characters for Black women on television.

Harris-Perry (2011) says television plays a huge part in the distorted image of Black women.

     Nevertheless, these stereotypes continue today but sometimes under a different name.

CHAPTER 3

PRESENT DAY PORTRAYALS OF BLACK WOMEN IN TELEVISION SHOWS

Society continues to create and push stereotypes on Black women in the media based on their class, sexuality and race. The images of Black women on television have been historically manipulated to leave a particular impression (Means Coleman, 2000; Smith-Shomade, 2002). Controlling images of Black women began from slavery and has since then been used to create more modern ones. The modern ones I will focus on will be the angry Black women (ABW), the strong Black women (SBW), sexually promiscuous, occupational roles and physical appearance.

Like the sapphire, this stereotype translates to the modern day angry Black women (ABW). This stereotype was created to dismiss Black woman's activism and frustrations in life because Black women faced both the gender and racial barriers during slavery and post-slavery. Black women are immediately familiar with aggressive encounters because their daily lives are filled with opportunities for emotionally draining interactions (Jones & Norwood 2017). To combat negative ideals of Black women, The strong Black women (SBW) stereotype was created to show Black women's fierce independence and attitude in a positive light. The Strong Black woman ideology (SBWI) which, although formulated during slavery, has become an adaptive and idealized cultural idealization for Black women. Economic forces, systemic oppression, and male unemployment led African American women to compensate for the absence of men within familial and community contexts by concurrently fulfilling both traditionally feminine and masculine gender roles (Cole & Zucker, 2007; Collins, 2004).

Controlling Black women's sexuality is related to the sexually promiscuous stereotype and derived from the Jezebel caricature. Black women and other women of color are constantly examined and seen as sexually available objects. This means that others in society attribute sex

as a part of the "natural" role of Black women and girls, and indirectly justify a voyeuristic gaze

on Black women and girls' bodies (Muhammad & McArthur 2015).

Controlling Black women's occupation is central in the mammy character. Her job is

always to help everyone around her and is usually limited to domestic worker roles. If they're

limited to domestic roles, they're usually shown as freeloaders or scammers like the welfare

mother. Today, although the quantity of African American images on television has increased,

the quality of these images has not (Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002; Mastro & Troop, 2004;

Weigel, Kim, & Frost, 1995). Lastly, appearances are major topic and issues with representing

all Black women on television. Like the tragic mulatto, many Black women represented on

television are usually the lighter skinned Black women with longer and/or wavy hair. Along with

skin tone and hair, body shapes are important as well.

Sinder (2018) points out that the lack of representation of African-Americans as complex

individuals reinforces the mistreatment of Black women because if these stereotypes are still

used as characters, it will translate into how society treats Black women. The following shows

the breakdowns of current stereotypes derived from the traditional ones.

Stereotypes

3.1 Angry Black Women

Why you so mad? Is one of the many questions Black women are asked when they're

expressing any type of challenging emotions. It is about the complexity of that fleeting moment

when Black women must decide whether and how to challenge another's assumptions about

Black women's status and "place" (Davis & Pryor 2018). This empathizes the micro controlling

of Black women's behavior because they must be careful how they react to certain situations to

avoid being labeled as the ABW. It is about the consequences of exercising voice, whether in

angry or moderated tones, and how that exercise can render one hyper visible and threatening. It is about the phenomenon of displaced blame and how any response to an aggressive encounter immediately risks deflecting attention from the aggressor and placing blame squarely on the target (Jones & Norwood 2017).

The stereotype of the ABW can also set the portrayals of the isolated Black professionals. This stereotype is not unique to the professional work world, but some of the most well-known depictions of ABW are connected, in some way, to the professional work world (Kretsedemas. (2010). This stereotype reinforces the idea that Black women are difficult to work with and also has negative association with Black women's mobility into the mainstream portrayals of women.

3.2 Strong Black Women

The ideal of femininity and gender roles are often shown on television and young girls are impressible to these projected ideas. African American women's gender roles have been profoundly impacted by the historical legacy of slavery and segregation. In addition to these mainstream ideals of femininity, Black women must negotiate several gender ideals and gender stereotypes that are specific to their racial group and to their historical experiences (Anyiwo,Ward, Fletcher, & Rowley 2018). One such gender ideal is the notion of the SBW. Baker, Buchanan, Mingo, Roker, and Brown (2015) defined the SBW as "a cultural ideal that reflects an expectation that Black women be selfless, self-reliant, psychologically and physically strong, and resilient despite the many social challenges (sexism, racism) they encounter" (p. 52). Furthermore, Black women have continued to carry on with these toxic traits because of their ancestor's legacy. Thus, this ideology further promotes the holding back of their emotions and suffering in silence. Although this stereotype could be interpreted as a symbol of hope and

endurance, it also links their ability to be strong with the necessity to suppress emotions (Versluys 2013).

The stereotype tries to depict Black women in a more positive light and many Black women still accept this stereotype but it has negative effects on Black women's behavior. The effects are over exhausting themselves in handling too many responsibilities while deliberately placing their personal issues last. They don't need help for anyone or protection from man. The SBW, also known as "the superwoman complex", was created by African American women themselves to fight back against the derogatory stereotypes of the Mammy, the Jezebel and the Sapphire (Harris-Perry 2011: 200). Even though it's supposed to have positive endearment of Black women, it can actually cause stress (Davis & Pryor 2018).

3.3 Sexually Promiscuous

The sexual exploitation of Black woman began with the rape by white slave owners. During slavery, white slave owners often required woman to work naked to justify their inferiority. Since Black woman were promiscuous, the idea of rape wasn't a crime. It also showed Black women's sexual appetites are "at best inappropriate and, at worst, insatiable" (Hill Collins. 2000: 83). This continued stereotype of Black women as promiscuous and maneaters made Black women questions their own sexuality. Situating Black women and girls as the "primitive sex object," "animal-like," "savage," or "highly sexual," began to represent them as subhuman (Harris & Hill, 1998).

 In a study (Muhammad, & McArthur 2015)., 8 adolescents (ages 12-17) Black girls were asked how they believe Black women are viewed in society. Of the 8 participants, 3 agreed that Black women are sexual objectified. One the participants referenced that she felt Black women and girls are depicted as 'hos' and strippers in media outlets. Moreover, this participant's

response reflects how some Black women are hesitant or resistant to engaging in typical woman cosmetic and wardrobe accessories because of this stereotype. Consequently, many Black women were afraid that if they put on make-up, wore revealing clothes or expressed affection in public, it would confirm the image of the jezebel (Harris-Perry 2011: 59-61).

3.4 Occupations

Occupational status as defined by Burgard & Stewart (2002), is one component of socioeconomic status (SES), summarizing the power, income and educational requirements associated with various positions in the occupational structure. The occupation of an individual determines the power, income and possible educational requirements for certain positions.

Portrayals of Black women's occupational roles on screen is essential in determining the progressive nature of television shows. Like the mammy and welfare mother, historically Black women have been limited to these demeaning roles that show them in occupations with no power and low income but this is gradually changing. Jefferson (2005) explains how television has increasingly changed to mirror society.

(Malveaux, 1997) in her study, she discovered Black female characters in professional careers are over-represented on television on networks like FOX, ABC, CBS, and NBC. She attributes this as the mirroring society because of the education achievement of Black women. In 1993, African-American women earned 45,000 B.A. degrees, compared to 23,505 degrees for African-American males. Remarkably, in year 2000, an increase in the number of master's degrees obtained by Black women exceeded that of Black (64%) men by 100 percent (Jet magazine, 2000). That trend continues today. According to the National Center for Education Statics, in 2017 Black women received more associates and bachelor's degrees than any other

racial group. Even with these overly positive representations the occupational roles of Black women in television, Jefferson points out the possible subliminal negative messages.

Matabane and Merritt (1996) assert that "while we might criticize or applaud the visibility of African-American characters, there is a need to pay attention to the subtle messages in which racism and sexism are so often embedded in this era of supposed diversity and multiculturalism" (p. 336). In her research, she finds that 75 percent of all Black female characters were noticeably more aggressive compared to that of all other minority women. Matabane and Merritt (1996) found the majority (60.6 percent) of Black characters were portrayed in positions of little power or significance. This problematic representation of Black woman characters results back to the ABW stereotype and the unappreciated labor of the Black women.

3.5 Physical Appearances

Black women's body images weren't acceptable or represented fairly in the media because they were seen as the 'other 'in beauty. Dealing with issues of beauty, particular skin color, facial features and hair texture are the examples of how controlling stereotypes denigrate Black women (Hills 1990).

Kelch-Oliver & Ancis (2011) conducted research to understand the racial difference between White and Black women. The study involved a focus group and individual interviews conducted with 16 Black women. Although participants felt the Black community was accepting a wide array of body types, they felt media did not reflect this appreciation. Participants felt that media's depictions of Black women still reflected White standards of beauty including lighter skin, wavy or straight hair and skinny body shapes.

Many participants felt that only a few stereotypically beautiful Black women were represented in media, and those few who were represented had features of whiteness (Kelch-Oliver & Ancis 2011). These acceptable Black women are comparable to the tragic mulatto character in relationship to her being seen as beautiful and acceptable to the main white audience. In addition to the absence of Black women in the media, some participants felt that the facial features and physical characteristics of Black people (such as the butt and lips) were appreciated on other races, but not on Black people (Kelch-Oliver & Ancis 2011).

Hair is probably one of the biggest struggles faced by Black woman. The regulation of Black hair has been a long history of discrimination and monitoring. The politics of Black women's hair is positioned within this perspective of subordinated femininity that designates Black women at the bottom of the gender hierarchy, below not only men, but white women, sexual outlaws, unmarried women and girls (Hill-Collins, 2005, p. 193). Black women are often considered the other negative half in beauty. Moreover, even with Black hair discrimination in American society and the media, Black women seem to embrace their natural hair. Wikerson (2017) states that representation in magazines, advertisements, social media and product marketing has promoted the embracement of Black hair. Now more than ever we see Black women in the United States wearing their hair curly and chemically unaltered. Nationwide perm sales are declining, more than 26% since 2008, while natural hair product sales (such as leave-in conditioners, styling gels, setting lotions, and curl creams) are steadily rising (Wikesron 2017).

Colorism and skin tone of Black women are also considered a major standard of beauty. White skin and straight hair privileges white women in a system in which whites are superior to Blacks. Black women of lighter skin often get privileges of being beautiful because of their close

resembles to whiteness. This racist ideology continues the trend of only using lighter skinned

Black women or mixed race women of color in leading roles.

Overall, having straight hair, slender bodies and lighter skin is usually the acceptable

version of the Black woman. Given the past and present stereotypes of Black women in society

and their portrayals in television, this study aims to find out the shift in representation of Black

women in two major television shows *Insecure* and *Scandal.* The two series have Black Women

as the protagonist and Black female executive producers. After reviewing the historical and

modern stereotypes of Black women, my analysis of *Scandal* and *Insecure* will determine if

these seemingly progressive shows project modern Black women or continue to portray the same

stereotypes.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To find out whether these stereotypes of Black women have been challenged in today's television shows, this paper will focus on American T.V. series *Insecure* (2016) & *Scandal* (2012). These two shows were chosen because they both have Black women protagonists, which is very rare in television programs. Research conducted by Nielsen Reports, African American Women: Our Science, Her magic(2017) listed the top 20 shows watched by Black women. From the list, I chose *Scandal* to focus on for this study. Another research by Nilsen reports, The Mainstream Appeal of Black Content (2017), listed 10 shows with Black lead characters or cast that are watched by a large percentage of white viewers. Of those lasted, I chose *Insecure* to focus on. Given their progressive act towards creating series showing racial and gender equality with Black women leads, my research will allow me to determine if stereotypes are still present in these shows. It also allowed me to highlight certain representations within the shows that are shifting away from these stereotypes.

Considering the progressive shift of both series, as well as the stereotypes of Black women listed above, the following research questions were posted:

1. Do the Characters Oliva Pope, Issa and Molly display traits of stereotypes of Black women?

2. What makes these series progressive for Black women?

3. What power does television shows have in destroying and promoting stereotypes?

In order to narrow my research, I will only focus on season 1 of each series. *Insecure* has aired 3 seasons while *Scandal* has aired 7. The research of the first season will allow me to analyze what the initial theme and tone of the series were set as to understand the story of the

show. The following sections will analyze episodes based on the progressive shifts and historical

stereotypes.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

The first part of my analysis will be a case study reviewing each series of season one to study the plots and the general understanding of the story of the two series.

To analyze the series of *Scandal* and *Insecure*, I will conduct a content analysis. The series *Scandal* has total of 8 episodes and *Insecure* has a total of 7 episodes. I used the systematic random sampling method to select and analyze episodes 1,3,5 and 7. *Insecure* episodes last 28 minutes and Scandal last 47 minutes. I will be reviewing each episode in detail to determine the specific operationally defined traits of stereotypes of Black women. To do so effectively, each episode was divided into chapters of roughly every 9 minutes for *Insecure* and roughly every 14 minutes of *Scandal*. This analysis graph will help me determine which characteristics traits are visible in each series.

Coding Procedure

The content will be coded for the following 6 variables: Stereotype roles, Skin color, hair, body type, clothing and attitude.

Coding Categories & Operational Definitions

1. Angry Black Woman (ABW)

2. Strong Black Women (SBW)

3. Modern-day Mammy

4. Jezebel/ sexually promiscuous

5. More Than 1

6. Other

The Skin:

1.   White

2.   Light skin

3.   Brown

4.   Dark/Black

5.   More than 1

The Body Type:

1.   Small

2.   Medium

3.   Curvy

4.   Large/overweight

5.   More than 1

The hair:

1.   Curly,

2.   Straight,

3.   Natural

4.   braids

5.   Weave

6.   More than 1

The Clothing:

1.   Loose,

2.   Tight

3.   Revealing,

4.   Causal

5.   Professional

6.   More than 1

The Attitude:

1.   Angry,

2.   Assertive

3.   Confident

4.   Helpful

5.   Other

6.   More than 1

The Occupational status:

1.   Professional/ corporate

2.   Middle level

3.   Low level

4.   Others

This content analysis will help determine presence of the types of stereotypes with the characters of these series.

Scandal Case Study 1

When you get into trouble - life-ruining, headline-making trouble - there's only one person to call...Olivia Pope. Olivia is a professional Fixer who makes problems go away before anyone even knows they exist (ABC scandal website). Olivia handles many crises but mostly the White House uses her expertise. This often gets her in trouble because of her love affair with the president. She must balance handling everyone's problems, maintain her company and her relationship with President Grant.

Insecure Case Study 2

Creator Issa Rae (The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl) stars as Issa Dee, who struggles to navigate the tricky professional and personal terrain of Los Angeles along with her best friend Molly (Yvonne Orji) (HBO insecure website). Issa is learning to deal with workplace microaggression and complications in her relationships with long-term boyfriend, while also finding herself in life. Issa's best friend, Molly has a high-powered job as a lawyer, nice apartment and wardrobe but she can't find her confidence in her personal life as she struggles to find love.

CHAPTER 6

SCANDAL DATA (CASE 1)

In this chapter, the content analysis data is presented for the television show, *Scandal*.

6.1 *Scandal* **Episode 1 "Sweet Baby" Summary:**

Olivia hires Quinn Perkins as a new associate. Olivia also o must deal with a woman's accusation against the President; Pope & Associates must prove a decorated war veteran innocent of murder.

Scandal Episode 1

Table 1

Episode	Chapter	Serotypes	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
1	1	1,2,3,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	2,3,6,6	1
1	2	1,2,3,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	2,5,6	1
1	3	1,2,3,4,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	3,5,6	1

6.2 *Scandal* **Episode 3 "Hell Hath No Fury" Summary:**

A millionaire's son is accused of rape; Olivia must deal with Amanda's first request as a client, a meeting with the President.

Scandal Episode 3

Table 2

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
3	1	1,2,3,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	2,3,5,6	1
3	2	2,3,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	2,3,4,5,6	1
3	3	1,2,4,5	3	1	5	1,3,5	3,5,6	1

Scandal Episode 5

6.3 *Scandal* Episode 5 "Crash & Burn'" Summary:

After a commercial plane crash, Olivia and her team must defend the pilot from the media and

airline accusations; When Amanda goes missing, Huck calls upon his dark past;

Scandal Episode 5

Table 3

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
5	1	2	3	1	5	1,5,6	2,3,5,6	1
5	2	2,3,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	2,3,4,5,6	1
5	3	1,2,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	2,3,4,5,6	1

6.4 *Scandal* Episode 7 'Grant for the People' Summary:

Quin finds herself in a tragic situation when she finds her reporter boyfriend dead. The White

House is under fire after Billy Chamber's resignation announcement so Olivia rushes to help.

Scandal Episode 7

Table 4

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
7	1	1,2,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	1,2,3,5,6	1
7	2	1,2,3,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	5	1
7	3	2,4,5	3	1	5	1,5,6	2,3,5,6	1

CHAPTER 7

SCANDAL DATA RESULTS
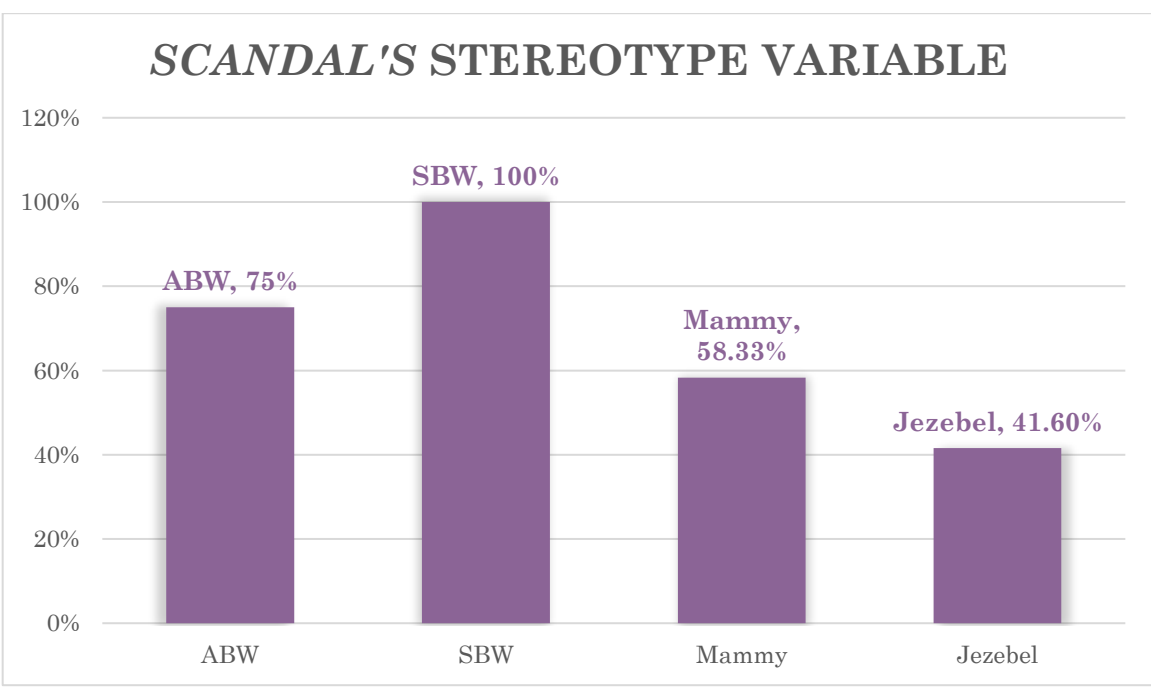
Figure 1

The Representation of Black women in the stereotype's category was more than one variable in each episode. The character, Olivia Pope, was 100% projection of the SBW stereotype, followed by 75% was ABW. 58.3% was modern-day mammy and lastly, she was 41% depicted as the sexually promiscuous, Jezebel stereotype. Majority of her SBW, ABW and modern-day mammy stereotype was seen through her work as a fixer. The jezebel serotype was seen through her on-going affair with President Grant.
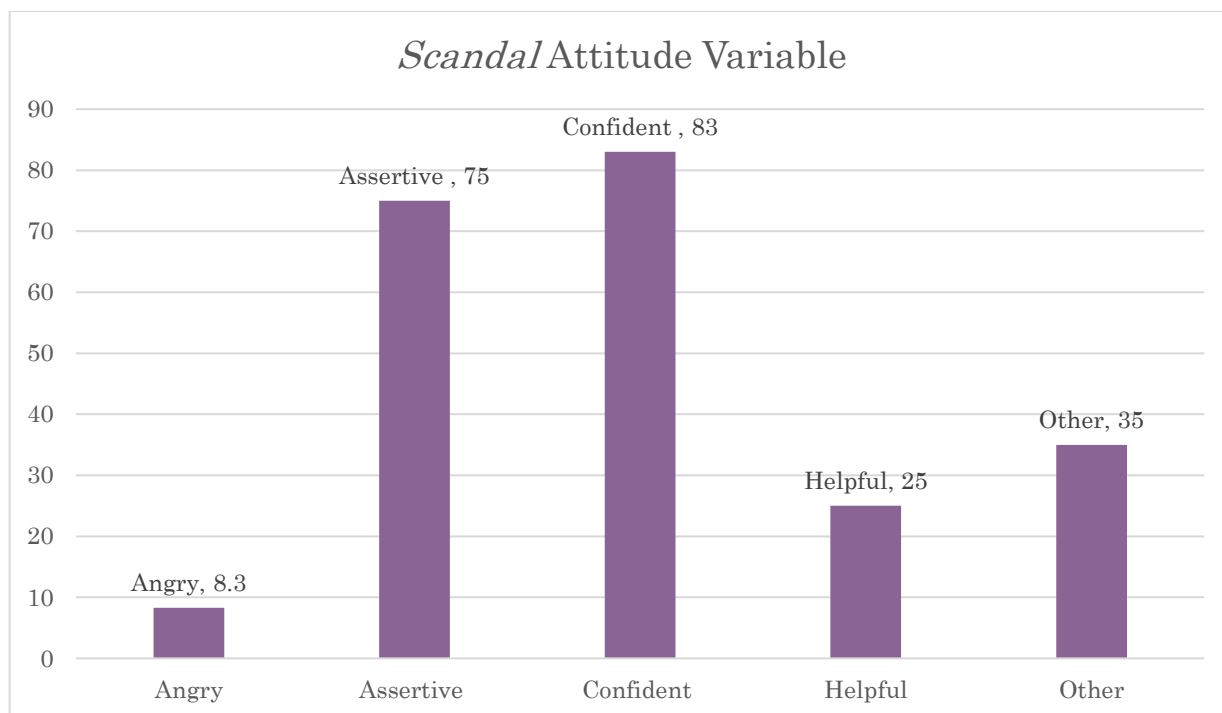
Figure 2

The representation of attitudes of Black women was more than one variable in each category. 100% of Olivia's attitude was other, which was identified as an attitude opposite of the major stereotypical variables. Following that was 83.3% confident, 75% assertive, 25% helpful and 8.3% angry. It's interesting because in figure 1.2, Pope project the ABW stenotype 75% of the time but the angry variable was only calculated 8.3%. The ABW stereotype included variables of being angry or mean but it can be inferred that it can be confused with the variable of assertiveness which Pope projected 75%. This may be because the ABW stereotype is too narrow and the character Olivia is very dynamic, moreover, making it difficult to limit her to any of these stereotypes. The 35% of other variables included aggressive, vindictive, nurturing, supportive, vulnerable, sad and happy.
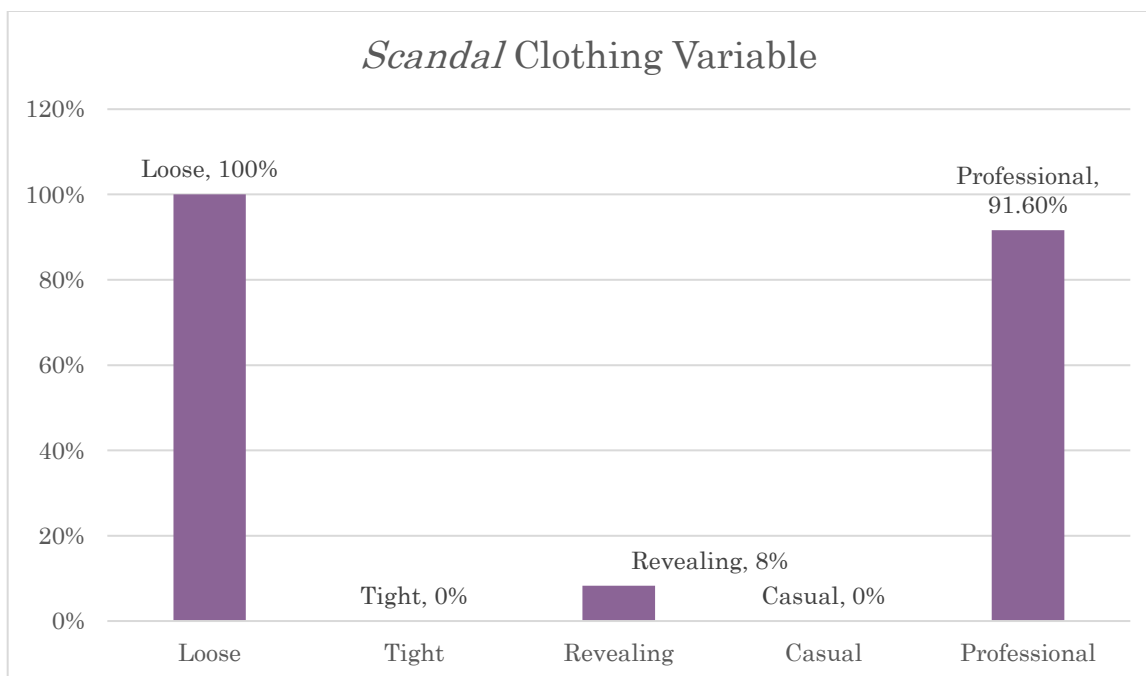
Figure 3

      The representation of Black women in clothing is very consistent with loose and professional variables. Olivia's clothing projected 100% in the loose clothing category, followed by 91.6% of professional clothing category and only 8.3% revealing. From Table 2, you can see that Olivia was only in revealing clothes for one episode. Popes occupational corporate setting correlates with her consistent clothing.

      The other variables of hair, body type and occupation were all calculated from the tables resulting in consistent inclusion in every episode. The tables show that Olivia's hair was weave 100%, her body was small 100%, and her occupation as a D.C. Fixer falls into the category of professional/corporate 100%.

CHAPTER 8

ANALYSIS OF *SCANDAL*

When you get into trouble - life-ruining, headline-making trouble - there's only one person to call...Olivia Pope. Olivia is a professional Fixer who makes problems go away before anyone even knows they exist." *ABC Scandal website*

Scandal is an ABC series that follows a Washington D.C. fixer, Olivia Pope, and her team as they help manage crises, particularly in the White House. It becomes apparent that these "gladiators in suits," who specialize in fixing the lives of other people, have trouble fixing those closest at hand -- their own. Pope is specifically handling a lot of problems including being the boss of Pope's & Associates, managing crises and her love affair with President Fitzgerald Grant.

The show is created by Shonda Rhimes and was aired in April of 2012. The show is generally based on the life of Judy Smith, who used to work in Washington as a crisis manager. Smith also co-produced the series. Kerry Washington, who was nominated for an Emmy Award and a Golden Globe for her role as Olivia Pope, is only the second African American female lead in a network drama in U.S. history, the first being Teresa Graves in Get Christie Love! in 1974 (New York Times. 17 January 2013).

Season 1 circulates around Olivia Pope's reemployment in helping the White House with a sex scandal involving the president and White House intern, Amanda Tanner. The issues become hard for Olivia when its revealed that the sex scandal is true, and Amanda is pregnant. Now Olivia must handle her feelings for the president and the crisis.

Strong Black Woman

The characteristics of the SBW is emphasizing self-reliance, emotional containment, perseverance, and competence as well as the caretaking role, while minimizing weakness or vulnerability (Jackson & Greene, 2000). And Ms. Pope embodies these in her personal and professional life.

In the opening scene of episode one, we're introduced to the power of Olivia when her associate, Harrison Wright, goes to the bar to hire Quinn Perkins.

Harrison Wright: "You really want to ask me who I work for."

Quinn Perkins: "Fine. Who do you work for?"

Harrison Wright: "Olivia Pope."

Quinn Perkins: "Olivia Pope? The Olivia Pope? Wait."

The opening scene highlights the power of Oliva's name. We're already introduced into the power of Olivia without her being present on the screen. Quinn's misbelief to Harrison working for Olivia also shows how many people admire Olivia and her work. This is a positive representation of showing Black women in a professional occupation and treated in a respectful manner.

The following scene introduces Olivia and she continues to portray the SBW. As she and her associate, Stephen are meeting with Ukraine mobsters. Olivia is also focused on Stephen's engagement to his girlfriend.

Olivia Pope: Don't worry. They'll take what we give them. Did you at least buy the engagement ring?

Stephen Finch: "Ukrainian mobsters do not take what you give them. They just shoot you. So, we have bigger things to worry about than me not proposing to my girlfriend."

Olivia is short of three million dollars in negotiating but is not worried. This scene indicates

how, as a SBW, she can handle anything including mobsters and her associates wedding

proposal.

There are positive traits with the SBW stereotype, but the downside is the trait promotes

emotionless and resistant to any kind of help. For an example, on Quinn's first day at work, she

is caught crying because she witnesses Olivia talking with Amanda Tanner and her words are so

harsh that it makes Quinn emotional.

Huck: Are you crying?

Quinn Perkins: No.

Huck: "Yes, you are."

Quinn Perkins: "No, I'm not."

Huck: "You are."

Quinn Perkins: "Fine. I'm crying."

Huck: "Well, don't let Olivia see you doing that. She doesn't believe in crying."

This scene indicates how Olivia is emotionless to any circumstances she faces and that's why

Huck told Quinn to stop crying. This emotionless characteristic relates to the SBW regarding that

she is too strong to cry and it's seen as a weakness.

Olivia's reflects traits of a SBW, but manages to challenge the stereotypes. In season 1,

episode 5, Olivia goes to the attorney general's office to tell him that Amanda Turner's body was

dumped in the lake.

Olivia: You're gonna need a diving team.

David Rosen: You okay?

Olivia: Not really.

David Rosen: (Whispers) Okay.

This dialogue shows Olivia admitting to her emotional state of not being okay and showing some type of vulnerability. Even though Olivia does not continue to express her feelings in detail, her admitting that she is at a weak point is opposite of the SBW stereotype.

Angry Black Women

The sassy, aggressive, bossy and often isolated black business professional is a part of the ABW stereotype. In episode 1, When Olivia takes on a new client accused of killing his girlfriend; she goes to the attorney general house to ask for more time before taking her client into custody.

David Rosen: "I've been on the phone with homicide. "He killed her and ran."

Olivia: "I can have a reporter out here in 20 minutes, with cameras, asking why you are persecuting an innocent, handicapped medal of honor winner. Perhaps because he's a well-known conservative republican and you are considering a bid on the democratic ticket next year."

Olivia: "Just to be clear that was me threatening you."

This scene portrays Olivia as an ABW because she's arrives at Rosen's house unannounced, in the middle of the night and threatens him to keep her client safe. This behavior can also be seen as aggressive and bossy. In this same episode, Quinn is learning to adjust to the new environment of Pope's & Associates but learns quickly that any weak answers won't be tolerated.

Harrison Wright: "Olivia doesn't believe in "I don't know." She asks you why, you better have an answer.

Harrison empathizing that Quinn "better" have a question shows the no-tolerance policy Olivia

expects from all her associates. This is seen as Olivia being very aggressive and bossy in the work places as she expects her associates to have complete and valid solutions to their crisis.

Mammy

According to both Bogle (1974) and Hill (1990), the Mammy is all about helping and nurturing everyone around her, especially the White people. Olivia isn't limited to the Mammy's domestic occupation, but she does help everyone around her but herself. In episode 1, Olivia takes on this care-giver role as we're introduced to her associates. They don't just work for her, but they rely on Olivia to take care of them.

Huck: "Olivia Pope fixes things. That's who she is. You need fixing. I don't know your story. I don't need to know. We all have a story." Everyone in this office needs fixing." You are a stray dog, and Olivia took you in."

Huck's dialogue highlights Olivia's Mammy traits when he says, 'she fixes everyone' emphasizing her catering to other's needs. Olivia helps each one her associates get out of bad situations and 'fixed' their lives. Abby's husband was abusing her, so Olivia not only offered her a job but also a place to stay. Huck was homeless, so Olivia hired him. Harrison was sentenced to eight years of prison for insider trading but only served six months, because Olivia got him out on probation. Stephen, after suffering from a nervous breakdown, becomes a lawyer at Pope's firm and Olivia frequently gives him relationship advice (Versluys, 2014).

As the domestic help, the mammy was hired to make sure that the household of the White family ran smoothly. The mammy did most of the work to guarantee that her family would come across as the perfect suburban family; she was never credited for it (Turner. 1994: 46-47). Olivia exhibits this as she continues to work for the President Grant to ensure everything in the White House goes smoothly but unlike the mammy, her work is acknowledged and respected. Majority of time, when the president calls for help, Olivia comes immediately but Olivia wants to help.

The famous line is 'when you need something done, get Olivia Pope on it', which is similar to the functions of the Mammy. The mammy's work ethic was very much undermined but Olivia's work ethic is well respected and she's the best at her job that is why everyone wants to hire her. Olivia has a dual meaning for the mammy because she projects the characteristics of this stereotype, but her work is recognized and praised by the public and the president.

Sexually promiscuous

Developed from the *Jezebel* stereotype, the sexual promiscuous Black woman is seen as sexually aggressive with a high sexual appetite. She is also seen as just sexually driven with no intentions of pursing relationship or being married. This sexually promiscuous behavior is analyzed between Olivia and President Grants relationship.

In episode 7, Olivia is confronted by Mellie Grant as she blames Olivia for the president's affair with Amanda Turner. She believes Olivia leaving him contributed to him cheating with someone else and letting the affair reach the media.

Mellie Grant: "You fell down on the job. You broke his heart, and you left him open, vulnerable and helpless. That is how that snake Billy Chambers got that shiny red Amanda apple right into Fitz' hand. I do my job. I smile and I push, and I make sure he has what he needs. I do my job. Why couldn't you do yours?"

The scene places emphasizes on Olivia's sexuality that limits her only to a sexual object functioning as a jezebel stereotype. Black women's sexuality has always been monitored and exploited for other people's advancement. In this case, Mellie advancement as first lady is jeopardized when the affair comes to light and she places the blame on Olivia for not 'doing her job' by continuing to sleep with president Grant to ensure his happiness. This scene, shows that

Olivia's job is only limited to Grant's secret affair mistress and her status as a crisis manager is neglected.

When Olivia's and president Grant's affair become trouble for the White House, her former friend, Cyrus Beane, the White House Chief of Staff, becomes distant from her. In episode 3, when Cyrus hears Pope is defending Amanda Tanner's case, he quickly goes on to insult her for being a money driven 'whore'.

Cyrus Beane: "I never took you for the Hell hath no fury kind, it's a bit trashy but then again so is sleeping with a married man. […]You're being played. You're being played by the best politician in the world. The up side, the tell- 20 all book that you can write, when you're old. The President's Whore, it's all very dirty and best seller." (episode Three)

There are countless attacks on Olivia's sexuality and intimate relations with the president. The show still manages to debunk Olivia as the "whore" because president Grant loves her. In episode 3, when Olivia and President Grant are dancing with each other at the state dinner, he continues to tell her how he feels about her.

President Grant: "I am not spending any more time away from you."

Olivia Pope: "Stop it. We're in public. Look away."

President Grant: "I love you."

Olivia Pope: "Your wife is 10 feet away."

President Grant: "I love you."

In this same episode, another challenge is made to combat Olivia as being the sexually promiscuous stereotype when Mellie Grant openly knows about the affair and knows what Olivia means to the president.

President Grant: "Why did you invite her to the state dinner?"

Mellie Grant: "Olivia? "

President Grant: "Why would you do that?"

Mellie Grant: "Because you needed to see her. I trust that tonight you'll sleep like a baby."

Previously in the episode, president Grant has trouble sleeping after Olivia stops talking to him due to his lying about the affair with Amanda. Both Mellie and President Grant show that Olivia is anything but a 'whore'. President Grant risks everything to be with her and Mellie knows this, so she supports it behind closed doors to ensure her status as first lady.

Occupation

From above analysis, we know that Olivia is a powerful and successful Black woman. She owns her own company, is the boss of majority white co-workers and works for the White House. All these characteristics portray her outside of stereotypical mammy or domestic occupation roles. Even with her successful in the occupational status, like the ABW stereotype, her associating with being successful is also related to the aggressive, isolated professional women. Beside being successful at work, Olivia doesn't have a personal life. Similar to this stereotype, she's isolated to just being successful at work but not in her personal life. Even though she portrays the SBW stereotype through her work, she's admired for it. In episode 7, they call in Olivia to manage president Grant's crisis after the chief of staff, Billy Chambers reigns and admits to having an affair with Amanda during a press conference to sabotage the White House.

Security Guard: "It's about time they brought you in. They need the big guns on this one." Olivia role as a high-powered crisis manager goes beyond the stereotypical roles of Black women and it also undermines the typical historical notion of Black women's work being unappreciated.

Physical appearance

Kerry Washington plays Olivia Pope and she is a very sophisticated, well-dressed woman with good accessories in the series. Her hair is always straight or loose curled. She is always dressed in business causal clothes, barely has skin showing or any revealing clothes. Washington has curly, natural hair but only wears weave on camera. This may be abiding to the white audience to show that Olivia has the characteristics as acceptable for white audiences. Washington's skin tone is brown which is moving away from the stereotypical characters of lighter skin.

CHAPTER 9

INSECURE DATA (CASE 2)

In this chapter, the content analysis data is presented for the television show, *Insecure*.

9.1 *Insecure* Episode 1 'Insecure as Fuck':

After her 29th birthday, Issa Dee reconsiders her relationship with her live-in boyfriend,

Lawrence; Issa's best friend, Molly, laments being single, and later Issa reconnects with an ex at

an open-mic night.

Insecure Episode 1 (Issa)

Table 5

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
1	1a	1	3	2	3	4	5	2
1	2a	1	3	2	3	4	5	2
1	3a	0	3	2	3	2,3,6	3,5,6	2

Insecure Episode 1 (Molly)

Table 5.1

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
1	1a	1	3	1	5	1,5,6	5,6	1
1	2a	1	3	1	5	1,5	5,6	1
1	3a	1	3	1	5	2,3,6	1,5,6	1

9.2 *Insecure* Episode 3 'Racist as Fuck':

Issa and Lawrence try to move along from their problems at home, Issa is facing problems with

her co-workers. Molly introduces Jared to her friends**.**

Insecure Episode 3 (Issa)

Table 6

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
3	1a	1,2,5	3	2	3	1,2,5	1,5,6	2
3	2a	0	3	2	3	4	5	2
3	3a	0	3	2	3	4	5	2

Insecure Episode 3 (Molly)

Table 6.1

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
3	1b	0	3	1	5	1,5,6	4	1
3	2b	0	3	1	5	2,4,6	5	1
3	3b	0	3	1	5	1,3,6	4,5,6	1

Insecure **Episode 5 'Shady as Fuck'**:

Issa reconnects with Daniel and Lawrence faces questions about his future with Issa while Molly

invites her "perfect guy" to a coworker's engagement party.

Insecure Episode 5 (Issa)

Table 7

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
5	1a	4	3	2	3	1,5	5	2

5	2a	4	3	2	3	2,3,5	3,5	2
5	3a	0	3	2	3	1,6	5	2

Insecure Episode 5 (Molly)

Table 7.1

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
5	1b	4	3	1	5	1,5	5	1
5	2b	4	3	1	5	2,3,6	5,6	1
5	3b	4	3	1	5	1,5	5,6	1

Insecure **Episode 7 ' Real as Fuck':**

Issa deals with drama at a work fundraiser; later, she clashes with Molly over life choices.

Insecure Episode 7 (Issa)

Table 8

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
7	1a	0	3	2	4	1,3,6	5	2
7	2a	0	3	2	4	1,3,6	5	2
7	3a	0	3	2	4	1,3,6	1,5	2

Insecure Episode 7 (Molly)

Table 8.1

Episode	Chapter	Stereotype	Skin	Body	Hair	Clothing	Attitude	Occupat.
7	1a	0	3	1	5	1,3,6	5	1

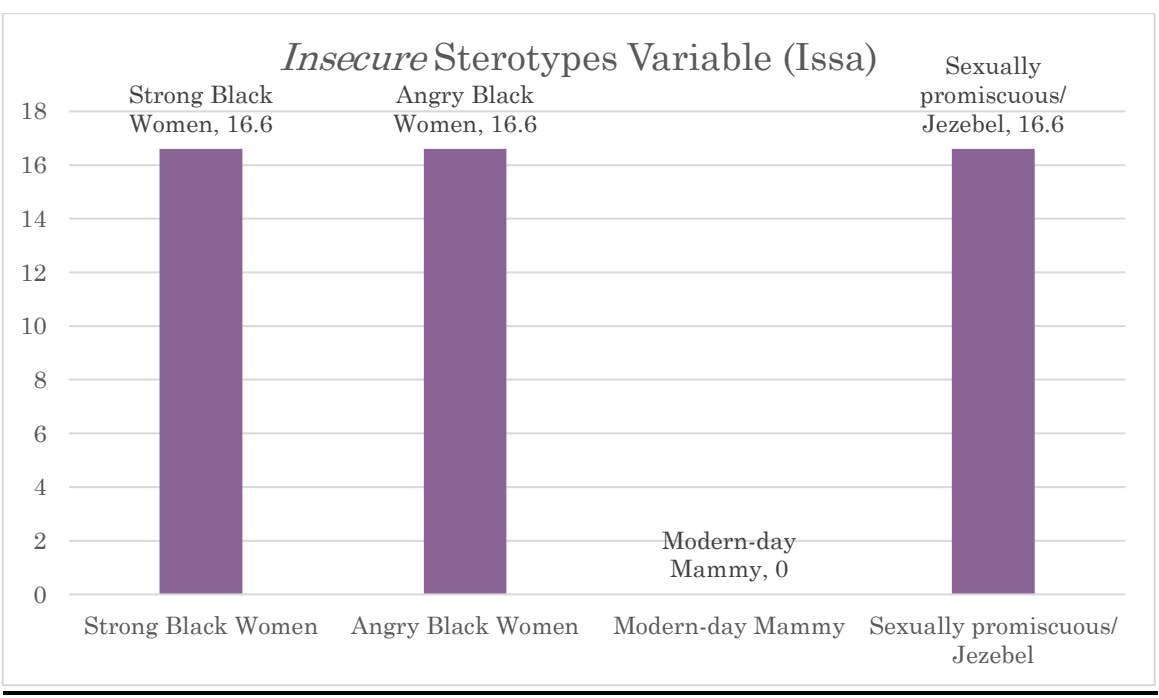| 7	2a	0	3	1	5	1,3,6	5	1
7	3a	4	3	1	5	1,3,6	1,5	1

CHAPTER 10
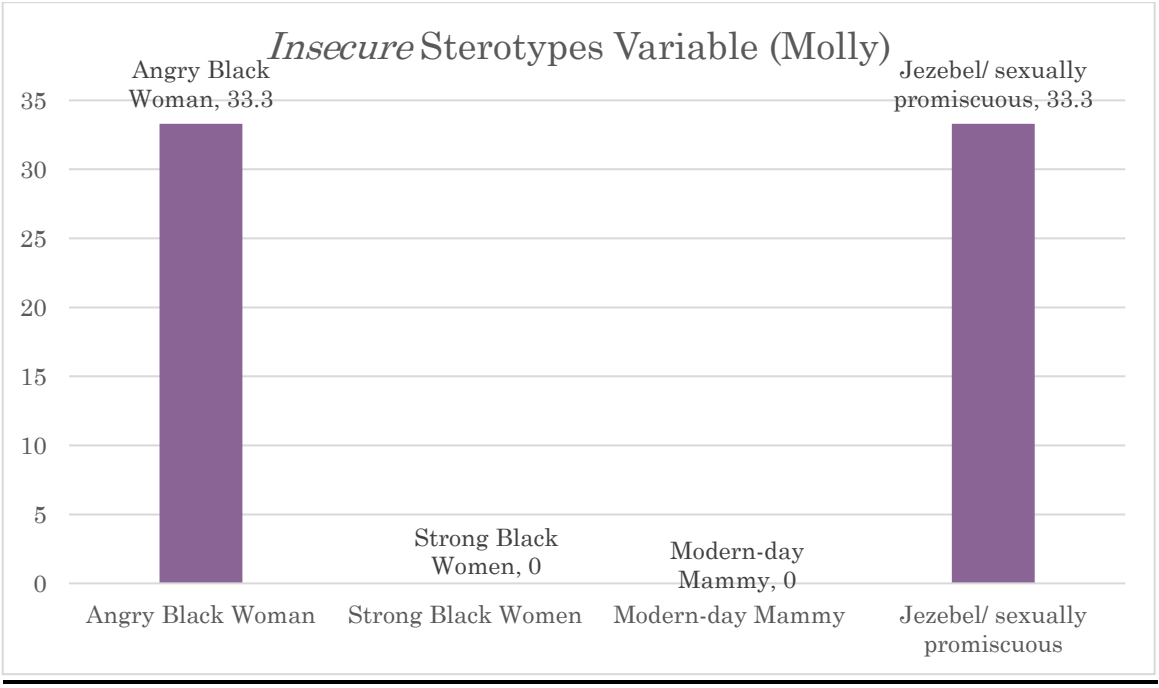
INSECURE DATA RESULTS

Figure 4

Figure 4.1

Issa & Molly's characteristics rarely portray any of the stereotypes consistently. Molly uses the ABW stereotype 20% which can be seen in her frustrations with dating. 20% is the sexually promiscuous stereotype that is used during her multiple pursuits of dating and trying to find a good relationship. Issa is 11% ABW, 11% SBW and 11% sexually promiscuous. Issa uses the ABW & SBW stereotype at work when she deals with microaggressions from her majority white co-workers. She uses the sexually promiscuous stereotype when she cheats on her boyfriend with Daniel, her high school and college 'friend with benefits'.
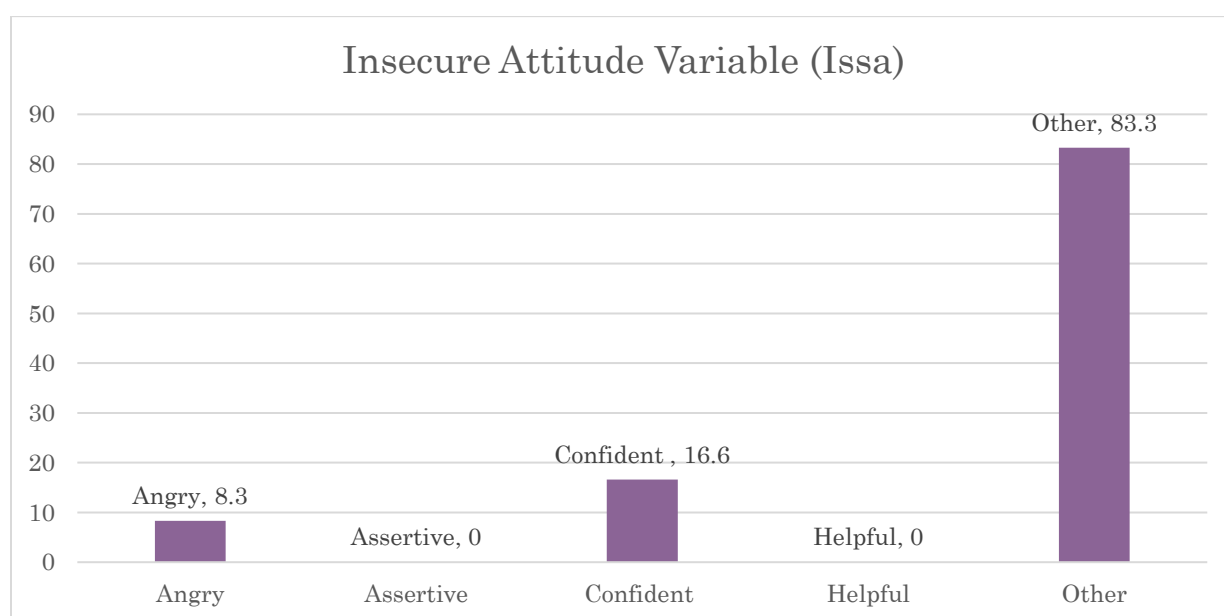

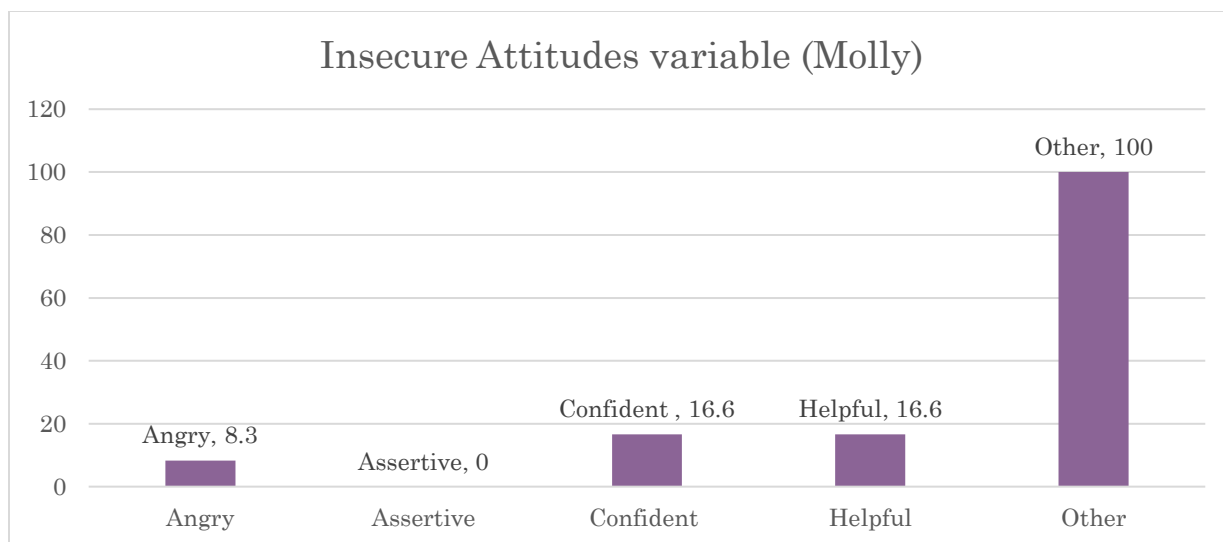**Figure 5**

Insecure Attitudes variable (Molly)

Figure 5.1

The attitude traits from the traditional stereotypes are very low for Issa & Molly. Both Molly and Issa only have 8.33% of the angry trait. Molly's anger is usually channeled through her failed relationships, while, Issa's anger is usually from her co-workers and work environment. Issa and Molly are confident and helpful (16.6%). Both the characters struggle with their inner insecurities which may be why their level of confidence has a lower percentage compared to *Scandal*.

Molly's hair changes frequently in length and style but it falls under the hair variable of weave in every episode. Issa's hair variable is consistent with the natural category with (75%) while 25% of her hairstyles falls under the braid's category. Issa's and Molly's skin tone is brown in all the episodes. The other attitudes that Issa and Molly both show included happy, adventurous, carefree, funny, silly awkward, smart, and vulnerable. These are important because both of these characters identify more with these attitudes than the traditional ones from the stereotypes.
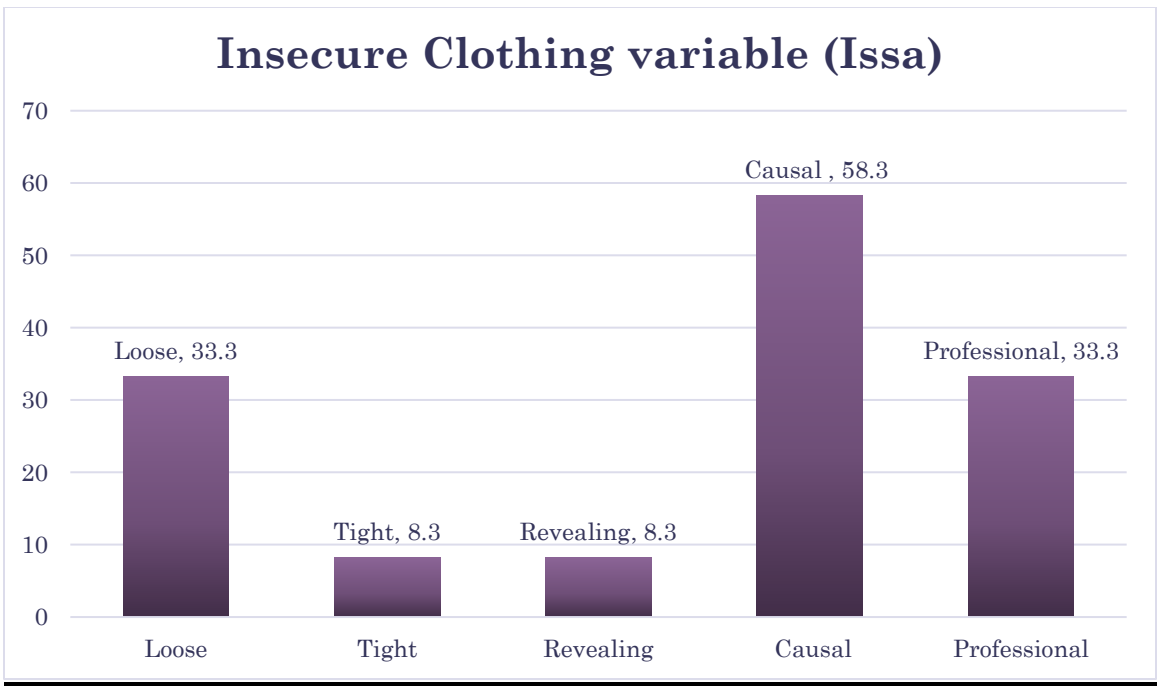
Insecure Clothing variable (Issa)

A bar chart showing: Loose, 33.3; Tight, 8.3; Revealing, 8.3; Causal, 58.3; Professional, 33.3.

Figure 6

Insecure Clothing variable (Molly)

A bar chart showing: Loose, 75; Tight, 25; Revealing, 50; Causal, 8.3; Professional, 33.3.
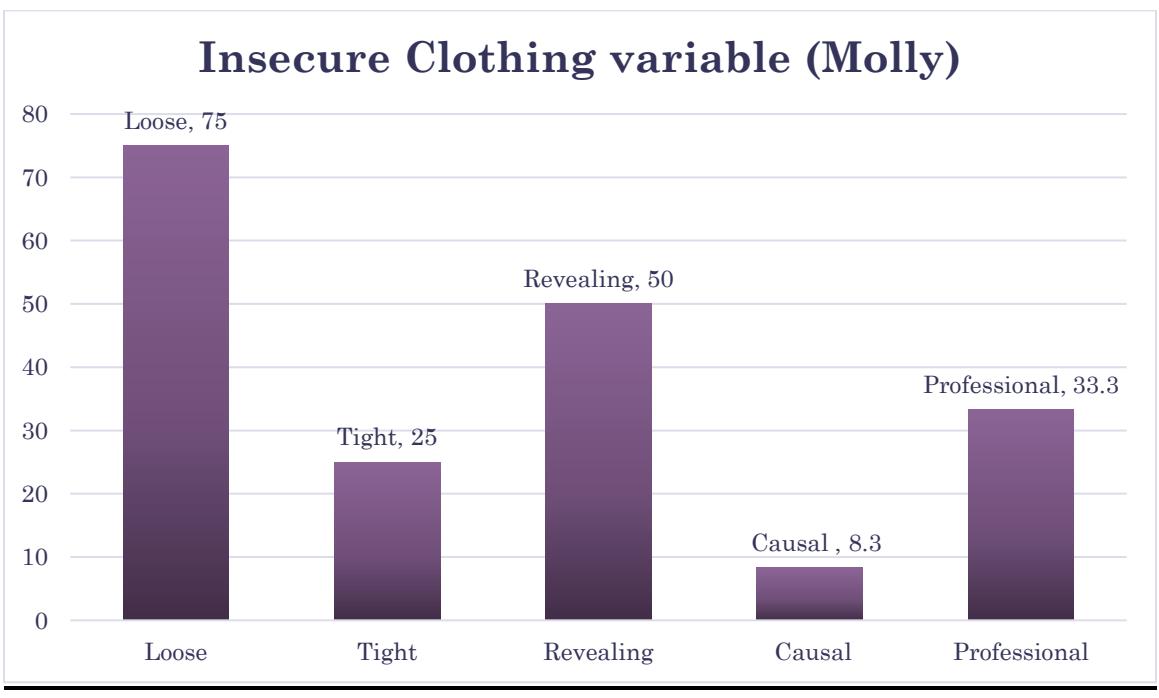
Figure 6.1

Molly falls under the professional/corporate occupational as a lawyer and Issa falls under the middle-class occupation as a non-profit worker. As a result, Molly is in loose clothing (75%)

and professional clothing is 41.6%. Molly also has a high percentage of revealing clothes which is usually wear on her dates which is 50% of the times. Issa is majority causally clothing because of her profession 58.3% of the time.

CHAPTER 11

INSECURE EPISODE ANALYSIS

"I'm rooting for everyone Black" Issa Rae said this at the 2017 Emmy award show as nominee for her series, *Insecure*. *Insecure* is an HBO comedy series that follows a non-profit worker (Issa Rae) and her friends in Los Angles who are learning to balance both professional and personal lives. Issa Rae, a nonprofit worker, that is uncertain about her love life and career path also battles with her notion of being an "awkward black girl." Molly (Yvonne Orji) Isaa's best friend, is a lawyer who is the only Black women at her law firm. While being successful at work, Molly isn't as successful in her romantic life. The series explores social and racial issues relating to black contemporary life in a comical way.

Relationships and career struggles are the center of season one. Issa feels like her relationship is boring and not evolving with her boyfriend, Lawrence. Issa also deals with work environment stress as she encounters subtle racism and disagreements with majority of her co-workers. Molly's career is great, but she understands she is working twice as much and not getting paid as equal as her white lawyers. While her career is thriving, her love life is in chaos

The show was created by Issa Rae in September of 2016. The show is based off Rae's viral YouTube series created called 'Misadventures of the Awkward Black Girl'. The show is similar to Rae's life. The show has received critical acclaim including 5 NAACP nominations, 2 Emmy and one Golden Globe nominations. The series has taken home awards from NAACP image Awards, American Film Institute Awards and many more.

The Angry Black Women

In the opening scene of Episode one, of *Insecure*, Issa is in front of a classroom at an inner-city school. She's talks about" We Got Yall" which is the non-profit she works for, and is

there to help the students. The students quickly begin asking Issa personal questions about her life:

Kid 1: "Why you talk like a white girl?" - (kids laugh)

Kid 2: "What's hat's up with your hair?"

Issa: "Let's stick to questions about the program."

Kid 3: "Are you single?"

Kid 4: "Why ain't you married? -My dad said ain't nobody checkin' for bitter-ass Black women anymore."

The questions the children are asking Issa can also be seen as a reflection of the questions Black women face by society. The comment about Issa being a bitter Black woman is also directly related to the ABW stereotype, but Issa's response was a rebuttal to it.

Issa: "And tell your dad that Black women aren't bitter. They're just tired of being expected to settle for less."

Also, in this same episode, we are introduced to Issa's work environment at "We got Ya'll. She explains that's her boss founded a non-profit to help children from poor communities but lacks diversity on the employment level.

Issa: "My boss founded a nonprofit to help kids from the hood, but she didn't hire anybody from the hood."

Issa explains that being the only Black person at work, she's seen as the token co-worker to having all the answers to any Black problems.

During this scene, one of the co-workers asked Issa what does "on Fleek" mean. This term is slang and the co-workers assumed Issa knew the meaning. Issa responded by saying she doesn't

know. Like I previous stated, in regard to 'Black' questions, they all directed them to Issa. Issa deals with these microaggressions by being passively aggressive.

This scene can also be a rebuttal to the ABW stereotype, because it shows Issa showing professionalism but ignoring the questions rather than reacting with anger. It shows how the white co-workers are difficult to work with because they were always asking questions based on race or ignorant assumptions about Black people.

Molly works in the corporate world as a lawyer and gets along with everyone at her job. As Issa introduces Molly, she says White and Black people love Molly. This introduction of Molly is also rejecting the idea of `the ABW` stereotype by showing her as well liked by everyone in her professional setting. Later in the episode, Molly finds out her Asian co-worker is engaged to her Black boyfriend and calls Issa for support because she feels like she'll never get married.

Molly: "It is never happening for me. Diane got engaged."

Issa: "To her black boyfriend? - Yes! Damn! That wife "others" up with a quickness."

Molly: "Right? And they don't even have to be that cute. You know, I'm not trying to be shady, but why does she deserve to get married, and I don't?"

This dialogue shows Molly portraying the bitter or ABW stereotype, but it can also be said that this is just Molly expressing her frustrations because her love life is far from perfect. This may be less of the ABW stereotype and just a Black woman going through a hard time in her love life because she still supports her co-worker marriage. As stated before, (Jones & Norwood 2017) examines how Black women simple express of any emotion gets interpreted as the ABW.

In Episode 3, Issa gets her limits pushed as she is planning an event for the kids at her non-profit, but her co-workers disagree with it. Instead of bringing their concerns to Issa, they talk behind her back.

Co-worker: "We were just talking, and a few of the others had some concerns.

Issa: "Are they concerns that they couldn't talk to me about? "

Co-worker: "I'm sure they could've, but they just emailed me to double check a couple little things."

Issa: "Wait, so there were emails, too? I wasn't cc'd."

Co-worker: "Oh. They didn't wanna seem like they were questioning your judgment. But they weren't sure how you'd react."

This scene is a social reaction to the stereotype of the ABW. Issa actually doesn't portray the stereotype at all but because of it, the co-workers felt more comfortable talking their issues with Issa' partner, the white co-worker. Issa rejects the stereotype by emphasizing that the emails should include her as well. Even though Issa doesn't embody the stereotype, it shows the psychological effects of the ABW stereotype and how society uses it against Black women.

The Strong Black Woman

In episode 3, When Issa is faced with her co-workers talking behind her back, her responses are in a professional matter but when she gets home, she's doesn't hold back her frustrations when talking with her boyfriend, Lawrence.

Issa: "They're having secret white meetings and they're sending secret white emails. I made one mistake during my presentation and they lost all faith in me."

Issa: "You know, now I'm the black girl who fucked up. And white people at my job fuck up all the time! "

Lawrence: "Look, did you talk to Joanne about it? "

Issa: "No. Cause then I'll look too sensitive."

The response from Issa saying she doesn't want to 'look too sensitive' is continuing the notion of the SBW by being emotional detached and maintaining a strong exterior despite conflicting factors. Issa must bear the weight of multiple aggressions she's facing at work but also be strong in the face of discriminations because she won't allow her co-workers to see her being vulnerable or weak.

In Episode 7, Molly talks to Issa about catching up with an old friend who has been doing better because of therapy after many toxic relationships. Molly protests on how she doesn't need therapy to fix her issues with men.

Issa: "Did she say therapy was working for her, though?

Molly: I mean, I guess, but who wants to go broke paying for a fake friend? "

Issa: "But maybe talking through some shit with someone isn't the worst idea."

Molly: "Bitch, you trying to say I need therapy or something?"

Issa: "Come on, no! Like But, I mean, maybe 'cause, you know, the stuff that you went through with Jared and even that lawyer nigga, maybe it could help."

Molly's rejection of seeking a therapist can be interpreted as encouraging the SBWI that as a Black women, she can figure it out things on her own. Molly later realizes in the season that she does need to work out her issues. In the next season, Molly has a therapist who she sees on a regular basis which again, disputes the stereotype of the SBW.

Sexually promiscuous

At first glimpse, Molly's multiple sexual partners and failed relationships can seem promiscuous but once we understand her intentions, she is not as presumed. Molly tries multiple

dating websites to find a good man and have relationships. She tells Issa how lucky she is to have her boyfriend. Molly rejects being sexually promiscuous because she desperately wants to be in a good relationship.

According to Figure 4, Issa projected only 11% of the sexually promiscuous behavior which isn't very high compared to Molly. The reasons she projected this stereotype at all was because she had multiple sexually partners, when she cheated on her boyfriend, this attributes to the high sexual appetite associated with the stereotype. The cheating affair only happened once moreover, its seen more as mistake because of Issa's regretful attitude.

Occupations

Both Molly and Issa both are representing Black women in various work fields. Molly is well liked by all her co-workers at the law firm and is even trusted to do multiple cases. Issa isn't well liked by all of her co-workers and can act passively aggressive towards them, but she is successful in her field by exposing the children to different experiences. It is evident that both characters are professionally portrayed as successful Black women.

In the next scene Issa deals with her own insecurities by day-dreaming her co-worker talking to her about the outlooks of Black women in relationships.

Molly: "Educated Black women are highly unlikely to get married the more education they have. On the bright side, many Black women are work-focused and find happiness in their careers. - (heart beating) - But, then, there is a small percentage of pathetic women who have neither. They are purposeless."

Issa: "You're wrong!"

Even though Molly isn't actually saying this, Issa imagination shows us a glimpse of her own insecurities and other Black women as working professionals. This scene is shedding light on

the isolated Black women in professional settings. Issa screaming "you're wrong" is her, as a Black women, rejecting this stereotype as being the norm for Black women professionals..

Physical appearance

Both main characters, Molly and Issa are brown-skinned woman. This is important because it goes against the standards of the acceptable type of Black women.

In addition, to skin tone, Issa also embraces her natural hair in every episode. Embracing her shorter and thicker curl pattern helps disestablishing negative views of Black women's hair. Centering storylines around these two women is moving progressively in showing various representations of Black women as well.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSIONS

The controlling images of Black women that originated during the slave era attest to the ideological dimension of Black women's oppression (King 1973; D. White 1985; Carby 1987). These controlling images and stereotypes of Black women have historical limited the roles and lowered the standards of what is acceptable for Black women.

The American film and television industry have evolved from Blackface and other blatant racists representation of Blacks but now they use stereotypical roles as a replacement. Ethnic minorities and women have always faced discrimination of being limited to stereotypes or not being represented at all. Black women being both an ethnic and gender minority makes positive representation even harder. These stereotypes effect how others look at Black women but it also reflects on how Black women view themselves. The purpose of my paper was to analyze these stereotypes of Black women and determine the current progressive state in steering away from historical stereotypes. I chose *Insecure* and *Scandal* to analyze because they both have Black women protagonists. My analysis would determine if these shows display any stereotypes of Black women even though they were written and produced by Black women.

Three research questions were drawn up to determine the progressiveness of each series. First, I introduced the stereotypes of Black women: The mammy, jezebel, sapphire, the matriarch, the welfare mother, the tragic mulatto, angry Black women and the strong Black women. Additionally, I introduced the two variables that also are reduced to stereotypical traits including occupational roles and appearance. The three research questions help analyze the main Black female lead characters: Olivia Pope, Issa and Molly:

1. Do the Characters Oliva Pope, Issa and Molly display traits of stereotypes of Black women?

2. What makes these series progressive for Black women?

3. What power does television shows have in destroying and promoting stereotypes?

To answer the first question, both *Scandal* and *Insecure* display traits of the historical stereotypes from the list above. Although it's alarming to see these critical acclaimed and current shows still displaying stereotypes of Black women, they differ from their past representation drastically. Olivia, Molly, and Issa are very dynamic in the traits they display which is why they can't be limited to the one-dimensional stereotypical characters. The stereotypes of mammy, jezebel, ABW and SBW are one-dimensional representation of Black women with usually one-story line.

In *Scandal*, the mammy stereotype is used various times through Olivia's work as a fixer. She has traits of care giving and helpfulness as she helps everyone around her with their problems. The mammy's main function is being obedient, faithful and helping the White family with no hesitation. While Olivia displays mammy traits, she doesn't embody the stereotype fully. First, Olivia's occupation permits her from fully being a mammy and her status of high power and wealth are opposite of the mammy as well. Olivia isn't obedient to anyone and she decides who she wants to help because she has power on her own.

In *Insecure*, the mammy stereotype wasn't used an all, but the story line is also very different. Insecure is about two 'insecure girls' navigating the LA scene and dealing with their own lives. There isn't room for this stereotype in the plot because they're so focused on themselves, they don't really have time to cater to other needs like the mammy.

The jezebel or sexually promiscuous women stereotype was used in the character Olivia. Her relationship with the president often portrayed her as the home wrecker or 'slut' in many of the situations. This stereotype is debunked because president Grant always confesses his love for

Olivia which shows her as anything but the 'whore'. Even though the stereotype of Jezebel is challenged by president Grant, it is still used by Mellie Grant and Cyrus Beam on Olivia.

In *Insecure*, Issa is rarely seen as the Jezebel until she has sex with Daniel while being in a relationship. This only being one incident, Issa doesn't embody the Jezebel stereotype. On the other hand, Molly is seen more of a Jezebel than Issa. She is constantly having multiple sexual relationships with different men as she searches for love and a relationship.

The ABW is something Olivia definitely portrays. She is means and will make people feel violated with her harsh words but that's part of her job. Olivia is just as 'angry' as all of her other white associates. In the field they're in, they have no choice but to act this way to win their cases. On the other hand, Molly and Issa rarely show this stereotype. Molly only shows the ABW stereotype with her failed relationships while Issa shows it from the racism she faces at work. Griffin (2012) gives legitimacy to the ABW stereotype in the face of discrimination. Black women have much to be angry about in the academy, including the poor representation of Black female scholars (Gregory, 2002; ''The Profession,'' 2011) and the difficulty of getting race-related research published (Hendrix, 2002, 2005,2010; Orbe, Smith, Groscurth, & Crawley, 2010), both of which fuel the absence of emancipatory scholarship by and about Black women. Even though this is referring to an academic background, it applies to the many incidents these Black characters are facing in the real world.

The SBW stereotype is seen in all three the characters. In Olivia's case, because of her occupation, she believes and preaches the motto of being tough because the job is hard and if you have a soft heart, it will get to you. Even though this her motto, Olivia shows some vulnerability in the first season when she discovers the death of Amanda Tanner. Issa exudes the SBW trait at home and in her occupation. She uses passive aggressive behaviors to deal with the subtle racism

and exclusions she feels at work. Instead of addressing the problems, Issa tries to prove them wrong in her actions at the non-profit. At home, Issa is also bearing the financial and emotional weight of her relationship with her jobless boyfriend. She admits in season one that carrying the weights of her job and her boyfriend's personal struggles was a lot and comes with much responsibility. Issa's expression that she doesn't want to endure all this hardships shows her vulnerability and challenges SBW stereotype. Molly also challenges the SBW stereotype in episode 7 when Issa suggest therapy. Molly at first is hesitant to therapy which furthers the SBW stereotype but she later challenges it as she's openly recognizes her problems and seeks out a therapist.

Occupational roles for these characters all challenge the mammy and welfare mother stereotype by showing Black women in powerful positions including Molly and Olivia. These characters representing power is very progressive, but it can also fall short to the stereotype of the isolated Black women professional. While Molly rejects the Isolated Black women professional, Olivia embraces it.

Appearance of hair is very much European based through Molly's and Olivia's hairstyles. From the data above, they both wear weave majority of the time and this can be attributed to the White corporate America. Molly and Olivia are in corporate settings; natural Black hair isn't usually seen as professional. This is interpreted to viewers that Black women must wear their hair in weave or straight to be accepted in professional/corporate settings. While some may see wearing weave as a European standard, weave is also an alternative hairstyle for Black women to wear as a protective style to prevent damaging their natural hair. The weave hairstyle can be seen from two perspectives.

In all, Olivia, Issa, and Molly are very dynamic and progressive characters for Black women. They do displays traits of some stereotypes but none of these characters could fully identify with any of the stereotypes. As a Washington D.C. and White House fixer, Olivia rejects the ideas of the deeming professional roles but embraces the stereotypes of the isolated Black women professional. In *Scandal,* Olivia is immitted to be an isolated professional working woman because her profession requires it. She has no friends (outside her work place), no family (that we see) or any personal life. She is also seen as annoying or demanding in the work place. The stereotypes of her being an ABW, SBW and mammy are only used because her job as fixer requires her too. Herself and her associates all embrace the traits of ABW, SBW and mammy because as fixers, they have to have these traits to successful at their jobs. According to figure 2, Olivia only displayed 35% other attitude traits that still followed the same traits as the traditional stereotypes. Nurturing and comfort are associated with the mammy stereotype, vindictive and mean follow the ABW and Isolated black women professional.

In *Insecure,* Issa and Molly reject the ideas of the traditional stereotypes by displaying more than 80% of the other traits than the stereotypes one. According to Figure 5 and 5.1, Issa shows 83.3% of other traits while Molly shows 100%. Issa has more characteristics of being funny, goofy, awkward, adventurous and insecure. Molly has characteristics of being confident, nice, funny supportive and insecure. Molly also debunks the stereotypes of the isolated black women professional by being well-liked at work and having a personal life as well.

Even though Olivia has more traits of old stereotypes than Issa and Moly, none of them are limited to the stereotypical behaviors. These characters are very different in portraying a diverse perceptive of Black women.

So what makes these series, *Insecure* and *Scandal*, progressive? From the above analysis, Scandal is a progressive show but has some limitations. The traits that Olivia possess relate to historical stereotypes of Black women in high percentages. These include Olivia being the ABW 100%, the SBW 75%, the mammy 58.3% and sexually promiscuous at 41%. Olivia being portrayed as the ABW is mostly through her work as a fixer. She is often threating people and ripping people apart with her words. Moreover, another observation made was that everyone who works for her possess these traits. For an example, in episode 1, Abby Whelan, one of Pope's associates, is trying to sneak a look at a crime scene she's investigating. Since she's not an official police investigator, she doesn't have any access to the scene legally. Instead of leaving, Abby threats the police guard with exposing his affairs with a stripper unless he lets her in.

Abby Whelan: "How's your wife, Wally? She's what, six months pregnant? Does she know about the stripper?

Police Guard: "You're a real bitch, you know that?"

This scene shows Abby, a white woman, as equally aggressive and emotionless as Olivia. This highlights how Olivia is less of the ABW stereotype, but just embraces the necessary skills of her job as a fixer. Even though some scenes challenge Olivia as the ABW stereotype, she still embraces major mammy traits. Olivia does all the work to make President Grant's missions in the White House run smoothly with no hesitation. She also is willing to help everyone fix their problems but her own. On the contrary, these mammy characteristics can also be challenged because her love for the president is the main reasons, she helps the White House.

In episode 1, when Olivia finds out the affair with Amanda Turner was true and that President Grant lied to her in order to get Olivia's help in hiding the affair from the public.

Olivia Pope: "I believed you. You clouded judgment." You made me mistrust my gut because I wanted to believe you! I Destroyed that girl! She tried to kill herself."

Olivia is showing here that she isn't just a mammy; she admits that her love and relationship with the president altered her judgment. As a result, Olivia takes Amanda Turner as her client which is completely the opposite of the obedient, loyal mammy. Olivia is just simply a flawed woman who like any human, lets her feelings cloud her judgments from time to time.

Shonda Rhimes, the African American woman creator of the show, uses stereotypes of Black women to a certain extent but also projects Black women as strong, professional and capable of managing crises of the highest level of power.

In an interview with Hollywood Reporter in April of 2018, she expresses how she hopes her shows makes is easier for other women of color to reach the big screen.

"Now it feels very normal and obvious that women of color can lead shows, so hopefully that is something that *Scandal* has done," Rhimes (the Director) told a small group of reporters, including *The Hollywood Reporter,* during a recent conference call. "Hopefully we've created a world in which we've stopped seeing these characters on television and it's a magical anomaly that they're there and there's an *otherness* to them.… Hopefully we've made a dent in that."(Rhimes 2018)

Even though Rhimes has clear intentions to normalize Black women's representation, the usage of traditional stereotypes can be imprinted on viewers minds and become the acceptable roles for Black women actresses. However, it is still progressive not only because it has a Black woman lead, but because it shows Black women in a different light including being powerful, vulnerable, smart and respected by her peers.

Insecure is a very progressive series for Black women because majority of Insecure episode offer major setbacks for traditional stereotypes of Black women and rejects them. This series promotes positive images of Black women and shows a glimpse of Black women's daily environments. The characters portrayed the opposite traits of these stereotypes because they are honest about their flaws and their insecurities through uncomfortable, everyday situations. This series also is in a progressive state by addressing racial and social discriminations Black people face, particular Black women in society. The show also challenges the White standard of beauty by embracing Issa's natural hair in every episode and casting Black women characters with darker shades of skin color. Both of these actions are breaking away from the acceptable lighter skin Black women. Addressing racism and bringing attention to it is one of the main topics in the Insecure series. The series points out subtle racism and microaggression in the workforce that non-back viewers may have not known.

Both Scandal and Insecure have titles that can be interpreted as negative when you first look at them. The series *Scandal* title suggest something of wrongdoing or immoral happening in the show while *Insecure* suggest lack of confidence or self-conscious. The title allows enforces these meanings onto the main characters which are Olivia, Molly and Issa. In *Scandal*, Olivia does vindictive, unethical and sometimes illegal actions to do her jobs as a fixer. Like I pointed out earlier, she has to embrace these traits to be as good and powerful as she is in the show. In *Insecure*, Issa and Molly both battled with their insecurities as Black women in life, but the show also highlights the insecurities society places on Black women. On the other hand, I believe the titles can offer a key perspective in understanding the show. In *Insecure*, the title is highlighting the insecurities Black women face in their daily life. Additional to racism and sexism, they have to deal with their own insecurities about relationships and jobs. In *Scandal,* the title highlights

Olivia's daily job as a fixer, while also showing the scandalous behavior of her clients and her work. But the real scandal of the show, is highlighting the wrong doing within the white house that only a Black woman can help fix.

Moving forward, using tittles that have negative conations can possibly have an effect how viewers see the main characters but, in these cases, the titles offer an important outlook of the message in the series

Overall, these two series help create positive images of the Black women that is much needed in television to increase their self-image and self-esteem. *Insecure* does an excellent job at showing how dynamic Black women can be while also disconnecting traditional stereotypes. The Insecure series is stronger at steering away from stereotypes of Black women in comparison to *Scandal*. Even though Scandal has more characteristics of stereotypical Black women, Issa looks up to the creator of Scandal, Rhimes, as she entered the field.

"She paved the way for so many of us," Rae said of Rhimes. "Scandal," starring Kerry Washington, "legitimized the online audience and the online voice in a completely different way. And so, yes, I look to her for inspiration for just starting a movement."

My last research question analyzes the power of television in creating and destroying these stereotypes of Black women.

Positive representation on T.V. of Black women help not only that community, but society. Having Black women as leads can help dispel stereotypes and possibly bridge an understanding to them as well. According to this Nielsen Report (2017), "Black T.V. shows" we're attracting substantial amounts of non-black viewer including, HBO's "Insecure" series having 61.54% non-African American viewership's. Nielsen criteria for shows to be considered "black content" are by having predominantly black cast or main storyline focusing on black

characters. This research shows that non-black viewers are interested in television shows that have a story line based around Black people. Moreover, having positives representation of Black women benefits everyone.

Boyd (1997) discuss how positive televisions representation of Black people help to critique years of negative stereotypes of Blacks. Fujioka (1999) highlights how television has been considered an influential source of information that plays a role in constructing viewers' social reality. She explains that television becomes a part of our social experience and serve as a basis for social judgements such as racial attitudes and ethnic Stereotypes. Including abundant and positive representation of Black women, can help break down inaccurate racial judgements of Black women in society too.

Nevertheless, television is a powerful weapon and these shows can be used to challenge stereotypes, subtle racism, and Black identity crisis of Black women better. Using Black female leads is only onw of the attributes that make these series progressive; What happens behind the scenes are just as important. Black women's exclusion from positions of power within mainstream institutions has led to the elevation of elite white male ideas and interests and the corresponding suppression of Black women's ideas and interest in traditional scholarship and popular culture (Scott 1982a; Higginbotham 1989). The power position is in the hands of Black women in these series. Both the series have Black women as the creators and producers of these shows which can attribute to swaying away from historical stereotypes and becoming more progressive. Black women have usually been limited to submissive and subordinated positions in society that resulted to their exclusions or stereotypical roles in films. These series are increasingly progressive at showing Black women as characters who can't fit into any stereotypical box. My expectations are that television and films continues in this progressive

state shifting away from stereotypes and towards positive representations for everyone, especially Black women. My hopes are that as we are continuing moving forward, these stereotypes will lose their power in media. As a result, Black women will be able to be angry, strong, helpful and express their sexuality without being limited to these stereotypes. I also hope my work inspire other ethnic minorities to push for accurate and diverse representation of themselves. Representation is not enough. Having the right representation is what matters.

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     Portrayals of Black Women On Television & The Shift of Their Representation: An
     Analysis of *Scandal & Insecure*

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