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ABSTRACT

A review of 67 studies examined minorities' media selection/usage, the psychological variables that account for minority exposure to the media, minorities' information sources, and the effects media have on minority audiences. Among the major conclusions are the following: blacks spend less time reading newspapers but more time viewing television (except during prime time) and listening to radio than do whites. High socioeconomic status (SES) blacks read more newspapers and magazines and view more prime time television than do low SES blacks. Although minorities view more television than whites, they are more highly critical of television than are whites, with blacks especially critical. Minorities are still underrepresented in magazine presentations and television programs. Race related items are given little attention in newspapers, and newspapers seldom present minority views on race related issues. Minority participation on newspaper staffs is low, probably because more numerous employment opportunities exist in the broadcast media. The percentage of minority students enrolled in journalism schools is low, but the percentage of minority faculty members is lower. Except for a few studies on Mexican-Americans, other minority groups besides blacks have been ignored in the literature, providing a decidedly unbalanced picture of minorities and the media. (RL)

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MINORITIES AND THE MASS MEDIA:  
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE, 1948-1978

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## MINORITIES AND THE MASS MEDIA

Race and ethnic status have long been used as analytical variables in sociological research. In mass communication research, however, it is only in the last decade that we see a sustained utilization of race and ethnic status as explanatory variables in the communication process. As a result, we are left with a void in our knowledge of the relationships between minorities and the mass media.

Several reasons can be advanced for justifying the importance of studying ethnic minorities and the media. In most of the available mass communication studies, minorities are not included in the samples. Yet, it is important from a theoretical view to compare the different minority groups with the majority group. Secondly, since minorities form a sizeable segment of the media's audience, it is important from a practical standpoint for those in the media holding policy-making positions to be familiar with this segment of the audience preferences. Thirdly, it is necessary from a societal stance to have up-to-date information on the adequacy of the media as an agent of social change as it seeks to combat racial and ethnic prejudices.

Recognizing the significance of the relationships that exist between minorities and the media, the authors collected and recorded the results of empirical studies that have been conducted on minorities and the media over a 30 year period, 1948 to 1978. The literature on this subject is presented under four main sections: audience analysis, effects, sources of information and communicator/organization characteristics. From the typology used in this paper, it is possible to determine what we know and what we need to know about minorities and the media.

Sixty-seven studies are reviewed in this paper. The majority of these studies were located through a systematic search of the indices of the four major research journals in mass communication: Journal of Broadcasting, Journal of Communication, Journalism Quarterly and Public Opinion Quarterly. In addition, the Social Science Index was searched and issues of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) News Research Reports were scanned.

In general, research studies appearing in similar reviews which were limited in scope, e.g., Comstock and Cobbey (1978), Greenberg and Atkin (1978), and Kassirjian (1973), which dealt specifically with advertising, were not included here. Similarly, research dealing with minorities only incidentally and not specifically was excluded. In addition, since this is the first phase of a massive compilation effort, dissertations, books, and conference papers were also excluded. In the final compilation, however, we hope to bring together all of the journal articles, dissertations, books, chapters in books, and conference papers that have been written pertaining to minorities and the media.

#### Audience Analysis

An intensive analysis of studies on the minority audience revealed that the following four questions provide a framework for explaining what we know about the minority audience:

1. Compared to whites, which media do minorities use and what kinds of content do minorities pay attention to?
2. Which psychological variables (gratifications, self-esteem, attitudes) account for minority exposure to the media?
3. Which sources do minorities turn to for information?
4. What effect do the media have on members of the minority audience?

## Media Use

The predominant question asked in the literature about the audience has been: Compared to whites, which media do blacks use? The predominant answer has been blacks are different from whites in their selection of the media. The fact that blacks differ from whites in their media use is a common finding in Bogart (1972); Sharon (1973); Bush (1971) and Stroman and Becker (1978).

Bogart's (1972) study is the most general picture in the literature on the black community's exposure to newspapers, television and radio. Sharon (1973) and Bush (1971) confine their studies to readership of the newspaper only and Stroman and Becker (1978) concentrate their analysis on blacks' reliance on the media for political content.

Bogart's analysis of a national sample of more than 15,000 adults compares black and white exposure to print and broadcast media. Bogart's finding that fewer blacks than whites read newspapers is also found in Sharon (1973) and Stroman and Becker (1978). While there are no sex differences between whites in newspaper readership, there are sex differences between blacks; that is, black women read newspapers more frequently than their male counterparts.

The age difference among blacks parallels that of whites with older blacks reading newspapers more frequently than younger blacks. Blacks who are very old, though, are the least likely age group to pay attention to newspapers.

There are also differences in attention to television. Blacks are more frequent viewers than whites of non-prime time television. During prime-time, blacks and whites view television with approximately the same frequency. Among blacks, young people are the heaviest viewers of television and during prime-time, upper income blacks are heavier viewers than lower income blacks. This difference in income level and amount of television viewing is due to the heavy viewing among upper income black women.

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Bogart found little difference between black and white use of radio. Black men were slightly more likely to listen to radio than white men and black women were slightly more likely to listen to radio than white women.

Sharon (1973) controlled on income in his comparison of black and white newspaper readership in a national sample of adults. When the control variable was utilized, black-white differences still surfaced; Sharon found that low income blacks were still less likely to read newspapers than low income whites.

Sharon (1973), Bush (1971) and Stroman and Becker (1978) also looked at what kinds of stories attracted blacks. Sharon found that blacks read fewer editorials, women and society pages and regular ads than whites, but blacks read more sports stories than whites. Bush (1971) also found that blacks were less likely than whites to read opinion content, financial news and comics. In addition, Bush found that few blacks read stories which had been jumped to an inside page. While the Bush study found that black men were not as thorough readers as were white men, it didn't find any differences between black women and white women in their thoroughness of reading the newspaper.

In a secondary analysis of 1974 election data from the Institute for Social Research, Stroman and Becker (1978) found that blacks were less likely than whites to rely on newspapers for political news but were more likely than whites to rely on television for this type of content. In addition, blacks were found to read fewer feature and public affairs stories than whites but to read more crime and accident stories than whites.

Differences were also found in the Stroman and Becker (1978) study in the time of day blacks and whites watched television news. Blacks were more likely than whites to watch morning and late evening news and less likely to watch the early evening news.

While the above-mentioned studies compared blacks with whites, Jackson (1978) compared blacks with other blacks in their use of the media. Jackson

(1978) attempted to determine if differences in socio-economic levels among blacks were related to their media use. In a comparison of lower SES blacks with middle and upper SES blacks in Washington, D.C., Jackson found that highly educated and upper income blacks read newspapers and magazines more frequently than poorly educated, low income blacks. In addition to socio-economic level differences, Jackson found age differences in attention to print media. Newspaper reading peaked in the 30-year old category; that is, blacks in their 30's were the most regular newspaper readers while blacks who were over 50 were the least regular readers. This age difference was also among Bogart's (1972) findings.

While most of the literature has tried to examine media use among all socio-economic levels, a few of the studies have limited their investigations to the urban poor. Greenberg and Dervin (1970) analyzed the media use of low income blacks and whites. The authors found that while neither low income blacks nor whites read the newspaper with great frequency, low income whites read the newspaper more frequently than low income blacks. There were no significant differences between poor blacks and poor whites viewing of television:

Allen (1968) interviewed black Pittsburgh ghetto residents and found that they read only one section of the newspaper. The most popular sections of the newspaper were sales and display ads and styles and fashion. Consistent with the Bogart (1972) study, Allen found that black women read newspapers more frequently than black men.

Over half of the ghetto respondents in Allen (1968) regularly viewed early afternoon soap operas and all were regular viewers of the local news. On the average, respondents listened to radio five and a half hours daily and women reported reading more magazines than men. Most of the magazine readers reported that they subscribed to Ebony.

Ebony was also read by Black Indianapolis residents in Shosteck's (1969) study. In fact, half of respondents reported reading Ebony or another black publication. Shosteck found that black press readership was slightly higher among upper SES blacks than it was among "highly militant" blacks.

While the previous studies have examined the frequency with which blacks read newspapers, view television and listen to radio, other studies have assessed minority preferences in television entertainment.

Carey (1966) was the first researcher to compare differences in television program preferences of black and white families. When the preferred programs of blacks and whites were ranked, Carey found a rank order correlation of .50 and thus concluded that there were differences and similarities between blacks and whites.

Carey discovered that blacks preferred weekend programs while whites liked mid-week viewing. Blacks preferred programs which were individually oriented while whites preferred programs which were family oriented. Blacks also preferred programs with individual conflict as a theme and what Carey said critics called "better television". Blacks preferred physically aggressive, visual comedy as opposed to strictly oral humor. In addition, Carey found that blacks avoided country and western and romantic music.

Fletcher (1969) did a similar study on the program preferences of young black and white children in grades six through twelve in Athens, Georgia public schools. The non-significant correlation between what programs black children preferred and what white children liked led Fletcher to conclude that black and white children in Athens, Georgia did not have the same tastes in television programs.

Surlin and Dominick (1970-71), in an attempt to synthesize the Carey and Fletcher findings looked at television preferences of Philadelphia high school

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students and found both support for and differences from the earlier studies. Young blacks were more likely to prefer family shows but not variety; blacks and whites equally preferred individualistic and team shows.

Greenberg and Dominick (1969) and Greenberg (1972) also looked at the program preferences of young people. Greenberg and Dominick (1969) examined low income urban teenagers and found they were less likely than whites to prefer comedy and variety shows.

When Greenberg (1972) compared Michigan fourth and fifth graders' preferences for entertainment programs, he found that black children were more likely than white children to say their favorite program was black.

In addition to differences in preferences in television programs, Greenberg and Dominick (1969) and Greenberg (1972) found black youth were also heavier viewers of television than were white youth.

Dunn (1975) examined program preferences of San Antonio Mexican-Americans according to whether they liked traditional or non-traditional content. The traditional group which clung to older more Mexican patterns preferred Spanish-language radio and television while the non-traditional group preferred English-language radio and TV programs.

Hur and Robinson (1978) investigated blacks' preference for and exposure to the highest rated program in television history--Roots. In this study which was conducted in Cleveland, the authors found that more blacks than whites watched Roots and among Roots viewers, blacks watched more episodes on the average than whites. In an investigation of attitudes and interpersonal communication surrounding Roots, the authors found that black viewers thought the series was more historically accurate and blacks talked with more people about Roots than whites.

While many of the studies have looked at the entertainment program preferences of minority audiences, few studies have linked minority audiences with public affairs and political information.

Tan and Vaughn (1976) examined the relationship between media use and public affairs knowledge. They found that there was a significant positive relationship between total media use and public affairs knowledge. However, the relationship between use of black media and public affairs knowledge was weaker than that between total media use and public affairs knowledge. The best predictor of public affairs knowledge was newspaper reading.

Rather than examine the relationship between media use and public affairs knowledge, McCombs (1968) examined the use of the media specifically for political information. McCombs' study, which is the only longitudinal study in this literature, was a secondary analysis of four Survey Research Center national probability samples from 1952 through 1964.

McCombs found that in 1952, the majority of blacks were low media users for political information but by 1964 this majority had dwindled to a minority. Of the over 20 percent of blacks who could no longer be considered low media users in 1964, one-fifth had become high television users and about one-tenth had become high newspaper users. In essence, McCombs had traced the black community's change from low media use to high media use of political content over a period of 12 years.

#### Psychological Variables

Most of the literature on the audience has tried to account for the relationship between minorities and the media by examining demographic variables such as race, education, income and age. Psychological variables which may have provided insight into the relationship between minorities and the media have barely been examined over the past 30 years. During this time span, only

one study has looked at the gratifications which minorities seek from the media, and only one study has looked at the relationship between self-esteem and media use. Several studies have tried to measure attitudes of minorities groups toward the media and its content. A miscellany of studies have examined perceptions of the audience about radio.

Stroman and Becker (1978) investigated the gratifications blacks seek from the media they use. These authors, who were specifically interested in the gratifications sought from political content, found that black readers were less likely than white readers to report using political content of the newspaper to learn candidates' stands on the issues and to make a voting decision. Blacks, though, were more likely than whites to use political content of newspapers to be reminded of their candidates' strengths. Highly educated blacks were more likely to use television to be reminded of their candidates' strengths while low SES blacks were more likely to use television for interpersonal communication.

Tan (1978) in an investigation of attitudes and self-esteem, tried to determine how some blacks and Mexican-Americans evaluated television and newspaper portrayals of their ethnic groups.

In personal interviews conducted in Lubbock, Texas, Tan found that both blacks and Mexican-Americans negatively evaluated television and newspapers, but blacks were more critical than Mexican-Americans.

Tan also examined the influence of age, education and self-esteem on attitudes toward the media. When total television viewing was held constant, age was positively related to both groups' evaluation of television and newspapers. When age and newspaper use were held constant, education was negatively related to evaluations of television and newspapers for blacks only.

Blacks with high self-esteem were more likely to be critical of newspapers and television than blacks with low self-esteem. Mexican-Americans with high self-esteem were more likely to be critical of television but not newspapers.

Two studies (Bush, 1969) published by the American Newspaper Publishers Association attempted to ascertain how blacks feel about the majority newspaper in their city. One study queried black residents in Los Angeles; the other study compared blacks and whites in Indianapolis.

In Los Angeles, the majority of black respondents evaluated the Los Angeles metropolitan newspapers' treatment of blacks negatively. In Indianapolis, the majority of blacks and whites thought the metropolitan newspaper was fair but more blacks than whites negatively evaluated the newspapers' treatment of different races.

Rather than assess black attitudes toward the mass media in general, Brigham and Giesbrecht (1976) tried to determine the relationship of racial attitudes of blacks and whites to the viewing of a specific television situation comedy--All in the Family. The researchers found that neither enjoyment nor frequency of watching All in the Family were strongly related to black or white racial attitudes.

Most of the studies throughout this section have focused on the audience's relationship to newspapers and television. Except for Surlin (1977) little is known about the relationship of the minority audience to radio. Surlin investigated the attitudes of the public, particularly poorly educated, alienated Blacks about the need for minority ownership of minority programming radio stations. In the study which was conducted in Athens, Georgia, Surlin found that poorly educated, high fatalistic blacks were much more likely than their white counterparts to perceive a need for minority ownership. Highly educated,

low fatalistic blacks were on the other hand, least likely to perceive a need for minority ownership.

Surlin (1977) also tried to identify the community members who were most involved in radio programming on the basis of their radio listening knowledge of rules and regulations and voluntary contact with a radio station. Also conducted among Athens, Georgia residents, this study found that race is not a predictor of radio involvement but education is. Surlin also found that involved individuals were not more exposed, information-oriented or knowledgeable of radio regulations than others.

#### Sources of Information

While only a small amount of attention has been devoted to exploring psychological variables which may account for the relationship between minorities and the media, the same cannot be said about the attention devoted to exploring the relationship between minorities and their sources of information. Eight studies have investigated whether blacks turn to newspapers, television, radio or friends for information. Jackson (1978) asked middle and low income blacks in Washington, D.C. which sources they relied on most for information on shopping, community activities, entertainment, current events and sports. He found that for food shopping and clothes information only did blacks turn to newspapers and magazines more than other information sources. For current events and city government information, the newspaper was only a slightly used source of information. For school news, sports and entertainment, blacks turned to television, radio and friends more than newspapers or magazines.

Bush (1969) asked black residents in Los Angeles which media they used for information. While Jackson (1978) found that blacks were less likely to use daily newspapers as a source of information, Bush (1969) found the reverse. Black respondents reported that newspapers were a more important source than

television, black newspapers or shoppers for information on clothes, household shopping, school news, civic affairs, entertainment, national and international news and sports. Only for food was the shopper the most important source.

Block (1970) and Bush (1971) asked both blacks and whites about sources relied on for information. Block (1970) specifically asked about the source used for choosing a product while Bush inquired about sources used for news. Block found that blacks were less likely than whites to rate the newspaper as a useful source but were more likely than whites to rate television as the most useful source of information. In addition, Block found that blacks were more likely than whites to rate advice from friends as a source for choosing a product.

Bush (1971) also found in a study among Milwaukee residents that blacks rated interpersonal communication as a source of information more frequently than whites. This same trend was also found in Shostek's (1969) study of blacks in Indianapolis. When asked where they got most of their news, blacks were more likely than whites to name other people, radio, television and magazines. Blacks were less likely than whites to name newspapers as a source of news.

Shostek (1969) also asked blacks in Indianapolis about their source for news of the black community. Most of the respondents said they used television. Other frequently named sources were newspapers and other people.

Blacks with a high socio-economic status were more likely to rely on television and newspapers while blacks with a low socio-economic status were more likely to get black community news from other people.

In addition to studies examining which sources blacks use for news and shopping information, several studies in the literature tried to ascertain

which sources, in the late 60's, blacks used for specific information about the urban unrest.

Slater and McCombs (1969) and Levy (1971) studied news sources about the riots among the adult population in Detroit while Singer (1970) limited his respondents to those who had been arrested.

In a secondary analysis of data which had been collected following the 1967 Detroit riots, Slater and McCombs (1969) found that friends or family (rather than mass media) were the predominant source of news about the riots. This same finding was present in Singer's (1970) study. In addition, Levy (1971) found that interpersonal channels were more likely to be a source of information for blacks than whites.

Riot participants reported that they learned about the unrest because they witnessed it, were told by someone else, or heard it on radio or television (Singer, 1970). Through an analysis of variance, Slater and McCombs (1969) found that age, not source of news about riots had the greatest impact on participation in the riots.

#### Effects.

One of the most neglected areas in the communications and sociological literature is the effects of the media on minority audience members. While effects have been studied extensively by psychologists, the area has been virtually ignored by communication scientists and sociologists. In fact only three studies, Donohue (1975), Leckenby and Surlin (1976) and Gerson (1966) have tried to assess the effects of the media on minorities.

Donohue (1975) tried to isolate the extent to which television's behavioral models influenced black children's perceptions of appropriate behaviors in specific situations. Elementary school children in New Orleans were informed

about a situation in which some action seemed desirable; the children were then asked what they would do in the situation, what their favorite television character would do and what their parents and best friends would do. The overall findings of this study indicated that television produced mostly innocuous behavioral models, i.e., the perceived responses of the television characters in the situation were as good a predictor of the children's own responses as the other sources of influence. In other words, television's influence was not significantly greater than the influence of the children's parents or friends.

Rather than investigate children, Leckenby and Surlin (1976) studied black and white adults from Atlanta and Chicago to determine what adults learned from "All in the Family" and "Sanford and Son". The authors found that the more the adults watched the programs, the more they tended to find the programs entertaining and the more they accepted the idea that the programs really showed how most blacks and whites behave in daily life. In addition, the more frequently the respondents watched, the more likely they were to accept the view of the major characters in the program. In other words, the authors found incidences of social learning taking place.

Gerson (1966) also found incidences of social learning taking place. In a study of black and white adolescent media use, he found that black adolescents were more likely than whites to use the media to learn how to behave with members of the opposite sex. In essence, black teenagers were more likely to use the media for socialization purposes.

#### Communicator/Organization Characteristics

Four questions serve as guidelines for the analysis of the studies in this section:

1. What types of coverage, both qualitative and quantitative, have the mass media given to minorities?
2. What kinds of changes have taken place in media portrayal of minorities from 1948 to 1978?
3. How have the media covered race-related issues?
4. What are the trends in the employment status of minorities in the media?

### Portrayal

In the Kerner Commission report the media were severely criticized for failing to portray an accurate image of black Americans. In reference to this criticism, studies pertaining to minority portrayal were extensively analyzed.<sup>1</sup>

Past research appears to support critics' charges that minorities are underrepresented in media presentations. In one of the first studies of its kind, Shuey, King and Griffith (1953) content analyzed issues of Saturday Evening Post, Life, Time, New Yorker, Ladies Home Journal and Collier to determine if blacks and whites were portrayed differently. Their comparison of blacks with whites revealed that blacks were pictured very infrequently in the magazines and when they were it was almost always in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. Berelson and Salter's (1946) analysis of short stories published in popular magazines resulted in highly similar findings; they found that the infrequent portrayals of minorities were always in minor roles in which they were depicted as belonging to low-status occupational groups.

Judging from the research, the unfavorable treatment of minorities in magazines began to decrease in the 1960's. Lambert (1965) examined the frequency and kind of black exposure occurring in Look magazine for two one-year periods, 1959-60 and 1963-64; he found more favorable treatment of blacks during the later time period. Cox's (1969-70) replication of the study done by Shuey, et.al. supports this trend towards more favorable treatment of blacks. He reported

that the stereotypical portrayal of blacks as maids, cooks, chauffeurs, etc. decreased from roughly 75% in 1949-50 to 8% in 1967-68.

Colfax and Sternberg (1972) questioned the decrease noted above and pointed out several factors which tended to inflate the significance of this decrease. Their data indicated that in spite of the trend toward increased visibility of blacks in magazines, blacks are generally cast in roles which distort black realities and confirm racial stereotypes.

The trend towards increased minority portrayal in magazines was documented in Stempel (1971) and Greenberg and Kahn (1970). In his analysis of issues of Life, Look, Newsweek, Time and U.S. News and World Report, Stempel found that the number of black portrayals in these magazines had increased from 1960 to 1970. Greenberg and Kahn (1970) reported that up until 1967, Playboy virtually ignored blacks in the cartoons, but in succeeding years attention has been focused on blacks. By 1969, 4% of all cartoons in Playboy carried at least one black.

How have minorities been portrayed in other media? O'Kelly and Bloomquist (1976) examined segments of the three major networks over a 28 day period in 1973. They found a paucity of minority characters; out of 2309 characters coded, Blacks, Orientals and American Indians comprised only 4.9%. This finding supports Seggar and Wheeler's (1973) results that the number of TV portrayals per minority group was generally not aligned with its proportion in the national population. In addition, these authors found that minorities were more likely to be concentrated in personal service occupations and to suffer from stereotyped images. This tendency to portray blacks in low-status occupations was also evidenced in Northcutt, Seggar and Hinton (1975).

Lemon (1977) investigated the question of inter-race dominance patterns, i.e., she attempted to determine if, in interactions between a black person

and a white person, one person could be classified as the dominator, the dominated, or an equal. Examining a sample of crime dramas and situation comedies, she found that situation comedies offered more favorable portrayals of blacks than did crime dramas.

Hinton, Seggar, Northcutt and Fontes (1974) alluded to what may be a trend: the portrayal of blacks as industrious, competent and law-abiding, but usually in minor and insignificant roles. In a similar vein, Roberts (1975) was concerned with the type of television program blacks were portrayed in. He examined black portrayal in a reality-type television program, the newscasts, and found that while blacks appeared in approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the news segments, the majority of the time they were seen but not heard. This led him to conclude that in the context of world and national affairs the viewpoint of blacks is seldom expressed.

Several studies have recorded an increase in the visibility of blacks on television. Roberts (1970-71) found that blacks appeared in approximately 50% of the television programs and 10% of the television commercials analyzed, and that blacks were more often portrayed in "glamorous" settings in occupations related to the law and entertainment business. Seggar (1977) also found an increase in the number of blacks; however, he also documented a decrease in participation by other minorities. That is, television drama had less minority participation in 1975 than in 1971 although there was more black participation.

Another subtle form of discrimination against minorities by the media was pointed out in a study by Rainville and McCormick (1977). These authors measured covert forms of prejudice in television broadcast of nationally televised games. They found that there were significant differences between commentaries on black and white players and these differences were favorable to

whites and unfavorable to blacks. For example, whites received more play related praise while blacks received negative references to their past achievements. From the data, the authors concluded that announcers are building a positive reputation for white players and a comparatively negative reputation for black players.

In a summary fashion, Culley and Bennett (1976) evaluated the 1974 portrayal of blacks in consumer magazines, prime time television ads, and newspapers in an effort to determine which changes had occurred since earlier research had been conducted. Their data revealed that few changes had occurred in black portrayals in magazines and newspapers, and, in spite of an increase in the number of blacks in television ads, blacks were still cast mostly in background, auxiliary type roles.

#### Race-Related Issues

Failure to portray minorities in an accurate light is one form of bias; race labeling may also be viewed as such. Several studies have examined the extent of race identification in newspapers and the effect that such identification has upon the news story writer. Dulaney (1960) found that rarely did the newspapers in his sample identify a suspect as black; this happened only 10 out of 1,642 instances. In one of the few experimental studies dealing with minorities, Carter (1959) found that the identification of a suspect as black did not have any prejudicial effects on the news story-writer. This finding supports that of Brown and Reece (1955) that the racial identity of a defendant was not the major determinant of the amount and character of coverage of an incident. Similarly, Baran (1973) in an examination of media coverage of the shootings at Jackson State University, Southern University, and Kent State University, found no significant differences and concluded that race appeared not to have been the deciding factor in the amount of coverage accorded these

shootings.

It appears, however, that the perceptions of the audience about television commentators are influenced by the commentator's race. Balon, Philport and Beadle (1978) examined the effects of a television newscaster's sex and race on audience perceptions of credibility. In this experimental study conducted on students in an introductory communications course at the University of Texas, the authors found that the audience perceived black male newscasters to be less cheerful, more sympathetic and less extroverted than white males. In addition, the audience perceived the black newscasters to be more anxious and less qualified than whites.

Rainville, Roberts and Sweet (1978) also used an experimental design to investigate whether a naive observer could perceive the race of a player by reading disguised transcripts of football announcers' descriptions of players. Using undergraduate students at the State University at Oneonta and Howard University, the authors found that 56 percent of the time, the subjects could correctly identify the player's race.

Most people would probably agree that media coverage has had an impact on race relations in America. Hence, the manner in which the media covers race-related issues is important. Carter (1957) examined the desegregation content of North Carolina daily newspapers; he tested a series of hypotheses about the sources of desegregated news, the degree of over-all attention to the desegregation issue and the occurrence of stereotypes of blacks in segregation news. He found that newspapers in his sample paid little attention to this issue. When mention was made of it, blacks were seldom the principal source of news stories and the content pertaining to desegregation was more likely to be neutral or pro-segregation. Few references were made to specific stereotypes of blacks.

One seemingly important race-related issue, the riots of the 1960's, has been covered only minimally. Paletz and Dunn (1969) examined the Winston-Salem Journal's coverage of that city's November, 1967 riot. Although they indicated that the Journal's coverage was directed at calming racial tension and curbing violence, it did not adequately respect the Afro-American attitude. In failing to project the opinions and attitudes of blacks to its readers, the newspaper failed to contribute to an understanding of the nature of black grievances or of conditions in the black community.

Several studies have compared black and white newspapers in their treatment of a race-related issue. Breed (1958) and Kelly (1976) found that black newspapers covered race-related items with more fervor and emotion than did the white newspapers.

Pride and Clarke (1973) examined a random sample of network evening news programs that dealt with race relations. The authors were specifically looking for bias against blacks. They found that although black militants were treated overwhelming negatively (as were white racists), blacks in general received very balanced treatment.

Most of the studies that examine minority coverage in the media have been concerned with the general media; four studies which examine the content of the specialized, minority-oriented media are Surlin (1973); Click (1975); Hirsch (1968) and Rosen (1964).

Surlin sought to determine the amount of service-oriented (news and public affairs) programming available on black-oriented radio. He found that the average amount of airtime devoted to news and public affairs programming was relatively low; the vast majority of the sample stations devoted from 7 to 15% of their weekly activities to news. Close to 50% of the stations use less than 2% of their weekly airtime for public affairs programming.

Click content analyzed all issues of Ebony published in 1967 and 1974 to determine the changes that had taken place in the editorial content of Ebony from 1967 to 1974. He found that in 1974, less space was devoted to content oriented toward social issues that involved blacks or content that could be considered useful to blacks. Still, this type of significant/useful content was in the majority in both years studied, 60.5% in 1967 and 55.4% in 1974.

Hirsch (1968) analyzed the editorial content of Ebony from 1945 through 1966. He found that up until the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the editorial content was devoid of references to militancy. However, this changed in the 1960s and Ebony became more militant in tone. Rosen's (1964) analysis of Ebony produced a similar finding. The results of his data, which covered two years, 1948 and 1960, revealed that the 1960 articles were significantly more militant than the 1948 articles.

#### Employment

Research on minority portrayal in the mass media indicates that minorities are underrepresented. The following discussion reveals that minorities are also underrepresented on news-media staffs. Trayes (1969) concluded that black participation on news staffs in major American cities was drastically limited; of 4,095 news executives, deskmen, reporters and photographers, only 108 or 2.6% were black. Moreover, the prospects of this percentage increasing was somewhat dismal for less than 2% of the students enrolled as majors in journalism schools were black. Data obtained in a study done a year later with a larger sample produced similar results; less than 2% of the people employed in the media were black and out of 1,219 news executives, only 5 were black. The percentage of blacks enrolled as junior and seniors in journalism schools had increased to slightly less than 4% (Trayes, 1970).

Later studies suggest that newspaper executives are not making much progress toward raising the level of minority participation on newspaper staffs. Davis and Westmoreland (1974), in a survey of managing editors of Texas daily newspapers found that of 1,295 employees, 42 were Mexican-Americans, 20 were black, 3 were Orientals and 1 was Arab.

Denley and Boone (1977) raise the possibility that the broadcast media may provide a better employment market for blacks and other minorities. While they found only 4% of the positions in the print media filled by blacks, 17% of the positions in the Mississippi broadcast media were filled by blacks.

The above-mentioned study suggests that the best opportunity for blacks may be in the broadcast media. However, a study by Tickton and Jones (1978) indicate that employment opportunities in broadcast education are rather restricted for minorities; of the 1,322 faculty members employed at schools offering broadcasts degrees, only 30 of them were black or Indian.

#### SUMMARY

The major conclusions suggested by these sixty-seven studies are:

1. The media usage and content preferences of blacks differ from those of whites. These differences surface in the following manner: 1. blacks read newspapers to a lesser extent than whites and blacks and whites read different sections of the newspaper; 2. blacks view more television than whites (with the exception of prime-time television); and 3. blacks listen to radio slightly more frequently than whites.
2. The media use patterns noted above are reflected in the sources that blacks rely on for information. In general, blacks are more likely than whites to rely on television and people as sources of information. Rarely do they use newspapers as a source of information.
3. In terms of gratifications sought from the media, blacks generally use the media to be reminded of their political candidates' strong points.
4. There are differences among blacks in their media use. High SES blacks read newspapers and magazines more than low SES blacks. During prime-time, upper-income blacks are heavier viewers of television than are low-income blacks.

5. Mexican-Americans, who are considered traditionalists, prefer Spanish-language radio and television programs while those considered non-traditionalists prefer English-language programs.
6. In spite of the fact that minorities generally view more television than whites, they are highly critical of this medium with blacks being more critical than Mexican-Americans. Both of these groups also negatively evaluate newspapers.
7. Although there has been an increase in minority portrayal in magazines since the 1940s, minorities are still underrepresented in magazine presentations and are not shown in as positive a light as whites.
8. Minorities are also underrepresented in television programs. And, although there has been an increase in the proportion of minorities appearing on television, this increase has occurred in minor, insignificant roles or roles that tend to reinforce stereotypes of minorities.
9. Racial identification does not appear to be the major determinant of the amount and character of newspaper coverage. However, knowledge of an athlete's race does appear to be related to newscasters' comments. Also, the audience's perceptions of the qualifications of a newscaster are related to the newscaster's race.
10. In general, race-related items are given little attention in newspapers, and seldom do newspapers present minority views concerning race-related issues.
11. The level of minority participation on newspaper staffs is low and does not appear to be increasing. Employment opportunities for minorities appear to be more numerous in the broadcast media.
12. The percentage of minority students enrolled in journalism schools is low, but the percentage of minority faculty members, especially in broadcast media education, is lower.

#### IMPLICATIONS

One of the striking conclusions to be drawn from this review is that while little is known about the relationship of blacks and the mass media, even less is known about other minority groups such as Spanish-Americans, Native-Americans and Asian-Americans. Except for a few studies on Mexican-Americans, these other minority groups have been ignored in the literature. What we have, then, is a decidedly unbalanced picture of minorities and the media.

It would be inappropriate to conclude this review without decrying the lack of theory in the area of minorities and the mass media. What has accumulated over the past 30 years is a set of fragmentary findings on various aspects of the communication process with little effort being made to replicate, integrate and build on these findings for the purpose of constructing future theory.

It is clear from the disconnected findings on blacks and the paucity of findings on non-black minority groups that we are in need of a research agenda that will aid in theory construction. We, therefore, propose a research agenda to guide us in understanding the relationship of the minority community and the mass media. After reviewing the communications literature to determine what we know, we feel confident about making suggestions about what we need to know.

#### Audience Analysis

First, we need to sever our dependence on demographic variables. We have relied too long on demographic variables to "explain" the use of the media by minority groups. It is well-known that demographic variables, at best, predict, but do not explain media use. And then as predictors, demographic variables account for little variance and contribute little to our understanding of media use. What we need then is to look to social psychological variables to aid us in understanding media use among minority groups.

We need to build models which will help us understand what attracts minority groups to the majority and minority media and the satisfactions which are received from these media. At the same time, we need to continuously monitor the content of the majority and the minority media so that we can better understand the relationship of the minority audience to the media.

### Sources of Information

In several studies which asked blacks which source of information they turned to for news and information, there were two predominant findings. First, blacks were less likely than whites to use newspapers as a source of information. Secondly, blacks were more likely than whites to use interpersonal sources for information. Why do blacks avoid newspapers but use interpersonal sources? Not only do we need scientific explanations for the avoidance of newspapers, we need scientific models to explain the diffusion of information through the interpersonal networks in the black community. And then we need to understand at what points in the diffusion process the majority media and minority media fit into the networks.

### Effects

This is one of the most neglected areas in mass communication research. Greenberg and Atkin (1978) recently proposed a research program which addressed the question of effects on the minority and/or disadvantaged child. Their proposed research program would address the following question: What do youngsters acquire from fictional portrayals that may establish or alter cognitions, aspirations, expectations and beliefs about specific social roles. While we concur with the Greenberg and Atkin research strategy, we feel that we must add that we need to know what young and older minorities learn from non-fictional media content. We need to know the effect of coverage and lack of coverage of minority groups in news and public affairs programs and the kind of effect this has on beliefs, values, attitudes and behavior.

### Communicator/Organization Characteristics

We need trend studies monitoring the types, quantity, and quality of

coverage of minorities in the majority press and minority press. What does the coverage say about the communicator? What does the coverage say about the audience? The relationship of the audience, message and communicator needs to be examined within the framework of the minority community.

Empirical studies on the minority press are virtually non-existent. We need studies which scientifically study the minority press' content; the gatekeepers who determine that content and the readers who attend to that content so that we can better understand the role of the minority press within a given minority community. The black press, particularly, has been suggested as a minority press that should be examined for its relevance to the black community.

We know that few blacks and ethnic minority groups are on staffs of the majority media. The same is true for students and faculty in journalism schools. While census data is available and needs to be kept current on the numbers of minority people in the majority media, almost nothing is known about how the minority person functions in the majority media organization. We need to examine the effect of minority status on attitudes, beliefs, job performance, job satisfaction, assimilation, alienation, interpersonal networks, selection and assignment of stories, etc. Research questions on the effects of minority status in the majority organization are endless. The answers to these questions are not only relevant to the minority person who works in the media organization, they are relevant from the standpoint that these are areas which affect the communicator--both minority and majority--and may eventually affect the total mass communication process.

Little is known about minority ownership, particularly ownership of broadcast properties, and what this means in the total mass communication process. How does minority ownership (not necessarily minority programming) change the

mass communication process? What does minority ownership mean in terms of gatekeeping, message selection, audience loyalty, amount of feedback in both the minority and majority community. With a push to increase the number of minority owned broadcast properties, it seems critical that we as communication scientists understand the implications of a minority owned system.

Finally, it must be emphasized that what we need are longitudinal studies which trace the changes that are occurring in the relationship between minorities and the mass media. Only when we have focused our attention on the long range process--the changes over time-- can we begin to seriously fill in the void in our knowledge in this area.

Our proposed research agenda suggests areas which, if thoroughly studied, would contribute greatly to our knowledge about the media and minority groups and would help us to begin to understand the complete picture of minorities and their relationship to the mass media of communications.

FOOTNOTE

1. Minority portrayal has been frequently monitored. For the latest and most comprehensive examination of minority portrayal see: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Window Dressing on the Set (Washington, 1977) and Window Dressing on the Set: An Update (Washington, 1979).

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