The Prevalence of Aversive Racism in the Reality TV Show Survivor

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/stander_posters

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/stander_posters/1621

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Stander Symposium at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Stander Symposium Posters by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlangen1@udayton.edu.
Surviving Discrimination: Examining the Prevalence of Aversive Racism and Sexism in the T.V. Series *Survivor*

Michael Stark & Jessica Eischen
Advisor: Erin M. O’Mara Kunz, Ph.D.

### Aversive Racism & Sexism
- Discrimination toward minority group members (race and sex) occurring in subtle, rationalizable ways (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).
  - e.g., in situations that lack norms to guide non-biased behavior and when biased behavior can be attributed to non-racial or sex factors.
- Aversive racists and sexists genuinely believe in equality, and deny race or sex playing a role in their biased or discriminatory behavior.

### Survivor
- Reality television show where 16-20 people compete for $1 million dollars while marooned on an island for 1-39 days, competing in challenges as tribes and after merging tribes, as individuals.
- Winning tribe(s) or individuals are safe from elimination, while losing tribes vote a member of their tribe, or another individual out of the game.
- A jury composed of eliminated contestants then votes on who, among the final 2 or 3 contestants, will win $1 million.

### Present Research
- Examine whether, compared to white male contestants, female & non-white contestants were:
  - more likely to be voted out earlier in the game
  - less likely to make it to the merge
  - less likely to be among the finalists
  - less likely to win $1 million
- We conducted Chi-Square tests and compared the observed frequencies across 37 seasons to the expected frequencies given the proportion of each group in the sample.

### Results
#### Voted out First
- Women are first voted out of the game at a higher than expected rate value, $\chi^2(1) = 4.20, p = .04$.

#### Voted out Early in the Game
- Women and non-white contestants are more likely to be among the first four contestants voted out, $\chi^2(1) = 6.88, p = .01$, $\chi^2(1) = 6.86, p = .01$, respectively.

### Discussion
- The present research found evidence consistent with aversive racism and sexism in the pattern of voting on the television series, *Survivor*.
- Survivor contestants can utilize a number of strategies to try to win the game, particularly when competing as a tribe, providing non-racial and non-sex related reasons for how fellow-castaways are voted out.
- Pre-merge, when contestants have to work as a team to remain in the game, non-white and female contestants are more likely to be voted out.
- Bias disappears when contestants are able to protect themselves from being voted out with individual immunity after the merge.