

**The News and Race Models of Excellence Project—Overview
Connecting Newsroom Attitudes Toward Ethnicity and News Content**

by
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Introduction

What is the connection between attitudes in U.S. newspapers and TV newsrooms toward race and ethnicity, and the actual content of their news products? Can we infer a link between the newsroom climate regarding racial and ethnic diversity and what appears in the morning paper and on the evening TV news? And what can we learn from the successes and mistakes of news organizations as they struggle in some of this country's most diverse communities with the thorny and often divisive issues of race and ethnicity in America?

In the 1960s, issues of race and civil rights became headline news and, beginning in the 1970s, led institutions across the country to launch training programs for minority journalists. Newspaper editors told the Kerner Commission in 1968 that they had missed the root causes of the riots of 1964 and 1967 because, they said, they couldn't "find qualified Negroes." In 1978, on the 10th anniversary of the Kerner report, the American Society of Newspaper Editors—at the urging of many U.S. editors, including the first African-American newspaper owner, Robert C. Maynard—outlined its "Goal 2000" plan to recruit minorities into the news business.¹ The goal was that by the turn of the century, the demographics of newspaper newsrooms should match the racial and ethnic makeup of their communities.

In 1978, 4 percent of newsroom staff were journalists of color.² When 2000 rolled around, newspapers found that they had fallen far short of the target. ASNE's annual newsroom census found that the proportion of minority journalists in U.S. daily newspaper newsrooms was 11.85 percent, compared to the overall U.S. minority population of about 28 percent. Ominously, the number of African-American journalists

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at daily newspapers dropped slightly in the 2000 ASNE Census, indicating that Black journalists were leaving the business faster than others could come in.³

The TV news industry reports much better diversity numbers. The Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) reported in its 2000 newsroom census that the percentage of minorities in TV news hit 21 percent, an all-time high.⁴ The greater diversity in TV news may be in part due to now-defunct FCC license requirements that TV newsrooms broaden racial representation in their newsrooms.

Many of the reasons offered to explain such slow progress in expanding coverage of an increasingly multicultural America and in getting journalists of color into the news business are the same today as in 1968. News businesses “can’t find” minorities who want to work in journalism and have trouble keeping the journalists of color they do recruit. That also was an explanation for why study after study of news content in America showed there was so little content in newspapers and TV news about people of color—typically less than 10 percent of the total newshole or newscast, several content studies have found—and why so much of that content was negative and reflected poorly on people of color: just not enough minority journalists in the newsroom.

This study and other recent studies find that although news organizations work hard to identify and to recruit journalists of color, these journalists are generally more unhappy with the job than White journalists once they’re there. As the latest ASNE census finds, among journalists of color, African-Americans are more likely to leave the newspaper business than are Whites or other minority journalists. That is underscored by the survey portion of this study, which finds that African-American men are more dissatisfied with the news business and various aspects of their jobs than any other group.

ASNE and RTNDA, along with various other organizations, vowed in 2000 to redouble efforts at minority recruiting. RTNDA entered into a partnership with UNITY, the umbrella organization for the four minority journalists associations, to pursue new methods of expanding workforce diversity. ASNE has set new benchmark goals for the diversity of newspaper newsrooms—a new “parity” target by 2025, when the U.S. minority population is projected to reach 38.2 percent. The ASNE goal for the end of 2001 is 13.5 percent.⁵ Meanwhile, organizations such as the Ford Foundation, the Knight

Foundation and the Freedom Forum, the Poynter Institute and the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, among others, continue to pursue aggressive diversity initiatives.

This report is part of such an effort, a national research initiative of the Poynter Institute's "Media Diversity: Beyond 2000" project. The project was funded by the Ford Foundation, with additional support from the Maynard Institute, Utah State University, the University of Texas-Austin, the University of Southern California and San Francisco State University.

Historical Perspective

In the 1940s, novelist Langston Hughes created Jesse B. Semple, a Black man called "Simple" by his friends, whose front-porch commentary on life in Harlem included insights on life, race and the news. "The only time colored folks is front-page news is when there's been a lynching or a boycott or a whole bunch of us have been butchered or is arrested," Simple observed.⁶

Although it was not necessarily addressing directly questions of race in its 1947 report, the Hutchins Commission's prescription for a socially responsible press—notably its statement that a responsible press must present "a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society"—helped set a framework for the Kerner Commission 21 years later, which did look particularly at race and the press.⁷

As the Kerner Commission commented in 1968, it's as if people who aren't White "do not read newspapers or watch television, give birth, marry, die or go to PTA meetings." One Black man, interviewed by Kerner investigators, said, "The average Black person couldn't give less of a damn about what the media say. The intelligent Black person is resentful at what he considers to be a totally false portrayal of what goes on in the ghetto. Most Black people see newspapers as mouthpieces of the 'power structure.'"⁸

For some, change seems slow in coming. In 1990, in response to a major national survey, a Black journalist said, "We're still the invisible people."⁹ This is consistent with a study by veteran TV broadcaster and network executive Av Westin, who wrote in the April 2001 issue of *Brill's Content* that, because of TV news' "ratings-obsessed culture," skin color has everything to do with what appears on the evening news. "Every week,

every day, stories about African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians are kept off the air,” wrote Westin, a former top executive at ABC News and *20/20*, among other positions. “Based on the anecdotal evidence I encountered, I feel confident that racism is alive and well in many television newsrooms around the country.”¹⁰ Today, even as the latest U.S. Census figures show “minorities” becoming the majority in many urban areas and even in some states, press portrayals of people of color are still characterized by the same pathological perspective.

Marilyn Gist, a University of Washington scholar, says negative press images of people of color stem largely from ignorance. However well-intentioned reporters and editors may be, their views of the world are necessarily anchored in their own experiences, which tend to be largely White. “For much of its history, this country was mono-cultural and, with the exception and frequent exclusion of African Americans, it was racially homogeneous,” she wrote. “It is rarely necessary to think of one’s culture, values and perspectives when they rarely contrast with those that may be different.” As a result, she says, those who are gatekeepers in the predominantly White press naturally view events in the context of their own “perceptual biases and cultural anchors.”¹¹

Those perspectives do not reflect social reality. A lack of full understanding of the complexity of America means that the news media may often offend, however unintentionally, and so may drive away minority readers and viewers who are making up larger and larger proportions of the population. Since the late 1970s, news businesses have tried to make changes. A Latina editor from Texas told researchers in a 1988 survey of minority newspaper executives that newsroom diversity can help newspapers stop blundering around in the dark. “You don’t drive a car, don’t read a book with one eye covered,” she said. “Without a newsroom that reflects your community, you’re covering that community with partial vision.”¹²

The arguments for changing the way the news business does business in American are both moral and practical, as David Lawrence Jr., then-publisher of the *Miami Herald*, said in 1990: “Moral in the sense that what is proposed in the hiring, advancement and retention of minorities and women is simply a matter of being fair. Practical in the sense that it is absolutely crucial to the future of our business. . . . My own life experiences do not provide a complete and unabridged perspective on what is important to others in this

world,” he said. “That is why I must ‘people’ my newspaper with folks who know something more about many things than I.”¹³ Ten years later, Charles L. Overby, chairman of the Freedom Forum, said the same thing in calling for a “massive joint diversity effort” to address the problems of covering all of America. “Race is still the most divisive aspect of American society,” he said in 2000. “Paying attention to racial issues in the newsroom is more than good social policy—it’s good business.”¹⁴ In 1993, Robert C. Maynard had expressed similar sentiments when he said, “This country cannot be the country we want it to be if its story is told by only one group of citizens. Our goal is to give all Americans front-door access to the truth.”¹⁵

News executives recognize these issues. “Race is not a minority issue,” said Gerald Boyd said in 1997 when he was deputy managing editor of *The New York Times*. “It’s the most important domestic issue this country faces.”¹⁶ Three years earlier, former *Milwaukee Journal* editor Sig Gissler called it “America’s rawest nerve and most enduring dilemma.”¹⁷

Certainly, the dilemma still endures. A 2001 study found that most White people in the U.S. White Black people have reached social and economic parity. “Whether out of hostility, indifference or simple lack of knowledge, large numbers of White Americans incorrectly believe that African-Americans are as well off as Whites in terms of their jobs, incomes, schooling and health care,” wrote the authors of the study, which was sponsored by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, *The Washington Post* and Harvard University. “The economic and social distance between Blacks and Whites is far from closed, except in the minds of many White Americans.”¹⁸

Clearly, the disconnect across racial lines that has so long characterized American society persists, not only in the society at-large, but in the national news media whose job it is to help Americans talk to one another. In the news business, this disconnect has long been in evidence in what journalist and educator Chuck Stone has called the “tortoiselike” progress in all the areas where the news intersects with American society.¹⁹ In the newsrooms of America, even those that have managed to make significant gains in the hiring of journalists of color, it’s sometimes as if White journalists and their minority co-workers are on different planets. The Associated Press Managing Editors reported in 1996, “America’s newsrooms are two different worlds. The newsroom experiences of

White journalists and of minority journalists contrast so sharply that they are nearly mirror images of each other.” Citing the “wide perceptual gap” identified in *The Newsroom Barometer* study five years before, the APME said newsrooms have to get “on the same wavelength. This is important both for internal newsroom operations and for news coverage.”²⁰

The perspectives of newsroom managers also make a difference in terms of hiring and retaining newsroom staff. Ellis Cose, then-director of the Institute for Journalism Education, found in a 1985 study that minority journalists are more mobile than their White counterparts—more likely to “job-hop”—because they were more valuable in an employee pool that had so few journalists of color. But that’s not the only reason: Minority journalists changed jobs more often than their White counterparts, Cose said, because they felt less at home in their jobs.²¹ *The Newsroom Barometer* study in 1991 found the same. Part of the reason certainly was scarcity; the other part of the equation, as Pease reported in his *Barometer* study, was that minority journalists thought that their predominantly White managers not only didn’t value them, but had doubts about their abilities to do their jobs adequately. The “climate” for minorities in U.S. newsrooms, the majority of those respondents said, was not very comfortable.²²

Today, only about 9 percent of newspaper newsroom managers are minorities, and most of those are in mid-level positions. In TV newsrooms, RTNDA reports that 14 percent of news directors are minorities.²³ A survey of minority journalists—both newspaper and TV—at the 1999 UNITY conference in Seattle found that having a minority executive in a decision-making capacity could make a significant difference in how the news organization deals with diversity issues.²⁴

Former TV executive Westin, in his interviews with 100-plus TV news executives last year, found what he considered to be evidence of systematic racism in TV newsrooms: “It’s our dirty little secret,” one source told him. Driven by news staffers’ perceptions that news about people of color reduces all-important Nielsen ratings, TV journalists think trying to air stories that focus on minorities (especially stories about Black people) can jeopardize their careers. “[T]he crushing quest for ratings” means that “race is a criterion for story selection,” Westin reports. “On the local level [as opposed to the networks], closet racism is manifested by news departments that will not cover

murders or kidnappings in their minority communities but swarm over similar events in the white sections of town.”²⁵

A news director at a network affiliate, an African-American woman, told Westin: “We don’t like discussing race even in our newsrooms because it can make us uncomfortable, and if we’re uncomfortable, how do we make a team? . . . I maintain, however, that when dealing with issues regarding race, the newsrooms themselves first have to be prepared to deal with issues of race before covering issues of race.”²⁶

Clearly, the newsroom climate as regards race and ethnicity is critical in determining the final “complexion” of the news product.

The News and Race Models of Excellence Project

Aside from the staffing and management issues, the most basic concern is how the news product looks. This issue isn’t appearance, of course, but content. How does the news reflect and serve the people and communities it purports to cover? The other question is whether management and staffing decisions regarding racial diversity actually have an impact on the news product.

This research project attempts to take previous studies of news content and newsroom attitudes a step farther, to see what the connection is between the climate in the newsroom regarding race and ethnicity, and the content of the newspaper or evening newscast. The News and Race Models of Excellence Project was designed to evaluate the American press’s progress in its efforts to cover communities whose demographics, as the most recent U.S. census attests, are rapidly changing. The challenge was not only to find the recipes for success in reporting on some of the most racially and ethnically diverse communities in America, but to take a look inside some of the best newspaper and television newsrooms in the United States to gauge the climate as regards race and ethnicity.

Research in this area has included innumerable content audits by newspapers, TV companies and scholars. There have been only a few major studies of newsroom culture.²⁷ Even fewer studies have looked at the sociology of race and gender in the newsroom and its relationship to job satisfaction among minority journalists.²⁸ Beyond these efforts, no research as far as we can determine has attempted to connect attitudes in

the newsroom regarding race and ethnicity issues in hiring and in content to the actual content of the news product.

Thus, the question here is whether connections can be made linking:

- a) management efforts regarding racial diversity in hiring and content,
- b) staff attitudes regarding issues of diversity in the workplace and in the performance of the news organization, and
- c) the actual content of the news product.

One key hypothesis of this project is that diverse newsrooms, with staff members who believe in racial diversity and inclusivity, will likely create an editorial product that is more diverse, more sensitive to issues of multiculturalism, and better able to cover the changing demographics of the communities in which they operate. Thus, we theorize, the closer together White and minority journalists are attitudinally regarding race and ethnicity—the more they agree on diversity questions in the workplace and in coverage—the more effective they will be as a team in confronting and exploring these issues both in the workplace and in the content of their news product. The farther apart they are attitudinally, we suggest, the less inclusive their news product will be.

How do the attitudes of journalists and the “climate” regarding issues of race in the newsroom play out when it comes to what the news staff covers and how communities are reflected in the news? Can the quality and quantity of news be predicted in any way by the attitudes and sensitivity of journalists in the workplace regarding issues of racial diversity? We believe the answer is yes.

This initial report offers some overviews of the results of this multi-faceted study. Future reports are planned detailing the newsroom surveys and the content audits of the TV newscasts and newspapers. As for this report, some themes stand out:

- There is more coverage of racial and ethnic minorities in these newspapers and newscasts than has generally been the case according to other content audits: something on the order of twice as much or more.
- There also is positive news to report regarding the attitudes in the newsroom about issues of diversity. While it’s not anything close to perfect in terms of workplace interactions, the climate is less chilly at these newsrooms than it was in newspapers surveyed 10 years ago.

- Management attitudes regarding the importance of covering minorities and diversity issues clearly makes a difference.
- Although perceptions and coverage are better (in some cases markedly better) at these news organizations, there still exist problems that need work. Wide disagreements persist between White journalists and journalists of color when it comes to defining the role race and ethnicity play in the work place or coverage that some say casts people of color too often as entertainers or criminals.

Although we have not discovered the straight-line correlation we sought, it does seem clear that the degree to which news managers can communicate their vision regarding diversity to the newsroom, and the degree to which the journalists and other employees buy into that vision, heavily influence whether news coverage will include the full diversity of the communities journalists serve.

One thing does seem to be clear about these newspapers and TV stations: Across the board, they included much more diverse coverage than has been the norm in the U.S. media in the past. Clearly, these news organizations are among the “best” in this regard: Overall, 39 percent of the TV news and about 38 percent of the newspaper items coded for this study dealt with people of color, a vast improvement over other content studies that have found the proportion of minority-related news to be more typically below 10 percent of the total newshole.

This finding may be, in part, an artifact of the diversity of the communities in which these news organizations operate. But it is also, we argue, a result of concerted and dedicated effort on the part of these newspaper and TV news executives and their staffs to cover their communities more completely.

Some bullets about the content of the newspapers in this study:

- The tone of the news coverage of people of color in these newspapers was, overall, far more upbeat and positive than previous newspaper audits have shown.
- A significant percentage of the coverage was judged to be “mixed,” or equally positive and negative, suggesting fair and balanced reporting on issues of racial diversity.
- In this sample, people of color were depicted living out their everyday lives. In past content studies, racial and ethnic minorities tended to appear in the news more often when they were in some kind of trouble or otherwise at risk.

- Although crime was still a leading topic of news about minorities in this study, this was primarily because of the focus of just one of the five newspapers. At the other four newspapers, crime news relating to minority groups or individuals was less prominent.

- On the down side, almost half the people of color in the news were sports figures or entertainers. Framing people of color so predominantly as athletes or entertainers reduces them to curiosities or sources of amusement, as if—as the Kerner Commission observed in 1968—minorities don't lead normal lives.

- The dominance of sports news demonstrates the challenges even the best newspapers face in providing more accurate and complete portrayals of racial and ethnic minorities in the news.

On the television side, the stations analyzed here show a more inclusive picture of minorities in their evening newscasts compared to previous studies. Those studies have shown that people of color have low visibility on the evening news, and then usually in negative contexts. These six stations featured minorities in 39 percent of the stories overall, and in significant roles as newsmakers 20 percent of the time (see Table 16). For some obvious reasons, the amount of news coverage featuring people of color was greater in communities with greater racial and ethnic diversity (El Paso, for example). But the presence of people of color on the evening news also was greater at stations whose overall quality of coverage was better, regardless of local demographics.

Other key findings about these TV newscasts:

- Latinos and African-Americans appear most often in sports and in crime stories, even as crime rates nationwide are in decline.

- A difference from previous practices in the portrayal of minorities in news, and certainly when compared to findings from previous studies, is the lack of a *dominating* negative skew in the inclusion of minorities (in this case primarily Black people and Latinos).

- Crime coverage was notably more neutral or even-handed at these six stations than has typically been the case in TV news.

- There appears to be some connection between the attitude among the newsroom staff regarding issues of racial diversity and the diversity of content of the final newscast. The stronger connection, however, may be between management dedication to diversity

issues and the practices of the news staff, and especially the presence of people of color in decision-making positions in the newsroom hierarchy.

Still, it is not always clear that the newsroom rank-and-file understand fully how much their bosses value diversity. For managers who already make diversity a priority, the challenge is to get that message across to the staff.

Methodology

The News and Race Models of Excellence Project selected six metropolitan newspapers and six major-market television news stations as partners in the project. The newspaper and TV partners operate in some of the most diverse cities across America, including New York, Detroit, Seattle, San Francisco, Tampa, El Paso and Dallas (See “About the News and Race Project,” Appendix). The news organizations were selected on the basis of:

1. their reputation and record in areas of diversity performance, and the recommendations of informed experts;
2. their geographic location;
3. their corporate ownership; and
4. the demographics of their areas of operation.

In the initial phases of the study, news organizations were surveyed and selected. Because the goal of this project was to identify some of the best practices of newspaper and TV news operations, we were looking for exemplary newsrooms from which other newspapers and TV news stations could draw lessons. What were some of the “best” print and TV news organizations nationwide in terms of their hiring, retention and promotion of journalists of color, the climate in the newsroom for minority journalists, their performance in covering racially diverse communities? Candidates for the project were nominated by members of minority journalists associations and others in the news business and academe. We also culled candidates from a database of organizations’ diversity initiatives compiled by the Poynter Institute as part of its “Media Diversity: Beyond 2000” program.

We were looking for a small sample of newspapers and TV stations from across the country (this project was not intended to be a generalizable picture of all U.S.

newsrooms) on which we could focus intensely. We were looking for newsrooms with good racial and ethnic diversity, located in communities that were themselves diverse. We also wanted a broad geographic range and a variety of corporate owners.²⁹

After selecting and recruiting the 12 partners, we conducted a yearlong content analysis of the news product of each of them. This was a random sample of the news content of 52 issues of each of the six newspapers and approximately 72 newscasts from each of the six TV stations. The samples were collected from January 1 to December 31, 1999. Not every newspaper could provide the issues on the dates sampled, but the percentage of missing dates for five of the six newspapers was not enough to affect the overall findings. *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* provided only about half of the sample dates, however, so it was dropped from the overall content audit.

These samples were analyzed for a wide range of diversity-related items, ranging from the race of the reporters to the tone of the stories and whether stories featured central involvement of people of color. In essence, we sought to answer the question, “What was the ‘complexion’ of the news content of these 11 major news products?” The second phase was a survey of the journalists in the 12 newsrooms on their attitudes regarding such issues of racial diversity as hiring, job assignments and the performance of the news operation. What was the “climate” in those newsrooms?

Based on our investigations and the recommendations of colleagues who pay close attention to these issues, we recruited the following news organizations for this study.³⁰

Newspapers

- *The Dallas Morning News*
- *The News-Journal* (Wilmington, Del.)
- *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*
- *The San Jose Mercury News*
- *The Seattle Times*
- *The South Florida Sun-Sentinel*

TV Stations

- KRON-San Francisco
- KTVA-Anchorage
- KVIA-El Paso
- WFLA-Tampa
- WNBC-New York
- WXYZ-Detroit

All 12 news organizations agreed to provide company background and information on hiring and personnel practices, especially diversity policies and practices. They also agreed to provide copies of the news product on the randomly selected dates identified by the content audit teams and to circulate the newsroom attitude survey in their newsrooms.

Newspaper Content Audits

The six newspapers in the study were analyzed for the racial and ethnic diversity of their content, with 52 issues of each newspaper randomly selected and analyzed for the quantity and quality of their news coverage of communities of color. The coders, based at San Francisco State University and the University of Southern California and directed by Erna Smith, analyzed the “minority-related” stories and photographs appearing in the random sample. The sample included one issue per week of each newspaper over the yearlong period. Only “minority-related” news published on front pages, section fronts or inside display pages without advertisements was analyzed. Aside from the practical impediments to analyzing all the items in all the sections of the newspapers, another rationale for focusing on the front pages, sections fronts and display pages is that they represent what the newspaper considers most important. These pages are the “face” that the newspaper puts on the community, the items its editors consider deserving of prominence. Clearly, there’s much more content on the inside, but limiting the analysis to the front pages illustrates the relative importance these newspapers placed on minority-related news.

The largest home-delivery edition of each newspaper was selected for the audit. Zoned issues or sections were not included.

“Minority-related” news was defined as photographs, stories, columns, reviews, editorials, letters to the editor and briefs that:

- referred to racial/ethnic minorities and/or other ethnic/race-oriented issues (such as affirmative action, bilingual education, etc.);
- depicted an event, situation or issue that a person of color caused or clearly helped cause to become newsworthy; and
- was accompanied by a photograph that featured a person of color who caused or clearly helped cause the situation depicted in the news story.

A total of 4,531 “minority-related” news items were analyzed using a coding instrument consisting of 25 questions focused on the quantity and quality of the coverage (see newspaper “Coding Sheet” in Appendix). Of those questions, 18 were about the news stories—e.g. story placement, length, topic, tone, minority group depicted in coverage and whether the news item was a photo, brief, column, editorial, review, brief,

etc. The remaining seven questions focused on the ethnicity, gender and social role of the sources in the story.

To evaluate coverage quality, an analysis was undertaken of the amount and tone of “minority-related” coverage and the social role people of color played in the coverage. We chose to evaluate these characteristics because they mirror the most common criticisms about news coverage of people of color: That there isn’t much coverage in the first place and, when there is, it’s mostly negative stories depicting minorities either at risk or in trouble. Each newspaper was evaluated based on these findings and compared to the newsroom “Race Climate Quotient” to evaluate the relationship between newsroom staffers’ attitudes toward race and the content of the newspaper.

TV News Content Audits

The “primary” evening newscasts of each of the TV operations were analyzed by a team from the University of Texas-Austin, directed by Federico Subervi. The goal was to obtain, a representative sample that included at least one newscast per week for weekdays and one per month for weekends, for a total of 72 newscasts from each station.³¹ The specific dates were randomly selected and each station was asked to provide video copies of the newscasts.

Because all TV stations air multiple newscasts through the day, we asked them to decide which one they felt was the “flagship” newscast. For most stations, that was the 6 p.m. show. While the goal was to get 72 newscasts from each station, a few programs could not be coded for five of the six stations due to either technical difficulties with tapes or missed dates at the source. We examined 408 newscasts: 71 from KVIA, 70 each from WNBC and WXYZ, 69 from WFLA, 66 from KRON, and 61 from KTVA. Altogether, these yielded 8,203 valid news stories (See distribution by station in Table 15).

At least two coders independently reviewed each newscast. For each of the minority-related 8,203 stories, they coded variables such as length; main topic; number of minorities as anchors and reporters; ethnic/racial characteristics and number of minorities as newsmakers and/or sources; their apparent positions or social roles, and tone of the story (see appendix for the Coding Manual). The most important and discriminate

variable was whether the news item had central involvement of minorities. The overall inter-coder reliability coefficient was 95 percent.

Newsroom Attitude Surveys—Overview

At the same time, a sample of the newsroom staff at all 12 newsrooms was surveyed on their attitudes regarding their jobs, the role race plays in their newsrooms, and their perception of the station's or newspaper's performance regarding the hiring, retention and coverage of racial and ethnic minorities.

The survey, conducted by Ted Pease and Brenda Cooper at Utah State University, was designed to measure attitudes in the newsrooms of our 12 partner organizations on a range of topics relating to both job satisfaction and, especially, their attitudes toward the role that race and ethnicity play in the workplace and in news content. Further, we sought to draw connections between these attitudes and the content of their newspapers and TV newscasts.

But before we look at whether and how the newsroom climate regarding race and ethnicity may be a predictor of media performance in covering an increasingly diverse America, let's look at some of the attitudes that prevail in these 12 newspaper and television newsrooms (Note: A full report on the "climate" of these newsrooms comparing these results to the 1991 *Newsroom Barometer* study, will be forthcoming. The basic results of the surveys are released now as annotated tables for newspapers and for the TV partners. Reports focusing on how individual companies fared in comparison to the aggregate data will be sent to the individual companies.)

The three-page newsroom survey (see appendix) went to the newsroom staff at all 12 news organizations. The survey instrument replicates Pease's 1991 *Newsroom Barometer*, which surveyed 1,328 journalists at 27 daily newspapers, measuring and contrasting the attitudes of White and minority journalists on diversity issues. The News and Race Models of Excellence survey included 51 questions: 13 dealing with general job satisfaction and retention issues in the news business; 32 dealing with issues of diversity and gender in the workplace and in the news business generally; and six questions on the respondents' demographics. Respondents returned 970 valid surveys,

which were coded and evaluated, 758 from newspaper journalists and 212 from television journalists.

Demographics

Just over 71 percent of respondents were White; 25.7 percent were journalists of color (about 5 percent did not self-identify); 53.9 percent were male, 43.9 percent were female (about 3 percent said they were “other”). White men had been in the news business longest—an average of just over 20 years; the newest arrivals among these respondents were Asian-Americans and Hispanic men, with an average of just over 10 years in the news business. Nearly 93 percent graduated from college, 59 percent with degrees in journalism.

Among the 758 newspaper respondents, 53.4 percent were male, 43.8 percent female; 73.5 percent were White; 24 percent were people of color (7.4% Black, 6.9% Latino, 4.8% Asian-American, 0.4% Indian); 7.1 percent did not specify and were designated as “Other.”³² The average age of the newspaper journalists was 38 years. About 76 percent had graduated from college, 27 percent had some graduate school; 64 percent had graduated with journalism/mass communications degrees.

Among the 222 television journalists, 55 percent were male, 41 percent were women; 63.5 percent were White, 31.5 percent were minorities (12.6% African-American; 7.2%, Latino; 4.5% Asian; and 1.4% Native American); and 10.8 percent did not self-identify by race and were designated as “Other.”³³ Their average age was 38. About 77 percent had graduated from college, 63 percent with journalism/mass communication degrees; 16 percent had at least some graduate school education.

The survey focused primarily on two areas: job satisfaction in the news business, and the importance of racial inclusiveness in hiring and news content. This report will focus on the latter issues, but it is instructive to mention briefly some of the key findings regarding job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

The survey asked respondents their views on 13 questions pertaining to their choice of a career in television or newspapers, ranging from a series of basic satisfaction scales to questions about their career objectives and goals. Overall, three-quarters of these journalists said they were satisfied with their choice of a journalism career, and 65

percent said they expected still to be working in the news business five years from now (although about 60 percent of them said they probably would be at different companies by then).

If they had it to do all over again, 65 percent of them said they'd choose a journalism career. Extrapolating from the *Newsroom Barometer* study, these numbers represent some significant erosion in the level of job satisfaction of all newspaper journalists from 10 years ago, especially among African-Americans. That finding is consistent with the latest ASNE census figures showing that Black newspaper journalists are leaving slightly faster than others are being hired.

Among TV journalists, African-Americans expressed the highest degree of satisfaction with their career choice—81.5 percent—compared to 74 percent of White journalists, 70 percent of Asians and just 56 percent of Hispanics. More than 25 percent of White respondents said they did not expect to be working in TV news five years from now. Nearly one-third of Hispanic respondents said they would not make the same career choice if they had it to do over again.

Attitudes About Race in the Newsroom and in the News Product

The survey also asked 32 questions dealing with various aspects of how race and ethnicity “plays” in the newsroom. A much more comprehensive look at all those data also will appear in a separate report. But at this stage we can summarize our findings this way: In general, the radical disconnect in the attitudes of minority and White journalists that was discovered in the 1991 *Newsroom Barometer* report—what was termed a “perceptual gap”—still exists in 2001, but it is a narrower gap in these 12 newsrooms.

For the purposes of this initial overview report, we will look at just a handful of key questions that get at respondents' attitudes toward diversity in hiring, advancement, professional opportunity and news content. Responses to these key questions help us construct a “climate quotient” that serves as a predictor linking the newsroom environment regarding racial and ethnic diversity with the actual content of the news product. A critical part of the analysis of these responses is the comparison of attitudes expressed by White journalists with those of minority journalists. This is not to erect some kind of racial us-versus-them dichotomy or to create divisions between White journalists and journalists of color, but to attempt to describe empirically the extent of the

racial perceptual and attitudinal disconnect that may exist in newspaper and TV newsrooms. That gap, we suggest, may get in the way of effective coverage. For the purposes of this discussion, we will focus on the questions that get at two aspects of journalists' attitudes regarding race and ethnicity:

- 1) the journalists' support for racial and ethnic diversity efforts in the workplace and diversity content in the news product, and
- 2) their assessment of their company's overall performance on diversity.

Nine questions focused on those issues. Four of them get at the journalists' support for diversity efforts by asking how important the respondents considered certain initiatives to be (See survey questions 18, 19, 24 and 25; see survey form in Appendix). Five questions examined how well respondents thought their organizations performed regarding such things as opportunities for advancement of journalists of color, the company's efforts to provide diversity training, the importance of coverage of minority communities, and an assessment of the "climate" as it relates to people of color (See survey, questions 15, 21, 30, 37 and 41 in Appendix).

Responses to these nine questions were analyzed and a score assigned that makes up the "race climate quotient," a description of an attitudinal "climate" and distance between White journalists and journalists of color.

The "Race Climate Quotient"

The Newsroom "race climate quotient" is designed to combine responses from these nine questions to assess in an aggregate way the level of agreement—or disagreement—between journalists of color and their White co-workers. The underlying assumption is that the newsroom "climate" in terms of embracing diversity can be assessed not only through the direct responses of journalists to questions, but also by evaluating the extent of agreement or disagreement between White journalists and their minority co-workers on these topics. That is, if approximately the same percentage of respondents in each group expresses the same opinion on an issue, then it indicates that everyone is more or less on the same page, that they see the issue similarly. But if there is a large gap in the responses by race and ethnicity, then it may be said that an attitudinal disconnect exists. Clearly, this could contribute to the relative comfort level in the newsroom for all

staffers, which may, we suggest, also show up in the quality of news coverage about people of color and their communities. Obviously, this kind of research method necessarily lumps individuals together, and so offers only a general picture of what may be occurring. Individuals and groups differ, but although we combine all minority respondents in this process, we can see significant attitudinal differences by race and by gender that, we believe, can be instructive to employers and managers.

Table 1: “Race Climate Quotient”

	Support for Diversity Efforts	Assessment of Company Effort	Aggregate
All Respondents (N=970)	+45.1	-80.3	125.4
All Newspapers (n=758)	+50.9	-68.4	119.3
All TV stations (n=212)	+28.9	-117.3	146.2
<u>Newspapers</u>			
<i>The Dallas Morning News</i>	+45.0	-99.8	144.8
<i>The News-Journal (Wilmington)*</i>	+77.3	-89.6	166.9
<i>The St. Louis Post-Dispatch</i>	+115.4	-118.9	234.3
<i>The San Jose Mercury-News</i>	+26.8	-8.6	35.4
<i>The Seattle Times</i>	+37.7	-103.5	141.2
<i>The South Florida Sun-Sentinel</i>	+52.2	-57.0	109.2
<u>TV Stations</u>			
KRON, San Francisco	+32.8	-204.6	237.4
KTVA, Anchorage	-32.7	-92.5	125.2
KVIA, El Paso	-103.8	+4.1	107.9
WFLA, Tampa	+73.6	-215.8	289.4
WNBC, New York	+27.9	-41.8	69.7
WXYZ, Detroit	-32.2	-214.6	246.8

(*Note: The *News-Journal* sample was small (40) and included only six minorities, so this comparison is difficult at best, and cannot be called representative.)

Explanation

What does this mean? The optimum score using this process would be zero, which would mean that journalists across the racial and ethnic spectrum are in sync when it comes to supporting diversity efforts and assessing their company’s performance. The point is that everyone assesses the situation in approximately the same way and would be starting from the same place.

A positive score means that minority journalists answered more positively than did White journalists. So a positive score on “Support for Diversity Efforts” means that minority respondents are more supportive than are their white colleagues of efforts to improve diversity in hiring and content. A negative score for “Assessment of Company Effort” means that minority journalists think their company is doing a poorer job regarding diversity than White journalists do.

(For example: In Table 1, the “Support for Diversity Efforts” score for newspapers is +50.9, and for TV stations +28.9. This indicates two things: 1) that minority journalists both in newspapers and TV news are more supportive of efforts to improve diversity than are White journalists; and 2) that White and minority journalists in TV newsrooms are closer in agreement on these topics (+28.9) than are their newspaper counterparts (+50.9). In the category of “Assessment of Company Effort,” both the newspaper score (-68.4) and the TV score (-117.3) are negative, indicating that journalists of color give their company a lower “grade than do their White colleagues. But the “disconnect” between journalists of color and their White co-workers appears to be greater in this measure at TV newsrooms than in newspapers: -117.3 vs. -68.4.

In the right-hand column above, Table 1 also reports an aggregate of the two “climate quotients,” a number that provides some insight into the overall “distance” in attitudes toward diversity between White and minority journalists.

The closer the quotient gets to zero, the more agreement there is across racial groups in the newsroom, and, thus, the better the “climate” for achieving diversity goals. Over all, journalists of color are more supportive of making extra efforts to improve diversity, and much more critical of the job their company is doing to improve diversity in hiring and in content.

There are exceptions. For example, the responses from *The San Jose Mercury News* and *The Seattle Times* indicate unanimity in the newsroom in support of diversity efforts in general. Interestingly, *The Mercury News* staffers also rate their company high for its efforts to achieve racial diversity, although the *Times* staff does not. (Note: The survey was conducted before the well-publicized strike in Seattle and the resignation of Publisher Jay Harris in San Jose.) Among TV news operations, the newsroom staff at New York’s WNBC-TV, the network’s flagship station, ranked it highly in terms of

general agreement on the importance of diversity efforts, as did the staff at WXYZ, KTVA and KRON (note that KRON's ownership changed shortly after the study period). The WNBC journalists also rated their company well in terms of the job the station does regarding diversity. In El Paso, KVIA-TV's journalists were in almost complete agreement in terms of their assessment of their company's performance in promoting diversity.

We predict that news organizations where journalists of color and their White co-workers are closer in agreement on issues of race and ethnicity will also produce better coverage of their diverse communities. The news products of newsrooms where minority and White journalists are in more *disagreement* on these questions will be reflected in news content that is less complete, less positive in tone, less representative of diversity in their coverage areas. Can we link newsroom "climate" with the content of the news product?

The answer to that question from the content analyses is "Yes" and "Sometimes."

The Newspaper Content Audits

The newspaper content audits are best understood within the context of the major audit findings over recent years for all newspapers. More than half the coverage analyzed here (51%) consisted of photographs, followed by news stories (33%), columns (6%), briefs (4%), reviews and letters to the editor (2% each), and unsigned editorials (1%).

In the 4,531 items analyzed from the five newspapers³⁴ in the study, Black people were depicted in almost half the "minority-related" coverage (46%), followed by White people (26%), Hispanics (14%), Asians (7%), Native Americans (2%) and people of "other" or mixed ethnic origin (5%).

More than half the stories had five or more sources, which is a good indicator of the depth of the coverage. But about 40 percent of the minority-related coverage was about sports and entertainment, with an emphasis on sports. Other top news topics were feature/human interest (12%); social welfare, which consisted mostly of education news, child welfare, health care, immigration and poverty (12%); and crime (11%) (See Table 2).

The emphasis on sports and entertainment coverage drove the findings. Most of the people of color (30 percent to 40 percent) depicted in the coverage who could be identified by race and ethnicity were athletes and other sports figures, such as coaches, managers, executives and union representatives (Note: Identification of a subject's race and ethnicity, and sometimes gender is always problematic in analyzing news content. When there is an accompanying image featuring the subject, it's easier. Sometimes a surname is a clue, although we all know Anglos with Hispanic surnames or Asians named "Smith." If the story subject's ethnicity was not clear, either through context or accompanying images, it could not be coded for race and ethnicity. Obviously, in the case of sports and entertainment celebrities, race and ethnicity is generally widely known, even without a photo. An argument could be made that the emphasis on sports and entertainment reflects social reality and American preoccupations with MTV, Tiger Woods and Barry Bonds.

Despite the emphasis on sports and entertainment, some promising coverage did emerge in the study that demonstrates how far some newspapers have come in improving coverage of people of color. There were slightly more minority feature/human interest stories than crime. Although many feature stories centered on cultural events, such as Black History Month and Cinco De Mayo, others were "color-blind" stories depicting racial and ethnic minorities as everyday people in everyday situations, such as a story on people seeking greater meaning in their work and careers.

Furthermore, more than half of that coverage was upbeat or positive in tone. These findings are in sharp contrast to numerous previous content studies, which showed that people of color were mostly depicted in a negative light and rarely in stories about their everyday lives. However, the tone of coverage in this study varied sharply according to topic. Not surprisingly, sports news tended to be more upbeat, while crime and social welfare news tended to be more negative.

The percentage of the total newshole devoted to "minority-related" coverage could not be determined in this study, because only certain pages of the newspapers were analyzed—the front page, section fronts and other prominent display pages. This was a decision of practicality because of the size of the project. But it also reflects a basic

Table 2: Topics of Minority News

Sports/entertainment	1812 (40%)
Social Welfare	544 (12%)
Feature/human interest	544 (12%)
Crime	498 (11%)
Politics/governance	362 (8%)
Civil rights	318 (7%)
Social interest	181 (4%)
Calamities	136 (3%)
Business/economy	91 (2%)
Other topics	45 (1%)
Total	4,531

journalistic assumption that what's most important is what leads. Some might complain that much more content focusing on people of color appears on inside pages and in zoned editions, and they could be correct. But there is no question that the "face" of a newspaper—its view of the world and what's important in it—appears on the front page and, to a somewhat lesser extent, on the front pages of the newspaper's sections. And, since the importance journalists place on a story can literally be measured in inches, some insight into the weight the newspaper places on certain kinds of coverage can be gained by examining the percentage of longer stories in each newspaper.

Given the diversity of the communities in which these five newspapers are located, the prominence of news about people of color is not surprising. On the other hand, content audits of newspaper (and TV news) over many years have found that the percentage of news about minorities and their communities routinely has lagged behind the actual population, with the percentage of newshole covering people of color typically in the single digits or possibly low teens in communities where the minority population is often much greater. In this study, other factors also bear noting. Many of the top-ranking government and/or elected officials in the communities in which these newspapers were located were people of color. Also, during the time of the study, the publishers and/or senior editors of three of the five newspapers in the study were people of color, and the percentage of the newsroom staff at these newspapers who were minority also was up to three times greater than the average at U.S. daily newspapers overall.³⁵

To determine if a relationship exists between the "climate" for diversity in the newsroom and the coverage of racial diversity by these five newspapers, the amount and tone of coverage and the social roles minorities played in the coverage were analyzed for

each newspaper. Table 3 reports the lengths of the five newspapers' minority-related stories. A story's length may be an indicator of its importance, but other factors obviously come into play, including the size of the newshole and the newspaper's tradition as a "writer's paper" or an "editor's paper." Most of the items, by far, were news stories, but the numbers reported below also include editorials, letters to the editor, briefs, columns and reviews.

Table 3: Lengths of Minority-Related Stories

Story Length

6 inches or less	298 (14%)
6-10 inches	397 (18%)
10 inches or more	1505 (68%)

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Stories 10 inches or more</u>	<u># Minority-Related news stories</u>
<i>South Florida Sun-Sentinel</i>	450 (77%)	585
<i>Seattle Times</i>	298 (76%)	392
<i>San Jose Mercury-News</i>	437 (73%)	599
<i>News-Journal</i> (Wilmington, DE)	115 (63%)	182
<i>Dallas Morning-News</i>	320 (52%)	442

How does this measure of content quality compare to the "climate quotients" of newsroom attitudes? The number of stories that fit in a newspaper is a function of the size of the paper's newshole, but the proportion of longer stories may also be seen as an indicator of editorial dedication to the subject matter. In this yearlong sample, *The South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, *The Seattle Times* and *The San Jose Mercury-News* ran the most minority-related stories, and the *Mercury-News*, *Sun-Sentinel* and *Seattle Times* ran the largest proportion of longer minority stories. Looking back at the "climate quotients" (See Table 1), newsroom staffs in San Jose, Seattle, Dallas and Fort Lauderdale expressed high or fairly high agreement on support for diversity efforts. Although the "climate quotients" and amounts of minority-related coverage do not line up exactly, the juxtaposition suggests that a predictor of inclusive coverage may indeed be contained in the attitudes and perceptions of the people who produce it. This may be intuitive, but it has not been tested empirically in this way before. The papers with the longest minority-related news stories also expressed high agreement between minority and White

journalists on one or both of the “climate quotients.” In other words, the more staffers who were on the same page regarding diversity efforts, the greater the amount (depth and quantity) of coverage about people of color.

Obviously, news coverage is a product of many factors that have nothing to do with newsroom commitment to diversity. Deadlines, staffing levels, beat structures, uncooperative sources, the newspaper’s reputation in communities of color and even the way news is defined in different newsrooms all pose challenges to more inclusive coverage. But commitment, both from “upstairs” and among the rank-and-file, remains the first step in overcoming these challenges.

Tone of coverage

The coverage also was analyzed to determine whether it reflected well, badly, both or neither on the people of color it portrayed. A point scale was devised to rank the four tone characteristics (upbeat, downbeat, mixed (both upbeat and downbeat) and neutral). The points for coverage tone in each newspaper were totaled and divided to establish a mean score for each of these five newspapers. Keep in mind that almost half the total coverage focusing on race and ethnicity in the five newspapers was upbeat and included sports and entertainment coverage. Just over one-quarter of the total coverage was negative. Removing sports and entertainment coverage from the equation would sharply change these results.

Defining the “tone” of a news item is a challenge for coders. Basically, news items that reflected what coders and readers could agree was “good news” for the individuals portrayed and/or the minority community being depicted in the story were coded as positive. If it was bad news for the individuals or that minority community, it was coded as negative. So, for example, a story about the opening of a Korean grocery might likely be coded as positive. A story about how a Korean grocery is resented by residents of other races in the neighborhood would be negative. Clearly, most crime news would be bad, but not always: “Ex-boyfriend accused of killing woman, stabbing her son” clearly is negative; “Neighborhood rallies to fight crime” is mixed. “Local kid makes good” *might* be a positive story unless, as some cognitive scholars have pointed out, the story frames the local kid as an anomaly, as someone who succeeds *in spite* of her/his race or ethnicity or gender. Defining “tone” is perhaps the most difficult part of this process,

because it depends on so many variables—the facts of the story itself, the approach of the journalist, the perceptions of the reader/coder. But it's important.

What this attempts to do is to quantify how a story is perceived when it comes out. Part of the criticism of the news media has been that there's only "bad news" about people of color. That clearly has sometimes been the case. It is one of the reasons newspaper readers and TV news viewers disconnect from the news. Thus, this difficult measure attempted to have coders "see" and agree with each other on whether the people being covered might perceive news items as positive or negative.

The strongest relationship between the tone of minority news content and the newsroom climate could be seen at *The San Jose Mercury-News*, but overall newsroom attitudes did not appear to be as good an indicator of the tone of the coverage as it was of the quantity of coverage.

Still, the overall findings on tone bear special attention because they contrast sharply with past content audits that show minority news coverage tends to be negative. The sports coverage clearly affected the findings because much of it consisted of game stories in which minority athletes were both winners and losers. But even more "hard news" reporting on social issues in this sample was almost as likely to be mixed (balanced) or neutral in tone than it was to be negative in tone. This is a change from most content studies of minority coverage.

The tables below indicate how tone also varied according to race and ethnic group in these five newspapers. Table 8 reports the tone of coverage of each ethnic group in the entire sample. The tone of coverage depicting Native Americans was the most negative (29%) and least positive (13%), but the number of exclusively Native American news stories was fairly small: 75 in the sample of all five newspapers over an entire year. Of those, *The Seattle Times* published 40, more than half "mixed" (i.e., good news/bad news) in tone. Two of the other papers had no positive stories about Indians, and the other two had one each. Many other newspaper content audits have found that minority news coverage is much more negative in tone than was the case in this sample. In our total sample, there was more positive than negative coverage of Black people, Hispanics and Asian-Americans; only coverage of Native Americans was more negative than positive, but 49 percent of Native American coverage was mixed (See Table 8).

Overall, the tone of coverage of Black people was the most positive. Note that half or more of the coverage of African-Americans in four of these five newspapers was positive in tone, although almost one-quarter of *The Seattle Times's* coverage of Black people, Latinos and Asian-Americans was seen as negative in tone. In three of the five newspapers, coverage of Latinos was fairly positive. It was somewhat less so at *The San Jose Mercury-News*. At *The South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, one-third of the coverage of Latinos was seen as negative (see Table 5). Almost half of all minority-related news (46%) depicted African-Americans; 26 percent depicted White people; Latinos, 14 percent; Asian-Americans 7 percent; Native Americans 2 percent, and 5 percent “other” or mixed. The figures in the following tables represent the number of times minority groups were mentioned in news stories. Sometimes more than one racial or ethnic minority group appeared in the same story.

Table 4: Tone—African-Americans.

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Neutral	Total
<i>The Dallas Morning News</i>	272 (63%)	88 (20%)	45 (10%)	29 (7%)	434 (100%)
<i>The Seattle Times</i>	291 (60%)	117 (24%)	60 (12%)	19 (4%)	487 (100%)
<i>The News-Journal</i>	145 (56%)	54 (21%)	28 (11%)	30 (12%)	257 (100%)
<i>The San Jose Mercury-News</i>	287 (50%)	66 (11%)	148 (26%)	78 (13%)	597 (100%)
<i>The Sun-Sentinel</i>	374 (47%)	204 (26%)	126 (16%)	88 (11%)	792 (100%)
All Newspapers	1,369 (54%)	529 (21%)	407 (16%)	244 (10%)	2,549 (100%)

Table 5: Tone—Latinos

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Neutral	Total
<i>The News-Journal</i>	24 (71%)	7 (20%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	34 (100%)
<i>The Seattle Times</i>	56 (66%)	20 (24%)	5 (6%)	2 (2%)	83 (100%)
<i>The Dallas Morning News</i>	103 (60%)	35 (20%)	29 (17%)	6 (4%)	173 (100%)
<i>The San Jose Mercury-News</i>	112 (44%)	33 (13%)	38 (19%)	33 (17%)	195 (100%)
<i>The Sun-Sentinel</i>	59 (30%)	65 (33%)	38 (19%)	33 (17%)	195 (100%)
All Newspapers	354 (48%)	160 (22%)	135 (18%)	88 (12%)	737 (100%)

Table 6: Tone—Asian-Americans

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Neutral	Total
<i>The Dallas Morning News</i>	44 (66%)	9 (14%)	9 (14%)	4 (6%)	66 (100%)
<i>The Sun-Sentinel</i>	21 (47%)	14 (31%)	6 (13%)	4 (9%)	45 (100%)
<i>The Seattle Times</i>	26 (44%)	14 (24%)	8 (13%)	11 (18%)	59 (100%)
<i>The News-Journal</i>	17 (44%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	20 (51%)	39 (100%)
<i>The San Jose Mercury-News</i>	89 (42%)	47 (22%)	35 (16%)	40 (19%)	211 (100%)
All Newspapers	197 (47%)	84 (20%)	60 (14%)	79 (19%)	420 (100%)

Table 7: Tone—Native Americans

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Neutral	Total
<i>The Seattle Times</i>	8 (20%)	8 (20%)	23 (57%)	1 (2%)	40 (100%)
<i>The San Jose Mercury-News</i>	1 (11%)	3 (33%)	2 (22%)	3 (33%)	9 (100%)
<i>The Dallas Morning News</i>	1 (8%)	4 (30%)	7 (54%)	1 (8%)	13 (100%)
<i>The Sun-Sentinel</i>	0 (0%)	7 (58%)	4 (33%)	1 (8%)	12 (100%)
<i>The News-Journal</i>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
All Newspapers	10 (13%)	22 (29%)	37 (49%)	6 (8%)	75 (100%)

Table 8: Tone by Ethnicity

Group	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Neutral	Total
Black	1,369 (54%)	529 (21%)	407 (16%)	244 (10%)	2,549 (100%)
Latino	354 (48%)	160 (22%)	135 (18%)	88 (12%)	737 (100%)
Asian-American	187 (47%)	84 (21%)	60 (15%)	64 (16%)	395 (100%)
Native American	10 (13%)	22 (29%)	37 (49%)	6 (8%)	75 (100%)

Although these findings at first glance do indicate some good news about these newspapers’ coverage of people of color—that is, that “minority news” seems to be more positive than was found in many past content studies—the “good news” is tempered by the fact that 40 percent of the minority news coverage found in this one-year sample was about sports and entertainment.

Tone of coverage by topic

As noted above, news about people of color focused heavily on sports and entertainment, feature/human interest, social welfare, crime, politics/government and civil rights. Feature/human interest, civil rights and social welfare merit discussion.

To assess minority portrayals in the news further, the tone of news stories was combined into two categories—positive and negative. As Table 9 illustrates, people of color were depicted most positively in feature/human interest stories, followed by sports news. The human-interest news finding is significant because these stories tend to be about everyday life, and one recurring criticism of minority news coverage is that people of color are rarely depicted as part of everyday life. However, closer analysis of

feature/human interest news based on headlines suggests not all this coverage was the result of “mainstreaming” of people of color in the newspaper. Rather it consisted considerably of photos and stories on cultural celebrations, such as Cinco De Mayo or Black History Month, and profiles depicting minority “firsts,” such as the first Hispanic secretary of the Army.

The most negative portrayals of people of color were in stories and photographs depicting violent crime and civil rights. The violent crime finding is not surprising but, at first glance, the tone of the civil rights news—that is, coverage of race discrimination — seems odd. Further analysis shows much of the civil rights news focused on affirmative action and, more specifically, the nationwide movement to dismantle it based on charges that it discriminates against White people. Three of five newspapers in the study are located in states where either challenges to affirmative action were underway or had succeeded during the time of the audit. It’s also worth noting that many of these stories also often depicted White people as victims of affirmative action. This represents reversal of content audits conducted in the 1960s-80s, in which people of color were primarily depicted as victims of racial discrimination. These two factors—white victims of affirmative action combined with minority victims of hate crimes—clearly contributed to the negative tone finding on civil rights news.

Almost all the minority-related news about civil rights focused on race discrimination and hate crimes. Violent crimes comprised about 70 percent of the crime news but it bears noting that the amount of crime news was much lower in some newspapers than others, a reflection of varying crime rates and, perhaps, editorial decision-making. Lastly, people of color were depicted as perpetrators and victims of crime but those most easily identified by race and ethnicity were perpetrators whose photographs sometimes accompanied the stories. (See sample of coding instrument in Appendix for definitions of terms.)

Table 9: Tone of Selected News about Minorities

Topic	Total Stories	Negative Tone	Positive Tone
Sports	1812	236 (13%)	1576 (87%)
Feature/human interest	544	23 (4%)	522 (96%)
Social Welfare	544	179 (33%)	365 (67%)
Violent crime	349	276 (79%)	73 (21%)

in the communities where these newspapers circulate are people of color (e.g. Washington Gov. Gary Locke). It should be noted that these data represent only news sources and photo subjects whose social status could be determined. In some instances, such a determination could not be made.

Overall Newspaper Content Conclusions

Newsroom attitudes regarding race and ethnicity seemed to be a strong predictor of diversity of content at *The San Jose Mercury-News*, whose coverage of people of color was consistently most positive in tone. Overall, the strongest relationship between content and newsroom attitudes toward race and ethnicity was in the quantity of coverage. The newsrooms with the strongest agreement between White and minority journalists on issues of race and ethnicity also appeared to have the best and most coverage of people of color and diverse communities.

The Television News Content Audits

Previous content analyses of TV news have, like studies of newspapers, found that people of color occupy a small proportion of the average TV newscast. As in the newspaper sample in this study reported above, TV stations, with one exception, dedicated between twice and three times the national average of their newscasts to stories that included minorities as central figures (See Table 13). This examination finds that these six stations do a much better job, at least in quantitative terms, than has been the norm in U.S. TV news.

In all, 8,203 separate news items from the six TV newscasts were analyzed for the amount and quality of their content relating to racial and ethnic diversity. The number of stories sampled and coded was fairly evenly distributed across the year, as Table 10 shows.³⁶ Table 11 shows the distribution of the newscasts' content focusing on minorities by the stories' primary topic. We coded the newscasts' content into nine categories: Crime; politics and government; social welfare (e.g., health, social services, labor, business, housing, etc.); hate crimes; calamities (e.g., natural or man-made disasters); features; sports, entertainment; social interest (e.g., lifestyle, consumer news, relationships, pop culture); and weather (See "Coding Manual" in Appendix). Beyond basic numbers of stories and their topic focus and tone, a critical part of this research

looks at how often minorities are *central* parts of the story, a distinction that tells us much more than just counting heads. The proportion of all stories that had minorities as central players—“Central Involvement of Minorities” or CIM—is fairly steady throughout the sample period and is reported in Table 11.

Topics of all stories and CIM stories

Overall, minorities were most often featured as central characters in sports and crime: 51 percent of all minority-related stories dealt with sports and entertainment (27%) or crime (24%). The next largest category of stories focusing on people of color was social welfare, stories about social problems and issues, with 15 percent of all stories in the sample. Sixty-five percent of all stories about hate crimes and 36 percent of all stories about crime featured minorities as central figures. (See Table 13).

Crime was the most common topic of minority-related news on WFLA’s evening newscast in Tampa. Sports was the No. 1 minority news topic at WNBC in New York and at KVIA in El Paso. In San Francisco at KRON, the main minority news topic was features—stories about everyday folk—while at WXYZ in Detroit and Anchorage’s KTVA, news about social welfare was most common. Interestingly, some stations virtually ignored coverage of some of the topic areas: Just 5.5 percent of KTVA’s total crime coverage focused on people of color, and only 3 percent on minorities in entertainment; just 4 percent of WFLA’s coverage and 5 percent of WXYZ’s focused on the role of people of color in politics and government. A full 4 percent of the total WNBC coverage was about hate crimes with minorities as the focus (See Table 12).³⁷

The prominence of crime and sports coverage at all six stations in stories with people of color as the central players is striking. Between 44 percent and 66 percent of all the minority news content of these newscasts was a combination of crime and sports: 66 percent at WFLA, 61 percent at KTVA, 55 percent at WXYZ, 49 percent at WNBC, 46 percent at KRON, and 44 percent at KVIA (See Table 12).

Clearly, local demographics affect the amount of crime and local sports involving minorities, which explains KTVA’s crime numbers, but not the sports. It is also interesting that minorities did not appear at all in some categories. For example, minorities did not appear in KVIA stories about calamities or social interest. At WFLA, people of color did not appear in any stories on entertainment or weather (although

routine weather stories are typically race-neutral, unless the station had a minority weather person).

The chart below, taken from Table 13, illustrates the percentage of crime and of sports as a part of the total sample of minority stories from the six stations:

<u>Station</u>	<u>Crime</u>	<u>Sports</u>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
KRON	21	25
KTVA	11	50
KVIA	20	24
WFLA	39	27
WNBC	19	30
WXYZ	31	24

Length of stories in general and CIM stories

Story length is another quantitative measure of the inclusion of minorities (see Table 14). Of course, the amount of airtime devoted to a story is, along with its position during the newscast, one measure of the story's relative importance. At four of the stations—KTVA, KVIA, WNBC and WFLA—most minority stories ran 31-60 seconds. WXYZ aired more short pieces, about 20 seconds; and KRON ran most stories of 21-30 seconds.

But among stories in which minorities were centrally involved, the pattern is quite different. Table 15 reports the length of stories with central involvement of minorities (CIM), which are items that focus on people of color. At four stations—WXYZ, WNBC, KRON and WFLA—the typical CIM story was 121-180 seconds long. KTVA's CIM stories tended to run 31-60 seconds; at KVIA, 61-120 seconds (See Table 15). Note in particular KRON: 34 percent of its CIM stories were longer than 2 minutes, indicating considerable depth and complexity.

Table 16 shows the length of the minority-related stories in each of the 10 content categories. For example, WNBC's longer stories, averaging 80 seconds, dealt with social welfare (poverty, education, health, environment, etc.), hate crimes and social interest (consumer and lifestyle). WFLA's and KRON's longest stories were about hate crimes and social interest. Table 17 then looks at story length in each content category for news items in which there was central involvement of minorities (CIM). CIM stories seemed to run longer at most stations in most of the content categories, indicating greater depth and

completeness. Note in particular KRON, whose CIM stories ran for more than 100 seconds in all content categories, and WFLA, whose CIM hate crime stories ran 157 seconds. WFLA's 12 CIM social welfare stories averaged 140 seconds and its three social interest stories averaged 130 seconds.

Relating TV Content to the "Race Climate Quotient"

The TV news content analysis offers additional perspectives on the connection between newsroom attitudes regarding race and ethnicity as reflected by the "climate quotient," and the actual content of newscasts. This part of the report focuses on three variables in the content of a random sample of the newscasts:

- a) the proportion of total stories that contained people of color or were about diversity issues;
- b) the social role or status of the minority newsmakers who appeared in those stories, and
- c) the tone of the minority coverage.

The combination of these factors serves as an indicator of the "quality" of news reporting about people of color and issues of racial diversity appearing on these newscasts.

As for the question of whether newsroom "climate" can be linked to quality of content in TV news, the answer for this sample is "Sometimes." The data show some connections, but not necessarily a direct correspondence between the stations' "climate quotients" and the quality of the diversity coverage in the selected newscasts. In other words, there are stations that stand out across the board as doing a better job in the actual reporting about minorities, regardless of the journalists' attitudes toward diversity.

The proportion of stories about minorities

In order to assess the diversity of news reporting in the TV news stories, calculations were made about the percentage of the stories that had minorities centrally involved, and whether the involvement was "significant." In other words, were people of color thematically or visually important in the story and not just passing mentions? Table 18 below reports on the percentage of the total number of minority news items from the sample that also had central involvement of minorities (CIM) as well as the more substantial significant involvement of minorities (SIM). This bears a little explanation:

Any story that featured people of color in any way became part of the total minority news stories that were coded. That number appears in the first column below. If people of color were central to the story, that item was coded as CIM. Those numbers appear in the second column below. Finally, if minorities were really significant in the item, either because they were interviewed or otherwise the primary focus of visuals, those items were coded as SIM. SIM is a subset of CIM. So, for example, a story about a restaurant owned by a person of color would be coded as CIM, and would then be raised to the higher standard of SIM if the owner were interviewed on camera. So, in the table below, for example, KVIA ran 1,256 total minority items in the sample we examined; of those, 641 (51%) had minorities centrally involved (CIM), including 364 (29%) where minorities were significantly the focus.

Table 18: Number and percentages of stories about minorities in the TV news programs.³⁸

<u>Station/city</u>	<u>Total # of news stories</u>	<u>CIM</u> <i>no. (%)</i>	<u>SIM*</u> <i>no. (%)</i>
KRON/San Francisco	1474	634 (43)	324 (22)
KTVA/Anchorage	1326	252 (19)	93 (7)
KVIA/El Paso	1256	641 (51)	364 (29)
WFLA/Tampa	958	355 (37)	182 (19)
WNBC/New York	1268	639 (50)	342 (27)
WXYZ/Detroit	1921	692 (36)	346 (18)
N	8203	3199 (39)	1641 (20)

(*CIM=Central Involvement of Minorities; SIM=Significant Involvement of Minorities. Note that SIM is a subset of CIM with a higher standard for the involvement of minorities. See text.)

Clearly, one of the key variables influencing the amount of minority news on the air is the local population. Of the six stations, KVIA has the most diverse population in its market and so it is not surprising that the station aired a lot of news about people of color. What is important here in terms of quality, however is that half of those items had minorities centrally involved in the story, and 29 percent of those had minorities as *significant* players or the focus of the story. Anchorage has a smaller racial and ethnic minority population, yet KTVA nonetheless aired 1,326 minority news items; of those, however, minorities were much less likely to be centrally or significantly involved. So

one of the quality measures that we are looking at is not just the number of minority news stories, but the proportion of those stories that really focused on *individuals* of color.

Connecting this SIM/CIM performance with the “climate quotients,” however, requires a little intuition. Again using KVIA as an example, the El Paso station aired the greatest percentage of SIM stories, according to this sample. Only half of the “climate quotient” figures (See Table 1) would predict that: KVIA’s quotient under “support for diversity efforts” was the largest of the six stations, and it was a negative number, meaning that disagreement between minority journalists and White people in this newsroom on their own support for efforts to growing diversity was large. It further showed that the minority KVIA staffers were much less in support of diversity efforts than their White co-workers. This is perplexing. On the other hand, KVIA showed the greatest agreement of all 12 companies in the study on questions of how well their company is doing—almost zero—which we have hypothesized would have predicted good performance in covering diversity. And, from the high proportion of SIM/CIM stories aired in KVIA’s sample, it clearly is doing a good job of covering its diverse community.

The “climate quotient” predicted good content performance by WNBC, and that is borne out by the SIM/CIM numbers. Like the KVIA case, WXYZ showed good newsroom agreement on one of the two quotients but wide disagreement on another; Detroit’s content performance is quite strong, especially in terms of total coverage, though somewhat less so in terms of SIM/CIM. KRON also had close agreement on one quotient and not on the other, and demonstrated very strong coverage. One interesting aspect of this partial success of using the “climate quotient” to predict performance quality is that in the instance where the newsroom expressed good agreement on one factor and disagreement on the other, the area of disagreement in five of six cases was over the company’s efforts to improve diversity.

So this first of the three content quality measures finds only partial connection between the content, attitudinal support for diversity and the journalists’ assessment of the company’s efforts.

Content Quality

Two of the measures of content quality in this study include evaluation of the social role, or status, of the minority newsmakers and the tone of each story about people of color. One of the many complaints about coverage of race and ethnicity, both on television and in newspapers, has been that people of color are too often seen in the news as criminals or individuals otherwise at risk, and that the tone of the stories seems so often pathologically negative. Clearly, these two issues are related.

Thus, as part of our examination of the minority news coverage, we coded for the social status or role of the individuals appearing in the stories. These social role categories included business people, doctors, government officials, politicians, police, students, blue-collar workers, sports and entertainment figures, criminal suspects, etc. (See “Coding Manual” pp.12-14 in Appendix). Similarly, coders recorded whether the context in which the person appeared was positive, negative or neutral; this does not mean “happy news” or stories about cute children, although those may have been included. What we were looking for were items that, when viewed (especially by members of the ethnic or racial group being portrayed) would be considered to be either good news or bad news for that group of people. For example, clearly the opening of a new store would be positive; a crime would be negative. (See “Coding Manual” p. 15 in Appendix).

Social Roles of Minority Newsmakers

Overall, coverage by WNBC and KRON consistently stood out in these two indicators, airing positive stories that featured people of color of higher social status. WXYZ and KVIA also aired a large proportion of stories that featured people of color in a positive light.

In examining each minority-related news item in our sample of TV news, coders noted – where they could identify it – the approximate social role, including occupation of each person of color appearing in the story.³⁹ Dozens of specific professions and occupations were available to coders, grouped in three broad categories: government employees or officials, professionals, and non-professionals. Some examples from each category:

Government Employee/Official

Federal, state or local officials/politicians /agency employees
Military officers
Police/firefighters/EMTs

Professional

Doctors/lawyers/scientists
Business people
Teachers

Non-professional

Students
Blue-collar workers
Sports/entertainment figures
(See "Coding Manual," pp. 12-14, in Appendix)

Each minority-related news story received a social role score based on the kinds of people of color who appeared in them. Government employees/officials, professionals and sports/entertainment figures were assigned a score of 2; criminals, crime suspects and homeless people were assigned a 0; all others were assigned a 1. The range for all 8,203 news stories coded was 0-16; the average score was 3.835. Thus, each station's newscasts in this sample can be assessed statistically, yielding a sense of the kinds of people of color that most usually appear on the air. Table 19 reports the results, ranging from 2.864 to 4.510. The higher the number, the more "higher status" sources and newsmakers were used by the station in this sample. (Note: The same kind of score is possible for each story topic and for each racial and ethnic minority group, but we do not go into those details here.)

Table 19: Social Role Scores

	Avg. Score	No. of Stories
KRON	4.488	1474
KTVA	2.864	1326
KVIA	3.275	1256
WFLA	3.383	958
WNBC	4.510	1268
WXYZ	3.598	1921
All Stations	3.835	8203

While there appears to be some connection between the “climate quotients” of these stations and the social roles of the minority newsmakers appearing in the newscasts in this sample, the correlation is tenuous. Certainly, close agreement between journalists of color and their White co-workers in one or both attitude categories (See Table 1) does seem to correspond to greater use of higher-status minority sources at some stations (WNBC as a clear example) it does not at others (e.g., KTVA). KRON also used many minority sources of higher social role (not surprising, in a city with an African-American mayor), but showed close attitudinal agreement in the newsroom on only one of the two “climate quotients.” Clearly, many other variables than the journalist’s own attitudes toward diversity come into play when covering the news.

Tone of Minority-Related News

Another of the perennial complaints about news coverage of racial and ethnic minorities is that it’s always bad news. Clearly, this is the nature of news: it often is bad. But is minority-related news coverage somehow more pathologically negative than news unrelated to race and ethnicity?

To try to get at this issue, all stories in the sample were coded for tone: positive, negative or neutral.⁴⁰ Further, we examined the portrayal of each individual minority newsmaker or source, as well as the visual context of the story and the groups being portrayed. Positive portrayals were scored +1 or +2; neutral or balanced portrayals were coded 0; negative portrayals were scored -1 or -2. For the purposes of this report, we discuss only the aggregate tone scores of all 8,203 stories coded (See Table 20).

Because news by definition favors bad news over good in the majority of cases, it is not surprising that the aggregate tone score for all the stories examined is negative, as are the scores for all six stations. A story about a community group on the steps of City Hall condemning the mayor’s policies is much more likely to draw the camera crews than the same group praising them. Still, “good news” does appear on the evening news: the range of tone in all stories ran from a +6 (a very upbeat story) to a -11 (a very negative story).

Table 20: Aggregate Story Tone Scores

	Avg. Score	No. of Stories
KRON	-.360	1474
KTVA	-.068	1326

KVIA	-.406	1256
WFLA	-.950	958
WNBC	-.598	1268
WXYZ	-.576	1921
All Stations	-.513	8203

Also because of the nature of news, perhaps tone cannot be controlled purposively without skewing the news. In this analysis, it is difficult to draw any meaningful connections between the “climate quotients” and the aggregate tone of the minority-related news examined in this sample, although there are some possible relationships that could be inferred.

Conclusions

The first thing that should be said about the newspapers and TV news operations that are the focus of this study is that they all do a better job—in both quantitative and qualitative terms—of covering diversity in their communities than has been the norm. Past studies have shown that news about people of color in newspapers and on the evening news has usually been about 5 percent to 7 percent of the total newshole. And this at some of the top companies in very diverse communities. The 12 companies that agreed to be subjects of this study have more diversity in their newsrooms than the average in their industries, and run much more news about people of color than the national average.

Although this report occasionally may have tended to rank the companies based on their data in this study, it is not intended as a competition. Necessarily, the empirical data resulted in scores that could be ranked. But let us not lose sight of the fact that these companies were selected because they were known to do a good job in the areas where our professions assess diversity: hiring, content and social conscience. Comparisons among these companies are inevitable, but are not intended to be judgmental. The goal was to look for “recipes for success.” All these partner companies, in having been selected for this project and in their participation, help write those recipes.

This study makes a first effort at connecting what news organizations *say* they’re all about regarding social and racial and ethnic inclusion, and their actual coverage of a

demographically changing America. We have tried to evaluate the connection between the attitudes regarding racial diversity on the front lines—in the newsroom—and the actual content of the final product. In short: How do good intentions translate in terms of what goes into America's newspapers and TV newscasts? In a society where entire segments of the population do not see themselves adequately reflected in the news media, and so choose not to inform themselves of the events of the day, participatory democracy itself may be at risk.

This initial report, we believe, covers some new ground that should help newsroom managers improve both the climate in their newsrooms and provide more inclusive coverage of their communities. Although the connection is not perfect between newsroom climate and news content, we believe that there is such a connection that may indicate the desirability of greater attention to staff development and better communication of management objectives on diversity to the staff. Clearly, as the newsroom survey indicates, there is work to be done. And, as the content portions of the report suggest, improvements in newsroom climate are likely to translate into the quality of the news product.

Clearly, another important factor in this equation seems to be the presence of people of color as top news executives and managers, as has been found in other studies.

As the survey finds, 76 percent of these journalists are satisfied with their choice of a journalism career, but one-third of Blacks and one-quarter of Asian-American journalists are not. Thirty-one percent of African-American journalists aren't sure if they'll stay in the business. Nearly half of the Asian-American journalists in this study (47 percent) and more than one-third of Latinos (36.5 percent) say they are uncertain or definitely will not still be in the news business five years from now. This clearly signals a threat to news organizations seeking to improve the diversity of their newsrooms, and places in jeopardy ASNE's goals of reaching 13.5 percent minority employment by the end of 2001 and parity with the U.S. population by 2025 (38.2 percent people of color).⁴¹ Over all, two-thirds of these journalists say they would select a journalism career if they had it to do all over again. Only 43 percent say that journalism is a career they'd want their children to enter, another measure of career dissatisfaction; this is down sharply from 1991, when 54

percent of newspaper journalists in *The Newsroom Barometer* study said they would want their kids to follow them into journalism careers.⁴²

It is intuitive to assume that newspaper and TV news operations that cover communities with greater staff diversity should reflect that diversity in their content. But that has not always been true: Blacks, Asian-Americans, Latinos and other ethnic and racial minority groups have long and often complained that they don't "see" themselves on the pages of their newspapers or in their evening television newscasts.⁴³

We hope this analysis can be helpful to news managers and their newsroom staffs in improving journalistic performance in covering the whole of America. Future reports will discuss the findings of the newsroom attitude survey in greater detail. But for the purposes of this report, it is important to point out that, even at these "best" newspapers and TV stations, the attitudinal disconnect between White journalists and many of their minority co-workers continues to be a part of life in the news business, as in America in general.

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The News & Race Models of Excellence Project

ENDNOTES

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- 4) Barbara Cochran. "Diversity: Progress, Yet More Challenges." *Communicator* (Radio-Television News Directors Association), July 2000.
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- 17) Sig Gissler. "Race—America's Rawest Nerve." *Media Studies Journal*, 1994.
- 18) See Richard Morin. "Many whites see blacks as equally prosperous in U.S." *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 12, 2001, p. A7.
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- 25) Westin, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.
- 26) *Ibid.*, pp.130-131.
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- 28) See also Don Heider. *White News. Why local news programs don't cover people of color*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000; Rivas-Rodriguez, et al., *op. cit.*; Lawrence T. McGill. "Newsroom Diversity: Meeting the Challenge." The Freedom Forum, 1999; Erna Smith. *Transmitting Race: The L.A. riots in TV news*. (Cambridge, MA: Shorenstein Barone Center for Press, Politics and Public Policy, 1994); Raul Ramirez, Erna Smith, Robert Warrior and William Wong. *Newswatch: A critical look at news coverage of people of color*. (San Francisco, CA: Center for the Integration and Improvement of Journalism, 1994); David Shaw. "Coloring the News: A special report." *Quill*, May 1991 (excerpted from 1990 *Los Angeles Times* series.); Erna Smith. *What Color is the News: An ethnic content analysis of Bay Area news media*. (San Francisco, CA: Shalan Foundation, 1991); Pease, *op. cit.*; *Newspaper Research Journal*, 11(3), Summer 1990; Clint C. Wilson II and Felix Gutierrez, *Minorities and Media: Diversity and the End of Mass Communications*. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1985).
- 29) We found it ironic that several companies—both TV stations and newspapers—that were identified from various sources as being among the "best" in terms of their efforts toward diversity declined to participate. Some seemed to have been over-examined, and were tired of being research subjects. Others declined because of factors (such as moving into new facilities) that they thought would distract them and their staff from giving their complete attention to the project. But there also was a sense of reluctance among all of those who declined to participate that was, we believe, related to the sensitivity of the topic of the study—race, "America's rawest nerve," as Sig Gissler put it. This reluctance was drawn sharply into focus by the statement of the executive editor of one of the newspapers invited to participate. He decided not to participate, he said, because "We don't know what you're going to ask, and we don't know what you're going to find." That, we think, is rather an odd statement coming from a journalist.
- 30) According to the annual American Society of Newspaper Editors Newsroom Census 2000, the newspapers in this sample report the following percentages of minorities in their newsrooms: *The Dallas Morning News*, 17.0%; *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 13.1%; *The San Jose Mercury News*, 32.2%; *The Seattle Times*, 20.6%; *The South Florida Sun Sentinel*,

21.6%; *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), 15.3%. The national average in U.S. daily newspapers is 11.85% minority, according to ASNE's 2000 census; the national U.S. population is approximately 28% minority. The figures for each of the TV news organization's newsroom demographics were not yet available.

- 31) While the goal was to obtain 72 newscasts from each station, due to either technical difficulties with tapes, or missed dates at the source, a few programs could not be coded for five of the six stations. The specific newscasts to be taped and subsequently studied were selected by constructing a composite year. The procedure entailed randomly selecting a day of the first week and then staggering the other days for the rest of the year. The first day selected was a Wednesday (January 6). Thus, the next day to be coded was the Thursday of the following week (January 14), then the Friday of the week after (January 22), and the Monday a week later (January 25), and so on. At least one weekend newscast per each month was also taped and coded. The first randomly selected weekend day was a Sunday (January 17). The others were selected by alternating between Saturday and Sunday, depending on which was most distant from the weekday included in the sample. The same pattern was followed for the rest of the year. Note: WXYZ in Detroit and KRON in San Francisco aired most stories because their selected evening newscasts were one hour long, as compared to 30 minutes by the other stations. Generally, the number of news stories aired by each of the stations is fairly constant across the time period, although some fluctuations are evident, as expected.
- 32) The American Society of Newspaper Editors' 2000 Newsroom Census reported the following newspaper newsroom demographics nationwide: Whites, 88.15%; African-Americans, 5.31%; Hispanics, 3.86%; Asian-Americans, 2.35%; Native Americans, 0.52%). "ASNE's 2000 Newsroom Census," *op. cit.*
- 33) The Radio-Television News Directors Association reports that in 2000, TV newsrooms were 79% White; 11% Black; 7% Hispanic; 3% Asian; and less than 1% Native American. "2000 Women and Minorities Survey." [Online: www.rtnda.org/research/womin/html.]
- 34) Although six newspapers began the project, *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* had to be dropped from the content analysis phase because of problems receiving the newspapers corresponding to the random sample. Fewer than half of those newspapers were received by the coding team, so the St. Louis data was deemed too incomplete to remain in the sample.
- 35) See Note 29.
- 36) See Note 31.
- 37) Hate crimes, a distinct crime category examined in this study, was the topic of relatively few stories. WNBC, however, dedicated 4 percent of its total newscasts to such events; KRON 3 percent, and KVIA 2 percent. The other three stations dedicated less than 1% of their coverage to hate crimes.
- 38) For this table and the analysis of the quality of coverage in the context of the "Race Climate Quotient," we included only the stories that had both SIM and CIM. Thus, there are fewer stories in this assessment: 1653 total stories vs. 1691. This means that 38 stories included minorities in ways that were not significant to the story (see the explanation of CIM vs. SIM offered elsewhere in this text).
- 39) Each identifiable newsmaker was categorized as having a certain social role. The main categories were: government employee/official, professional, and non-professional. For the statistical analyses, specific roles under each of these categories were assigned a numerical value of 2, 1, or 0. Government officials/employees, professionals, and sports and entertainment figures were coded 2. Criminals and crime suspects were given a 0. All others were coded 1.
- 40) For each story, the coders evaluated the tone (positive, negative, or neutral) regarding the individual newsmakers, the tone of the visuals (background), and of the groups featured or portrayed. We also coded each story for its overall tone. The question was whether the story

was positive or negative as regards the people portrayed in the story. Scores ranging from +2 or +1 were given to stories and players portrayed most positively, 0 for neutral stories or in which a clear balance was observed, and -1 or -2 for negative stories (see coding guide for the specific options for the various items coded).

41) "ASNE's benchmarks." *op. cit.*

42) Pease, *op. cit.*

43) The Kerner Commission, *op. cit.*, remarked that press coverage of minorities in the 1960s seemed to imply that they "do not read newspapers or watch television, give birth, marry, die or go to PTA meetings." Les Payne, a managing editor at *Newsday*, said in 1988: "The offering pattern has African-Americans disproportionately included in negative coverage—as prostitutes, drug dealers, welfare recipients, second-story men, unwed mothers. It is a strange place, this Black world the media project by commission and omission. Within the feature pages of many newspapers, snowstorms and floods rarely disturb Black residents. Gypsy moths don't attack their lawns or eat the leaves of their trees. Their children don't run away from home or go on vacation. Or get married. Or shop at suburban malls. Or ice skate. Or take in a play." Les Payne. "Desegregation in the City Room: 20 Years After Kerner." *Kerner Plus 20*. (National Association of Black Journalists, 1988). pp. 11-12. These data seem to indicate that even at "the best" U.S. daily newspapers and TV stations, similar patterns still hold true.