

CHAPTER 1

U.S. Minorities and the News

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Social science research on specific media behaviors and orientations of U.S. minorities to general mass media is sparse; extant literature focuses on minority portrayals in entertainment and is confined largely to Black Americans, with rare additional studies of Hispanic Americans (Greenberg & Brand, 1994), let alone other ethnic groups. A social science focus on minorities and news is even more rare.

News and minority studies derive from a single question: How are they portrayed? Surely, this is an important query, but it begs other important questions: How are minorities represented in the news industry workforce? What use is made of the news? What are the attitudes of minorities toward the news? What effects does news have on minority and majority groups? The pastiche assembled here integrates the best research entries for such questions. But the skeletal character of this research quickly becomes clear. Conclusive findings in the social sciences generally are difficult to produce; here, they suffer further from lack of replication and lack of theory if not lack of interest.

With these caveats, we advance five propositions concerning news and minorities. Not examined here for economy of space is research on perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioral effects of news on minority audiences (cf. Armstrong, Neuendorf, & Brentar, 1992; Tan & Tan, 1979).

1. News industry goals for minority *employment* have not been realized;
2. *Representation* of Black and Hispanic Americans in news is consistent with population proportions, but the context of portrayals is questionable;

3. Black and Hispanic Americans *use* television and radio for news more and newspapers less than Whites, and they favor soft news content;
4. *Minority leaders* argue majority media inadequately cover their community and should incorporate more minorities in mainstream news operations; and
5. *Minority publics' attitudes* are positive toward mainstream news, particularly among younger audiences, but they prefer same-race television reporters and anchors.

MINORITY EMPLOYMENT IN THE NEWS INDUSTRY

Minority employment in the news industry does not compare with minority population proportions. Thompson (1989) reported that minorities total 21% of the U.S. population and are expected to comprise 28% by the year 2,000. About 12% of the U.S. population is Black, 9% of Hispanic origin, 3% Asian, and 1% Native American (Bureau of the Census, 1990).

Despite the Kerner Commission's 1968 recommendations to improve news coverage of minorities by bringing more minority reporters, editors, and managers into news organizations, only modest changes have been made in the past quarter-century. Consider separate data for the newspaper and broadcast news industries.

Newspapers

With an American Society of Newspaper Editors' (ASNE) 1978 goal of a threefold increase in the number of minority employees working in newsrooms by the year 2000, there evolved only a modest 1.8% increase from 2,811 minority newsroom professionals in 1978 to 2,862 by 1984. Overall, minorities in 1994 comprised 10.5% of daily newspaper staffs compared with an estimated 9% in 1989 and 1% in 1968 (Sunoo, 1994; Martindale, 1991; Thompson, 1989). Minority composition varies by circulation; however, all U.S. dailies with circulations of more than 100,000 have minorities on their news staffs, whereas only 43% of those dailies with circulations between 10,000 and 25,000 do (Thompson, 1989). According to the most recent ASNE data, 55% of American newspapers employ Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American journalists, but 45% have no minorities on staff (Sunoo, 1994).

Thompson (1989) reveals further inequities across job levels. In 1989, 93% of all *copydesk* jobs in U.S. dailies were held by Whites compared with 4% held by Blacks, 2% by Hispanics, and 1% by Asians. The Kerner Commission found that 5% of editorial jobs were held by

Blacks in 1968. Today, Black Americans fill 6% of editorial jobs, Hispanics 2%, Asian Americans 1%, and Native Americans, less than .5%. In 1968, less than 1% of daily newspaper supervisors were Black; in 1989, 95% of newsroom supervisors were White, 3% percent were Black, 1% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and less than 1% were Native American. No Blacks were publishers of major daily newspapers in 1968. In this area there has been progress. By the late 1980s, there were seven Black publishers, three Hispanics, and one Asian American publisher in the United States (Thompson, 1989).

Today, most minority news workers are reporters (53%), 17% copy editors, 17% supervisors, and 13% photographers or artists (Sunoo, 1994).

Television and Radio News

Eleven percent of broadcast newsmen are minorities (Thompson, 1989). A mail survey of 375 television and 355 radio stations in 1987 showed that 64% of all commercial television stations and 15% of commercial radio stations employed minorities compared with 63% and 16% in 1972 (Stone, 1988); the broadcast industry experienced no additional penetration across individual TV and radio stations in those 15 years.

Numbers of minorities in TV news have been in decline since the mid-1970s when 16% of that workforce was minority (Guimary, 1984). In 1979, 15% of TV news personnel were minorities and in 1982, 14%. Stone (1988) found from his mail survey of TV and radio stations that 13% of TV news professionals and 10% of the radio news workers were minorities in 1987. Women (both minority and majority) increased their share of the TV and radio news workforce, while minority males, especially Blacks, lost ground.

Weaver and others (1985) found that 8% of all television news *reporters and editors* were Black and 1% Hispanic. In radio, 3% of reporters and editors were Black and 1% Hispanic. Stone (1988) found that 10% of TV reporters were Black, just over 3% were Hispanic, 1% were Asian American, and less than .5% were Native American. One job where minority males were overrepresented was news photography, a job that paid the least of editorial positions and was viewed as a career "dead-end."

Of all commercial TV news anchors, 7% were Black, 2% were Hispanic, 1% Asian American, and less than .5% were Native American. In radio news, 5% of anchors were Black, 2% Hispanic, and less than 1% each Asian and Native American.

The proportion of *news directors* in television and radio remained

unchanged from 1981 to 1987; 4% were minorities in television and 6% in radio news organizations. Most minority news directors at commercial TV stations were Hispanic (75%), while at radio stations, Blacks filled most (57%) of the minority directorships. No Native American or Asian American news directors were found at TV stations. One percent of radio stations had Native American news directors, while less than .5% had Asian American directors (Stone, 1988).

Of TV *news producers*, 8% were Black, 4% were Hispanic, 2.4% were Asian American, and less than .5% were Native American. Finally, 8% of supervisory positions in commercial TV news operations were held by minorities (Stone, 1988).

The available research suggests that minorities are underemployed in the news industry. While gains are being made in the newspaper industry, progress in broadcasting may be diminishing.

PORTRAYALS OF MINORITIES IN THE NEWS

Content analysis research on minorities in U.S. news is dated and limited in scope. What follows are summaries of research on Black and Hispanic Americans; social science research focusing on Asian and Native Americans has yet to be developed. Although these reviews are necessarily abridged, they suggest increasing numbers of Black and Hispanic Americans with the accuracy of those representations still in question.

To begin, Dodd, Foerch, and Anderson (1988) examined how often women and racial minorities from the United States made the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* in the decades from 1950 through the 1980s. Women appeared on 15% and minorities on 7% of the 897 covers. Minorities were on 3% of the covers in the 1950s, 12% in the 1960s, and 6% in both the 1970s and 1980s. Women and minorities were portrayed more often in lower status and anonymous roles than majority males; the minorities were most frequently represented in sports (27%) and miscellaneous (13%) categories; they were twice as likely as Whites to be anonymous.

Black Americans

By the early 1970s, Blacks were becoming more visible in the news, and studies suggested they were increasingly seen in at least relative proportion to their representation in the population. Blacks were found in 13% of news magazine pictures by Stempel (1971), in 25% of network television newscasts by Baran (1973), and in 23% of network TV newscasts by Roberts (1975), although primarily in nonspeaking roles on segments dedicated to busing, segregation, and other civil rights

issues. In 1979, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1979) reported that less than 2% of the network news stories dealt with minorities, a smaller proportion than two years earlier, and that 8% of the correspondents were minorities.

Martindale (1984) found that coverage of Black Americans in a midwestern newspaper between 1950 and 1980 varied in relationship to the rise and fall of the civil rights movement: total news hole during the 1970s (15%) was less than half of its 1960s figure (33%) and equivalent to the 1950s (13%). She found that among four major metropolitan daily newspapers, coverage of Blacks increased from the 1960s to the 1970s for two of them and remained relatively stable for the other two (Martindale, 1985). In the 1970s, coverage of Blacks in everyday life was the predominant topic. Stereotyped stories comprised 14% of the newshole on Black Americans then. Coverage of Black problems ranged from 3% to 13% across the papers and less space was given to the coverage of Black protest causes and activities.

Martindale later (1987) extracted the category of stereotyped news coverage for more intensive analysis in which she compared coverage of Blacks involved in criminal activities, and of Blacks as entertainment figures, as protesters, and as politicians. Taking as a baseline the total coverage of Blacks in the newspaper, criminal activities coverage ranged from 3% to 12% in the four dailies; Blacks as entertainers ranged from 5% to 9%; Blacks as protesters was exactly 1% in all four papers; and the coverage of Black politicians ranged from 8% to 20%. Overall, there was little change from the 1960s to 1970s in coverage of Blacks in criminal activities, a sharp increase in coverage as entertainers, a sharper increase in coverage as politicians, and a striking decrease in presenting them as protesters (from 15% in the 1960s to 1% in the 1970s).

Elaborating Martindale's finding that newspapers increased their coverage of Blacks in politics, Chaudhary (1980) examined newspaper coverage of Black and White elected officials during 1974 and 1976 elections in 19 metropolitan cities in which the Black population exceeded 200,000. White elected officials received significantly more coverage on election day and two days before the election, and they received more favorable placement on the front page and inside front page above the fold, where most of the election stories were located. Black elected officials received longer stories, averaging 300 words compared to 225 for White officials, but significantly more negative stories appeared for Black elected officials than for Whites.

Womack (1986, 1988) examined the extent of Black participation in network presidential convention broadcasts comparing 1972 and 1976 with 1984 coverage. He found no differences among the net-

works in their presentation of race and gender, but significantly more Blacks were interviewed in 1984 than earlier. Furthermore, Blacks were interviewed in greater proportion than their relative delegate strength, although interviewees were most likely to be rank-and-file delegates.

In sharp contrast to the coverage of Blacks in politics, Pritchard (1985) examined newspaper coverage of 90 homicide prosecutions in Milwaukee from 1981 to 1983. Pritchard determined that: (a) stories with minority suspects were shorter; (b) although the Milwaukee newspapers overall provided what was assessed as fair coverage of 80% of the homicides, nevertheless minority suspects were less likely to receive fair coverage; and (c) minority suspects were less likely to receive thorough coverage.

Entman recently demonstrated that subtle visual and audio distinctions in television news portrayals of Blacks and Whites accused of crimes appear to be presenting "modern racism" to viewers (1992). Entman reinforced the findings that Blacks are presented often: 37% of the newshole prominently featured Blacks. However, video and audio contexts provide evidence that *how* Blacks are being portrayed is less egalitarian. Entman found video portrayals of Blacks accused of crimes compared with Whites were: (1) more dehumanizing because Blacks were less often shown in motion than Whites (movement indicates more humanity, shows emotion and expression), and (2) more threatening because Blacks were less often well-dressed (suggesting more danger from prison uniforms or "shabby" street clothes), and more often physically held by police (suggesting restraint of a threatening person). Audio elements potentially dehumanized Blacks by presenting fewer pro-defense soundbites for Blacks than Whites. In short, Entman revealed qualitative differences in portrayals of Black and White suspects on television news with more negative video and audio contexts of the former.

Finally, before progressing to studies of Hispanic American portrayals, it is appropriate here to note a study of Black and Hispanic interaction in mainstream news magazines. Shah and Thornton (1994) reported there was little reportage of interaction between the two minorities in the 11 national publications they examined. Over the 13-year period from 1980 through 1992, only 21 articles appeared, 8 of these in 1991 when rioting beleaguered an area of Washington, DC. Fifteen articles included references to Whites and eight to Korean Americans. Whites were commonly placed in the context of victims, mediators, or analysts, while Korean Americans were covered in the context of victims of the Los Angeles riots. Across the 21 articles, the most common themes of coverage were conflict and racism.

Hispanic Americans

In six southwestern U.S. cities with Hispanic residents comprising 20–65% of the population, local daily newspapers were analyzed for locally written Hispanic news, sports, editorials, photos, and bulletin listings (Greenberg, Heeter, Burgoon, Burgoon, & Korzenny, 1983). Newspapers varied greatly in their coverage of Mexican Americans across locations and news topics, but the following trends were observed. While these papers filled their local newshole with Hispanic news stories in proportion to the percentage of Hispanics in their community, largely as a function of stories that contained a Spanish surname, stories that focused primarily on Hispanics averaged only 10% of the local news. Hispanic sports stories filled more of the local sports newshole (42%), with virtually all qualifying because the story contained one or more Spanish surnames. Bulletins such as births, deaths, and community events announcements were one half or less of the proportion of the Hispanic population. Hispanic photos filled 19% of the total local photo newshole. Editorial page content carried one Hispanic referent every other issue, filling 13% of the local editorial page.

Examining two Southwest papers for 1982, 1984, and 1986, Turk and others (1989) found that Hispanics were present in those newspapers at least in proportion to their presence in the population. The three single-year samples were not different from one another within each paper; coverage in 1986 was equivalent to the other 2 years. In one city, half the newspaper space was devoted to Hispanic coverage, although the population was one-third Hispanic. Hispanic stories and photos were generally longer, with bigger headlines and more prominent placement. But Hispanic news coverage tended to focus on Hispanics as “problem people,” although the slant on White stories was less favorable than that on Hispanic stories.

A cross-media study in communities with at least 20% Hispanic population (Heeter et al., 1983) compared local Hispanic news coverage across newspapers, radio, and television on parallel criteria. On a typical day, news that involved Hispanics averaged a little more than one half-page of text in the daily paper, 1 of 5 minutes devoted to local news on radio, and a little more than 3 of the 14 minutes of news on evening television news. No Hispanic studio newscasters were found for either radio or television. Overall, local radio gave less of its newshole and focused more on crime and name dropping. Newspapers gave newshole and television gave time equivalent to Hispanic population proportions; newspapers covered many more kinds of issues for more varied reasons; television coverage was present and was at least as strong as radio.

These studies of minority portrayals in the news media indicate a reasonable presence of Blacks and Hispanics in news stories and news presentations. While more visible than two decades ago, questions remain about how minorities are being presented, especially Hispanic minorities. Although new stereotypes may be replacing older ones (e.g., Black suspects are less human, more dangerous, and less trustworthy than White suspects; Blacks as athletes and entertainers run amok; Blacks are victims of big-city police oppression).

Emerging work from a critical perspective is well suited to answering questions of content meaning. Goshorn and Gandy (1995), for example, looked at reportage of a single national news event in 1991 announcing that Blacks were less likely than Whites to obtain home mortgages. Headlines in the 57 stories analyzed, tended to frame the issue in terms of Black loss rather than White gain. Leads, however, more often cast the story in terms of White success for getting mortgages, demoting the perspective of Black risk (but this was less likely in newspapers where the Black community was larger). Similar critical research includes Campbell's contemporary analysis of racial news myths (1995), phases of news portrayals by Wilson and Gutiérrez (1995), Swenson's analysis of Rodney King and Reginald Denny news (1995), and Fiske's cultural view of news of the Los Angeles uprisings (1994).

USE OF NEWS BY MINORITIES

Nielsen annually reports that Blacks are much more avid television consumers than Whites; viewing in Black households exceeds White households by 1–2 hours per day. Black adolescents view television at least 2 hours more per day than White adolescents (Greenberg, Brown, & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1992). But this national evidence is based on studies of exposure to television entertainment programs, not television news; there is no greater affinity for Blacks to attend to television news. In fact, Blacks watch less TV news than Whites. Recently, however, specialized Black cable programming such as the Black Entertainment Network (BET) has provided a minority orientation to entertainment and news. Where available, it has drawn strong viewership, particularly among younger Black Americans and those concerned with the importance of knowing Black history or issues of the Black extended family. BET receives one third of the viewing time among these groups (Jones, 1990).

Hispanics too are heavier entertainment television viewers than Whites and watch national and local news as frequently and for as long as Whites (Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon, & Korzenny, 1983). Hispanic

youth watch significantly more of all television program types, including local and network news. Both Hispanics and Whites listen to radio news for 20 minutes a day. Hispanic youth also did not differ from White youth in radio listening time, for news, music, or sports.

For more than two decades, research has supported the contention that Blacks do less newspaper reading than Whites. Examining low-income Blacks and Whites, Sharon (1974) found less reading of newspapers was paralleled by less reading of magazines. Whites were more likely to read the main news sections, women's and society pages, editorials, financial news, business news, and regular advertising. Bogart (1972) also identified levels of comparative readership, finding that 80% of his White sample had read a newspaper yesterday compared with 61% in the Black sample; thus, given that more than half were daily readers, it would be erroneous to consider Blacks nonreaders.

Later, Allen and Bielby (1979) focused on the relationships that subgroups of Black adults have with the print media. More educated and wealthy Blacks spent more time with mainstream print media. These Blacks also were exposed more to Black establishment magazines such as *Ebony*, and to Black nonestablishment magazines such as *Black Scholar*, but avoided Black entertainment magazines such as *Jet*, which were more the selection of younger and more alienated Blacks. Older Blacks spent more time reading majority newspapers and less time with all categories of Black magazines. Total newspaper reading was positively correlated with trust in Black establishment and nonestablishment magazines and it was negatively related to perceptions of newspaper bias (heavier readers judged the paper as less biased). To obtain information about the Black community, more educated Blacks avoided mainstream newspapers, whereas those who did more newspaper reading were more likely to seek such information from the mainstream.

Cobb (1986) conducted interviews of 1,355 11th and 12th graders, 71% White and 22% Black. An initial finding was that one in five did not read a newspaper, especially those in minority households or with less educated parents. One in three read the newspaper infrequently and briefly; they did not have a time or place for reading, were generally negative toward the newspaper, and 90% chose some other medium as most valuable. They were the least regular readers of any content area and had the second least exposure to the other three media examined. This apathetic group was predominantly White. Black youth were less likely to have a newspaper available in their home, looked at fewer issues for longer periods of time, and more regularly read and held positive attitudes toward advertising; they also were most positive toward radio advertising (Cobb & Kenny, 1986).

Weber and Fleming (1984) found that White and Black youth

claimed television was their primary source of information with the newspaper in second place by a 2-1 margin among Blacks and a 3-1 or 4-1 margin among others. Thus, newspapers were a stronger second choice among the Black youth.

Hispanics also are less likely than Whites to be newspaper readers (Greenberg et al., 1983). Readership was especially low among predominantly Spanish-speaking Hispanics. Forty-five percent of Hispanics were regular newspaper readers and 30% were nonreaders, compared with 68% and 12% of the Whites. Hispanic newspaper readers, however, spent as much time as Whites with the paper—about 40 minutes. While only 59% of Hispanic households had access to a newspaper, 80% of White households did; 50% of the former subscribed, compared to 77% of the latter. A major contributor to this difference was the greater occasional reading among the younger Hispanics.

Among Hispanic adults, there was a stronger preference than among Whites for news of crimes, accidents, and disasters; news of Mexico and Latin America; job opportunities; advertising; stories about discrimination; problems in the schools and bilingual education; news about youth gangs; advice on personal problems and on health issues. Whites exceeded Hispanics in their interest in politics at all levels, editorial elements of the newspaper, business news, and humorous stories and features (Greenberg et al., 1983).

These studies illustrate that minority groups prefer television over other mass media at least as an entertainment medium, and inferentially as a news medium. Radio also is used more intensively by Blacks and Hispanics. Combining both electronic media, these minorities dedicate several more hours each day to them than Whites.

MINORITY LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEWS

Four studies offer insight into Black, Hispanic, and Native American leaders' attitudes toward the news media; no research assesses Asian minority leaders' attitudes. Concerns of these leaders include lack of employment opportunities for their communities, stereotypic coverage of their populations and a media focus on negative news, and mainstream press ignorance of issues faced by their publics.

Employment

Sneed, Riffe, and Van Ommeren (1988) surveyed 396 Black state legislators' evaluations of White-owned newspaper performance in their communities in coverage of news about Blacks and the Black community. Among the legislators, 89% thought more Black reporters should

be hired and 74% said that understanding of minority concerns and perspectives would increase if the White-owned press in their community hired a Black editor.

Based on interviews with Hispanic leaders in six southwestern communities, Korzenny and others (1983) reported that "lack of accessibility with respect to employment and coverage were at the top of the list of complaints" leaders had of media relations with the Hispanic community (p. 67). Minority leaders further argued that Hispanics were rarely involved in administrative or decision-making media jobs and that they often were hired into media jobs from outside the community, leading to no identity with issues relevant to Hispanics in their new location.

Eighty-six percent of Puerto Rican elected and appointed public officials, business people, educators, and religious and grassroots leaders reported that newspaper and TV coverage of Puerto Ricans would be better if more Hispanics reporters were hired in newsroom jobs (Nicolini, 1987). In his exploratory study of Native Americans' relationships with public television and radio, Eiselein (1982) reported that Native Americans were more likely to be members of advisory boards than employees of stations.

Stereotypic Coverage, Focus on Negative News

Sneed and others (1988) found that Black legislators universally agreed press coverage of Blacks in athletics is fair and balanced but that news about crime involving Blacks was not. There was "strength of the agreement among Black legislators that press coverage in their communities is inadequate" (p. 6).

Local Hispanic community leaders blamed employment patterns and traditional stereotypes for an overemphasis on crime and negative news, a shortage of positive news, and less frequency and prominence given Hispanic than majority news. They also believed that radio offered the most local coverage, while television coverage was minimal. Leaders faulted negative media portrayals of Hispanics for "poor self-concept" and lack of pride in Hispanic communities (Korzenny et al., 1983).

All Puerto Rican leaders were dissatisfied with newspaper coverage of the Hispanic community, most (85%) were dissatisfied with TV coverage and 75% were dissatisfied with radio coverage (Nicolini, 1987). These leaders believed "that either the general public must form a negative impression of the Hispanic community, or, perhaps, no impression at all" (p. 599).

According to Eiselein (1982), "Native American organizations and tribes felt that broadcasting did not provide adequate coverage of Native American events and concerns" (p. 4). Only 6% of organization repre-

sentatives and 17% of tribal representatives said that TV coverage of their communities was “adequate.” The proportion indicating adequate radio coverage was 9% and 17% for organization and tribal respondents, respectively.

Ignorance of Minority Issues

Sneed and others (1988) reported Black legislators had strong agreement that the “White-owned press does not understand some issues that involve Blacks in their communities” (p. 6). Seventy-seven percent thought the mainstream press in their communities did a poor job of covering the Black community and 82% thought the press failed to report stories of interest and importance to Blacks. Moreover, 79% of the leaders agreed that papers in their towns did not understand Black issues; half the respondents concluded newspaper publishers are not concerned about Black issues.

Nicolini (1987) found 88% of the Puerto Rican leaders she surveyed felt that non-Hispanic reporters were ill-informed about the Hispanic community; that non-Hispanic reporters were “arrogant,” “demanding,” and “only interested in getting superficial facts”; and Hispanic reporters they knew were knowledgeable and positive about the Hispanic community and that they asked “the ‘right questions’” (p. 600).

Eiselein reported that 61% of Native American organization leaders and 59% of tribal leaders said that news about their communities was “very important,” while only 8% of public TV stations and 12% of public radio stations held this view.

Overall, relatively limited documentation of minority leaders’ attitudes toward the mainstream press (and none related to Asian Americans) illustrates neglect of an area of scholarship with significant policy potential. In all, minority leaders regret negative coverage of minorities, lack of employment in mainstream news organizations, and pervasive insensitivity toward news that matters to their publics.

MINORITY PUBLICS’ PERCEPTIONS OF NEWS

If social science suggests news content of minorities is inadequate and minority leaders are critical of the news industry, minority publics themselves are *not* dissatisfied. In general, secondary analysis of two national data sets by Becker, Kosicki, and Jones (1992) found that Blacks and Whites hold similar opinions of the news media. Although Blacks gave their newspaper and local television a lower favorability rating than Whites, both groups were not different in their favorability ratings for magazines, network television, or radio. Moreover, both groups held

similar views of believability of the daily paper, news magazines, and radio and both held similar views of political and social issues coverage in the press. And, while both Blacks and Whites judged Blacks as having the least influence over how news organizations report news, Blacks feel they are particularly not influential on news content compared to other groups.

Race is not a predictor of evaluation for the local daily newspaper (Burgoon, Burgoon, & Shatzer, 1987). Race, however, does predict important distinctions in judgments of individual newspaper attributes. In large urban centers, Blacks and Whites gave higher ratings than non-Black on how accurate, lively, timely, and bland the news was. In small to medium cities, Blacks were most positive on how lively and courageous the newspaper was; both Blacks and Hispanics were more positive than Whites on judging the newspapers' competency; on every single significant difference, one or more of the minority groups had the most positive image evaluation. In southwestern cities, Hispanics gave higher ratings—the newspaper was more competent, influential, courageous, lively, powerful, and had the latest news; on three items, Blacks gave higher ratings than Whites. Generally, then, Hispanics said these local papers were more credible than did the Blacks, who in turn were more positive than the Whites.

Hispanic viewers exceed Whites in overall satisfaction with local TV news, in satisfaction with local TV coverage of social news in their communities, and the likelihood of believing television reports if they conflict with other local media (Greenberg et al., 1983). Hispanics also exceed Whites in the level of their satisfaction with local radio coverage of social news in the community, whereas Whites are more satisfied with local radio coverage of crime.

A study of Chicago Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites (Faber, O'Guinn, & Meyer, 1987) revealed Blacks were most likely to say there were too few Blacks on TV, both Blacks and Hispanics perceived too few Hispanics, and all three groups perceived that Hispanics were the most underrepresented. Interestingly, amount of viewing contradicted perceptions of the *fairness* of these portrayals; heavy-viewing Whites were more likely to perceive that the representations of Hispanics were fair; heavy-viewing Hispanics expressed the opposite perception, and for Blacks there was no correlation between viewing and perceived fairness of Hispanics; heavy-viewing Blacks, however, were more likely to say there were too few Blacks on television.

Comparatively, Greenberg and others (1983) found that fifth- and tenth-grade Hispanics assessed the portrayal of Mexican Americans, Mexican American families, and Black Americans on television as substantially more realistic than did their White classmates. Hispanic more

than White youth reported their belief that local newspapers and television news shows portrayed good things; the two groups did not differ in the extent to which they judged the media as showing bad things, although it must be noted that their overall assessment was that there were more bad than good portrayals. The White youth also were more likely to believe the newspaper in case of conflicting reports from different media; Hispanics more often believed TV reports.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE JOURNALISTS

Two thirds of Black households chose Black newscasters as more believable than White newscasters (Johnson, 1984, 1987); half chose a Black male as most believable, one fourth chose a White male, one fifth a Black female, and 6% a White female—a clear preference for male newscasters over females as well. Nine in ten said that Blacks were more attractive newscasters. While Blacks rated Black and White newscasters equivalently in competency, Whites rated White newscasters as more competent in a study of both competency and social distance (Kaner, 1982). There was a preference for opposite-sex and same-race newscasters as potential neighbors; higher ratings were given to same race as potential kin and this same-race preference was especially pronounced among Whites. Neither TV news viewing frequency nor socioeconomic status were correlated with evaluations. In contrast to Johnson's findings, Black males rated female newscasters higher than male newscasters, but White males did the opposite.

Across these studies, evaluations of daily newspapers produce attitudes that are at least as positive as those of Whites among Black and Hispanic readers. Among minority adults, same race newscasters were judged to be more believable and as competent as majority newscasters.

CONCLUSIONS

A sparse number of studies covering a wide time period, with a myriad of samples, a variety of study goals, a complete absence of research on Asian Americans, and minimal evidence from Native Americans greatly limit the opportunity for firm statements. This literature provides a basis for the following conclusions:

On Employment in the Media

Goals set within the industry for employment of minorities have not been met. Growth in minority employment has slowed and development

and placement of minorities in key editorial positions is not evident. Poignant is a management consultant's comment cited by Sunoo (1994, p. 106): "Minorities no longer need a boarding pass. What they need is an upgrade." Perhaps the goals and the processes by which minorities are attracted into journalism should be reexamined.

On Portrayals in the Media

Black and Hispanic Americans are present in the news in proportions equal to or greater than their presence in the population. Now that they are visible, the issue is no longer how many there are, but how they are portrayed. Blacks are not being presented disproportionately as criminals, but relatively new stereotypes may be replacing older ones—for example, Blacks as troubled athletes and entertainers, as victims of the police, and as questionable politicians. Here, evidence is emerging more in the critical literature than the social science literature. Hispanics appear regularly in sports news and soft news of America's papers, but less regularly in hard news. How fully minorities are being mainstreamed into the news remains to be determined.

On Media Use

Blacks and Hispanics prefer and depend on television for entertainment and for news more than the majority. Radio is also used more intensively by Blacks and by Hispanics. As a result, they give an additional one to three hours *more* each day to these electronic media. Blacks and Hispanics read newspapers less than Whites. Black adolescents read the newspaper sporadically, at best. These minorities were less oriented to the general news sections and youth especially favored the softer news content.

On Minority Leaders' Attitudes

Leaders of minority populations condemn majority media coverage of their communities. They feel there is not enough coverage, what coverage exists is overly negative, the media are not sensitive to the minority community and do not understand minority populations' problems. These leaders argue such shortcomings could be alleviated by greater minority employment in mainstream news organizations.

On Minority Publics' Media Attitudes

Minority publics do not demonstrate particularly negative attitudes toward mainstream news. Evaluations of daily newspapers produce attitudes among minority readers that are at least as positive, if not more

so, than those of Whites. Blacks who read newspapers are satisfied with the job the newspaper does in covering the Black community. Television has greater credibility in the minority communities than any other medium. Hispanics, especially, are quiescent about the coverage they obtain from TV and radio. Minority youth perceive the media to be realistic in their race portrayals. Among minority adults, same race newscasters were preferred and judged to be more believable than, and as competent as, majority newscasters. Thus the complaints levied consistently by minority community leaders are not echoed in studies of their constituents.

FINAL REMARKS

Martindale (1991) made four recommendations for improving news coverage of minorities and minority issues:

1. Increased accuracy and more representative coverage
2. Less stereotypical coverage
3. More coverage of minority achievements and contributions
4. More coverage of problems faced by minorities

Martindale proposed that these improvements would develop primarily through increased employment of minority reporters, editors and supervisors in news organizations. As she states,

the presence of minority journalists in a newsroom tends to sensitize White reporters and perhaps may enlarge their awareness and lead them to new sources. But not until minorities obtain editorships are they in a position to influence coverage decisions, to determine what gets covered and how it is played. (p. 10)

To her list of suggestions, the following is proffered. The only systematic research in this area on a regular basis is that which is federally mandated and examines minority employment in the licensed broadcast industries; to this, the newspaper industry regularly provides an update of its voluntary efforts. In the other areas examined in this paper—media use, media portrayals, and leader and public attitudes toward the media—research is scarce and spasmodic. Unless there is some programmatic effort at an organized body of research undertakings, readers can expect little better in the next review a decade hence. In fact, interest in these kinds of issues may be decreasing among social scientists, who must move on to issues for which funding is available.

The news industry itself could underwrite such a research program. For a relatively small investment, the newspaper, magazine, radio, and

television industries could embark on the kinds of research abstracted here, extend beyond those with a cadre of thoughtful scholars, and make a significant contribution to both themselves and the minority communities they wish to serve. Those communities consistently speak of the need for more and better information on which to base their efforts and those communities will soon comprise nearly half the U.S. population (Sunoo, 1994). An industry-organized and funded program of research on *minorities and the news* would produce, at best, a responsive service to minority citizens and at the least represent a significant marker in the industry's effort to alter the history of their relations with minority groups in the United States.

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