This study aims to assess whether, and under what conditions, restaurant patrons evaluate Black servers differently (e.g., more punitively) than comparable White servers. To explore this research question, I collected survey data from 1,181 Amazon M-Turk workers who reside in the United States. These participants were asked to read a hypothetical dining vignette wherein servers’ race (Black/White), gender (male/female), and service quality (poor/average/excellent) were randomly manipulated. Following the vignette, participants were asked a series of questions designed to solicit information about their perceptions of and likely reactions to the service encounter portrayed in the vignette. These questions were used to construct four independent measures of consumer appraisals of the hypothetical dining experience—likelihood of being satisfied, leaving a tip, lodging a complaint, and expressing incivility. While consumers’ appraisals of the hypothetical service encounter were found to be sensitive to the service quality manipulation in a predictable fashion (e.g., service quality was predictive of greater satisfaction, bigger tip, etc.) I find little evidence to suggest that consumers evaluate Black servers more punitively than comparable White servers. In addition to discussing my results, the applied and theoretical implications of this project’s findings will be delineated in this presentation.

Gerald Roman Nowak III is a graduate teaching assistant who studies sociology at Wayne State University. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Wayne State in 2017. His research focuses on racial inequalities within consumer markets. Gerald expects to defend his master’s thesis this spring. After graduating, he plans to pursue his Ph.D. in Sociology with the eventual aim of securing a tenure-track position in higher education. Gerald has also contributed to articles that were published in Cornell Hospitality Quarterly and The American Sociologist.

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