

**Portrayals of African-Americans on prime-time  
entertainment television**

by

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide an accounting of portrayals of African-Americans on week night prime-time entertainment television. This study was inspired by an 1989 Cotton study. Cotton's Iowa State masters thesis studied "The presence of Blacks on prime-time television." Data gathered in this 1993-94 study will be contrasted with data gathered in the 1989 study to look for any changes in the portrayals of African-Americans. This study also intends to provide information concerning the images of African-Americans available for today's children to view on a daily basis. This study begins with information on the effects of television on children. Hopefully the study may contribute to parent awareness of televisions effects.

### Problem Statement

Numerous studies support theories of media effects on children as well as adults. For example, agenda setting studies (Davis and Robinson, 1986) suggest, television has the power to set individual agendas and create reality when dealing with other cultures. It is a medium that needs to be studied. The main reason for focusing this study on children is, they cannot tell stereotypes from true portrayals and are more vulnerable to accepting what they see as reality (Kimball, 1986).

In the process of gathering research for the literature review, this study found that in the 1990s the five historical and common stereotypes of African-Americans still exist on prime-time television (Ebony, 1991). The Coon, Mammie, Buck, Tom and Mulattos are stereotypical negative images that existed in the 40s and still exist in the 90s. The media research community needs to make society aware of these incorrect images that children may be viewing and the possible effects such images can have.

### Assumptions

1. The week (November 15- November 19) selected for viewing is going to adequately represent the 1993-94 prime-time entertainment programming.
2. The time frame selected for this study will adequately represent the portrayals of African-Americans during prime-time in 1993.
3. The media; especially television, have powerful effects.

### Limitation

Only two time frames will be contrasted in this study, 1989 and 1993. Therefore, generalizability to other time periods are not possible. This study could not be generalized to African-Americans in other time periods because past studies have shown that the percentage of African-Americans on television changes from year to year.

## Rationale

The rationale for this study is that most parents may not understand the possible negative effects of television viewing on their children. While the research on this topic is limited there is enough to support a discussion of today's television programming and its possible effects on children. With such limited research on this topic, there needs to be more research to understand how the media are affecting children. Therefore, the data collected for this study will not focus on testing the premise of effects of television viewing on children, but rather will assume effects and will provide information about images available for children to view on a daily basis and draw some possible effects conclusions. This report provides support by presenting past studies of effects of television on children to give the reader an understanding of the potentially negative effects of television and its contents.

Negative stereotypes of African-Americans on television are a growing concern within the African-American communities in the United States (Wilson, 1989). In 1939 when television was introduced, African-Americans felt that it would be a medium that would not stereotype African-Americans. Unfortunately the medium was a disappointment to African-Americans (MacDonald, 1992). African-Americans saw television as an industry with great hope for their people. Later, in the 1940s-50s when the television industry was expanding its foundation, African-Americans were found in roles such as, singers, musicians, dancers and comedians. In 1950, Ebony reported



that television offered better opportunities for African-Americans than any of the other media. The reasoning behind the statement made by Ebony was the numbers of African-Americans on television was a "sure sign that television is free of racial barriers" (MacDonald, 1992 p. 3).

However, the television industry faced a different problem with societal expectations. A great deal of white Americans expected to see demeaning images of African-Americans (MacDonald, 1992). The major problems occurred with the southern markets. The television industry was afraid that they would alienate the southern market by portraying African-Americans in roles that were not stereotypical. "When the networks in 1957 moved to censor racially objectionable words like "massa," "darkey," and old black Joe" from the songs of Stephen Foster, southern politicians reacted with hostility"(MacDonald, 1992 p. 5). These are few examples of how the Promise of the new medium was denied to African-Americans and the stereotypical images of African-Americans continued in the television industry. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) have addressed the issue of negative stereotypes with activities such as information campaigns to educate society about African-Americans. One of the major questions being addressed by the African-American communities and organizations such as the NAACP is, "What effect does television have in shaping individuals' thinking?"

"Evidence suggests that television can influence the viewer's general knowledge, cultural tastes and a number of other important

aspects of his or her life" (Schramm, 1961 p.312). Some people use television as an escape from reality; others use television as a baby-sitter or disciplinarian for their children. Children are persuadable, attentive and frequent viewers of television, and overall they represent one of the largest groups of television consumers in the world today. In most instances, adults can distinguish stereotypical images from true portrayals of a particular group of people, right from wrong, and fiction from nonfiction whereas a child's mind is like a blank slate, waiting to be filled. Locke (1910) says, "a child's mind at birth is a tabula rasa, a blank page on which ideas are to be printed."

To a large number of children, television is the source of these ideas. Studies show that out of all ethnic groups of children, African-American children watch many more hours of television than any other group (Dates, 1990). Therefore, an important question is what ideas are being written in the minds of these African-Americans children as they watch prime-time television?

At an early age, African-American children develop negative attitudes toward the color black, and a scientific study of the treatment of African-Americans on television supports this fact (Goodman, 1964). The portrayals of African-Americans on television perpetuate racial prejudice. Due to some of the negative images of African-Americans on television, African-American children are given the perception that black means bad (Goodman, 1964). African-American children are facing problems of ethnic identity and self concept because of negative perceptions of the color black. Self

concept is an important factor that affects the overall development of African-American children (Clark, 1969).

A large number of African-American children view television, and the damage is that a large number of these children perceive the programming as reality. These children are seeing themselves in the reality portrayed by the television industry. These reasons provide a rationale for this study. This study will examine the portrayals and distinguishing characteristics of African-American actors/actresses on prime-time television.

### Television and the Socialization of Children

Numerous studies on the effects of television on children have explored the socialization, self-esteem and self concept as they relate to children and television.

Historically, the family, church and school were seen as the key figures in the socialization of children. Television has quickly emerged to become part of this list. Socialization is the process by which children learn values, attitudes, social roles, cognitive processes, self concepts and behavior acceptable in this society (Dorr, 1982). Some researchers believe that many children use television and its portrayals as a way to validate their beliefs (Berry, 1980). Comstock et al. (1978) suggest television competes with other socialization agents in providing role models and information that affect numerous aspects of children's lives. Television can affect children's behavior, attitudes, and beliefs.

Many African-American parents and professionals are concerned that television "influences African-American children's attitude toward their own racial group and facilitates African-American children's development of low self-concept through its non recognition or negative stereotyped treatment of African-Americans" (Storma, 1984 p. 29). The major concern is that television will compete with African-American families in the socialization process (Stroma, 1984).

### Children and Television

Numerous studies of television viewing habits of children indicate that children view many hours of television on a daily basis. One study found that 98 percent of American households contain at least one television set (Broadcast Year, 1980). The National Institute of Mental Health (1982) reported that at the age of two, children will tentatively watch television. Most children's viewing peaks around preadolescence 11 to 12 years old. A study conducted on 6-year-old African-American males revealed that they were viewing 42 hours of television a week (Murray, 1972). Lee and Brown (1981) supported the previous study, they found that 26 percent of the third and fourth graders viewed at least 8 hours of television a day.

Research suggests that African-American children learn new facts or what they perceive to be facts from television. This is supported by past research which states that African-American children use television as a role model or learning device (Dates, 1990). Greenberg and Atkin found that 50 percent of their study sampled

reported that they viewed television to learn about different cultures, different peoples' behaviors and different ways of speaking. Also 52 percent of those interviewed in the study reported that they learned about parent and children interaction from television (Greenberg and Atkin, 1978). If children are using television to learn about different groups of people or acceptable behaviors what messages are they receiving?

Television can affect other aspects of a child's life. Studies suggest that the negative stereotypical messages about African-Americans can affect African-American children's self-esteem and self concept. Self-esteem is defined as "liking and respect for oneself which has some realistic basis." Researchers in media stereotypes suggest, that African-Americans "are often portrayed negatively on entertainment programs, therefore low self-esteem and self-concept may be learned from television" (Tan, 1979 p. 107). Due to the consistency of the message relating to African-Americans most children will accept the portrayals of African-Americans as reality. Cultivation theory suggests that television has the ability to shape individuals beliefs and attitudes because of the repetition of the message. After viewing television for an extended period of time, children start to accept the message as reality (Tan, 1979).

Research shows that television has taken over many parts of children lives. It has taken the place of humans and become an electronic baby-sitter. Where children would once read or play with

their friends or interact with others, television has taken over (Dorr, 1982).

Television has become the constant companion of children and adolescents. Just about every household in the United States has a television set in it, and some even more than one. Television has taken things once thought of as taboo for children's eyes and ears and placed them within a switch of the dial. Although, the owner of the television may not have intended to "expose" so much to children, children are constantly being exposed to stereotypical images of African-Americans, along with violence and murder. Furthermore, as Tan would suggest these different messages that children are exposed to are being accepted as reality.

### Media Effects Studies and Children

Kimball (1986) conducted a study on the effects of television on sex-role attitudes among children before and after being exposed to television. The study found that children who had not been exposed to television had no preconceived notion about sex-roles in comparison to children in other towns who had been exposed to television all their lives. After television was introduced to the children, there was a significant increase in their sex-role stereotyping. There was a noticeable effect on the boys in the town after viewing limited amounts of television. They felt that certain work should be done by women and certain work should be done by

men. The girls perceptions of interpersonal relationships was affected after viewing television.

There is evidence from a number of studies bearing on the effects of television sex on adolescents. We know, for example, that by early adolescence most youngsters can comprehend much of the sexual talk and innuendo on prime-time television, and by mid-adolescence they understand almost all of it (Silverman-Watkins and Sprafkin, 1983 p. 361).

Graves (1975) conducted one of the few studies on race stereotypes and the effects on children's attitudes. Graves examined eight cartoons that portrayed African-Americans positively as well as negatively. When the African-American characters were portrayed positively they were seen as competent, hardworking and trustworthy, but when they were portrayed negatively they were seen as lazy, inept, powerless, and destructive. The study found that children who were exposed to negative portrayals changed their attitude in a negative direction. However, the study also found that the positive portrayals of African-Americans had no effects on white children. This is a study that was uncommon in its focus but this study also found that there was an attitude change after being exposed to just one program.

Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes (1981) examined the attitudes of children viewers and non-viewers of soap operas and their perception of the reality. The viewers of the soap operas felt that abortions and divorce were a common occurrence in this society. The non-viewer did not see abortion and divorce as a reality.

Numerous studies have reported a correlation between

television violence and children's aggression.

The National Institute of Mental Health, (1982) found that, after more than 10 years of research, the consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs.

McLeod found that there are other factors involved when dealing with aggressive behavior of children, but they also found one of the highest correlation was between violent television viewing and aggressive behavior.

Our research shows that among both boys and girls at two grade levels [junior high and senior high], the more the child watches violent television fare, the more aggressive he/she is likely to be as measured by a variety of self-report measures. . . Partialing [sic] out [total] viewing time slightly reduces the . . . correlation of violence viewing and aggressive behavior in most cases, but the basic result is the same as for the raw correlation. . . Similarly, the partialing [sic] out of socioeconomic status and school performance does not alter the basic pattern of raw correlation. . . We may conclude, then, that adolescents viewing high levels of violent content on television tend to have high levels of aggressive behavior regardless of television viewing time, socioeconomic status, or school performance (McLeod et al., 1972 p. 94).

Over the years there have been several bobo dolls studies that found similar results to the McLeod study. The original bobo doll study was conducted by Bandura and Walters in the early 60s. The first bobo doll study goals were to provide evidence to support the theory that exposing children to aggressive television would have a



direct effect on their behavior. To be more specific, the exposure to the aggressive programming would have a teaching effect and a motivating effect (Liebert and Sprafkin, 1988). The children were separated into four groups, upon being separated they were exposed to different segments of the violence and aggressive acts being displayed on the bobo doll. Some of the acts of aggression were not shown to certain groups of the children, but the experimental groups were shown the complete segment of aggressive acts that were being carried out on the bobo doll. The study found that the experimental groups exposed to the aggressive acts began to model the behavior that they had seen on the film, and that boys were more aggressive in their reenactment than girls. The children who received a controlled amount of exposure did not reenact all of the aggressive behaviors (Liebert and Sprafkin, 1988).

In 1972, O'Neal and Sulzer performed a study with pre-school children and an adult dressed up in bobo doll costume. The study found that after viewing bobo doll films the children reenacted violent acts against the adult. This is another example of the power of television, in that television has a effects on the children's behavior.

According to the 1970 White House Conference on Youth, by the age of eighteen the average adolescent has spent more time with the television than in school or with his/her parents, that is approximately 11,000 hours in school versus 15,000 hours of television. If those were the figures in 1970 one can only imagine the new figures with the

advancement in technology in 1994. The massive amount of television being viewed by children and numerous studies that support the theories that the media can have a socialization effects on children led to the following research questions about what children were viewing during the 1993-94 season of shows recorded and analyzed for this study. In view of the implications of the studies of television effects and children, this study will adapt a 1989 study conducted by Clarence Joesph Cotton. Results and discussion of the current study will refer to the Cotton study. The following research questions will be explored:

### Research Questions

Research Question 1A. How many African-Americans appeared on prime-time entertainment television the week of November 15-19 of 1993-94?

Research Question 1B. How has this number changed since the 1989 Cotton study?

Research Question 2. What type of roles do African-American actors and actresses appear in during the 1993-94 television programs recorded?

Research Question 3. How are African-Americans portrayed on prime-time entertainment television during the week of November 15 -19 of 1993-94?

## CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this chapter is the presentation of the of literature that supports the premise of the problem statement: that a medium such as television may have undesirable effects on children after long and short term viewing.

This chapter takes a detailed look at cultivation theory, modeling theory, stimulus-effects theory as well as the evolution of stereotypes and negative stereotypes of African-Americans past and present. Also, included in this chapter is a television content analysis.

### Cultivation Theory

There are many researchers in the area of mass media who view cultivation theory as a theory with long-term media effects. One of the most prominent researchers in the area of cultivation is Dr. Gross Gerbner. Gerbner (1980) stated, "television among modern media, has acquired such a central place in daily life that it dominates our symbolic environment, substituting its message about reality for personal experience and other means of knowing about the world." What is cultivation theory? "The symbolic world of the media, particularly television, shapes, maintains and cultivates audiences' conceptions of the real world or their view of reality" ( Hugh, 1980 p. 291).

Gerbner viewed television as a "deviant from reality," but television is such a constant and consistent medium of information, that many individuals accept the messages as reality. This is the point where cultivation begins. Individuals become cultivated by the long

term viewing of distorted messages. Television has the tendency to distort the reality of different races, women, crime, education, violence and roles in the work force. Television programming has the tendency to portray African-Americans as thieves, murderers, sex fiends and buffoons (Dates, 1990). Due to the lack of positive role models in the inner city communities, African-American children are growing up think that the images of African-American people on television are reality (Dates, 1990). Television has a great deal of power, in that it can influence children and adults roles, attitude, values, and relationships (Libert and Sprafkin, 1988). Long before this research into the power of television, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) "demanded in 1951 that CBS stop broadcasting the series "Amos and Andy" (Libert and Sprafkin, 1988). The NAACP stated:

Amos and Andy. . .tends to strengthen the conclusion among uninformed and prejudiced people that Negroes are inferior, lazy, dumb and dishonest. . .Negro doctors are shown as quacks and thieves. Negro lawyers are shown as slippery cowards, ignorant of their profession and without ethics. Negro women are shown as cackling, screaming shrews, in big-mouth close-ups, using street slang, just short of vulgarity. All Negroes are shown as dodging work of any kind. Millions of white Americans see this Amos 'n' Andy picture and think the entire race is the same (MacDonald, 1992 p. 30).

Television has become the number one pass-time for the majority of American households. Therefore, this is the environment into which most children are born and thus one of the most pervasive technology advances in the twentieth century. Studies suggest that children in

America are one of the largest consumers of television. Furthermore, African-American children view many more hours than any other group in this country. The main reason mentioned for the difference in viewing habits was socioeconomic status. So, if African-American children are accepting the negative messages that are aired on television as reality, African-Americans will continue to reflect a race of people with no self love or pride. There will be children growing up thinking that violence is a part of every day life and its a means of survival. One of the major concerns that Gerbner expressed in his research about cultivation theory was the violent world that the media reflects as reality. Gerbner felt that individuals in society have feelings of fear and anxiety, because of the violent messages aired on a daily basis. In 1977, a General Social survey was randomly administered to individuals throughout the United States. The survey included questions such as:

\*On the average day, about how many hours do you personally watch television?

\*Are there any areas within a mile of your home, that you would be afraid to walk alone at night?

The study found that the heavier viewers of television were three times as likely to answer yes, about questions relating to personal safety, as opposed to the light viewers of television (Gerbner, 1978). Heavy viewers of television perceived the world to be a much more dangerous place because of the media reality.

Cultivation theory has been studied for numerous years and a great deal of research has shown evidence to support this theory. If television can shape the reality for adults, what does television do to the children of this society? Most children can not distinguish reality from false portrayals of women and minorities that seem to be aired daily. According to researchers, the cultivation effects of television may have a large impact on the sexism, racism and violence that occurs in this society (Tan, 1979).

### Modeling Theory

Modeling theory suggests that individuals can learn behaviors by observing the different portrayals aired on television and in some cases will model the actors/actress behavior (Slife, 1982). If television can have a modeling effect on adults, what effect does it have on children? Children are very vulnerable and have a tendency to look for things to imitate (Liebert and Sprafkin, 1988). "The fundamental learning processes by which children learn all forms of new behaviors are also said to operate when children are sitting in front of the television set watching violent programs" (Defleur, 1982 p. 223). Just as a child will imitate their parents or friends, they will also respond in a similar fashion to negative or positive things they view on television. Numerous examples have been provided by researchers to support modeling theory. Liebert and Sprafkin stated:

The manner in which complex adult-role behavior may sometimes be acquired almost entirely through imitation is illustrated in an

account given by Nash of the social training of children in a Cantelense subculture of Guatemala. The young Cantelense girl is provided with a water jar, a broom, and a grinding stone, which are miniature versions of those used by mother. Through constantly observing and imitating the domestic activities of the mother, who provides little or no direct tuition, the child readily acquires a repertory of sex-appropriate responses. Similarly, small Cantalense boys accompany their fathers while the latter are engaged in occupational activities and reproduce their fathers' actions with the aid of smaller versions of adult implements.

North American parents do not provide female children with miniature functioning replicas of the complex appliances that are customarily found in their households, since these would be prohibitively costly, readily damaged, and dangerous for children to operate. They frequently, however, supply their young daughters with a varied array of play materials, toy kitchen ensembles, dolls with complete nursery equipment and wardrobes, cooking utensils, and other junior size homemaker kits-which foster imitative adult-role behavior. Play materials for male children in our culture are, generally speaking, less likely to be of direct relevance for the acquisition of sex-appropriate, everyday adult-role activities (partly, perhaps, a result, in middle-class families, of the relatively abstract nature of the occupational activities of the adult male), but they nevertheless frequently include building and other construction kits and mechanical gadgets that are associated with male occupational roles. While playing with toys that stimulate imitation of adults, children frequently reproduce not only the appropriate adult-role behavior patterns but also characteristic or idiosyncratic parental patterns of response, including attitudes, mannerisms, gestures, and even voice inflections, which the parents have certainly never attempted directly to

teach. As the example taken from the course of imitative role-playing, numerous classes of interrelated responses *in toto*, apparently without proceeding through a gradual and laborious process of response differentiation and extinction or requiring a lengthy period of discrimination training"(Liebert and Sprafkin, 1988 p. 66).

Researchers believe that children, as well as, adults tend to store behaviors they have learned from television until a time when the behavior is needed. This works on the same premise as education in the classroom. Most children learn there multiplication tables in the 3rd grade. Once the tables are learned they are stored in the child's mind. As an adult, when the situation and the need to work math problems arises, the adult applies the skills learned years ago. When children learn behaviors from television they will save the behavior until there is a use for the learned behavior (Liebert and Sprafkin, 1988).

By watching television, individuals may very well learn their role in society (Liebert and Sprafkin, 1988). If minorities and women are taught by television they are inferior to white males, then they may grow up settling for situations where they are treated unfairly. Television is truly a powerful medium, if it has the ability to teach people behaviors or teach people their roles in America.

Slife (1982) studied the effects of violent and aggressive television programming on children's behaviors. The study had a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group was shown violent treatment of a bobo doll by an adult on the video tape, while the control group was shown none of the acts of violence. After viewing, both groups were allowed to play with the bobo dolls.



The study found that the boys were much more aggressive than the girls but as a whole the experiment group reenacted more of the violent acts seen on the video tape.

Over the years there have been numerous studies that provide evidence to support modeling theory. Considering the support for modeling theory, there are some concerns that the television industry, the research community and parents should consider. Are African-American children modeling the drug dealer images that they are viewing on television? Are African-American children growing up viewing people of color, as a people without opportunity, therefore they have nothing to strive for? Is modeling theory the key reason that there are more African-American men in jail than there are in college?

Television aired in the 90's has some positive images of African-Americans. But, there are very few Bryant Gumbles and Bernard Shaws for African-American children to see. A large percentage of the portrayals that African-American children have to model themselves after, particularly in entertainment television, are negative portrayals of African-American people. These negative stereotypes will be defined and discussed later in this literature review.

### Stimulus Effects Theory

The foundation of stimulus effects theory is that the exposure to aggressive stimulation will raise an individuals emotional level and will highly increase the chance of them engaging in an aggressive activity. Researchers in this area believe that viewing violence on

television will increase the likelihood of individuals carrying out violent acts on other people. But, researchers in the area of stimuli effects do agree that every time individuals view aggressive programming they will not perform an aggressive act of violence. The major component that does increase the likelihood of a violent act after viewing is frustration individuals may have at the time they viewed the program (Berkowitz, 1976).

When violence on television is aired, depending on whether the violence was "self defense or on the grounds of vengeance," viewers will justify their acts of violence by the situation on the program (Hoyt, 1967). One of the most prominent researchers in stimulus effects stated, "another factor that can affect the nature of response to televised violence is the extent to which the televised portrayals is similar to anger-provoking circumstances with which the audience member is currently trying to cope" (Berkowitz, 1976 p. 88). If the individual can find some similarities between himself/herself and the television actor/actress committing the act of violence, the similarity will evoke the act of violence.

There are many researchers in the mass media who have provided evidence that television can affect heavy viewers. Would stimulus effects theory explain the violence of the Rodney King beating? Is stimulus effects theory the explanation for the Reginald Denny beating? Is there a connection between stimulus effects theory and the rise in hate crimes throughout the United States? The research that has been conducted on media effects suggest possible evidence

that television does have an effect on these people. One of the major issues that should be researched is how large of a role does television play in shaping individual views, values, attitudes, behaviors and beliefs.

### Stereotypes, How Did They Evolve?

Some suggest there is an insidious side to stereotypes. The main reason for presenting stereotypes on television is to reinforce and remind society that there are different classes of people (Dates, 1990). Stereotypes also keep society from becoming united. Therefore it is important to have an understanding of where stereotypes originated, and how stereotypes can distort the African-American child's perception of his/her people.

"In general, political America is composed of the influenced and influential" (Laswell, 1936 p. 51). America is a society where constant struggles and power competition among the classes exist (Dates, 1990) These two terms (influenced and influential) came into existence because in almost every society there are groups who identify themselves as superior figures, usually the influential. This group is also commonly known as the ruling class within society. For this influential group to maintain high economic status, political and economic power, a lower social class of people must exist. If lower class people did not exist, everybody would be politically and economically equal.

In response, the ideal Marxist theory suggests that if there is a classless society, everybody is equal, there is no room for capitalism, and the masses are driven toward communism. Total equality would threaten the ruling group's elevation over others in society (Smith, 1987).

The hegemonic theory suggests that the dominant culture strives to expand its dominance while fighting off challenges and interventions from the class it seeks to subjugate. The dominant group's target is the working class of society. The mechanism of stereotypes survives on the compliance of its victims and succeeds by invading and shaping their minds. The influential class or ruling class then seeks to downplay other classes as unequal. "In American society, by reproducing the ideological hegemony of the dominant culture, the mass media helps to legitimize the inequalities in class and race relations" (Dates, 1990).

In order to keep the power structure strong, the ruling class uses devices such as the stereotype. The power structure uses negative stereotypes and racial conflicts as a "social psychological message delivered to majority and minority groups alike" (Wilson, 1985).

Negative stereotyping of blacks may have an especially negative impact on black children and youths. Some of the images of blacks portrayed on television may reinforce or instill negative value of blackness. After seeing blacks traditionally portrayed on television, black viewers may well conclude that black means that one is poor, carefree and unschooled (Bank, 1977 p. 337).

Stereotypical statements are clever tactics used to suppress a lower class of people. Society recognizes that lower class people are seen as a threat to the power structure. Therefore, stereotypes remind society that differences exist between the classes. Furthermore, it would be wrong to imply that the media are the producers of these stereotypes.

Media have their greatest effect when they are used in a manner that reinforces and channels attitudes and opinions consistent with the psychological makeup of the person and the social structure of the group with which he or she identifies (Wilson, 1985 p. 102).

### Negative Stereotypes of African-Americans

The media reinforces ideas that members of society may already have embedded in their minds about African-Americans. The media did not create these stereotypes, but they often perpetuate them. Subsequently, negative portrayals exist as a result of society's economic, social and political structure. Television seems to be subservient to the power holders of society; it constantly preserves and displays stereotypes to help form opinions about the stereotyped group (McQuail, 1989). In support of this notion, mass society theory suggests, the media caters to the power holders, and content is likely to serve the interests of the political and economic power holders of society. The theory emphasizes the interdependence of institutions that exercise power and thus the integration of the media into the source of social power.

Racial representations help to mold public opinion. . .for public discourse in the race issue in the media and in the society at large. Black media stereotypes are not the natural, much less harmless, products of an idealized popular culture; rather they are more commonly socially constructed images that are selective, partial, one-dimensional and distorted in their portrayal of blacks. Moreover, stereotypical black images most often are frozen, incapable of growth, change, innovation, or transformation. . .black representations are totally at odds with the reality of blacks as individual people (Dates, 1990 p. 158 ).

As years pass, public ideas and perceptions of African-Americans haven't changed. Stereotypes have been reinforced in a clever and subtle way. During the 50s and 60s, commercial networks were becoming a strong medium within mass communications (Berry, 1982). African-American characters were rarely represented. If they did receive roles they were portrayed as law breakers or "lovable but stereotyped buffoons" (Berry, 1982).

In the years shortly thereafter, African-Americans, when represented, played only certain stereotypical roles. The early 70s were called the "blaxploitation" years when African-Americans were portrayed as pimps, prostitutes, and drug dealers (Dates 1990). In support of this notion there are five common stereotypes that have followed African-Americans throughout history. Bogle, a scholar on African-American films and performances, says that there are five common depiction's that African-American actors and actresses have played and continue to play historically. Bogle says these characters in

film and television were/are portrayed as Toms, Coons, Mulattos, Mammies, and Bucks (Bogle, 1973).

According to Bogle, "Toms are the object of the white man's humor by appearing submissive, stoic and generous. Toms are always chased, harassed, hounded, flogged, enslaved, and insulted." In 1992, Toms are still present on prime-time television. Alfonso Ribero, who plays Carlton on the "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," co-stars in this half hour situation comedy. This situation comedy focuses on an African-American family living in Southern California. The series is about an inner city African-American male who moves in with his wealthy family in Southern California to escape the hard streets of Philadelphia. Will's cousin, Carlton, grew up in a wealthy environment. In one episode, Carlton and Will are arrested and jailed because they were driving a Mercedes-Benz. The police officers accuse Carlton and Will of stealing the car because they cannot believe that an African-American male could afford such an expensive car. Carlton does not have the same apprehensions of most African-American males in America when dealing with police. Carlton believes the officers were just doing their jobs and had unconsciously made a mistake. He doesn't believe they were arrested because of the officers' racist views. Instead, he blindly defends the officer's actions (Ebony,1991).

The Coon is another term and stereotype that has endured throughout history. A Coon widens his/her eyes, wears a silly grin/expression, and his hair stands on end (earlier known as the pickaninny). Coons are also considered to be "lazy, sub-human

creatures, good for nothing more than eating watermelons, stealing chickens, shooting craps or butchering the English language" (Bogle, 1973). A contemporary example of this type of depiction is the character Lester on the FOX network show "True Colors." The show is about an interracial family. Both parents bring teenage children together in the same household. Lester, the youngest son, walks around being the comical hit of the show. He frequently resembles the definition of a coon when he wears a confused facial expression, misunderstands things, and is usually lazy (Ebony, 1991).

The Mulatto has been another stereotype that has survived through time. Bogle refers to Mulattos as "victims of divided racial inheritance." He or she appears close to white because of skin color, eye color, and/or hair texture. Due to these features, Mulattos are closely aligned with sex appeal and beauty. Hillary on Monday Night's "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" is an example of the Mulatto. A great deal of her discussions are about material things that she intends to buy.

Another light skinned, rich and shopping-crazed character somewhat similar to Hillary is Whitley Gilbert, of "A Different World," a situation comedy about African-American college life. She portrays a light-skinned, rich, prissy, southern woman who has no understanding of the realities of the real world. She has no knowledge of the struggles of African-American people in America and does not care about their struggles. She is regarded as "fine or beautiful" on the show by various males. The focus of her life is centered around



etiquette, fine food, credit cards, and shopping. These are two fine example of the Mulatto of the 90s. (Ebony, 1991).

Mammies are "usually big, fat, cantankerous, and fiercely independent." But often play the role of caregiver for white children. She usually has a strong bond with the children because of her being a mother figure (Berry, 1982). These are examples of words frequently used to describe a mammy. The Mammie image is portrayed by Nell Carter on "Gimmie a Break." In this series, Nell is an overweight and smart-mouthed, African-American female. She gives up all the goals she had for her life to raise three Caucasian girls after the death of their mother.

"The Jefferson's" gives another example of the Mammie image. An African-American family becomes wealthy through its dry cleaning business and moves to a high rise complex in New York City. The maid, Florence, challenges Mr. Jefferson's authority and ignores that he is her employer. Florence makes rude remarks about his abilities and character. She has no regard for authority. These are examples of the Mammies that are still being aired on cable channels in the 90s.

The image of the Mammie has also been commercialized. In Ms. Butterworth syrup commercials, Mammie symbolism is evident--a dark bottle in the shape of a full figured woman wearing an apron. When she speaks of the product to children, she is warm, sweet, and jolly. These traits are characteristic in the description of a Mammie.

Finally, African-American Bucks appear "always oversexed and savage, violent and frenzied" (Bogle, 1973). Ron of "A Different World"

is a ladies man. On a Valentine's Day episode, several of Ron's companions appear at a party where his band is performing. Ron is portrayed as an oversexed African-American male trying to juggle several women at one time. Also, each week he tries to get the attention of other females and kisses a wide variety of women that he has taken on midnight rendezvous (Ebony, 1991).

Figure 1 is a listing of common traits given to not only African-Americans, but to Native, Latino, and Asian-American's alike.

Intellectual

preoccupied with simple ideas  
 inferior strategy in warfare/conflict situations  
 low or nonexistent occupational status  
 poor speech pattern/dialect  
 comedic foil

Moral

low regard for human life  
 criminal activity  
 sexual promiscuity  
 drug/alcohol abuse  
 dishonesty

Figure 1. Some traits commonly applied to minority portrayals in early movies and television (Wilson 1985, p )

A great deal of television viewed in the 90s is based on the stereotypical roles played by African-Americans from the past (Fife, 1974). The images of African-Americans from the past implies that African-Americans are being portrayed negatively and stereotypically as their predecessors were. This is the underlying reason for this study. This study will first gauge how and if the portrayals of African-Americans on network television have changed in the past four years and, secondly, will provide information about what kind of roles African-Americans are portraying.

The Cotton study analyzed the presence of blacks on prime-time commercial television (Cotton, 1989). Information gathered from the 1993-94 seasons initially will be contrasted with those findings related to prime-time entertainment programming in the Cotton study. The focus of the study will be on four commercial networks: ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX in order to remain consistent with the methods of the Cotton study. Then an expanded look at the portrayals of African-Americans on each of the four networks will be conducted.

### Television Content Analysis

The studies referred to here support the theory that individuals learn from television content at many different levels: affective, cognitive and behavioral. There are many people who use television as a way to learn about different racial groups (Atkin and Greenberg, 1978). Greenberg (1972) suggests that white children not exposed to

different cultures use television as their primary source of information.

Roberts and Schramn (1971) referred to the term "incidental learning, to explain the process of which information that is not deliberately sought out." Furthermore, individuals may watch television for many different reasons, to be relaxed, stimulated or entertained, but regardless of the motives they still learn from their viewing. This study is concerned with the possibility that individuals may be learning about African-American people from a source that is not reliable in the presentation of the African-American images.

In an early television study, Dominick and Greenberg (1970) suggested that the number of African-Americans on prime-time programming increased. They also said that African-Americans were seldom portrayed as villains. Furthermore, they found during their study that African-American characters had the largest increase in numbers on prime-time programming, but still appeared in minor roles.

In the process of gathering research for this topic many studies with different interpretations of the presence of African-Americans in the 70s were found. As you will see the research found by Hinton in 1973 contradicts the findings of the Dominick and Greenberg study in 1970.

In the early years of television, "Amos and Andy" stands out as the most significant and representative of shows portraying African-Americans. Otherwise, until recent years, blacks on television were most notable for their absence" (Hinton, 1973). Lemon (1968)

conducted a study in 1967 which reported that only two percent of all commercials presented African-Americans, Indians, Puerto Ricans, and Asians.

As the picture came on the screen I saw to my astonishment that the newscaster was a Negro. Why I should have been so astonished I do not know, presumably because I had never seen a colored man in such a role before. But the psychological impact was immediate and almost salutary.(Colle, 1969 p. 57).

Simmons, Hogan, Greenberg, and Atkins (1980) analyzed three seasons of television content from 1975 through 1978, their study found that African-Americans were underrepresented in managerial occupations and in professional roles in comparison to the overall percentage of African-Americans on television. During the study the number of African-Americans in professional roles decreased. They also found that African-Americans made up a mere nine percent of the total population of characters but of that nine percent only four percent were in professional roles.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported that the presence of minorities on television was on the decline and in a comparison of white males and minorities, whites males were portrayed in occupational roles vs. minorities who were seldom seen. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights also reported that minorities were portrayed in mostly services occupation roles (MacDonalds, 1992).

Hinton (1973) examined the trends in television portrayals of African-Americans and women. He focused on two racial groups, white Americans and African-Americans. The unit of analysis is defined as

occupational roles of portrayals, such as, an actor or actress appearing on the screen in a clearly identifiable occupational role. According to his assessments, African-Americans appeared less often and in less prestigious positions, white women appeared more often but in labor force type positions. The findings of this study also, stated that when African-Americans did appear they seldom appeared in a high status occupations.

In 1980 Simmons, Hogan, Greenberg and Atkins stated, that the percentage of minorities on television had remained relatively steady at about ten percent.

Word (1975) studied television in the lives of African-American people. Word found that 72 percent of African-American homes use television as their main source of activity. Also, television was used as a friend, socializing, housework, and conversations. Two-thirds of the African-Americans surveyed, expressed that they watched because they could relate to the characters. They felt that the programs were reality oriented.

In 1980 Loomis, Weigel, and Soja researched the interactions of African-Americans and white Americans on prime-time television shows in 1977. Their study found that cross-racial interaction represented less than two percent of the prime-time programming. In support of this finding, Barcus (1983) found that when dealing with children's programs 82 percent of the programs never aired minorities and white children in the same scenes.

Reid (1979) investigated racial stereotypes on television, a comparison of the behavior of African-Americans and female white American characters. Achievement behavior was scored on how well a character overcame obstacles. Reid found that African-Americans female characters scored the lowest in achievement behavior, African-American men scored highest and white women scored the second highest in the achievement category. Also, there were no significant differences based on the race and sex of the characters. In categories of activity, no significant difference of aggression and self recognition were found in the characters behavior.

Greenberg and Neuendorf (1980) analyzed African-American families and white-American families portrayals during three seasons of network programming. The study found several differences in relation to the families race. The first difference was the interaction between the African-American male and female, one third of the interaction between the husband and the wife concerned the wife attacking her passive husband. The African-American husband was portrayed as being very passive in comparison to the white husband. The white husband was seen as strong figure in the family with a great relationship with his wife. Secondly, the African-American families were portrayed as having a weak foundation in comparison to white families. A great deal of the African-American families were portrayed as a family with no father figure in the home, which was very stereotypical for the early 80s. The images that were portrayed

of African-American families were simply a message that stated that most African-American families are dysfunctional.

Banks (1977) studied the relationships between the racial composition of television casts and their portrayals of African-Americans. Banks found that there was a greater frequency of stereotypical African-American characteristic theme units on programs with predominately African-American casts than on programs with integrated casts. Also, there was a greater frequency of high social status theme units on programs with integrated casts than on programs with all African-American cast.

A study in 1979 evaluated the use of "African-American English" on African-American situation comedies. The study found that the word "BE" was not being used correctly, and tended to be used by a comical or an uneducated person of color. The use of this incorrectly used English was another form of stereotyping of African-Americans. This was a clever tactic to keep society viewing African-Americans as uneducated buffoons ( Fine, Anderson, and Eckles, 1979).

Roberts (1975) examined the presentations of African-Americans on television network newscast. According to the assessment, during the two three-week periods African-Americans appeared in 204 of the 874 news segments. This study also found, that 87 percent of the African-Americans who appeared were in non-speaking roles during the 1972 season. African-Americans also appeared in stories concerning racial matters. This study revealed that 82 percent of all appearances



by African-Americans concerned possible crimes or past criminal activity.

O'Kelly and Bloomquist (1976) studied segments of the three major networks during a 28-day span. The 1973 study found that of the 2,309 characters coded, only 4.9 percent of those consisted of African-Americans, Native-Americans, and Asian-Americans. The number of television portrayals of minorities was skewed when compared to the national population of 15 percent (Seggar,1973).

Cox (1969) studied changes in stereotypes of African-Americans and white Americans in magazine advertisements. Cox found that African-Americans comprised .57 percent of all advertisements. The study also revealed that African-Americans were viewed as servants, porters, butlers, cooks, maids, and chauffeurs according to 75 percent of all general advertisements. Furthermore, white Americans were viewed as doctors, lawyers, store owners, and teachers.

In 1972, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights announced that in the 1950s African-Americans appeared on television to play stereotype roles such as "Amos & Andy." During the 1960s, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights focused attention on African-Americans on television; as a result the number of African-Americans increased on television.

But, on November 5, 1956, a major change took place on NBC. NBC produced " The Nat King Cole Show." This broke many barriers in the network industry, by giving an African-American his own television program. "Cole was the first African-American to star and lead his own network show" (MacDonald, 1992). Cole stated, "I know that the

networks were freezing the Negro out, but I'm fighting this from the inside without publicity" (Ebony 1956). Due to the monopoly of the industry by white males, his fight had just begun. When his program initially aired, it was only a 15 minute summer replacement. Later, it became a half-hour prime-time spot against one of the top programs in the ratings, "The \$64,000 Question." Cole's program was aired by 77 stations, with about half of those in the South (MacDonald, 1992).

"In 1965, comedian Bill Cosby became the first black star in television history, marking the beginning of the real appearance of blacks on television" (MacDonald, 1992). Cosby starred in "I Spy," which was the first major role for an African-American in a television series. This action-packed adventure program provided another stepping stone for African-Americans in the mid 60s.

Culley and Bennett (1976) found that African-Americans were cast mostly in background roles or seen as inferior to whites. They found an increase in the number of African-Americans in television ads. Hair, Solomon and Bush (1977) replicated the 1968 study by Dominick and Greenburg. They found that the increase of African-Americans in television advertising had a direct relation to the growing acceptance among product advertisers.

"Roc" is a half-hour family situation comedy that has a predominantly African-American cast. Charles S. Dutton stars as Roc, a hardworking trash man who loves his work. Ironically, contrary to the rest of society's feelings about garbage men, Roc is a proud individual with a great deal of respect and love for his work and his

family. His family has a lifestyle similar to the upper-lower class. In the past he would have been portrayed as a African-American male who was depressed about his life. "Roc" is a situation comedy that portrays reality for many African-Americans families in the United States. This is one situation comedy that portrays African-Americans in a positive light. The show has a positive message, this show says that African-Americans can work and take care of their family without cheating and stealing. This situation-comedy deals real issues and shows an African-American male as someone with pride. (Ebony,1991).

The "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" has an African-American family in a totally different situation. This situation comedy shows a wealthy African-American family residing in Southern California. The father is a prominent corporate lawyer. The family has allowed cousin Will to move into their home. Will, a young African-American male with has a great deal of street savvy, is placed in the best private school in the city. Will is portrayed as a rebel but in his own lovable way (Ebony,1991).

"True Colors" is a situation comedy that crossed many barriers that society has embedded in their minds when dealing with interracial relationships.

For many years, in fact, it was considered commercially and socially taboo to portray interracial lovers, particularly black men and white women, in movies. And television, in its infancy, enforced an unwritten code forbidding black men and white women to touch. So powerful and persuasive was this unwritten law that even the exceptions such as the blind white

woman who fell in love with Sidney Poitier in "A Patch of Blue" proved the rule (Lee,1991 p. 10).

"True Colors" scratched the surface of a sensitive subject in American, "interracial family." The show has a African-American male married to a white woman. Both adults have teenage children from previous marriages. This situation comedy shows society how an interracial family survives on a daily basis.

"True Colors" is the first prime-time situation comedy that has ventured into the realm of intimate contact between a black man and a white woman (Ebony,1991). With situations of this nature occurring there must be further research on the presence of African-Americans on prime-time television. Seggar (1977) found that, overall, the number of African-Americans on television has increased, but he also concluded that other ethnic groups have decreased in number. Hinton, et al. (1974) found a developing trend in the appearance of African-American actors occurring on television. They also concluded that African-Americans were often portrayed as competent, law-abiding, and industrious, but in insignificant roles.

Cotton (1989) found that out of the 48 shows in his sample, at least one African-American appeared in 24 of the 48 shows. Cotton also found a decrease in the percentage of African-Americans appearing on the 48 shows in comparison to the 1969 Dominick and Greenburg study. This study found that NBC made the greatest gain since the 1969 study, with 64.3 percent of it's programming having at least one African-American in a role. NBC also had the largest percentage of African-Americans in comparison to ABC and CBS.

## Summary

In a world that's vastly changing, where hate crimes are on the rise, theories such as cultivation, modeling and stimulus effects must be examined and considered to gain more knowledge of their possible impacts on society.

This study intends to help researchers and communities know what messages they are currently receiving from television relative to African-Americans. Parents need to be made aware of the long term effects that television may be having on their children.

Role models are important in today's society especially if you are an African-American child. The African-American communities must realize that the messages that the children are receiving, may be affecting their self-esteem, self-concept and numerous other aspects of their lives. There must be an effort to take society's children back from the grasp of television.

This is more than an African-American issue, it's everyone's issue. White Americans in this country must make their children aware that the portrayals of African-American people on television don't represent all African-American people. As this country approaches the year 2000 and the demographics of this country changes, people must respect each others difference and cultures. Individuals must have a look at reality when dealing with African-American people or the fear and hatred will be the downfall of this country. The root to a lot of these problems are the television sets: Due to the negative images aired about people not a part of the dominant culture.

To that end, this study intends to view ABC, NBC, CBS and FOX during the prime-time hours, with the largest percentage of viewers, to provide a snap shot of the portrayals of African-Americans on prime-time television in 1994. The results of this study will provide more information concerning the images that African-American children may be receiving as reality. Also, this study hopes to peak the interest of other researchers about the topic of African-American children and media effects.

## CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

### The Sampling Frame

In the initial study (Cotton 1989), the information was collected from 48 entertainment programs aired during the week of August 29 through September 2, 1988. A fraction of the present study will be based on the 1988 television content which was obtained from Cotton, who viewed television from 7 p.m.-10 p.m. (Central Daylight Time).

The present study acknowledges the possibilities of observing daytime programming. However, the prime-time hours were chosen as the main focus of this study. Prime-time programming (7 p.m.-10 p.m.) should be representative of the portrayal of African-Americans on prime-time television in the 90s. Furthermore, the prime-time hours have the highest number of viewers when compared against other time slots and this is the time when most children view television because of school, parents and numerous other factors. The Cotton study analyzed three network affiliates: the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). A major difference in the methodology of the Cotton study and this study will be a collection of data from FOX network.

The present study will focus on programming aired during the week-day hours of 7 p.m.-10 p.m. (Central Daylight Time), in order to remain consistent with the method used in the Cotton study.

## Data Collection

Programming was recorded during the week of November 15, through November 19, 1993. The programs for the present study were recorded from the four networks, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the FOX network. The three networks, CBS, NBC, and ABC were selected in order to remain consistent with the method used in the Cotton study. The FOX network was selected because, during the 1992-93 season, three out of five new African-American situation comedies were aired by the FOX network. Fifteen hours of prime-time programming from each of the four networks were recorded and analyzed; resulting in a total of 60 hours of programming. The amount of recorded programming was chosen in an effort to remain consistent with the methods used in the Cotton study.

## Coding Procedure

In the Cotton study, television content was examined in three broad categories. The present study will examine similar but more focused categories.

The nine coding categories are:

- (1) Dramatic Series
- (2) Made for Television Movies
- (3) Made for Theater Movies
- (4) Action-Adventure Series



- (5) Situation Comedies Series
- (6) Westerns
- (7) Reality shows
- (8) Variety Shows- shows with the main emphasis on singing, dancing and comedy.
- (9) Headline News Programs

Sports programs will not be analyzed in this study. When dealing with sports, networks have no control over the ethnicity of the players and where those ethnic athletes will be playing. "Television plays little part in choosing players who appear" (Dominick and Greenburg, 1970 p. 23).

## Variables

The programs recorded will be analyzed by the:

- \* number of African-American actors or actresses
- \* time of day
- \* program type
- \* channel and network

Upon the appearance of African-Americans in the programs, the following variables will be coded:

- \* whether the character spoke, gave orders, or took orders
- \* whether the role was "major," "minor" or "background"
- \* whether a reference was made to race
- \* whether an African-American character touched another person
- \* the perceived occupation of the African-American character

- \* does the character fit into one of the five stereotypes of African-American ( Coon, Mammie, Tom, Mulatto, and Buck).

A 44-item coding instrument was used during the Cotton study to collect data. The coding instrument was a checklist that allowed the coder to respond to the program quickly and consistently without losing focus on the program. The present study will use a revised coding instrument to collect the data for this study. The "Hemp-Pete" instrument was developed to gain more detailed information about the portrayals of African-Americans on prime-time television.

### Coder Reliability

The reliability test for the present study was conducted on four coders. According to Cotton, coder reliability for the set of variables observed was 92.0% in the 1989 study, which is an acceptable level of intracoder reliability.

Intercoder reliability for coding the variables in the present study was analyzed by performing a pre-test on a portion of one night of programming. A total of three hours of programming from CBS was viewed and coded. To calculate the percentage of agreement between the four coders Holsti's (1969) coefficient formula was applied:

$$\text{Intercoder agreement} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

M: Total amount of agreement between coding decisions

N1 and N2: Total amount of coding decisions ( number of hour analyzed x number of coders)

The intercoder reliability for this study was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Coder 1 \& Coder 2} = 2M/(N + N) = 2 \times 22/(228 + 228) = 96.4\%$$

$$\text{Coder 2 \& Coder 3} = 2M/(N + N) = 2 \times 21/(228 + 228) = 92.1\%$$

$$\text{Coder 3 \& Coder 4} = 2M/(N + N) = 2 \times 22/(228 + 228) = 96.4\%$$

$$\text{Coder 1 \& Coder 4} = 2M/(N + N) = 2 \times 20/(228 + 228) = 87.7\%$$

$$N: \text{No. of hour analyzed} \times \text{No. of coding decisions/coders} = 57 \times 4 = 228$$

The average inter-coder agreement was computed as :

$$N(96.4\% + 92.1\% + 96.1\% + 87.7\%/4 = 93.1\%$$

The intercoder reliability for the pretest were calculated at 93.1%. In 1952 Berelson stated, that an acceptable level of intercoder reliability may range between 66% and 95%. The same coding instrument used in the reliability coding was used in the study.

### Statistical Analysis

Statview Student for Macintosh was used to analyze the data that was gathered during this study. This study intends to use means to determine if there were any differences in the portrayal of African-Americans in 1993 in contrast to the 1989 Cotton study.

## CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of a content analysis of 60 hours of programming recorded from the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), the National Broadcasting Company and FOX network. The data was compiled with the Hemp-Pete instrument which allowed the coders to respond to the appearance of African-Americans quickly and accurately without losing focus on the program. The instrument was developed from a foundation that was laid by Clarence Joseph Cotton in the 1989 study on the "Presence of blacks on prime-time entertainment television." The instrument used in the Cotton study was designed to group all data from each network (ABC, NBC, and CBS). The present study changed the structure of the instrument and added several categories. The instrument in the present study provided data for each of the four networks, in order to give the reader an understanding of what the networks are airing on a daily basis for children to view. The Hemp-Pete instrument was structured to determine the role of the characters, whether the character was in a speaking or background role and the perceived occupation along with other items which will be discussed later in this chapter.

There were four research questions formulated for this study. The research questions for this study are as follows:

Research Question 1. How many African-American appeared on prime-time entertainment television the week of November 15 -19 of 1993-94?

Research Question 1B. How has this number changed since the 1989 Cotton study?

Research Question 2. What type of roles do African-Americans actors and actresses appear in during the 1993-94 television programs recorded?

Research Question 3. How are African-Americans portrayed on prime-time entertainment television during the week of November 15 -19 of 1993-94?

In the 1988-89 study, the number of African-Americans was measured only if the character spoke, no matter how small the speaking part. This study measured all African-Americans whether their role was speaking or background. The 1988-89 study found 93 African-Americans characters on the three networks analyzed (ABC, CBS and NBC). The present study saw a considerable increase in the number of African-Americans who appeared during the week data was collected. NBC alone had 141 African-Americans who appeared in speaking or background role. FOX had 140 African-Americans who appeared, followed by ABC with 121 African-Americans in a speaking or background role. CBS was well below the other three network with 61 African-Americans in a role (Figure 1). In the 1988-89 study, Cotton also found that CBS with 20 African-Americans who appeared in a role was much lower than the other two networks (ABC and NBC) that were analyzed during the prime-time programming.

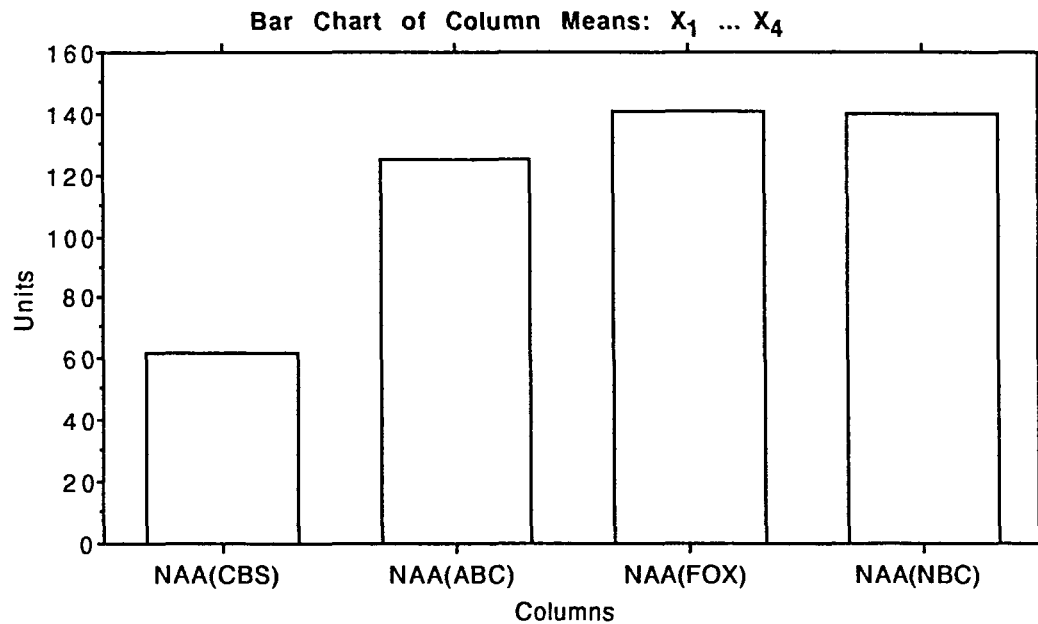


Figure 1. Number of African-Americans who appeared on prime-time network television during the 1993-94 season.

The instrument in this study measured the importance of the characters role, whether the character was portrayed in a major, minor or background role (for operational definitions see appendix B). Cotton studied the number and percentage of African-Americans in a role. Cotton also used three categories, those being major, minor and backgrounds. Cotton found that 21 African-Americans appeared in major roles on the three networks that were analyzed, 24 African-Americans appeared in minor roles and 48 African-Americans appeared in background roles. In the reporting of the current studies data, the methods of gathering and analyzing the data are different. Cotton grouped all of the data from the three networks into one group and reported the findings. In the present study the data were broken into

separate groups by network to provide more information on each network's portrayal of African-Americans.

During the 1993-94 season NBC had the largest number of African-Americans in major roles with 36, followed by FOX network with 22 African-Americans. There was a considerable decrease in the number of African-Americans in major roles on ABC and CBS. ABC had 18 African-Americans in major roles followed by CBS with 9 African-Americans (Figure 2).

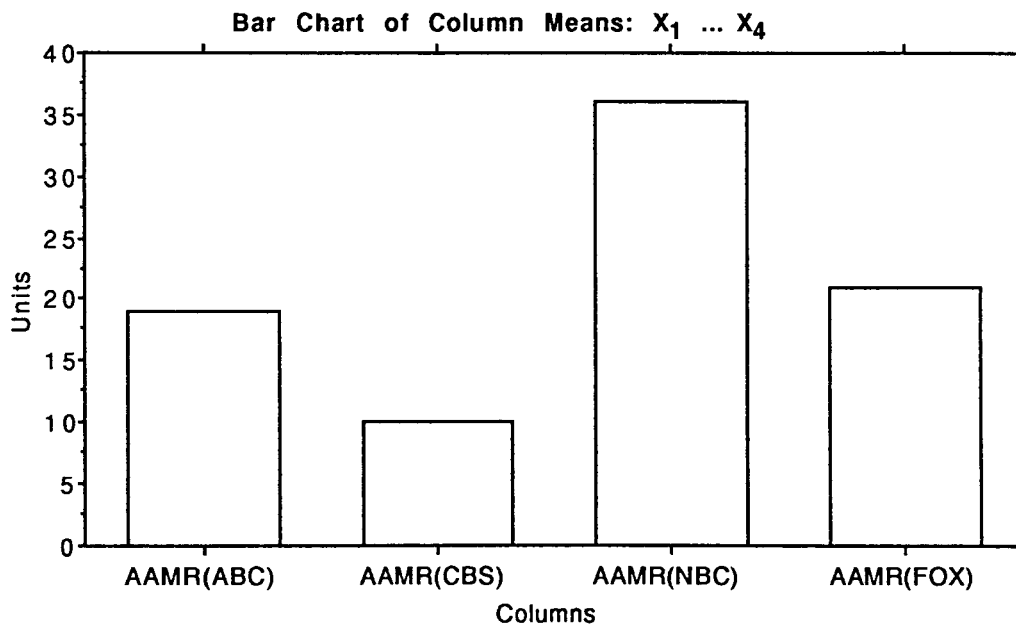


Figure 2. Number of African-Americans appearing in major roles during the 1993-94 season.

There was a slight increase in the number of African-Americans in minor roles in comparison to African-Americans in major roles during the 1993-94 programming season. In the 1988-89 study, Cotton also reported a slight increase in the number of African-Americans in

minor roles which was 24 in comparison to the number of African-Americans in major which was 21. NBC remained consistent to the finding in the major roles, by leading the other three networks with the largest number of African-Americans in minor roles. NBC had 42 African-Americans in minor roles, followed by ABC with 33 African-Americans in minor roles. Fox followed ABC with 26 African-Americans in minor roles and CBS had a total of 10 African-Americans in minor roles (Figure 3).

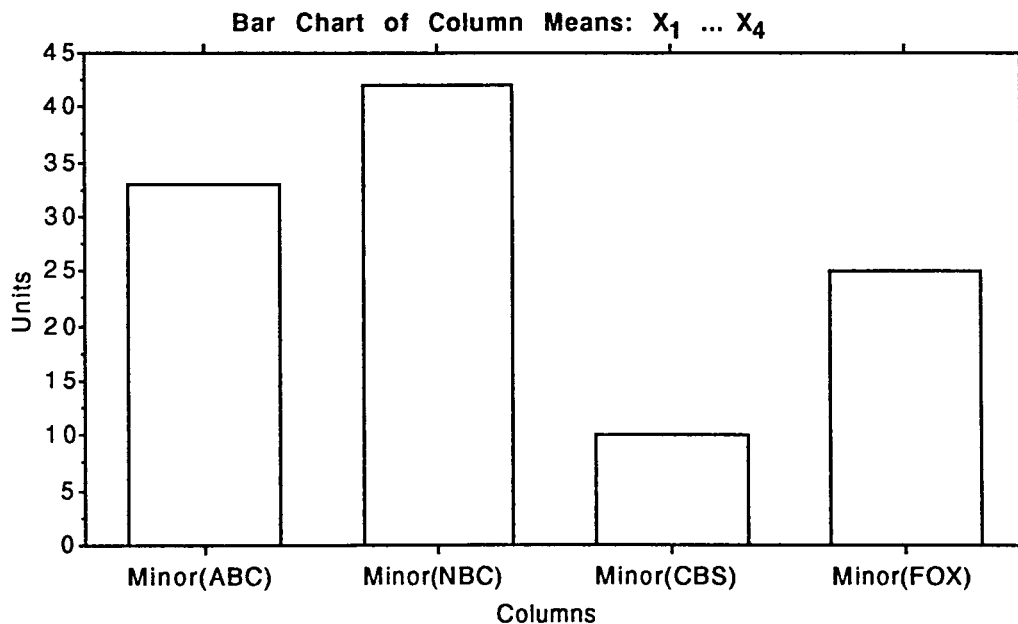


Figure 3. Number of African-Americans appearing in minor roles during the 1993-94 programming season.

In the 1988-89 study, Cotton reported a large increase in the number of African-Americans in background roles which was 48 in comparison to the number of African-American in major and minor. Background roles were defined differently in the Cotton study and the



present study. The 1988-89 study analyzed background roles as a person who spoke briefly. The current study considered background roles as a person who appeared on screen in a non-speaking role. In the present study every African-American who spoke was placed in a major or minor role.

FOX network showed a large increase in the number of African-Americans in background roles, which was 107. ABC had 85 African-Americans in background roles followed by NBC with 65 African-Americans in background roles. CBS was well below the other networks with 42 African-Americans in background roles (Figure 4).

In the 1988-89 study, Cotton didn't collect data on whether an African-American character spoke. In the present study data was

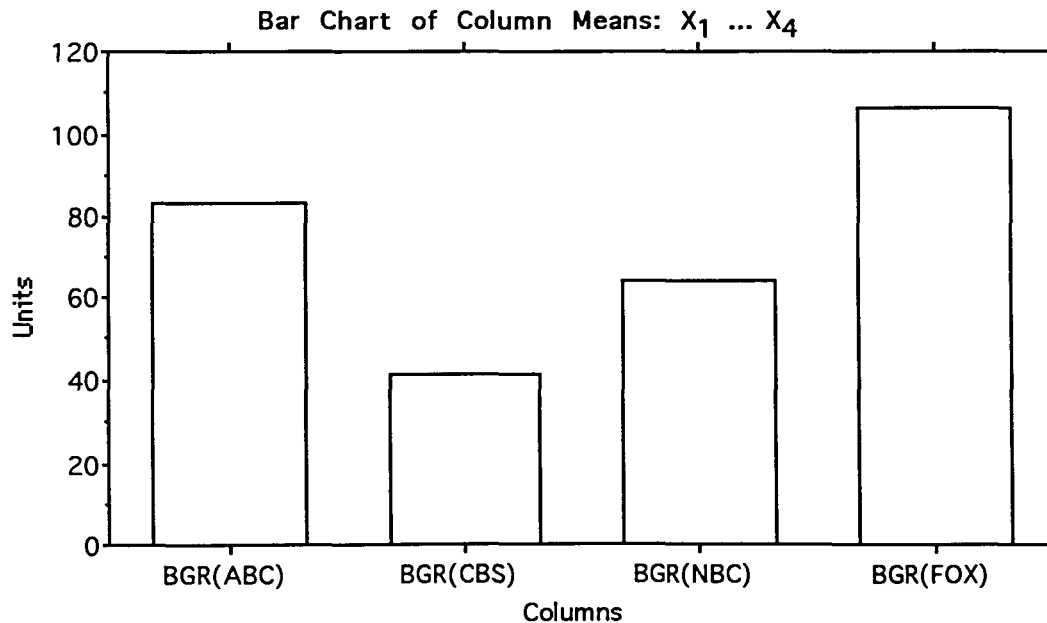


Figure 4. Number of African-Americans appearing in background roles during the 1993-94 programming season.

collected and analyzed to report how many African-Americans spoke on the four networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX). All of the African-American characters who spoke were placed in a major or minor role for coding purposes, major and minor roles may be viewed on (Figures 2 and 3).

During the 1993-94 season, NBC continued its trend with the highest number of African-Americans in a speaking role. NBC had a total of 78 African-Americans who spoke during the 1993-94 season. ABC showed a significant decrease of African-Americans in speaking role with 46 and Fox was slightly less with 45 African-Americans in speaking roles. CBS was below the other three networks with 15 African-Americans who spoke (Figure 5).

The Cotton study collected data on the frequency of physical contact that African-Americans had with Caucasian. The present

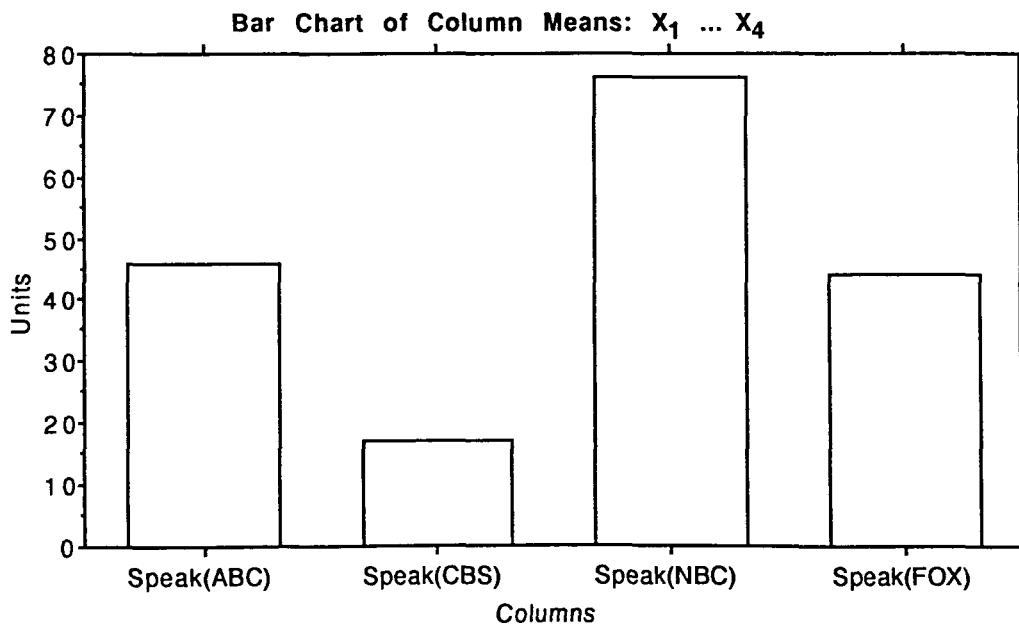


Figure 5. Number of African-Americans who spoke during the 1993-94 season, no matter how small the part.

studies methods were different, data was collected if an African-American touched another person, whether they were African-American or Caucasian. Also, the method of analyzing the data was different, the 1988-89 study used percentages to analyze the data vs. the 1993-94 study which used means. Neither study reported what kind of physical contact occurred.

During the 1993-94 season, NBC had the most physical contact between African-Americans and other characters. NBC had 32 touches, followed by ABC with 22 touches and CBS with 12 touches. FOX was below the other three networks with 10 touches during the 1993-94 seasons (Figure 6).

During the 1988-89 study, Cotton analyzed the number of shows with a reference to race vs. the present study which analyzed the

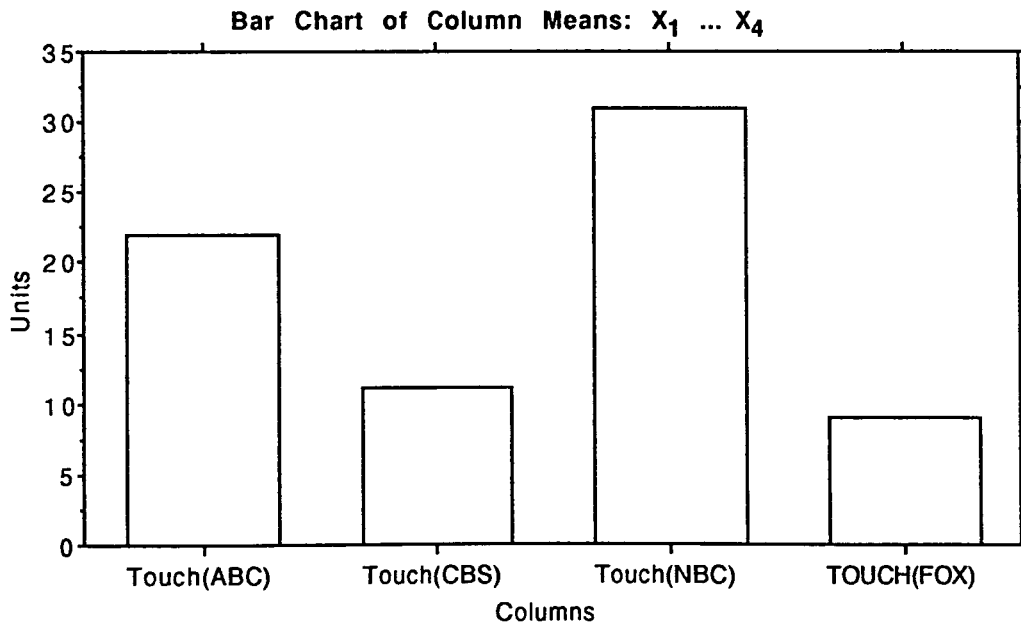


Figure 6. Number of African-American character who touched another character during the 1993-94 season.

number of reference to race on each network. Neither study kept a record of what the racial statement was. Cotton reported that two shows out of 48 shows analyzed had a reference to race.

The 1993-94 study found that CBS had the highest number of references to race with 6, followed by ABC and NBC both had 3 references to race. FOX had the fewest number of references to race with 1 during the 1993-94 season (Figure 7).

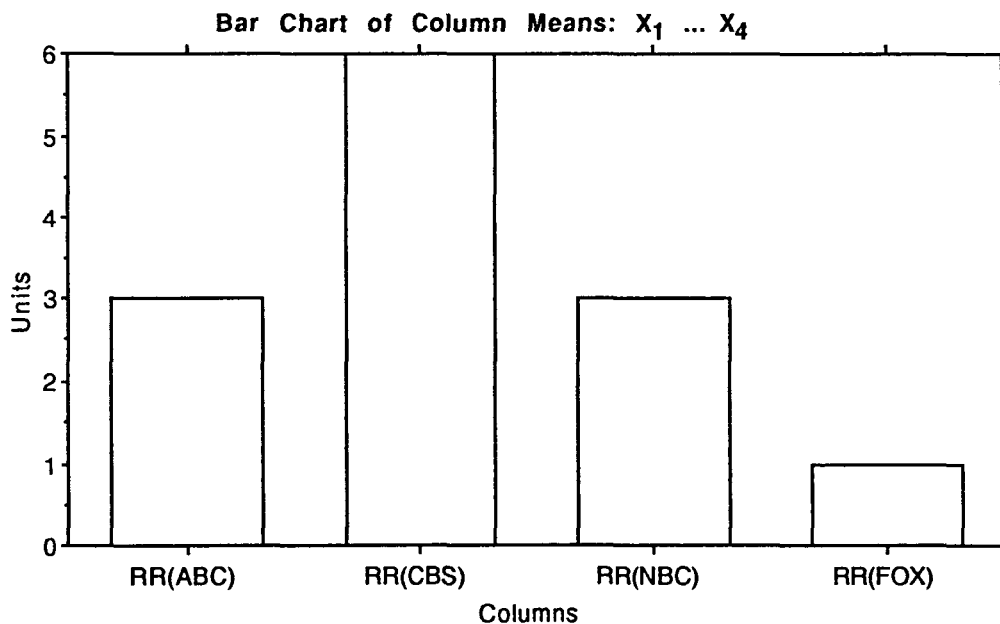


Figure 7. Number of references to race on each network during the 1993-94 season.

Cotton found that African-American characters in prime-time programming were more likely to take orders than to give orders in the 1988-89 season. The 1988-89 study reported that 24.7 percent of African-American gave orders, but those who took orders was slightly higher with 26.9 percent. The present study methods were different.

Data on whether African-Americans gave orders or took orders was collected for each network. Also, the present study used means to analyze the data.

In the 1993-94 study, ABC had the highest number of African-Americans giving orders with 16 followed by NBC with 14. FOX had 7 African-Americans who gave orders. CBS had the fewest number of African-Americans who gave orders with 6 (Figure 8). NBC had the highest number of African-Americans who took orders with 42 followed by ABC with 27. CBS and FOX had 19 African-Americans who took orders during the 1993-94 programming season (Figure 9).

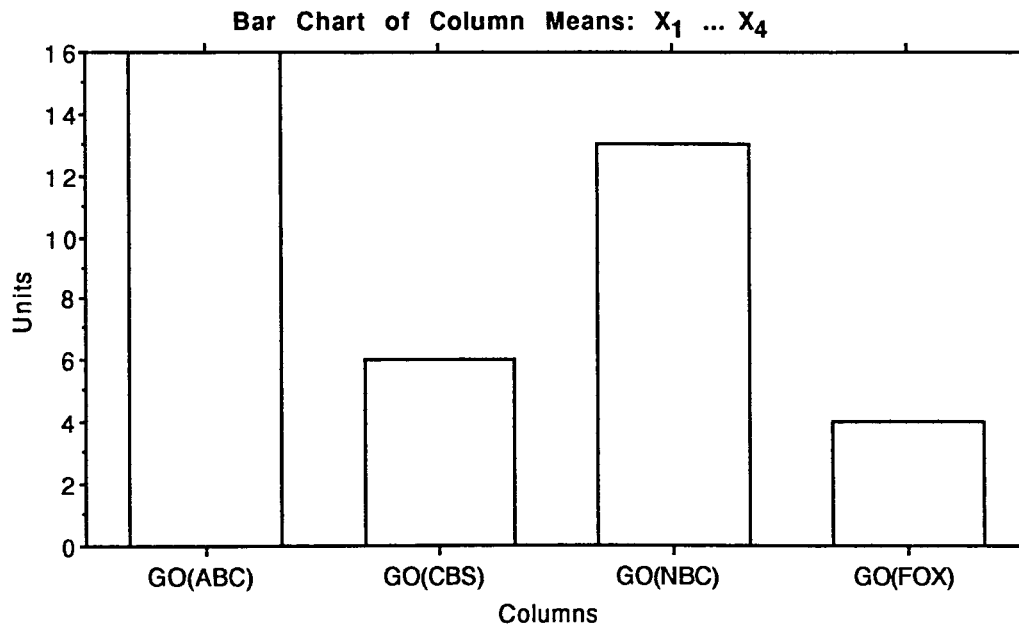


Figure 8. Number of African-Americans who gave orders on the four networks during the 1993-94 season.

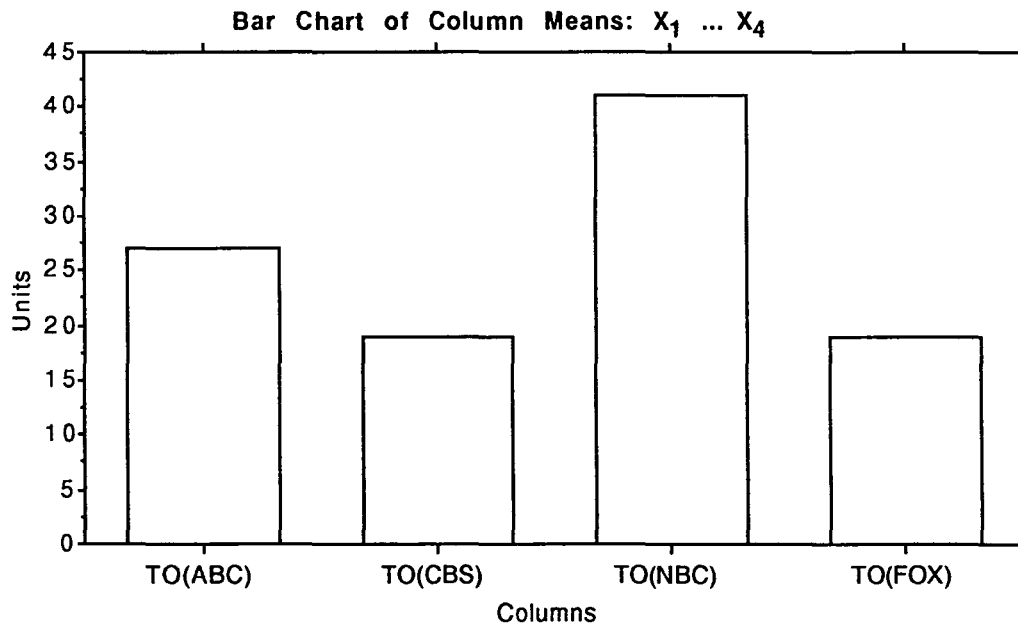


Figure 9. Number of African-Americans who took orders on the four networks during the 1993-94 season.

### Roles of African-American Characters

To determine the occupation or role of the African-American characters, the instrument was designed to record and measure the appearance of each African-American character. During the 1988-89 study, Cotton used the 44-item instrument to record how African-Americans were portrayed. The 1988-89 study reported the following:

<u>Portrayals</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Student	44
Police Official	9
Background character	6
Lawyer	4
Reporter	3
Prostitute	3
Parent	2
Teacher	2
Criminal	2

Laborer	2
Farmer	2

The 1993-94 study used a different coding instrument than the instrument used in 1988-89 study, therefore the present study results will be different. Another key difference in the 1988-89 study and the present study was the methods. Cotton grouped all portrayals on each network into one group and reported the findings. The present study recorded data on the portrayals of African-Americans for each of the four networks (NBC, ABC, CBS and FOX). The present study had the following coding categories:

Professional	Unemployed	Pre-School Child
Blue Collar	College Student	Unknown
Homemaker	High School Student	Criminal Activity

The four coders used in the present study were trained to code the appearance of African-Americans according to the perceived occupation of the characters. According to the results, 52 African-Americans appeared in professional role on ABC, 79 African-Americans appeared as professionals on NBC, followed by FOX network with 21 professional roles. CBS was well below the other three networks with 6 African-Americans in professional roles (Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13).

Three of the four networks reported a considerable decrease in the number of African-Americans who appeared in blue collar roles compared to African-American in professional roles. ABC had 11 African-Americans who appeared in blue collar roles, 5 African-Americans appeared on NBC and 7 African-Americans appeared in blue

collars roles on FOX network. CBS remained consistent with the same number of professional and blue collar appearances with 6 (Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13).

ABC, FOX and NBC did have any African-Americans portrayed as homemakers. CBS had 1 African-American who appeared as a homemaker. According to the results, 4 African-Americans were portrayed as unemployed individuals on ABC, followed by FOX with 3 such appearances. NBC and CBS did not have any African-Americans appearing as an unemployed person (Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13).

The instrument for this study was designed to measure the criminal activity of African-American characters. According to the findings, NBC had 23 Africans-Americans who were portrayed as criminals or involvement in illegal activity. FOX had 6 appearance followed by ABC with 5 such appearances. CBS had 2 African-Americans who were portrayed as criminals. FOX had the largest number of Africans-Americans portrayed as college students with 3, followed by NBC with 2 portrayals. CBS and ABC did not portray any African-Americans as college students. ABC had the largest number of African-American high school student with 13. NBC had 2 African-Americans who appeared as high school students followed by FOX and CBS with no such appearances (Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13).

This study found that ABC had the largest number of African-Americans who were in the age group that is considered pre-school in comparison to the other three networks. ABC had 17 African-American children followed by FOX with 5 appearances and CBS had 2 African-



American children. NBC had the fewest number of African-American children with 1 appearance. The coders also had the option to respond to a character as "unknown" if they had no knowledge or not enough information about the characters role. According to the findings, ABC had 27 African-Americans in roles who were unknown followed by FOX with 2 African-Americans in unknown roles. CBS had 1 African-American in an unknown role. NBC had no unfamiliar roles for African-American characters in the 1993-94 study (Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13) (for operational definitions of roles used during coding see appendix B).

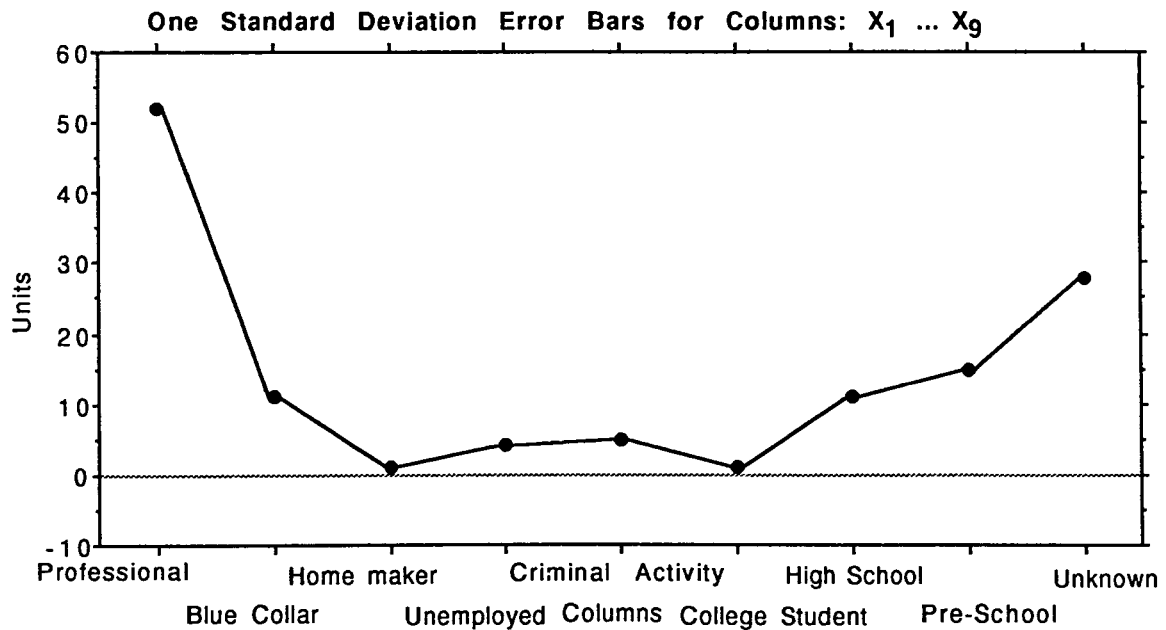


Figure 10. Roles of African-American on ABC during the 1993-94 programming season.

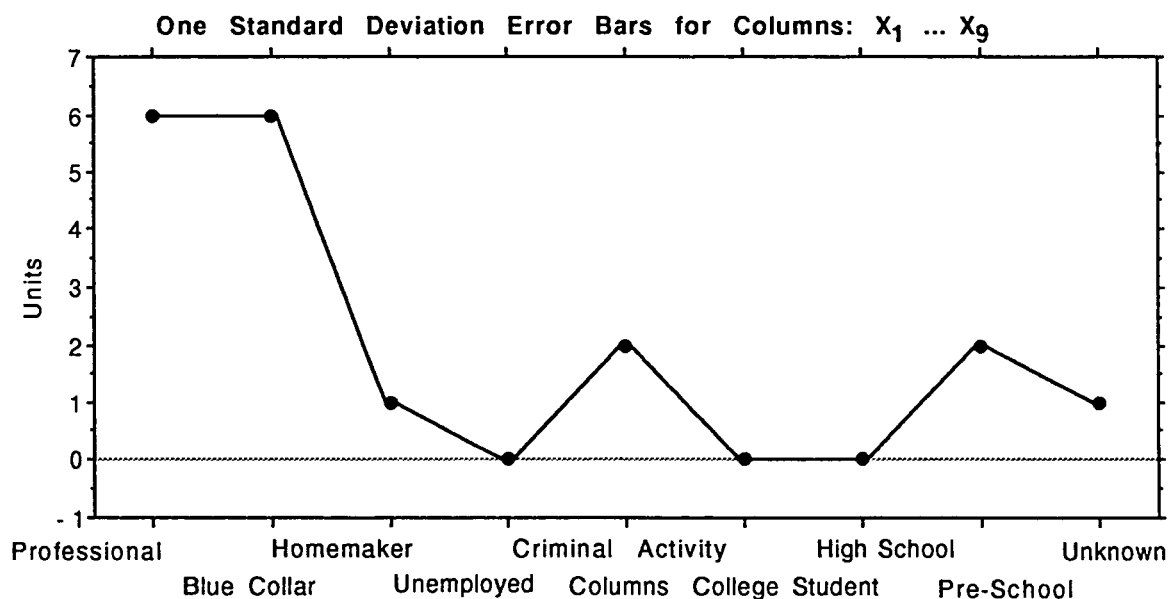


Figure 11. Roles of African-Americans on CBS during the 1993-94 programming season.

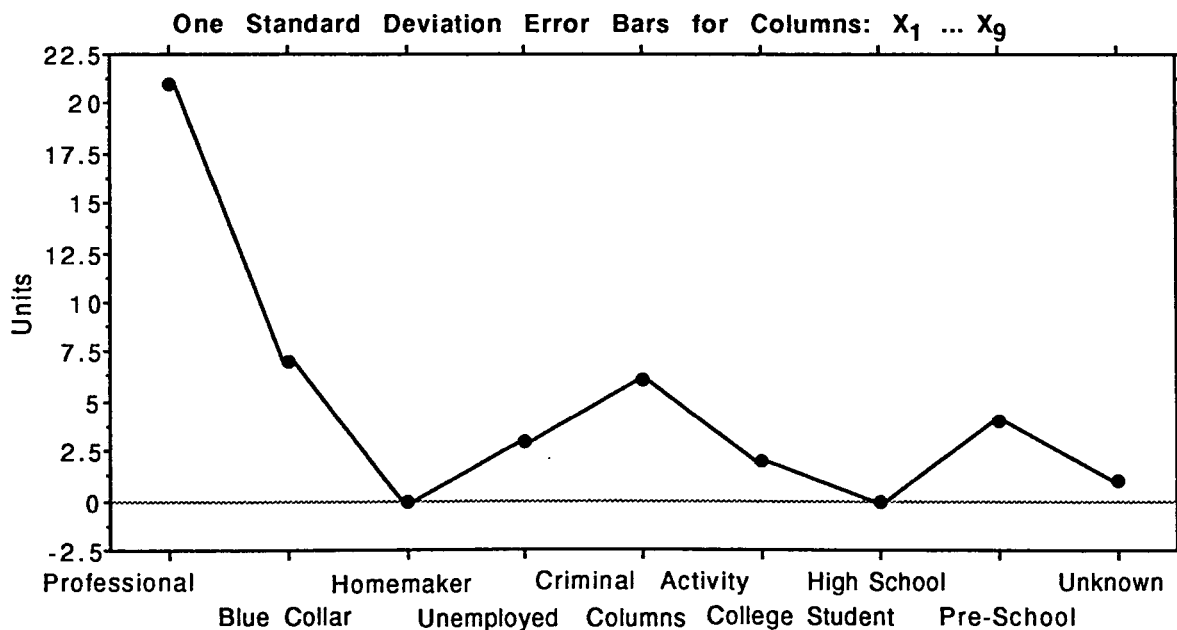


Figure 12. Roles of African-American on FOX network on during the 1993-94 programming season.

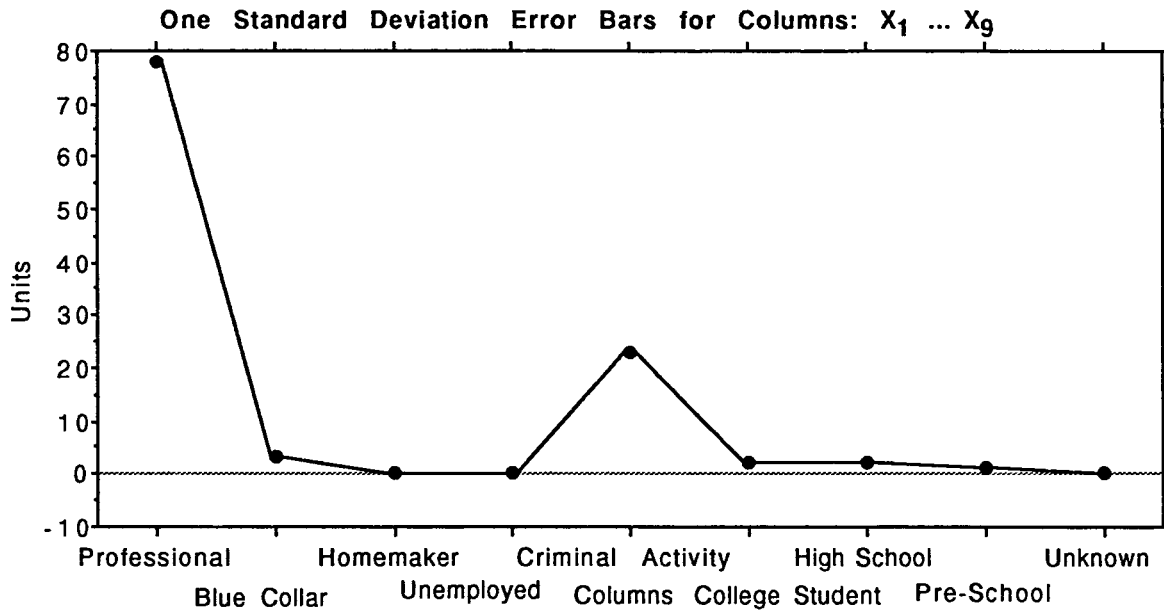


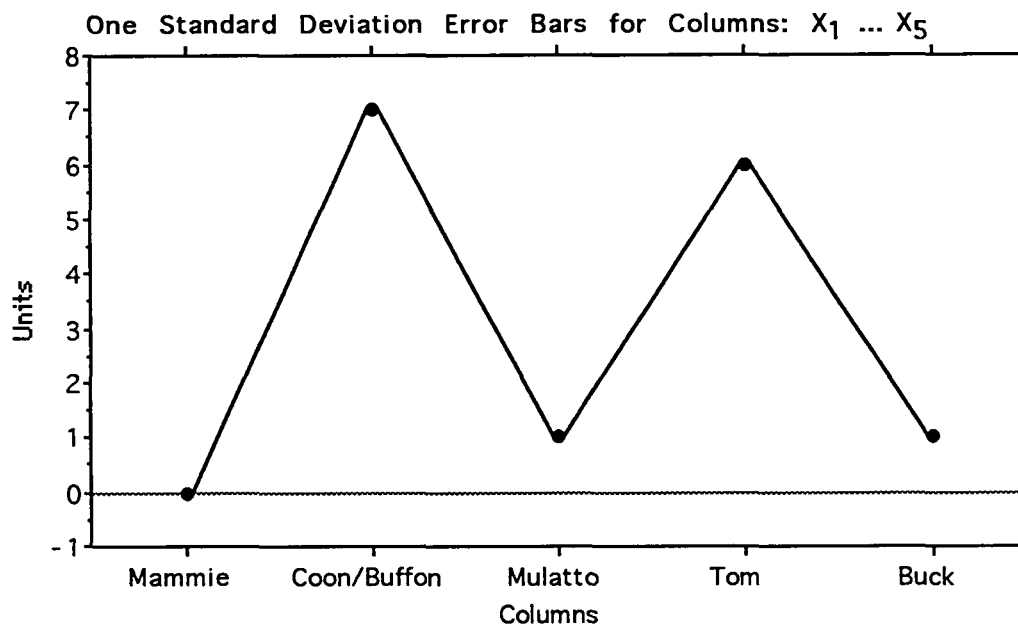
Figure 13. Roles of African-Americans on NBC during the 1993-94 programming season.

As mentioned in chapter 1, this study was interested in the portrayals of African-Americans on prime-time entertainment television, in an effort to find out what children are viewing on a daily basis. The instrument in this study was designed to measure the roles of African-American characters who appeared (Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13). The instrument was also designed to detect the appearance of five stereotypes that have followed African-Americans through history (Bogal, 1973). The Mammie, the Coon, the Buck, the Mulatto and the Tom are the five stereotypes that were analyzed (for operational definitions of stereotypes see appendix B). The Cotton study collected data on the roles of African-Americans on prime-time television, the present study collected data on the roles as well as past stereotypes.

According to the findings, ABC had the largest number of African-American women portrayed as Mammies with 5 followed by NBC with 1 appearance. FOX and CBS did not have any African-American women portrayed as Mammies. The findings for the Coon/Buffoon were consistent for all four networks. FOX and NBC had 7 African-Americans who were portrayed as a Coon/Buffoon, followed by CBS and ABC with 4 African-Americans appearing as a Coon/Buffoon. The number of African-Americans portrayed as a Mulatto were low for all four networks. FOX and NBC had 1 African-American portrayed as a Mulatto. CBS and ABC had no African-Americans portrayed as a Mulatto. FOX had the largest number of African-American portrayed as Toms with 6. The other three networks had fewer number of African-Americans portrayed as Toms. CBS had 1 African-American portrayed as a Tom. NBC and ABC had no African-Americans appearing as Toms. The appearance of the Buck was also consistent among the four networks. NBC had 4 African-American males portrayed as Bucks, followed by CBS with 3 appearance. FOX and ABC had 1 portrayal of a Buck during the 1993-94 programming season (Figures 14, 15, 16, and 17).

### Summary

As can be seen from the above findings, there have been some changes since the Cotton study. As mentioned previously in this chapter the data collected for this study went beyond Cotton in



one

Figure 14. Stereotypical portrayals of African-Americans on FOX network during the 1993-94 programming season.

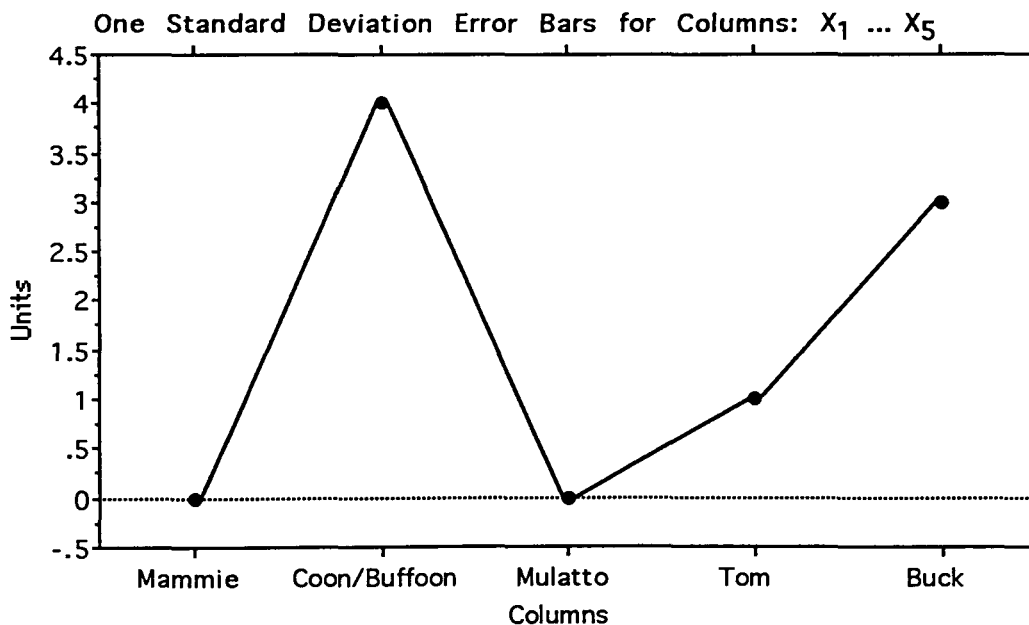


Figure 15. Stereotypical portrayals of African-Americans on CBS during the 1993-94 programming season.

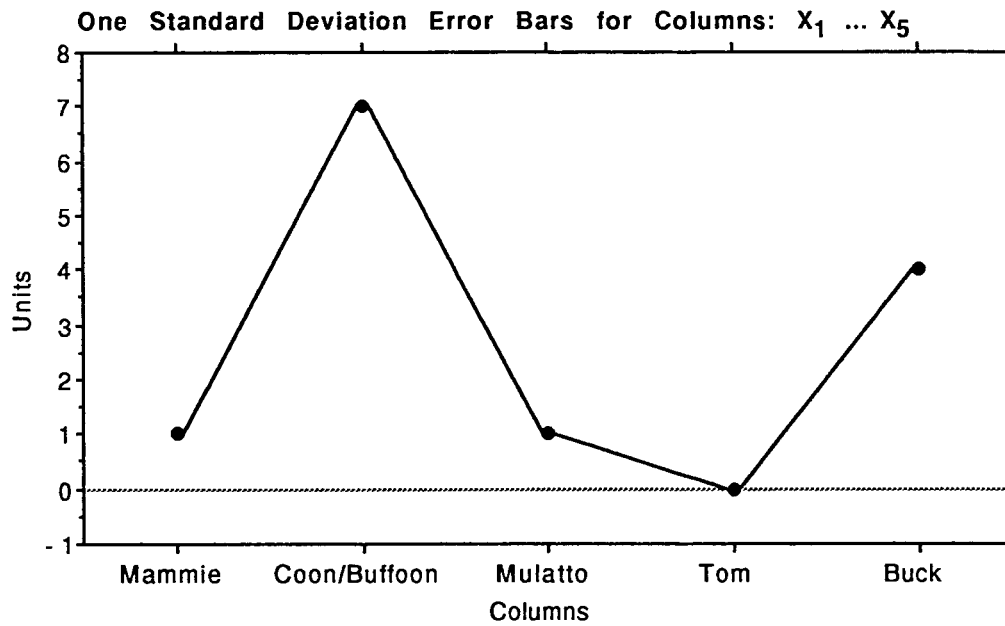


Figure 16. Stereotypical portrayals of African-Americans on NBC during the 1993-94 programming season.

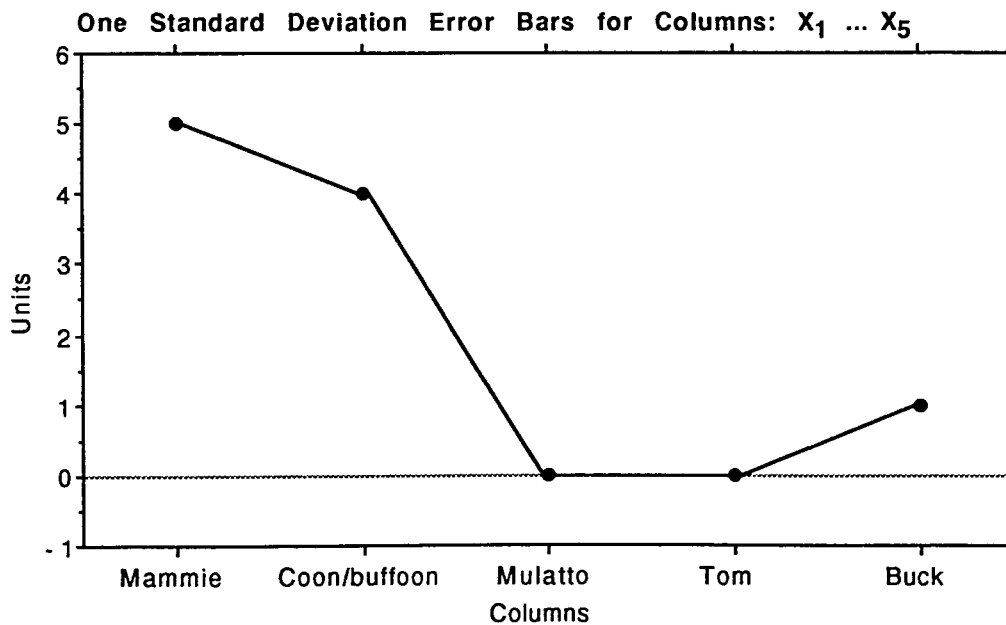


Figure 17. Stereotypical portrayals of African-Americans on ABC during the 1993-94 programming seasons.

the portrayals of African-Americans on the individuals networks. Cotton grouped all data collected from the three networks and reported the findings. One of the most noticeable changes in the present study in contrast to the 1988-89 study was the number of African-Americans who appeared in a role. The 1988-89 study reported that 93 African-Americans appeared on the three networks (ABC, NBC, and CBS). In the 1993-94 study, there was a combined total of 463 African-Americans in a role on the four networks analyzed (Figure 1).

One key fact about the data that was found is that of all the networks CBS had the fewest number of African-Americans who appeared in a role during the prime-time hour with 60, the fewest number of African-Americans in major roles with 10 and the fewest number of African-Americans in minor roles with 10 (Figures 1, 2 and 3). But CBS had the highest number of references to race when dealing with African-Americans characters with 6 (Figure 7).

The coders had 9 occupations or roles to place African-Americans in while analyzing the data. One finding that was consistent for three of the four networks was a larger number of African-Americans in professional roles in comparison to the other 8 roles analyzed. CBS had an equal number of African-Americans in professional roles and blue collar roles with 6 (Figure 11). One interesting fact about the findings for the 9 roles that were analyzed, is African-Americans involved in criminal activity was the third highest role on CBS, FOX and NBC.

This study collected data on stereotypes of African-Americans who existed in the early 40's and 50's to see if these same stereotypes

exists in 1994. The findings suggest that of the five stereotypes (Mammie, Coon, Buck, Mulatto and Tom) only one still exists consistently on the four networks. The Coon/Buffoon which was defined as African-American person who widens his/her eyes, wags a silly grin/expression, and his/her hair stands on end (earlier known as the pickananny). Coons/Buffoon are considered to be "lazy, sub-human creatures, good for nothing more than eating watermelons, stealing chickens, shooting craps or butchering the English language" (Bogal, 1973). There was a total of 22 such appearances on the four networks analyzed (Figures 14, 15, 16 and 17). The other four stereotypes (Mammie, Tom, Mulatto and Buck) appeared on the networks, but were not consistent from networks to network (Figures 14, 15, 16 and 17). As time passes these are stereotypes that are doing one of two things, they are fading away or progressing into other clever forms of stereotypes similar to the progression of the pickananny. The pickananny progressed to the Coon, the Coon came through history to the modern day buffoon.



## CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the portrayals of African-Americans on prime-time entertainment television. The instrument was designed to measure the number of African-Americans, whether their roles were major, minor or background, their perceived occupation, whether stereotypes exist as well as other categories.

There have been numerous studies to support the theories that relate to media effects on children behavior. Research suggests that television has the power to set agendas as well as create realities for children. This study provides information on the theories related to children's responses, information on the effects of television on children and adults. However, this study was not designed to study children, but give some understanding of what messages children are receiving as they relate to the portrayal of African-Americans.

Based on this study, the portrayals of African-Americans are in a state of crisis. The number of African-Americans have increased since 1988 study from 93 in a role to 463 African-Americans in a role (Figure 1). But, the Cotton study viewed three networks vs. the present study which viewed four networks. It is great that the number of African-Americans have increased since the 1988 study, but at what expenses did these numbers increase? There are many more African-Americans starring in situation comedies in 1994 than any other time in history. But once again, at what expenses. How are they being portrayed?

Martin Lawrence the star of the hit series "Martin" he is a disc jockey for a radio station in Detroit. His occupation would have been a professional for this study, but he is the epitome of the Coon/Buffoon. Martin is constantly dressing up as a African-American women and butchering the English language. Martin also, dresses up as other African-Americans characters simply making a mockery of African-American people. White Americans and children who are not exposed to other images of African-Americans will accept portrayals such as Martin as reality. This analysis suggests that the television industry must have African-Americans making fools of themselves to receive high ratings on the white male dominated media. Must African-Americans be the center of the white mans humor in 1994 to survive on prime-time entertainment television?

The study also found that CBS had the least number of African-Americans appearing but the highest number of references to race related to African-Americans. CBS, NBC and FOX had high African-American involvement in criminal activity, criminal activity was third out 9 occupations or roles for the three networks.

Must African-Americans be a Coon/Buffoon or criminals to survive in the white male dominated media. Society must look beyond the fact that there are more African-Americans on television in 1994 and "look" and "listen" to what images and messages society are receiving about Africans in Americans.

The media has a great deal of potential to do positive things in relation to the portrayals of African-American on prime-time

television, but during the time period that this study analyzed there were very few positive portrayals. As mentioned before, there is a great deal of potential for the media, there have been some very positive images of African-Americans on prime-time television. The “Cosby Show” was a television series that portrayed a middle class African-American family in a very positive manner. The hit series “ROC” was another situation comedy that had positive portrayals of African-Americans. But, both of these shows have been taken off the air while programs such as “Martin” remain on the air. Because of the stereotypical images of African-Americans on television, there will always be racism, hatred and violence in this country.

Researchers suggest that cultivation theory, modeling theory and stimulus effects theory does have an effect on individuals who view high amounts of television, therefore; there needs to be more emphasis placed on the television industries' social responsibility. The television industry needs to realize that television is more than getting high ratings and start being socially responsible for the messages they are airing. Furthermore, the television industry must realize they are affecting peoples lives' everyday that they portray stereotypical images of African-Americans.

### Recommendations for Future Research

The focus of this study was only on African-Americans on prime-time entertainment television. In realizing the diversity of the

population and the changing demographic there are several recommendations for future study:

I. As mentioned above, the demographics in the United States are changing and the Latino population will represent 23 percent of the total population by year 2050. Many corporations such as McDonalds, Burger King and Coca Cola recognize these changes and are beginning to target this ethnic group. It would be interesting to replicate this study, but focus on the portrayals of Latinos on prime-time entertainment television. Furthermore, what impact will no or negative portrayals of Latinos have on the television industries' financial future.

II. There needs to be data collected on the perception of African-American women on prime-time entertainment television. In the past, data collected on African-American women found that there was two common stereotypes, the mammie and the mulatto. A content analysis on the portrayals of African-American women would build on the total body of knowledge. In gathering research for this study, there was a limited amount of data on African-American women in the media.

III. A content analysis on the portrayals of African-Americans vs. White Americans on prime-time television would truly be an asset to the body of knowledge pertaining to African-American and the media.

IV. This study focused on the four major networks, (ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX) it would be interesting to collect data on the portrayals of African-Americans, Latinos or women on the cable networks.

V. One of the major issues that should be researched is how large of a role does television play in shaping African-Americans childrens' views, values, attitude, behaviors and beliefs.

As alluded to earlier, there is a very limited amount of research on African-Americans, Latinos and women in the media. There is a need for more published research on all of these recommendations. In the process of collecting data for this literature review, there was a great deal of dated literature on African-American-Americans in the media. The assumption that this study made about the dated literature is researchers have gotten comfortable with the appearance of African-Americans in the media.

There was tremendous amount of data published on African-Americans in the media in the 60's and 70's and there has been a continuous decline of research through the 80's and 90's. There really needs to be an in depth look at the negative portrayals of minorities in the media. In relation to the negative portrayals in the media there are several questions to consider:

I. Does the negative portrayals of African-Americans on television have a large impact on the sexism, racism and violence in this country?

II. Are African-American children modeling the negative images that they are viewing on television?

III. Are African-American children growing up viewing people of color as a people without opportunity, therefore; they have nothing to strive for?

IV. Are African-American men modeling what they have seen as children on television, therefore; they understanding that the prison system will be a part of their lives?

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APPENDIX A. TELEVISION PROGRAM CONTENT ANALYSIS  
SCHEDULE



**Television program content analysis schedule for**  
**November 15,- November 19, 1993.**

**ABC**

Monday, November 15, 1993

7:00-8:00 p.m. "Day One"

8:00-10:00 p.m. "Football: Buffalo Bills at Pittsburgh" Not coded

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Full House"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "Phenom"

8:00-8:30 p.m. "Roseanne"

8:30-9:00 p.m. "Coach"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "NYPD Blues"

Wednesday, November 17, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Thea"

7:30-8:00 p.m. " Joe's Life"

8:00-8:30 p.m. "Improvement"

8:30-9:00 p.m. "Grace Under Fire"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "Moon Over Miami"

Thursday, November 18, 1993

7:00-8:00 p.m. "Missing Persons"

8:00-9:00 p.m. "Matlock"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "Prime-Time Live"

Friday, November 19, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Family Matters"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "Boy Meets World"

8:00-8:30 p.m. "Step By Step"

8:30-9:00 p.m. "Hanging With Mr. Cooper"

9:00-10:00 p.m. " 20/20"

CBS

Monday, November 15, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Evening Shade"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "Dave's World"

8:00-8:30 p.m. "Murphy Brown"

8:30-9:00 p.m. "Love and War"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "Northern Exposure"

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

7:00-8:00 p.m. "Rescue 911"

8:00-10:00 p.m. "Return To Lonesome Dove Part 2 of 3"

Wednesday, November 17, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Trouble With Larry"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "The Nanny"

8:00-9:00 p.m. "South Of Sunset"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "48 Hours"

Thursday, November 18, 1993

7:00-8:00 p.m. "In The Heat Of The Night"

8:00-10:00 p.m. "Return To Lonesome Dove Part 3 of 3"

Friday, November 19, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "It Had To Be You"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "Family Album"

8:00-8:30 p.m. "Good Advice"

8:30-9:00 p.m. "Bob"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "Picket Fences"

NBC

Monday, November 15, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Fresh Prince"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "Blossom"

8:00-10:00 p.m. "NBC Monday Night Movie"

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Saved By The Bell"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "Getting By"

8:00-8:30 p.m. "John Larroquette"

8:30-9:00 p.m. "The Second Half"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "Dateline"

Wednesday, November 17, 1993

7:00-8:00 p.m. "Unsolved Mysteries"

8:00-9:00 p.m. "Now With Brokaw And Couric"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "Law And Order"

Thursday, November 18, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Mad About You"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "Wings"

8:00-8:30 p.m. "Seinfeld"

8:30-9:00 p.m. "Frasier"

9:00-10:00 p.m. "L.A. Law"

Friday, November 19, 1993

7:00-8:00 p.m. "Against The Grain"

8:00-10:00 p.m. "NBC Friday Night Mystery"

### FOX

Monday, November 15, 1993

7:00-9:00 p.m. "The Fabulous Baker Boys"

9:00-9:30 p.m. "Special Program"

9:30-10:00 p.m. "Home Videos"

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "Roc"

7:30-8:00 p.m. "Bakersfield"

8:00-9:00 p.m. "American's Most Wanted"

9:00-9:30 p.m. "Prime Suspect"  
9:30-10:00 p.m. "Emergency Call"

Wednesday, November 17, 1993

7:00-8:00 p.m. "Beverly Hills, 90210"  
8:00-9:00 p.m. "Melrose Place"  
9:00-10:00 p.m. "The Highlander"

Thursday, November 18, 1993

7:00-7:30 p.m. "The Simpsons"  
7:30-8:00 p.m. "The Sinbad Show"  
8:00-8:30 p.m. "In Living Color"  
8:30-9:00 p.m. "Herman's Head"  
9:00-10:00 p.m. "Uptown Comedy Club"

Friday, November 19, 1993

7:00-8:00 p.m. "Brisco County Jr."  
8:00-9:00 p.m. "The X-Files"  
9:00-10:00 p.m. "Lifestyles of Rich And Famous"

APPENDIX B. THE INSTRUMENT AND VARIABLE  
DEFINITION

## Code Book Definitions

**Dramatic Series:** a program that its main focus is on society issues, morals and ways of living.

**Made for Television Movies:** a movie that was produced by a network (ABC, CBS, or NBC) to be aired on television.

**Made for Theater Movies:** a movie that was produced by an individual movie company (Paramount, Universal, or Tri-Star) that are played in the movies and may be aired on television.

**Action-Adventure Series:** shows with its main emphasis on action, violence and central conflict. There are usually a villain and a hero.

**Situation Comedies Series:** shows that have a central theme or focus but is presented in a humorous minor. Some shows may be stereotypical in its presentation of certain groups of people.

**Westerns:** show with its main emphasis on western or frontier living in America during the 1800s.

**Reality Shows:** shows that are recorded live that air actual events that occur in people's daily lives. The main focus of these shows is real life events. (Cops or Rescues 911)

**Variety Shows:** shows with the main emphasis on singing, dancing, and comedy. Shows may be stereotypical in its portrayals of different groups of people.

**Headline News Program:** programs that raise important issues that may be controversial. The program may be consumer oriented. Their format is similar to that of a newscast and the emphasis is on the program.

**Tom:** an African-American male who is submissive, stoic and generous. They are chased, harassed, hounded, flogged, enslaved, and insulted. They see white men as their idol.

**Coon/Buffoon:** an African-American who widens his/her eyes, wears a silly grin/expression. They are lazy, sub-human creators, good for nothing more than eating watermelons, stealing chickens, shooting craps or butchering the English language. They are the center of the white mans humor.

**Mulatto:** an African-American who appears close to white because of skin color, eye color, and/or hair texture.

**Mammie:** an African-American female who is big, fat, cantankerous, and fiercely independent. They are usually caregivers fir white children.

**Buck:** an African-American male who is oversexed, savage, violent and frenzied.

**Professional:** an African-American character who appears as a person in a career that took professional training. (Accountant or Lawyer)

**Blue Collar:** an African-American character who appears as a person performing manual or physical labor. (Waiter/Waitress or Chef)

**Homemaker:** an African-American character who appears as a person working in the home.

**Unemployed:** an African-American character who appears as a person without a job.

**Criminal Activity:** an African-American character who appears as a person involved in illegal activities. (Drug Dealer or Stealing)

**College Student:** an African-American character who appears as a student in an University, College or Community College.

**High School Student:** an African-American character who appears as a student in High School.

**Pre-School Child:** an African-American child who appeared on prime-time entertainment television.

**Unknown:** an African-American who appeared in a role unfamiliar to the coders.

**Major Role:** an African-American who appears on a prime-time program where the central theme of the program is based around the character.

**Minor Role:** an African-American character who appears on a prime-time program, he/she is in a supporting role of the central theme of the program. The characters speaking role may be minimal.

**Background Role:** an African-American character who appeared on a prime-time program in a non-speaking role.



CODE BOOK

(CBS) Columbia Broadcasting System

Monday November 15, 1993

Recording 7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

Category (1) Dramatic Series (2) Made for Television (3) Made for Theater Movies

(4) Action Adventure Series (5) Situation Comedies (6) Westerns

(7) Reality Series (8) Variety Series (9) Headlines News Program

Type of Program and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of African-Americans

People Not of African decent

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Major Role \_\_\_\_\_

Major Role \_\_\_\_\_

Minor Role \_\_\_\_\_

Minor Role \_\_\_\_\_

Background Role \_\_\_\_\_

Background Role \_\_\_\_\_

Speak \_\_\_\_\_

Speak \_\_\_\_\_

Touch \_\_\_\_\_

Touch \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

References to Race:

References to Race:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Authority:

Authority:

Gave Orders \_\_\_\_\_

Gave Orders \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Takes Orders \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Takes Orders \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Both \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Both \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Perceived Occupation/Roles:**

**Perceived Occupation/Roles:**

Professional \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Professional \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Blue Collar \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Blue Collars \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Homemaker \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Homemake \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Unemployed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Unemployed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Criminal Activity \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Criminal Activity \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

College Student \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

College Student \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pre-school \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pre-school \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Unknown \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Unknown \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Stereotypes:**

Mammie \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Coon/Buffoon \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mulatto \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tom \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Buck \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_