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EFFECTS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC STEREOTYPING

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The effects of media exposure on the construction and maintenance of consumers' social perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and actions have long been addressed by theoretical and empirical research in the domains of mass communication, social psychology, and cognitive psychology (Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that media use has been determined to play a meaningful role in the development of racial/ethnic cognitions and intergroup behaviors. Indeed, research has consistently revealed modest but significant associations between viewing media portrayals of race/ethnicity and outcomes concerning evaluations of outgroup members' competence (Zuckerman, Singer, & Singer, 1980), socioeconomic status (Armstrong, Neuendorf, & Brentar, 1992), group status (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977), social roles (Atkin, Greenberg, & McDermott, 1983), and judgments regarding a variety of race-based attributions and stereotypes (Dixon, 2006; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Ford, 1997; Mastro, 2003; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz, 2007; Mastro & Kopacz, 2006; Mastro, Tamborini, & Hullett, 2005; Oliver, Jackson, Moses, & Dangerfield, 2004).

Despite such evidence, racial/ethnic representation in the media and the implications of exposure to these messages remain intensely debated topics among consumers and producers alike; prompting a recurring stream of headlines in the popular press such as "White still a primary color" and "Same old Black and White" (Braxton, 2007, June 6; Stanley, 2006, March 22). In order to shed light on this issue, the present chapter synthesizes the extant research on the subject. In particular, quantitative examinations of (1) depictions of race/ethnicity in the media, (2) audience characteristics and media usage patterns, and (3) the effects of exposure will be addressed.

MEDIA DEPICTIONS OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

Theories of media effects (including those rooted in beliefs about active as well as passive audiences) collectively implicate the particular features of media content in outcomes associated with exposure. In other words, media effects depend (in part) on the specific images and messages depicted in the content. Accordingly, any discussion concerning effects must take into consideration the manner in which different racial/ethnic groups are characterized in the media. However, few universals can be offered with regard to contemporary media representations of race/ethnicity (see Greenberg,

Mastro, & Brand, 2002, for historical overview). In fact, research reveals that both the number and the nature of portrayals vary based on the race/ethnicity of the model. As such, a summary of current depictions of Latino Americans, Black Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans on television, in advertising, in the news, and in film (when available) is provided as these groups represent the four largest racial/ethnic minority groups in the U.S. population.

Black Americans

In terms of numeric representation on primetime TV, Black Americans and White Americans are the only racial/ethnic groups depicted at a rate exceeding their proportions of the U.S. population of approximately 12% and 69%, respectively (U.S. Census, 2000). Generally speaking, African Americans constitute between 14–17% of the primetime population and Whites comprise between 73–80% of the characters appearing on primetime television (Children Now, 2001; Children Now, 2004; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). Although images of White Americans can be seen relatively evenly distributed across the TV genres, Black Americans are nearly exclusively seen in sitcoms or crime dramas (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Matabane & Merritt, 1996; Stroman, Merritt, & Matabane, 1989–1990). When in dramas, Black Americans are featured in mixed-race casts (Children Now, 2004) whereas on sitcoms they appear in a cast that is predominately Black American. The importance of these clusterings is two-fold. First, genre conventions and constraints inevitably result in differing race-based presentations. Accordingly, differential effects are likely to be associated with exposure to the different content features normative for various genres (Armstrong, Neuendorf, & Brentar, 1992). Second, this tendency leaves open the possibility that depending on TV viewing preferences, a viewer may be exposed to one-sided images of Blacks, or simply not see them at all. Given that intergroup contact in the media conveys messages to consumers regarding race-based norms and the value attached to diversity in society (Harwood & Roy, 2005), the extent to which Black Americans, or any group, is isolated/integrated into the general media landscape should not be ignored. As Entman (1994) argued, images of race/ethnicity on television not only have the potential to provide (mis)information about *who* racial/ethnic minorities are, but additionally offer evidence to corroborate (mis)perceptions regarding *why* they should be viewed in a certain way.

In terms of the manner in which Black Americans are depicted on television, the typical Black character on primetime is a middle-class male in his thirties. He is likely to be a law enforcer or professional, discussing work-related topics (Children Now, 2001; Children Now, 2004; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). This character enjoys moderate levels of both job and social authority (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005) and is among the least aggressive figures on TV (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). However, Black Americans on primetime are also characterized by more provocative and less professional dress than their White counterparts (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000).

Much the same can be said for images in film. Again, the preponderance of lead characters are White Americans (80%) followed by Black Americans (19%) (Escholtz, Bufkin, & Long, 2002). Although their rate of appearance exceeds their proportion of the real-world population, Black Americans are not seen across a variety of film genres. Instead, they are most frequently featured in films primarily starring Black American characters. On average, these characters are younger than their White counterparts and

are more likely to be employed in positions with lower levels of occupational prestige than Whites.

The images offered by advertising are not altogether different. Here again, the vast majority of characters are White Americans (86%), with Black Americans representing about 11% of the actors featured in commercials (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000). Most often, Black characters are found in ads for food/beverages (Taylor & Stern, 1997) and financial services (Mastro & Stern, 2003). In addition, Licata and Biswas (1993) note an inverse relationship between product value and interface with Black Americans in advertisements such that as interactions with Black Americans increase product values decrease.

News coverage depicting Black Americans presents an altogether more unfavorable picture, both on an absolute and comparative basis (Entman, 1992). Although Blacks and Whites appear with relatively equal frequency in news stories unrelated to crime, Black Americans are seen at nearly twice the rate as Whites when the topic is crime (Romer, Jamieson, & DeCoteau, 1998). In such news stories, Black Americans are more likely to be depicted as crime perpetrators (Dixon & Linz, 2000a), appearing nameless and restrained, and with a disheveled and threatening appearance (Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994). In addition, findings from Dixon and Linz (2002) reveal that prejudicial information (e.g., providing information on prior arrests) is more frequently reported when the defendant is a Black American as opposed to White.

Black Americans' rate of representation as criminals in the news is not only discrepant when compared with depictions of Whites, but is additionally inconsistent with real-world arrest reports (Dixon & Linz, 2000a). When contrasted with real-world crime statistics, African American adults are overrepresented as perpetrators on TV news whereas Whites are presented either at a rate equivalent to (Dixon & Linz, 2000b) or below (Dixon & Linz, 2000a) that in the real world. The same is true of images of Black youth in the news. Results from Dixon and Azocar (2006) indicate that Black American youth are seen as perpetrators on TV news more frequently than Whites. In fact, 39% of all juvenile perpetrators depicted in the news are Black (18% in Department of Justice statistics) whereas 24% are White (22% in Department of Justice statistics).

Alongside their overrepresentation as criminals on TV news, when compared with Whites, African Americans also are underrepresented as victims—but at a rate in proportion with real-world crime reports (Dixon & Linz, 2000b). In addition, Black Americans are seen as police officers on the news (3%) (Dixon, Azocar, & Casas, 2003) and in reality-based police shows (9.3%) (Oliver, 1994) at a rate substantially below their proportion of the U.S. police population.

Latino Americans

Although Latinos are the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the U.S., at approximately 13% of the population (U.S. Census, 2000), they comprise only between 2% and 6.5% of the primetime television population (Children Now, 2001; Children Now, 2004; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000) and a mere 1% of lead characters in top grossing, U.S. motion pictures (Escholtz, Bufkin, & Long, 2002). Like Black Americans, Latino images on primetime television are primarily confined to sitcoms and crime dramas. The typical Latino character is a family member, engaged in conversation about crime (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). Compared with their on-air counterparts Latinos are younger, lower in job

authority, lazier, less articulate, less intelligent, more seductively dressed (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005), and four times more likely to be characterized as a domestic worker (Children Now, 2004). In addition, alongside Black Americans, Latinos are deemed the most hot-tempered characters on primetime TV.

Consistent with their negligible representation in the movies, in commercial advertising few images of Latinos are likely to be found. Here again, only 1% of characters depicted are Latino (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Mastro & Stern, 2003). When present, they are primarily in background roles and in group settings (Taylor & Stern, 1997). Moreover, Latinos in commercial advertising are significantly more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to be presented in a sexualized manner, engaging in sexual glances, displaying alluring behavior, and adorning provocative attire (Mastro & Stern, 2003).

When it comes to television news, Latinos (like Blacks) are depicted as crime perpetrators more frequently than Whites (Dixon & Linz, 2000a). However, their rate of representation falls below real-world arrest reports (Dixon & Linz, 2000b). The same pattern emerges for depictions of Latino youth on the news. Although Latino youth appear as perpetrators more frequently than Whites, this proportion is below Department of Justice Statistics (Dixon & Azocar, 2006). Alternatively, when it comes to representation as victims on TV news, Latinos also are seen at a rate below both their White, on-air counterparts and below real-world crime reports (Dixon & Linz, 2000b).

The content of crime-related news stories also varies depending on the race/ethnicity of the perpetrator. Consistent with their findings regarding Black Americans, Dixon and Linz's (2002) results indicate that reporting prejudicial information (such as an existing arrest record) is more likely to be associated with Latino defendants than with Whites, particularly in cases involving White victims.

Asian Americans

In terms of numeric representation, Asian Americans constitute between 1% and 3% of the characters on primetime TV (Children Now, 2001; Children Now, 2004; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000), compared with 4% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2000). When they are seen on TV, Asian Americans are found primarily in minor and non-recurring roles (Children Now, 2001; Children Now, 2004). Despite the scarcity of these images, Asian American characters are often in high-status (37%), professional positions (Children Now, 2004). As a result of their infrequent presence, however, little more is known about the manner in which they are depicted on primetime.

When it comes to images in commercial advertising, Asian Americans make up 2% of the characters depicted (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Mastro & Stern, 2003). They are most commonly portrayed in conservative attire in the workplace and are characterized by their passive nature (Mastro & Stern, 2003). Asian American images can be found most frequently in technology ads (Mastro & Stern, 2003).

Native Americans

Native Americans represent between 0 and 0.4% of the characters appearing on prime-time television (Children Now, 2001; Children Now, 2004; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000), and make up slightly less than 1% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2000). Their occasional roles are typically based in an

historical context (Merskin, 1998). Similarly, .02% of newspaper articles and .002% of films depict Native Americans (Fryberg, 2003). When they appear in these media outlets, they are seen as spiritual, as warriors, and as a social problem.

Television Newsmakers

Although not a content feature, per se, Harwood and Roy (2005) maintained that media control and ownership are inherently tied to issues associated with the quantity and quality of race-based media offerings. They argued, "control over media production and dissemination is a crucial dimension of group vitality . . . [in] that media ownership and control can function as a means to support the subordination of disadvantaged groups" (p. 191). Notably, not only are numeric disparities evident in the racial/ethnic breakdown of both on-air television newsmakers (Gant & Dimmick, 2000) and those working off-air (Papper, 2005), but the overall proportion of the racial/ethnic minority TV news workforce (21%) as well as the percentage of minority TV news directors (12.5%) has dropped slightly from previous years (Papper, 2005). Although the proportion of Black Americans in the broadcast news workforce has remained relatively stable in recent years (at 10%), the percentages of Asian Americans (2%), Latinos (9%), and Native Americans (0.3%) all are down. Among news directors, 6% are Latino, 3.5% are Black Americans, 1.3% are Asian American, and 1.0% are Native American. In terms of TV news general managers, the vast majority are White (93%).

When it comes to on-air appearances, Whites account for 77% of newsmakers and Black Americans 22%—with Asian Americans and Latino Americans combined at 1% (Gant & Dimmick, 2000). Moreover, White newsmakers appear as experts/professionals significantly more than Black American newsmakers.

AUDIENCE CHARACTERISTICS

Of course content features alone address only a portion of the relationship between exposure and effects. Theory and empirical research alike demonstrate that the amount of consumption and the particular characteristics of the audience members each play a role in determining effects.

Usage Patterns

Research in the domains of social cognitive theory (see Chapter 6 in this volume), cultivation theory (see Chapter 3), and priming (see Chapter 5), among others, have long established that media effects are, in large part, a reflection of what and how much viewers consume. Accordingly, effects are likely to vary based on media preferences and patterns. Although this has implications for all audience members, it suggests that certain audience features may result in increased vulnerability to media messages. Thus, identifying what is known about race-related media consumption patterns is critical.

Black Americans

Despite the increasing variety of new media offerings, television remains the dominant media choice for consumers, and audience analyses reveal Black Americans to be among

the heaviest consumers in the U.S. (Nielsen, 1998, 2007). According to Nielsen Media Research, in the typical Black American home the television is on for 20 hours per week more than in the average White American household. On a daily basis, this amounts to a 3 hour per day disparity in time spent watching TV; a pattern which has consistently emerged in studies of viewing rates (Brown, Campbell, & Fischer, 1986; Greenberg & Linsangan, 1993). Moreover, as Brown, Campbell, and Fischer (1986) noted, this tendency is not isolated to adult viewers. Indeed, their findings indicate that Black teens are exposed to up to 7 more hours of television viewing per week than White teens. Botta's (2000) investigation of the influence of television consumption on adolescent girls' self-concept yielded parallel outcomes. Her findings demonstrate that compared with their White counterparts, Black adolescent girls watch substantially higher levels of television.

In terms of content preferences and uses for media, differences based on race additionally have been documented. Across ages and genders, Black Americans report a preference for programs featuring Black characters and Black casts (Eastman & Liss, 1980; Nielsen, 1998; Poindexter & Stroman, 1981). Use of television in the average Black American household is primarily for entertainment and educational purposes (Becker, Kosicki, & Jones, 1992; Poindexter & Stroman, 1981); however, research additionally suggests that program choices (including both selection and avoidance) may be used to support racial identity needs (Abrams & Giles, 2007). Black audiences (and children in particular) also report greater belief in the veracity of television messages (Poindexter & Stroman, 1981) and reveal higher levels of identification with Black characters (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982) particularly when highly identified with their race/ethnicity (Whittler, 1991).

Latino Americans

Among Latino viewers, both adult and adolescent television consumption rates have increased on a yearly basis (Nielsen, 2007), making this group second to Blacks in amount of TV viewing. In terms of preferences and uses for media, audience analyses have yielded mixed findings. Some research has noted a preference for Latino-associated content (Greenberg et al., 1983) and Latino characters (Eastman & Liss, 1980) whereas other findings have suggested that preferences for Latino-based programming are only marginal. Of course, given the small number of Latino characters depicted on mainstream U.S. programming, selectivity may not be an option. Not surprisingly, Nielsen (1997) ratings reveal that many of the most popular programs in Latino households (e.g., telenovellas) come from the Spanish-language networks such as Univision and Telemundo. In fact, since the addition of Spanish language programming into the Nielsen rankings, Univision has emerged as the fifth most watched TV network in the U.S. (*LA Times*, Feb 17, 2006); reaching 98% of all Latino TV households (Univision, 2005). Additional evidence in support of a preference for Spanish language content can be derived from research on the persuasive appeal of Spanish language television commercials. This research has demonstrated that advertisements for the same brands are found to be significantly more persuasive in Spanish than in English among both bilingual and Spanish-dominant Latinos in the U.S. (Roslow & Nicholls, 1996).

Variations in preferences may also reflect the diversity of gratifications sought from Latino consumers with differing levels of acculturation. Among Latinas with low levels of acculturation, television is likely to be used to learn about social norms in the U.S. and to improve English-speaking skills (Johnson, 1996). Stilling's (1997) data yielded

parallel results, revealing use of English-language television among Latinos to increase levels of acculturation. Alternatively, for those seeking to maintain racial/ethnic identity, ethnic media content is preferred (Jeffres, 2000; Ríos & Gaines, 1999).

Inconsistencies also have been found in studies investigating Latinos' perceptions about the quality of television content. Formative research by Greenberg et al. (1983) indicates that Latino youth believe in the authenticity and decency of Latino television models. Alternatively, in their research examining adult TV viewers Faber, O'Guinn, & Meyer (1987) revealed Latinos to be greatly dissatisfied with both the number and quality of Latino TV characterizations. Notably, their findings additionally showed that Whites who were heavy TV consumers were more likely to report that the quality of images of Latinos was fair, whereas Latinos who were heavy television viewers noted quite the opposite.

Asian Americans and Native Americans

Little is known about the media choices, patterns, and preferences of Asian American and Native American consumers. What can be said about Native American media use and beliefs about representations of Native Americans in the media is derived from survey research by Merskin (1998), who sampled 190 self-identified Native American college students from a university in the Northwest U.S. Her findings indicated that although the majority of students own television sets (82%), viewing rates peak at 1 to 2 hours per day. Additionally, the majority of students who participated (69%) reported dissatisfaction with the programming available for adults, most often declaring that TV portrayals of Native Americans were both negative and inaccurate.

Audience Attributes

Alongside the usage patterns documented above, a variety of individual difference variables have also been found to impact on outcomes associated with racial/ethnic stereotyping and race-based evaluations. Such features are not only likely to influence effects of media exposure but also the interpretation of media messages themselves. In particular, viewers' own racial (ingroup) identification, adherence to stereotypes (e.g., racial attitudes), and real-world interracial contact each serve as moderators of race-based media effects.

Racial Identification

Research identifying the influential role of ingroup (racial) identification on race-based effects is rooted in the literature on social identity theory and self-categorization theory which suggests that manifestations of racial/ethnic bias are likely to vary as a result of the importance of one's own racial/ethnic identification to their own self-concept (Reid, Giles, & Harwood, 2005). From this perspective, as ingroup identification increases so too does the motivation to protect the status and interests of that group (Verkuyten & Brug, 2004). Accordingly, it is the degree of group salience that determines responses to intergroup contexts (Espinoza & Garza, 1985), including mediated, intergroup contexts (Mastro, 2003), such that individuals who are highly ingroup identified perceive greater disparities between ingroup and relevant outgroup members and judge outgroup members accordingly (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). Thus for media consumers high in racial/ingroup identification, exposure to stereotypical characterizations of

outgroup races/ethnicities is particularly likely to provoke more unfavorable/stereotypical judgments of those outgroup members and more advantageous evaluations of ingroup members (Mastro, 2003). Of course the availability of images privileging one's ingroup varies greatly depending on the race/ethnicity of the consumer. Consequently, the primary messages offered by the media may, for some, facilitate intergroup comparisons in favor of self. For others, these same images offer a threat to self, requiring more thoughtful selection of media content and necessitating strategic efforts to manage self-concept.

Racial Attitudes

Not surprisingly, existing racial attitudes also have been found to impact the effects of media exposure to racial/ethnic stereotypes. However, research in this domain has met with somewhat inconsistent results. To some extent, findings have revealed that a variety of stereotype endorsement measures and racial attitude measures moderate the relationship between exposure to media stereotypes and subsequent stereotypical judgments (Dixon, 2006; Gilliam et al., 1996; Peffley, Shields, & Williams, 1996). Among these studies, data suggest that for those high in racial antipathy, more punitive responses are triggered as a result of exposure to racial/ethnic stereotypes in the media. Still, others have been unable to replicate this relationship in seemingly parallel designs (Oliver et al., 2004; Oliver & Fonash, 2002), raising questions about the exact nature of this association.

Interracial Contact

Of course our own personal experiences also are known to moderate the effects of exposure to media messages (Hawkins & Pingree, 1990). Accordingly, racial/ethnic stereotypes in the media have been found to produce the greatest effect on consumers when real-world experiences are consistent with the messages offered by the media and/or when audience members have minimal/no real-world contact to pull from in forming their judgments (Fujioka, 1999; Tan, Fujioka, & Lucht, 1997; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz, 2007). From a more prosocial perspective, it could be said that positive contact experiences in the real-world minimize the effect of exposure to unfavorable racial/ethnic stereotypes in the media.

EFFECTS OF MEDIA ON RACIAL/ ETHNIC STEREOTYPING

Given the discrepancies in portrayals of different racial/ethnic groups in the media and the varying usage patterns associated with different races/ethnicities, it should come as no surprise that a variety of race-based effects have been linked with exposure. Indeed, these studies indicate that when it comes to effects of media exposure on majority as well as minority group members, the quality of content is critical. Although this may appear to be an oversimplification of a complex relationship, in essence it reflects the core findings in this area.

Priming Stereotypes in Majority Group Members

The bulk of the quantitative research examining the influence of racial/ethnic stereotypes in the media on consumers has utilized a priming framework. Priming in this context refers to the process through which information that has been recently activated by media consumption is used to guide judgments regarding target outgroup members. In the main, results from such investigations have demonstrated that even a single exposure to racial/ethnic stereotypes in the media can, at least in the short term, influence real-world evaluations of minorities (Dixon, 2006, 2007; Givens & Monahan, 2005), provoke stereotypic responses (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Mendelberg, 1997), and guide intergroup outcomes (Fryberg, 2003; Mastro, 2003).

A handful of experimental studies have provided evidence for these assertions. Johnson, Adams, Hall, and Ashburn (1997) examined the role of exposure to race and violent crime on attributions about Blacks. Their results demonstrated that alongside prompting stereotype-consistent responses, priming racialized depictions of crime additionally resulted in differential attributions for the behavior such that dispositional explanations are provided for Black perpetrators (particularly those implicated in violent crimes) whereas situational explanations are offered for White defendants. Consistent with these findings, Peffley, Shields, and Williams' (1996) investigation of the influence of race primes in crime news coverage on subsequent judgments revealed a significant association between the race of the depicted suspect and stereotypic evaluations. Similarly, data from Abraham and Appiah's (2006) examination of the role of implicit racial cues in news stories revealed that exposure to even subtle depictions of race/ethnicity can generate stereotypic responses in White consumers. The authors argued that this result demonstrates that the effect of media primes is more pronounced when the depicted trait is stereotypically associated with the target (Banaji, Hardin, & Rothman, 1993).

More blatantly prejudicial outcomes emerge in studies by Dixon and Maddox (2005) and Oliver et al. (2004). Their findings indicate that Black criminality is stereotypically and erroneously linked to overtly physical attributes such as skin tone and Afrocentric features. In particular, findings from Oliver et al. (2004) establish a link between exposure to crime news stories and misperceptions regarding the Afrocentric qualities of the Black individual depicted in the article; with these attributes identified as more pronounced when exposed to a violent crime story (compared with a non-stereotype story and a non-crime stereotype story). Further, Dixon and Maddox's (2005) results reveal that exposure to dark-skinned Black perpetrators (compared with Whites) generated increased concern and sympathy for the victim.

Alongside priming specific constructs, exposure is likely to activate semantically related cognitive constructs that can serve to bias a broader array of social judgments. Valentino's (1999) research demonstrated that certain issues (e.g., crime, welfare) have become race-coded topics and, as such, media coverage prompts stereotype-based responses regarding both the activated construct and associated constructs. Findings from Ford (1997) yielded parallel results revealing that priming a particular construct in memory not only affects judgments along that particular trait, but also activates broader schema for the target; influencing a variety of stereotypical traits beyond that which was primed.

Notably, the outlook is not all bad. Results from Bodenhausen et al. (1995) as well as Power, Murphy, and Coover (1996) each have shown that exposure to positive, counter-stereotypes in the media promotes more favorable race-based judgments. In particular,

Bodenhausen et al. (1995) examined the influence of exposure to Black media exemplars (i.e. Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordan) on Whites' racial attitudes. Their results indicated that activating positive media exemplars generates more sympathetic responses towards discrimination as a social problem and more favorable attitudes about outgroup members as a whole. Power, Murphy, and Coover (1996) investigated the effects of exposure to negative stereotypes and counter-stereotypes of Blacks in the news on White consumers' evaluations of Blacks. Although somewhat mixed, their results show that exposure to negatively stereotypic representations of Blacks generates more negative judgments of Blacks in unrelated news events whereas exposure to positive counter-stereotypes results in more favorable evaluations (compared with a control condition).

But priming alone provides only a portion of the picture. Researchers have begun to appreciate the importance of including measures of both immediate and long term exposure in tests of media effects. Indeed, findings from Gorham (2006) clearly demonstrated that both short term and over-time exposure to stereotypic depictions of Blacks in the media influence subsequent stereotype-based responses. In this case, these outcomes manifest in variations in language abstractness, used to reflect subtle (and unconscious) discriminatory responses. Dixon and Azocar (2007) further advance this notion by specifying the underlying mechanisms involved in this process. Consistent with findings outside the domain of stereotyping (Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Shrum, 2002), they argued that whereas recently activated constructs will be more accessible for use in processing and interpreting information, as the rate of exposure increases, the cognitive associations between the attribute and the attitude object will additionally strengthen (Dixon & Azocar, 2007). Accordingly, based on content analytic results looking at depictions of Blacks in the news, heavy consumption should lead to increased exposure to Blacks as criminals which in turn strengthens this cognitive association. Over time and repeated exposure this construct becomes chronically accessible in the minds of consumers when rendering judgments about Blacks. Consequently, when exposed to images of Black criminality in the news, the priming effect should be stronger among heavy viewers; ultimately influencing race-based evaluations. However, only inconsistent support was yielded from Dixon and Azocar's (2007) experimental test of these relationships. Nonetheless, their results suggest that increased exposure (*à la* cultivation) indeed contributes to the construction of race-based cognitions.

Cultivating Stereotypes in Majority Group Members

According to cultivation theory, television consumption provides audiences with a consistent set of messages that, over time and persistent exposure, influence consumers' real-world social perceptions such that the more a viewer watches, the more their views reflect those presented by TV, regardless of the veracity of the messages (Gerbner et al., 2002). Consequently, cultivation theory does not direct attention to the effects of exposure to any single message; rather, it is concerned with consumption of the system of messages presented by television—for example racial/ethnic stereotypes.

Initial survey research into the cultivation of racial/ethnic stereotypes revealed a significant relationship between exposure to television content and real-world racial perceptions (Armstrong, Neuendorf, & Brentar, 1992). Specifically, in their survey of White college students, Armstrong, Neuendorf, and Brentar (1992) found that increased exposure to TV news was associated with negative judgments regarding Blacks' socioeconomic status (consistent with content analytic results for the genre). The reverse was found for exposure to entertainment programming. Here, heavy exposure resulted in

more favorable estimates of Black socioeconomic status relative to Whites (again consistent with genre-specific depictions). Similar results were yielded in Busselle and Crandall's (2002) survey of White college students. As exposure to TV news increased, so too did the belief that differences in the socioeconomic status of Blacks versus Whites were a result of lack of motivation on the part of Blacks, rather than lack of opportunity. Alternatively, increasing exposure to sitcoms was associated with higher estimates of Blacks' educational attainment (with no such effect emerging regarding Whites' level of education). Finally, as exposure to dramatic programming increased, perceptions regarding disparities in the educational attainment of Whites versus Blacks also increased.

In order to provide additional clarity regarding the mechanisms involved in learning stereotypes from the media, Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, and Ortiz (2007) incorporated mental models assumptions into the cultivation framework to examine the association between media use, perceptions about media content, and real-world stereotyping of Latinos. In this context, mental models can be considered cognitive devices that allow viewers to incorporate subjective and objective components of mediated information into malleable versions of knowledge, or mental representations, for use in interpreting incoming messages (Johnson-Laird, 1983; Radvansky & Zacks, 1997). Accordingly, both the features of media messages and the manner in which viewers interpret and store these messages each come into play when determining exposure-based effects. The findings from their survey yielded support for this cultivation-based mental models approach, revealing that amount of consumption and perceptions regarding the content impact on stereotyping. In other words, how much people watch and what they perceive they are seeing in the content each contribute to forming stereotypes. In particular, their results indicate that the relationship between viewers' perceptions of television portrayals of Latinos and real-world evaluations of Latinos is stronger for heavier viewers. Notably, their findings additionally offer some support for the assertion that positive real-world contact can mitigate the impact of exposure.

Stereotypes and Political Reasoning among Majority Group Members

Assumptions from priming, cultivation, and models of policy reasoning each contribute to our understanding of the effects of exposure to media depictions of race/ethnicity on policy reasoning and political decision making. Although not rooted in one particular theory, the findings from this research provide valuable insights into the influence of exposure to media depictions of race/ethnicity on consumers' voting intentions. Here, research links racialized depictions of crime in the news with Whites' decision-making about policy issues (Mendelberg, 1997; Valentino, 1999). To illustrate, audience members exposed to news stories about a furloughed African American convict were more likely than those who were not exposed to be resistant to government efforts to reduce racial inequality (Mendelberg, 1997). Similar results are yielded in investigations of political candidates. Valentino's (1999) research examining the influence of racialized crime news stories on evaluations of presidential candidates reveals that less support was offered for Democratic (vs Republican) candidates when voters were exposed to minority perpetrators in crime news stories. Valentino contends that these news stories activated existing cognitions that Democrats are sympathetic to minorities and weak on crime, resulting in unfavorable evaluations of their candidates.

Studies addressing overall media consumption offer comparable results to those

yielded in priming-based research. Both Tan, Fujioka, and Tan (2000) and Mastro and Kopacz (2006) found that exposure to unfavorable media portrayals of racial/ethnic minorities led Whites to make more stereotypic evaluations of real-life minorities. These stereotypic evaluations, then, were negatively related to support for race-related policies such as affirmative action. In both studies, media exposure was the initial causal variable in a model of policy reasoning revealing that consumption of racial/ethnic stereotypes in the media can indeed sway real-world perceptions, ultimately predicting political decision making.

Media and Intergroup Outcomes Associated with Majority Group Members

Effects studies rooted in social identity theory also have begun to emerge which investigate the extent to which exposure to media portrayals of race can serve identity-based needs. From this perspective, viewing media depictions of race/ethnicity would be expected to provoke group-based comparisons in order to maintain and enhance self-concept (Harwood & Roy, 2005). Findings in this area have revealed that exposure to stereotypical portrayals of outgroup races on television can initiate race-based social comparisons which may be utilized to advantage the ingroup and bolster self-esteem (Mastro, 2003). Moreover, these media-generated intergroup comparisons favoring the ingroup are more pronounced among those high in racial ingroup identification.

When these social identity based notions are merged with assumptions from aversive racism, a more complete picture is provided with regard to the diverse intergroup outcomes that can be anticipated from exposure to particular features of media content. Specifically, although exposure to negative, stereotypic images of outgroup races/ethnicities can prompt intergroup comparisons favoring the ingroup, ambiguous or affiliative depictions appear to generate responses consistent with assumptions derived from aversive racism (Coover, 2001; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Kopacz, 2008). According to this framework, in an effort to maintain an egalitarian self-image, viewers will avoid discriminatory responses to media when behaviors could be attributed to race-based motives (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Indeed, when exposed to media images that present harmonious interracial contact, attempts to overcompensate for the appearance of racism have been found to emerge (Coover, 2001). This finding parallels self-categorization based research which demonstrates that viewing highly assimilated images of race/ethnicity results in more favorable evaluations of racial/ethnic outgroup members, among White viewers (Mastro, Tamborini, & Hullett, 2005). This is not to suggest, however, that prejudicial responses are on the decline. Instead, experimental research has demonstrated that race-based discriminatory reactions remain likely to surface if an opportunity to privilege the ingroup arises which would allow for continued maintenance of a non-racist self-image, such as an anonymous media viewing context or an ambiguous media message (Mastro et al., 2008).

The Influence of Media Exposure on Minority Group Members

What little is known about the effects of exposure to stereotypical media content on racial/ethnic minorities themselves, is somewhat mixed. Although it has been theorized that consuming negative images of one's ingroup could have a negative influence on self-concept and self-esteem, few empirical studies have explored this relationship. In one notable exception, Fryberg (2003) experimentally investigated the effects of

exposure to stereotypical depictions of Native Americans on Native American consumers. Her results indicated that consumption of unfavorable representations of one's ingroup has a negative effect on self-esteem and ingroup efficacy. Similarly, results from Rivadeneyra, Ward, and Gordon's (2007) survey of Latino high school students found that different dimensions of self-esteem were impacted negatively as a result of exposure to a variety of media genres. Global self-esteem, however, was unrelated to television viewing in their study. On the other hand, Subervi-Velez and Necochea (1990) found no relationship between television exposure and self-concept (for either English and Spanish-language TV) among Latino, elementary school children.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Taken together, what do these findings tell us? From the perspective of shared reality theory (Hardin & Higgins, 1996), the features of media content (alongside the attributes of audience members and the subsequent effects of exposure) work together to create a common version of the reality of race/ethnicity in society. According to this approach, reality itself is based on social verification, as collective legitimization (rather than individual experience) is the force that moves the subjective into the objective (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). If we acknowledge the conceivability of such claims, then the significance of media representations of race/ethnicity and their subsequent effects on consumers can not be over-emphasized as no channel for the creation of mutually shared reality has broader influence. This is particularly relevant to stereotypes as they "exist in part *because* they are based in social consensus" (Hardin & Higgins, 1996, p. 61). Given this, the implications of the current body of evidence on media and race may seem inauspicious—at least at first glance. However, this perspective offers cause for optimism. In particular, it implies that mass media can serve as a powerful mechanism for re-shaping and re-defining social reality to redress current inequities. All that remains is for racial/ethnic stereotyping in the media to be perceived with the same critical importance as issues such as violence and sex in the media.

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