The Same Old Story:
Cultivation of the Warrior Stereotype of American Indians

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Although representations of American Indians in mass media are rare, when depicted they are portrayed in a consistent stereotypical manner, especially as bloodthirsty warriors and noble Indians from the past. We used a cultivation approach, surveying 903 White Americans, to explore whether greater reported exposure to 6 media types and genres was associated with the endorsement of 5 stereotypes. We found that more reported exposure to television, books, social media, news, and sports media was associated with greater endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype. More exposure to social media was associated with more endorsement of the noble Indian stereotype and less endorsement of the casino and degraded Indian stereotypes, and more exposure to sports media was associated with less endorsement of the degraded Indian stereotype. We discuss our findings in relation to cultivation theory, settler colonial theory, and the phenomenon of ostensibly positive stereotypes, as well as their implications for American Indian Peoples.

Keywords: Native Americans, American Indians, stereotypes, mass media, cultivation theory

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Although American Indians (AIs)[2] rarely appear in mass media (e.g., Peruta & Powers, 2017; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003; Tukachinsky, Mastro, & Yarchi, 2015), there are two reasons to suspect that media depictions of them may impact perceptions of AI Peoples. First, AI people are a small, geographically concentrated percentage of the U.S. population (Lichter, Parisi, Grice, & Taquino, 2007), and when the majority has limited interpersonal contact with a marginalized group, media representations of these groups may be more impactful (Gross, 1984; Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2012). Second, when AI people do appear in mass media, they are usually depicted in a consistent stereotypical manner (e.g., Davis-Delano, Folsom, McLaurin, Eason, & Fryberg, 2021), and consistent media messages about marginalized groups can be impactful (Gross, 1984). Thus, we used a cultivation approach to explore the possibility that more media exposure may be associated with the endorsement of stereotypes of AI Peoples. Studying this association is important because stereotypes about AI Peoples impact AI Nations and individuals (e.g., Berkhofer, 1978; Davis-Delano, Galliher, Carlson, Eason, & Fryberg, 2020; Fryberg, Markus, Oysterman, & Stone, 2008).

Stereotypes of American Indians in Context

We situate four main stereotypes of AI Peoples in the context of settler colonial theory and research on ostensibly positive stereotypes. Ostensibly positive stereotypes are "subjectively favorable beliefs about members of social groups that directly or indirectly connote or confer domain-specific advantage, favorability, or superiority based on category membership" (Czopp, Kay, & Cheryan, 2015, p. 451). Settler colonial societies are those in which colonists settle on lands occupied by Indigenous Peoples and strive to replace these Indigenous Peoples. Settler colonial processes extend beyond initial periods of violence and are ongoing in the present time period (e.g., McKay, Vinyetea, & Norgaard, 2020). One way settlers (i.e., non-Indigenous people who reside on Indigenous land) legitimate settler colonialism is by the creation and control of signifiers of indigeneity (Davis-Delano et al., 2021; O'Brien, 2010). In this article, we focus on settler-created stereotypes of AI Peoples that legitimate settler colonialism.

Berkhofer (1978) explained two primary stereotypes of AI Peoples created during early colonization of what is now known as the United States. First, the stereotype of AI Peoples as "bloodthirsty warriors" suggests that AI Peoples are aggressive, brutal, and violent warriors. This stereotype was used to legitimate the settler colonial processes of killing AI Peoples and taking their lands. Second, the "noble Indian" stereotype includes beliefs that AI Peoples are primitive, traditional, childlike, spiritual, and connected to nature. This stereotype was disseminated in the wake of violent dispossession to legitimate settler colonial policies and practices to control and assimilate remnant AI Peoples (e.g., Berkhofer, 1978; Mihesuah, 1996).

Subsequently, settlers began to stereotype AI Peoples as "degraded/broken Indians," which includes beliefs that AI Peoples are poor, addicted, lazy, and otherwise dysfunctional (e.g., Berkhofer, 1978; Mihesuah, 1996). Similar to stereotypical views of Black Americans, this stereotype blames AI Peoples, based on alleged flaws in their constitution and "culture," for their lower-than-average position in the U.S. stratification system. This stereotype legitimates their lower position while ignoring structural oppression

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[2] We use the term "American Indian" because it is associated with Native Nation sovereignty. We use "AI people" to refer to AI individuals and "AI Peoples" to refer to AI Nations and pan-Tribal AI ethnic groups.

(Gans, 1976), including settler colonialism. Most recently, AI Peoples have been stereotyped as "casino Indians," which includes beliefs that AI Peoples are greedy and manipulative, especially in the context of economic endeavors. Davis-Delano, Galliher, and colleagues (2020) found that endorsement of this stereotype is associated with less support for AI Nation sovereignty (which is evidence of, and critical to, challenges to settler colonialism).

Considering these four stereotypes when interpreting the findings of Burkley, Durante, Fiske, Burkley, and Andrade (2016), non-AI participants perceived characteristics associated with the degraded and casino Indian stereotypes as negative while perceiving characteristics associated with the bloodthirsty warrior and noble Indian stereotypes as both negative (e.g., violent, primitive) and positive (e.g., brave, wise). Endorsement of overtly negative racial and ethnic stereotypes declined in the United States since the mid-1900s though there has been no corresponding decline in endorsement of ostensibly positive stereotypes (e.g., Bergsieker, Leslie, Constantine, & Fiske, 2012). Czopp and colleagues (2015) reviewed research on ostensibly positive stereotypes, noting that many people believe these stereotypes are unrelated to oppression and are complimentary. Yet, there are many ways ostensibly positive stereotypes harm members of oppressed groups, including depersonalizing, generating extra pressure, and encouraging avoidance of beneficial activities that do not correspond with supposed group strengths. Furthermore, because some ostensibly positive stereotypes legitimate oppression and stratification, belief in these stereotypes may undermine motivations to reduce this oppression and stratification (e.g., Czopp et al., 2015).

Some research reveals that ostensibly positive stereotypes of AI Peoples are harmful. While many believe AI mascots honor AI Peoples and convey the positive message that they "were brave and strong warriors" (e.g., Davis-Delano, Gone, & Fryberg, 2020), when AI students are exposed to AI mascots the consequences include lowered self-esteem, less capacity to imagine future achievements, less faith in AI communities, and negative emotions (Fryberg et al., 2008; LaRocque, McDonald, Weatherly, & Ferraro, 2011). Furthermore, using samples of non-AI people, exposure to AI mascots increases stereotyping of AI Peoples as warlike, and supporters of AI mascots evidence more prejudice against and less support for AI Peoples than opponents (e.g., Angle, Dagogo-Jack, Forehand, & Perkins, 2017; Davis-Delano, Galliher, & Gone, 2022).

Media Representations of American Indians

AI people are vastly underrepresented in mass media (e.g., Peruta & Powers, 2017; Poindexter et al., 2003; Tukachinsky et al., 2015). Yet, when AI people do appear, there are definite patterns in *how* they are depicted. Content analyses of samples that include multiple media texts depicting AI people (i.e., not including findings from research focused on a single or few media texts) are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Stereotypes of American Indians.

	"People of the Past"	"Bloodthirsty Warrior"	"Noble Indian"	"Degraded Indian"	"Casino Indian"
-Television	Fitzgerald (2010, 2014)	Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021); Fitzgerald, (2010, 2014)	Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021); Fitzgerald (2010, 2014)	Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021)	Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021); Lacroix (2011)
-News	Weston (1996)	Baylor (1996); Weston (1996)	Baylor (1996); Fryberg (2003); Weston (1996)	Fryberg (2003); Miller and Ross (2004); Weston (1996)	Boxberger Flaherty (2013)
-Films	Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021); Kilpatrick (1999)	Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021); Hilger (2016); Kilpatrick (1999)	Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021); Fryberg (2003); Hilger (2016); Kilpatrick (1999)	Fryberg (2003)	
-Comic Books	Sheyahshe (2008)	Sheyahshe (2008)	Sheyahshe (2008)		
-Consumer Product Names and Logos	Merskin (2014)	Green (1993); Merskin (2014)	Green (1993)		
-Mascots	For example, Davis-Delano, Gone, and Fryberg (2020)	For example, Davis-Delano, Gone, and Fryberg (2020)			
-Ads	Molholt (2012)	Molholt (2012)			
-Wikipedia Entries		Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021)	Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021)		
-YouTube Videos		Kopacz and Lawton (2011)	Kopacz and Lawton (2011)		
-Children's Books	Chaudhri and Schau (2016); Reese and McEntarffer (2021)				
-Internet Images	Leavitt, Covarrubias, Perez, and Fryberg (2015)				

AI Peoples are most often stereotyped as a people of the past, bloodthirsty warriors, and noble Indians. For example, Leavitt and colleagues (2015) searched the Internet for images of AI people and found that 99% on Bing and 95.5% on Google of the first 100 images that appeared were from the past. Based on content analysis of the 12 most commonly recalled films with AI characters, Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021) reported evidence of the bloodthirsty warrior stereotype:

> 100% . . . include violence by at least one Native character; in 50% at least one Native character is represented as an aggressor, brutal, and out of control; and in 58% at least one Native character is portrayed as brave, tough, and physically strong, . . . [while] the most common role for Native characters in these films is warrior (in 75% of films). (p. 9)

In the same study, Davis-Delano and colleagues (2021) observed evidence of the noble Indian stereotype in the 10 most commonly recalled television shows with reoccurring AI characters, as these characters are portrayed as "spiritual (80%), in-touch-with-nature (60%), ritualistic (50%), culturally traditional, peaceful (both 40%), intuitive, faithful, proud, and artistic (all 30%)," while "the most common occupation for Native characters is spiritual guide (50%), with traditional healer (40%) not far behind" (p. 9).

More rarely, AI people are portrayed through the lens of the degraded and casino Indian stereotypes. Miller and Ross (2004) found that from 1999 to 2001, 14 of 55 stories about AI people in the *Boston Globe* were framed through the lens of the degraded Indian stereotype. Boxberger Flaherty (2013) observed that, from 2004 to 2005, the *Syracuse Post-Standard* newspaper included the casino Indian stereotype (i.e., portraying AIs as rich, greedy, and "false Indians") in 30% of news stories that did not mention gaming and 70% of stories that did mention gaming.

Cultivation Theory

Given the consistency in media stereotyping (as bloodthirsty warriors and noble Indians) and the limited interpersonal contact that many non-AI people have with AI people, media representations of AI people may be impactful. Employing cultivation theory, Gross (1984) focused on two other oppressed groups that dominant group members had limited (known) interpersonal contact with, and who were underrepresented and consistently stereotyped on television, at the time of data collection. In this study, Gross (1984) found associations between heavy television viewing and harmful beliefs about Black and gay/lesbian people. Since these same conditions apply to AI Peoples in the contemporary period, we used cultivation theory to explore possible associations between heavy media use and stereotyping of AI Peoples.

George Gerbner and his colleagues (e.g., Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Morgan et al., 2012) introduced the basic premises of cultivation theory. They argued that, over the long term, heavy television viewers are more apt than light viewers to see the world through the lens of messages commonly conveyed on television. Content analysis is used to determine common messages, which then determine survey questions researchers pose about the world. Participant answers to questions about the world are then compared to their reported quantity of media use. In a classic example, content analysis revealed violence is pervasive on television, and cultivation researchers found that heavy television viewers are more apt than light viewers to indicate they fear real-world violence. Hermann, Morgan, and Shanahan (2021) and Morgan, Shanahan,

and Signorielli (2012, 2015) summarized cultivation theory and research findings, noting that researchers now study media other than television, as well as particular genres. Despite significant changes in media, most research reveals cultivation effects[3] for both overall and genre-specific television viewing. Cultivation findings are correlational, and it is likely that cultivation impacts media selection and vice versa (Hermann et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2012, 2015).

Only two publications used a cultivation approach to examine associations between media exposure and perceptions of AI Peoples. First, using a sample of 191 White students from two universities in northwestern United States, Tan, Fujioka, and Lucht (1997) found that reported quantity of television viewing was generally not associated with positive (or negative) beliefs about AI people (e.g., that they are educated) nor with attributes of AI people perceived to be present in television shows (e.g., portrayal as alcoholic). Second, using a sample of 450 mostly White students from one northwestern and one southwestern U.S. university, Lee, Richard, Irey, Walt, and Carlson (2009) found that heavy television viewers rated AI Peoples as less open, extroverted, and conscientious. Although Tan and colleagues (1997) included some attributes associated with the degraded Indian stereotype (e.g., laziness), neither of these studies examined whether quantity of reported media exposure was associated with endorsement of stereotypes that content analysis has revealed are common in representations of AI people.

The Present Study

Since stereotypes of AI Peoples legitimate settler colonialism and are harmful to AI Peoples (e.g., Berkhofer, 1978; Fryberg et al., 2008), it is important to study the role media may play in AI stereotype persistence. Although AI people rarely appear in mainstream U.S. media, the combination of consistent media stereotyping of them as bloodthirsty warriors and noble Indians, along with the limited interpersonal contact many non-AI Americans have with them, inspired this study. Because the bloodthirsty warrior and noble Indian stereotypes are common in media when AI people are represented, we hypothesized cultivation effects for these two stereotypes. Based on the principal components analysis discussed below, we created two separate hypotheses for the warrior stereotype (i.e., H1a and H1b):

H1a: Media will generate cultivation effects for the warrior Indian stereotype.

H1b: Media will generate cultivation effects for the violent Indian stereotype.

H2:   Media will generate cultivation effects for the noble Indian stereotype.

Thus, we hypothesize that individuals with high media consumption (of television, films, etc.) will be more likely to endorse these stereotypes. In contrast, given the dearth of representations of AI people in media, in combination with less common depictions of the degraded and casino Indian stereotypes, we did not generate hypotheses about cultivation effects for these two stereotypes. Nevertheless, we did examine possible cultivation effects of these two stereotypes, although these analyses are exploratory.

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[3] Although results from cultivation studies do not demonstrate causality, we use the term "effects" to refer to our findings because this is common terminology in statistics and cultivation studies (e.g., Hermann et al., 2021).

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 903 White Americans[4] who lived their entire life in the United States. For our most complex analysis (multivariate analysis of covariance), G*Power estimate indicated that a sample of 863 is sufficient to detect a small-to-medium effect size (f^2 = .15), using an α = .05 and power = .95. We focused on White Americans because they are the most influential racial group in U.S. society and the main beneficiaries of settler colonialism. We further limited our sample to residents of the contiguous 48 states because beliefs about Indigenous Peoples in Alaska and Hawaii may differ due to distinct processes of and experiences with colonization in these two states. Institutional Review Board approval was secured at the first author's institution. We paid the Dynata company to secure participants. Dynata prescreens potential participants in regard to demographic and other criteria. Researchers provide study criteria to Dynata. Then, Dynata recruits and compensates participants who meet the study criteria, delivering anonymous data to researchers. Participants were removed from the sample for failure of attention checks.

Materials

The primary measures in this study are belief in stereotypes of AI Peoples and reported exposure to media and genres. We also used five control variables. Measures were reviewed by several experts on stereotypes of AI Peoples.

Control Variables

Participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, education level, and political ideology. Age ranged from 18 to 80-plus years, with a median of 48 years. In terms of gender, 53.7% identified as women, 44.3% as men, and 2% as another gender. Education ranged from less than high school to doctorate/professional degree, with a median of "some college or associate's degree." The median political ideology was moderate, and scores were distributed across the political spectrum (1 = very conservative 11.1%, 2 = conservative 20.7%, 3 = moderate 35%, 4 = liberal 19.4%, and 5 = very liberal 13.8%; *M* = 3.04, *SD* = 1.18).

We also asked participants how many AI individuals they have had close relationships with, instructing them to define close relationships as people with whom they regularly shared personal information or engaged in activities. The majority of participants (*n* = 509, 56.4%) reported zero close relationships with AI people. The mean number of relationships was 1.37 (*SD* = 2.36), and scores ranged from 0 to 10 or more.

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[4] Participants were allowed to select more than one racial category. We excluded participants who indicated they were anything other than White (i.e., who indicated they were Hispanic, Black, Asian, Native, Middle Eastern, and "other").

Reported Exposure to Media

After reviewing measures used in other cultivation studies (e.g., Behm-Morawitz & Ta, 2014; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz, 2007; Morgan et al., 2012), we created questions to measure exposure to six media and genres. All but one of our questions began with "On an average day, throughout your life, . . ."[5] Then, participants were asked how many hours (in half-hour increments) they read books; focused on social media; watched, read, or listened to news; watched, read, or listened to sports; and watched television programming (on a television, recorded, or streamed). A sixth question asked participants to indicate how many films/movies they watched per month.

Belief in Stereotypes of AI Peoples

Characteristics associated with four stereotypes of AI Peoples (derived from prior scholarship; e.g., Burkley et al., 2016; Erhart & Hall, 2019) were combined into a single list and randomized. Participants were asked to indicate whether they disagree or agree with the statement "Native Americans are [characteristic]" using a 5-point scale that ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Total scores for each stereotype were calculated as the average across all characteristics associated with the stereotype, with higher scores indicating greater endorsement of the stereotype.

Results from the principal components analysis of our original conception of the bloodthirsty warrior stereotype led us to split this measure into two subscales. The "violent Indian" stereotype included the items violent, brutal, and aggressive (eigenvalue = 2.58, 36.9% of variance accounted for, α = .81), while the "warrior Indian" stereotype included the items warrior, fighter, brave, and tough (eigenvalue = 2.08, 29.7% of variance accounted for, α = .76).

The noble Indian stereotype included the items traditional, wise, spiritual, patient, artistic, in touch with nature, environmentalists, polluters (reverse scored), and a people who engage in rituals. Principal components analysis yielded one factor that accounted for 48.9% of the variance among the items (eigenvalue = 3.9, α = .85). Item loadings ranged from .57 to .79.

We used 10 items to assess the degraded Indian stereotype. Principal components analysis yielded two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, but almost every item cross loaded significantly. We reduced the number of items by selecting those we perceived had the most face validity, which led to retaining the items poor, school dropout, addicted to drugs or alcohol, educated (reverse scored), and hardworking (reverse scored). Principal components analysis with these items yielded one factor with an eigenvalue of 2.78 accounting for 55.7% of the variance. Factor loadings ranged from .68 to .81 (α = .80).

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[5] Because cultivation theory aims to measure long-term exposure, we included the phrase "throughout your life" to direct participants to think about their entire life rather than simply about the current time period. Social media are relatively new, so participants were asked to report use of social media over "the past 10 years."

Five items were included to assess the casino Indian stereotype. Principal components analysis yielded two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The first factor demonstrated an eigenvalue of 2.10, accounted for 42.1% of the variance, and included the items greedy, manipulative, and devoted to community (reverse scored). The second factor demonstrated an eigenvalue of 1.01 and accounted for an additional 20.3% of the variance. However, the two items in this second factor (i.e., rich and associated with casinos) loaded in opposite directions and cross loaded with the first factor at .27 and .33. Thus, for our measure of the casino Indian stereotype, we used the three items that loaded on the first factor, with factor loadings that ranged from .66 to .86 (α = .75).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 contains descriptive statistics for reported media exposure and endorsement of stereotypes. The variables assessing reported exposure to media were positively skewed. We split participants into groups of heavy, moderate, and light users. For each media/genre, the cutoff score for "light users" was the score that fell closest to the 25th percentile, moderate users were approximately the middle 50%, and the cutoff score for heavy users was the score that fell closest to the 75th percentile. Table 2 describes these groups for each form of media/genre use.

There was variability in scores assessing the endorsement of stereotypes about AI Peoples. Repeated measures analysis of variance, with the five stereotypes as within-subjects levels, indicated significant differences in levels of endorsement of these stereotypes, $F(4, 3608) = 1801.24$, $p < .001$. Tests of simple effects indicated that scores for the warrior and noble Indian stereotypes were significantly higher than scores for the other three stereotypes.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for All Variables.

Reported Exposure to Media	N	Median	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Films per month	903	3	3.88	3.13	0	10+
High users (> 5)	239					
Mod. users (2–5)	445					
Low users (< 2)	219					
Television	903	3	3.78	2.15	0	8+
High users (> 5)	189					
Mod. users (2.5–5)	351					
Low users (< 2.5)	270					
Books	903	1	1.59	1.71	0	8+
High users (> 2)	323					
Mod. users (1–2)	282					
Low users (<1)	219					
News	903	1	1.38	1.42	0	8+
High users (> 2)	216					
Mod. users (1–2)	380					
Low users (< 1)	307					
Sports	903	0.5	0.89	1.35	0	8+
High users (> 1)	188					
Mod. users (0.5–1)	372					
Low users (0)	343					
Social Media	903	1	1.92	2.17	0	8+
High users (> 2.5)	222					
Mod. users (0.5–2.5)	504					
Low users (0)	177					

Endorsement of Stereotypes				**Possible Range: 1 – 5**		
Violent Indian		2	1.95	0.71	1	4.33
Warrior Indian		3.5	3.53	0.71	1.50	5
Noble Indian		3.88	3.89	0.55	2.38	5
Casino Indian		2	1.93	0.67	1	4.67
Degraded Indian		2.4	2.33	0.67	1	4.40

Note. "Minimum" and "Maximum" represent the lowest and highest observed scores. Unless noted, observed scores covered the full possible range.

Control Variables

The variables of age, gender, education level, political ideology, and number of close relationships with AI persons were significantly associated with at least one of our primary variables (i.e., at least one

type of media/genre use or endorsement of at least one of the five stereotypes). Thus, we included all these variables as covariates in subsequent analyses.

Bivariate Correlations Between Media Use and Stereotype Endorsement

Table 3 shows bivariate correlations among the five measures of stereotype endorsement. The warrior and noble Indian stereotypes were strongly positively correlated, and they were negatively correlated with the other stereotypes. The violent, casino, and degraded Indian stereotypes were strongly positively intercorrelated and negatively related to the warrior and noble Indian stereotypes.

Table 3. Correlates of Stereotype Endorsement.

	Violent Indian	Warrior Indian	Noble Indian	Casino Indian	Degraded Indian
Reported media exposure					
Films	.000	.060	.025	.026	−.031
Television	−.028	.092**	.058	−.045	−.076*
Books	−.015	.114**	.052	−.071*	−.079*
News	−.016	.137**	.024	−.051	−.068*
Sports	−.054	.117**	.052	−.078*	−.113**
Social media	−.069*	.148**	.118**	−.111**	−.172**
Composite media exposure	−.046	.172**	.083*	−.084*	−.138**
Correlations among stereotypes					
Violent Indian	1	−.084*	−.436**	.712**	.522**
Warrior Indian	—	1	.594**	−.303**	−.354**
Noble Indian	—	—	1	−.644**	−.507**
Casino Indian	—	—	—	1	.607**
Degraded Indian	—	—	—	—	1

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 3 also includes partial correlations between stereotype endorsement and reported exposure to each media/genre, controlling for age, gender, education level, political ideology, and close relationships with AI people. In addition, we created a composite media exposure variable, by standardizing and then averaging scores for the six media/genres. With the exception of films, the most consistent findings are that reported media/genre exposure was positively related to endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype and negatively related to endorsement of the degraded Indian stereotype. All significant correlations were small in size. The noble, violent, and casino Indian stereotypes were less consistently related to reported media/genre exposure, although social media exposure was positively associated with the noble stereotype and negatively associated with the violent and casino stereotypes.

Stereotype Endorsement of Heavy Users

A series of multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to assess differences among heavy, moderate, and light media users on endorsement of the five stereotypes. For each of the six MANCOVAs, age, gender, education, political ideology, and close relationships with AI people were entered as covariates. The categorical variable for one form of media use was entered as a fixed factor, and the five stereotypes were included as a set of related dependent variables. In each of the six MANCOVAs, all five demographic control variables were statistically significant at the multivariate level, with differing patterns of univariate significance across the five dependent variables.

Table 4 summarizes the primary results of the MANCOVAs. The multivariate F-statistics for use of films, television, and books were all nonsignificant, with very small effect sizes, as assessed by partial eta squared. However, despite nonsignificant multivariate tests, consistent with the findings from the bivariate analysis, significant univariate F-statistics emerged for the warrior Indian stereotype for both television and book use. For both media, heavy users reported higher endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype (M television = 3.70, SD = .89; M books = 3.68, SD = .74) relative to those who reported moderate (M television = 3.48, SD = .71; M books = 3.45, SD = .69) or light (M television = 3.46, SD = .69; M books = 3.47, SD = .68) use. Cohen's d estimates of effect size for the significant pairwise comparisons ranged from .29 to .34, suggesting that effects were small to moderate.

Table 4. Stereotype Endorsement of Heavy Versus Moderate or Light Media Users.

Media Type	Stereotype	F	P	η^2	Post Hoc Comparisons
Films		1.34	.206	.007	
	Warrior Indian	2.97	.052	.007	Heavy > light (p = .027)*
	Noble Indian	2.28	.103	.005	
	Degraded Indian	0.85	.426	.002	
	Violent Indian	0. 02	.980	.000	
	Casino Indian	0.13	.882	.000	
Television		1.01	.436	.006	
	Warrior Indian	**4.06**	**.018**	**.010**	Heavy > moderate and light
	Noble Indian	1.57	.209	.003	
	Degraded Indian	1.33	.264	.003	
	Violent Indian	0.15	.859	.000	
	Casino Indian	0.56	.572	.001	
Books		1.56	.112	.009	
	Warrior Indian	**5.11**	**.006**	**.011**	Heavy > moderate and light
	Noble Indian	2.88	.056	.006	
	Degraded Indian	2.15	.117	.005	
	Violent Indian	0.29	.751	.001	
	Casino Indian	1.69	.186	.004	

News	**2.17**	**.017**	**.012**	
Warrior Indian	**7.83**	**<.001**	**.017**	Heavy > moderate and light
Noble Indian	0.25	.782	.001	
Degraded Indian	0.68	.509	.002	
Violent Indian	0.15	.863	.000	
Casino Indian	0.57	.564	.001	
Sports	**4.16**	**<.001**	**.023**	
Warrior Indian	**17.27**	**<.001**	**.037**	Heavy > light
Noble Indian	**5.51**	**.004**	**.012**	Heavy > light
Degraded Indian	**4.21**	**.015**	**.009**	Heavy < moderate and light
Violent Indian	0.64	.526	.001	
Casino Indian	2.50	.083	.006	
Social media	**3.29**	**<.001**	**.018**	
Warrior Indian	**6.60**	**.001**	**.015**	Heavy > moderate and light
Noble Indian	**6.01**	**.003**	**.013**	Heavy > moderate and light
Degraded Indian	**12.24**	**<.001**	**.027**	Heavy < moderate and light
Violent Indian	2.11	.122	.005	
Casino Indian	**4.40**	**.013**	**.010**	Heavy < moderate and light

Notes. Significant effects are in bold font. *Univariate *F*-statistic was not significant, but one pairwise comparison was significant with α = .05

Table 4 also presents the statistically significant multivariate results for the categorical variables assessing use of news and sports media, along with significant univariate *F*-statistics for endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype. For both genres, the pattern of significant differences was similar to the pattern for books and television with regard to the warrior Indian stereotype. Heavy users reported higher endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype (*M* news = 3.65, *SD* = .75; *M* sports = 3.63, *SD* = .74) relative to those who reported light use (*M* news = 3.48, *SD* = .71; *M* sports = 3.42, *SD* = .70). Also, moderate news use was significantly different from heavy users (*M* news = 3.50, *SD* = .68). Cohen's *d* estimates of effect size for the significant pairwise comparisons ranged from .22 to .30, suggesting that effects were mostly small in size.

Univariate analyses of the effects of sports media use for endorsement of the noble and degraded Indian stereotypes were also significant. Heavy users of sports media reported higher endorsement of the noble stereotype (*M* = 3.91, *SD* = .55) relative to light users (*M* = 3.86, *SD* = .57). In contrast, heavy sports media users reported lower endorsement of the degraded stereotype (*M* = 2.24, *SD* =.70) relative to moderate (*M* = 2.39, *SD* = .65) and light (*M* = 2.33, *SD* = .66) users. Cohen's *d* estimates ranged from .11 to .22 for the significant pairwise comparisons, indicating small effects of sports media use on noble and degraded stereotype endorsement.

Finally, multivariate analysis of the effect of social media use yielded a significant multivariate *F*-statistic, in addition to significant univariate follow-up tests, for endorsement of all stereotypes except the violent Indian stereotype. Consistent with other media/genres (except films), pairwise comparisons showed

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higher endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype among heavy users (*M* = 3.83, *SD* = .69) relative to moderate (*M* = 3.51, *SD* = .71) and light (*M* = 3.21, *SD* = .57) users. Additionally, we found higher endorsement of the noble Indian stereotype among heavy users (*M* = 4.08, *SD* = .54) relative to moderate (*M* = 3.88, *SD* = .55) and light (*M* = 3.70, *SD* =.47) users. For these two stereotypes, Cohen's *d* estimates ranged from .37 to .96, demonstrating medium to large effect sizes. In contrast, those who identified as heavy social media users endorsed the degraded and casino Indian stereotypes less (*M* degraded = 2.05, *SD* = .64; *M* casino = 1.79, *SD* = .68) than both moderate (*M* degraded = 2.33, *SD* = .63; *M* casino = 1.93, *SD* = .66) and light (*M* degraded = 2.70, *SD* = .61; *M* casino = 2.12, *SD* = .64) users. Cohen's *d* values ranged from .21 to 1.05. Effect sizes for differences between light and heavy users were moderate to large in size, while effect sizes for differences between moderate and heavy users were small to moderate.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess cultivation associations between reported exposure to six media/genres and endorsement of five stereotypes of AI Peoples. Considering only the findings evident in *both* bivariate correlation and MANCOVA analyses, there are two overall sets of findings. First, we predicted that more reported media exposure would be associated with more endorsement of the warrior (H1a), violent (H1b), and noble (H2) Indian stereotypes. In general, our findings support H1a, in that more reported exposure to all the media/genres except films was associated with greater endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype. There was no support for H1b, as media consumption was unrelated to endorsement of the violent Indian stereotype. In general, there was a lack of support for H2, with one exception, which was more reported exposure to social media was associated with more endorsement of the noble Indian stereotype. Second, we explored (without hypotheses) whether media consumption was associated with endorsement of the degraded and casino Indian stereotypes. In most cases, media use was not associated with these stereotypes. There were a few exceptions, such that more reported exposure to social media was associated with less endorsement of the degraded and casino Indian stereotypes; and more exposure to sports media was associated with less endorsement of the degraded Indian stereotype.

Our correlational findings do not enable us to claim that more media/genre exposure causes more endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype (and, in one case, more endorsement of the noble stereotype). Yet, it is extremely unlikely that more endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype causes more general media/genre use, especially because these media/genres include so few representations of AI people; realistically, any alternate causal interpretation would need to posit that some unidentified third variable results in both warrior Indian stereotype endorsement and more media/genre use.

Although content analysis reveals that AI people rarely appear in mass media, our findings suggest that when they do appear, the prevalence of the warrior Indian stereotype may be impactful. This makes sense for television and news, wherein content analysis demonstrates this stereotype is common (Baylor, 1996; Davis-Delano et al., 2021; Fitzgerald, 2010, 2014; Weston, 1996). We are unaware of content analysis of representations of AI people in samples of sports media, books for adults, and social media (in a general sense, although Wikipedia and YouTube content evidence this stereotype; Davis-Delano et al., 2021; Kopacz & Lawton, 2011). It is logical that more exposure to sports media would be associated with greater endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype because more exposure to sports media likely

increases contact with AI (warrior) mascots. Since television, news, social media, and sports media often include advertisements, exposure to the warrior stereotype via advertising of consumer products (Green, 1993; Merskin, 2014; Molholt, 2012) might be impactful. Given the prevalence of the warrior stereotype in depictions of AI Peoples in films (e.g., Davis-Delano et al., 2021), we wonder why more exposure to films was not associated with greater endorsement of this stereotype. Perhaps this is due to the extremely small number of mainstream films that include AI characters (Fryberg, 2003). Or, perhaps films—in comparison with other media and genres—are less ubiquitous, and perceived as less realistic or informative, and for these reasons are less impactful in terms of cultivation effects.

We suspect our findings on the warrior Indian stereotype can be explained, to some degree, by several phenomena. First, research reveals some non-AI people perceive AI Peoples as a people of the past (e.g., Clark, Spanierman, Reed, Soble, & Cabana, 2011; Senter & Ling, 2017), and this perception is aligned with content analyses of media (e.g., Chaudhri & Schau, 2016; Davis-Delano et al., 2021; Leavitt et al., 2015). This alignment suggests that some non-AI media producers may perceive AI Peoples as primarily a people of the past and thus depict them in this manner, including as past warriors; this perception may also block media producers' consideration of—and thus depictions of—contemporary AI Peoples, including as degraded and casino Indians. It is possible that this tendency to associate AI Peoples with the past is related to the more general phenomenon of Western societies perceiving themselves as contemporary and civilized while perceiving other societies as reflections of a primitive and savage past, a phenomenon used to legitimate colonization (Fabian, 2002). While the belief that AI Peoples are of the past is associated with less support for AI Peoples (Davis-Delano, Galliher, & Gone, forthcoming; Lopez, Eason, & Fryberg, 2022), accurate depictions of contemporary AI Peoples may generate more support.

Being socialized to think from a settler colonial perspective likely affects the *way* some non-AI media producers depict past AI Peoples. It is possible that the centrality of settler colonial violence to the formation of U.S. society (e.g., Dunbar-Ortiz, 2018) fueled ardent admiration of warriors. Also, the warrior stereotype may be especially prevalent because AI warriors were perceived as the most significant barrier to settler colonialism. Thus, we suspect that some non-AI media producers perceive AI Peoples as primarily warriors from the past and are not cognizant of past AI activities other than fighting that could be depicted in media.

The general societal shift away from belief in negative stereotypes, while belief in positive stereotypes remains (e.g., Bergsieker et al., 2012), may help to explain why the warrior stereotype is more acceptable than the more overtly negative violent stereotype (see Table 2). Some media producers may hesitate to depict overtly negative stereotypes but feel comfortable depicting ostensibly positive stereotypes, which they may not perceive as stereotypes and may believe convey positive messages about AI Peoples. Thus, these media producers may include depictions of the ostensibly positive warrior stereotype while excluding the violent, degraded, and casino stereotypes.

Non-AI distinction between the violent and warrior Indian stereotypes may be foundationless, because, according to common U.S. definitions, warriors and fighters (which are elements of the warrior Indian stereotype) engage in violence. Furthermore, we suspect that perceiving and portraying AI Peoples

as superb warriors renders military victory over them more impressive, suggesting that White settler soldiers are superior to AI warriors. Thus, the belief that the warrior Indian stereotype is positive may actually be a celebration of the establishment of U.S. settler colonial society.

Despite content analysis revealing depictions of AI people in films, television, and news often include the noble Indian stereotype (e.g., Davis-Delano et al., 2021; Fryberg, 2003), endorsement of this stereotype was only consistently associated with social media exposure. Perhaps the noble stereotype is simply less prominent in U.S. mass media than the warrior stereotype. Or, perhaps there is more variation in the characteristics included in depictions of the noble stereotype (e.g., sometimes including depictions of wisdom and other times artistry; and sometimes associated with past AIs, while other times with contemporary AIs); however, the warrior Indian stereotype may almost always include depictions of past warriors. We are unaware of broad-ranging content analysis of AI depictions in social media, although the noble Indian stereotype is evident in depictions of AI people on YouTube (Kopacz & Lawton, 2011) and may appear in social media via advertisements for consumer products (Green, 1993). The noble stereotype may be more common in social media due to the larger number, and more diverse backgrounds, of social media content creators.

Given the dearth of representations of AIs in mass media, as well as less frequent depictions of the degraded and casino stereotypes (compared with the warrior and noble stereotypes), it is not surprising we found that more media exposure does not generate positive cultivation effects for these stereotypes. We were surprised to find that *less* exposure to social media and sports media was associated with more endorsement of the degraded Indian stereotype, and *less* exposure to social media was associated with more endorsement of the casino Indian stereotype. It is certainly possible that extraneous variables generate these associations, although there are some media-specific possibilities. Compared to other media producers, perhaps social media creators are less apt to include depictions of overtly negative stereotypes due to more actual or anticipated criticism from users (related to the greater interactivity of social media). Or, perhaps, those who generate social media content (who could be younger and more liberal than other media producers) include more actual or ostensibly positive representations of AI people, and this positive emphasis may diminish support for overtly negative stereotypes. Supporting this possibility, the highest correlations between more reported media exposure and endorsement of the ostensibly positive warrior and noble stereotypes were for social media. The wide diversity of content in social media may enable a greater presence of ostensibly positive stereotypes. Last, sports media users may be less apt to endorse the (more contemporary) degraded Indian stereotype because they may be more apt to associate AI Peoples with the past due to more contact with warrior Indian mascots. Furthermore, heavy sports media users, who are more apt to support AI mascots (Davis-Delano et al., 2022), are likely aware of assertions that AI mascots exhibit bias against AI people, and thus may be motivated to reject the degraded stereotype (which they may perceive as more biased than the warrior stereotype) in an effort to demonstrate lack of bias.

It is important to consider possible explanations for our finding that there was no consistent association between most measures of reported media/genre exposure and endorsement of most AI stereotypes. This was especially true for films; and for the violent, casino, and noble Indian stereotypes across most media/genres. We can think of two reasons for these findings. First, it is possible that media producers have become more aware of these stereotypes and decreased their use, which would certainly

be a positive development. Yet, because content analysis reveals the presence of these stereotypes, especially the noble Indian stereotype, we suspect that this finding can be partially explained by the rarity of *any* representations of AI Peoples (with the exception of mascots and perhaps consumer products). If this second explanation is accurate, this might mean that groups that are virtually invisible in mass media would need to be portrayed in an *extremely* consistent manner to generate cultivation effects. In other words, even when content analysis reveals that a group is portrayed in a consistent manner when they are included, such as in the case of the noble Indian stereotype, perhaps there must be enough depiction of the group for cultivation effects to emerge. The exception may be when the portrayal is *extremely* consistent, which our findings suggest might be the case for the warrior Indian stereotype in five media/genres.

While the negative association between exposure to social media and endorsement of overtly negative stereotypes is encouraging, the positive association between exposure to five media/genres and endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype concerns us. Although covering the history of colonialism is essential, media producers should jettison the settler colonial perspective so narrowly focused on AI warriors. Media should include accurate, and much more varied, information about and portrayals of AI Peoples, generated by AI media producers and including AI perspectives, focused on both past and present-day AI Peoples.

Our study contributes to cultivation theory and accumulated research findings, and we provide a potentially useful model for using settler colonial theory and the concept of ostensibly positive stereotypes in quantitative media research. We urge content analysis to determine the frequency and nature of representations that legitimate and challenge settler colonialism, as well as research to examine the effects of this content on measures associated with legitimation of settler colonialism (e.g., ignorance of AI Nation sovereignty). There are many ways to explore ostensibly positive stereotypes in media research, such as interviewing media producers to determine their attitudes and practices related to these stereotypes, comparing audience reactions to depictions of overtly negative versus ostensibly positive stereotypes, and exploring whether cultivation is more common when exposed to ostensibly positive versus overtly negative depictions of oppressed groups. Related to cultivation theory and method, our findings, when considered in light of others' findings (e.g., Gross, 1984; Mastro et al., 2007), suggest that when a group is *very* rarely included, messages in media texts may require an extremely high degree of consistency for cultivation (e.g., the warrior Indian stereotype), whereas when a group is more often included—even if underrepresented—cultivation may not require such an extreme degree of consistency in messaging. We encourage scholars to determine the extent to which a group must be present in media for cultivation, and how degree of consistency in messaging about highly underrepresented groups affects cultivation. Last, our findings reveal the need for more cultivation research focused on social media.

Like any study, ours includes both strengths and limitations. One limitation is that our sample is not representative of White Americans, and (intentionally) does not include Persons of Color. Yet, our sample is relatively large and diverse in age, gender, education level, and political beliefs. Second, our questions about media exposure required participants to estimate over a long time period during which their exposure likely varied. Such estimates are limited by memory and the capacity to determine averages. Our study is also limited by the common desire to appear "unprejudiced" (e.g., Plant & Devine, 1998), and this likely reduced honest answers to questions about overtly negative stereotypes. Yet another limitation is that we

did not measure the degree to which the media our participants consumed were produced in the United States, and thus in future research we recommend measures that enable this determination. Last, most cultivation studies reveal relatively small correlations, and our findings are no different. Given the multitude and complexity of social forces that impact perceptions, we and others believe these correlations are meaningful (Hermann et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2012, 2015).

Conclusion

Content analysis reveals that media representations of AI people are rare, yet they are consistent in depictions of the warrior and noble Indian stereotypes. In this study, reported exposure to most media/genres was not associated with endorsement of most stereotypes of AI Peoples. Yet, more exposure to television, books, news, social media, and sports media was associated with more endorsement of the warrior Indian stereotype, a stereotype that is associated with the past and legitimizes settler colonialism. These findings suggest that when media depictions of a group are rare, messages may need to be especially consistent for cultivation. Furthermore, there may be a shift away from depictions of overtly negative stereotypes while ostensibly positive stereotypes remain. We urge media producers to increase representations of contemporary AI Peoples and challenge settler colonialism in their depictions of AI Peoples from the past.

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