

Explorations of the Simpson Trial “Racial Divide”

Kimberly A. Neuendorf, David Atkin, and Leo W. Jeffres

Department of Communication
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Theresa Loszak and Alicia Williams

Triad Research Group
Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Two random, regional telephone surveys—one conducted during the Simpson criminal trial, one a year later—assess differences between self-identified racial groups in evaluations of Simpson’s guilt/innocence. A number of alternatives to a simple Black/White America dichotomy are identified. Significant predictors of perceived innocence include positive attitudes toward affirmative action, perceived reality of television, and a view of the world as mean and crime ridden. In the first study, Black females are found to be significantly more likely to judge Simpson as innocent; this distinction is not evident in the second data set.

KEYWORDS *affirmative action, African American, attitudes, gender, race, racial identity, selective perception*

Television’s role in shaping images of Black and White America has been underscored in recent years, given the extensive reporting of O. J. Simpson’s controversial criminal trial over the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Only three years earlier, the nation was struck by the shocking images of Rodney King’s beating by the Los Angeles police and the city’s ensuing riots (e.g., Associated Press, 1992). Racially charged confrontations of this sort have rekindled popular press interest in the representation of race on television (“O. J., Farrakahn,” 1995; Zuckerman, 1995a; 1995b), as highlighted by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1977, 1979) observation that relations between the races may be affected by television news.

This study explores the influence of media use and social locators, particularly ethnicity, on audience responses to the Simpson criminal trial. In that regard, we attempt to bring enhanced understanding to the much-discussed *racial divide*, wherein African Americans have been found much more likely than Whites to believe in the innocence of O. J. Simpson (e.g., Toobin, 1995).

Address correspondence to Kimberly A. Neuendorf, Department of Communication, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH 44115.

For the media, 1995 was the year of the O. J. Simpson murder trial, during which time it attracted 90 magazine covers (Johnson, 1996), helped launch a new cable network (Court TV), and gave news/talk radio its highest-ever 12-plus share in Arbitron ratings (Ross, 1996). A poll of executives and subscribers to various press services indicated that the not-guilty verdict in the Simpson murder trial was among the biggest news stories of the 1990s (Thaler, 1997).

Background

Although commentators (Toobin, 1995) focus on race as the key determinant of interest in the Simpson trial, the story's newsworthiness was enhanced by factors beyond race. Other prominent issues in the case included the treatment of domestic violence, law enforcement, celebrity status, presumption of guilt or innocence, social impacts of media coverage, and issues of the right of the accused to a fair trial. However, since the larger goal of this study is to explore origins of beliefs about Simpson's guilt or innocence—as derived from media exposure, racially related attitudes, and self-identity—it is useful to review the literature on African Americans in the media. In particular, given that Simpson trial reactions lie at the intersection of multifaceted image and information-processing dynamics, our review must perforce consider a broad spectrum of these elements.

African American Images in Media

The literature offers considerable evidence that television presents a traditionally stereotyped portrayal of minorities, particularly African Americans (Bernstein, 1990; Campbell, 1995; Staples & Jones, 1985; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977, 1979; Wilson & Guitierrez, 1985). Evidence suggests that negative stereotypes, particularly in television news, might exploit story principals (e.g., Atkin & Fife, 1993–1994; Barber & Gandy, 1990; Poindexter & Stroman, 1981; Thornton, 1990).

One of the more common explanations for racial stereotyping draws from hegemony theory, which posits lower-status images of minorities as symptomatic of a media ideology stressing the norms of middle White America (Gray, 1994). Although traditional or submissive minority images can represent the fantasies of White male gatekeepers, the hegemonic ideology may, on occasion, incorporate new social trends (Gitlin, 1983). Thus, the ascension of African Americans to higher social stations may be reflected in entertainment television (e.g., *The Cosby Show*), but such roles remain exceptional (Atkin, 1992; Entman, 1992; Greenberg & Collette, 1997; Kubey, Shifflet, Weerakkody, & Ukeiley, 1995; Stroman, Merritt, & Matabane, 1989–1990).

Prior to 1970, when virtually all portrayals of minorities emphasized submissive and domestic roles (MacDonald, 1983), Ogburn (1964) described a “cultural lag” dynamic for cultural and social change. Thus, despite recent gains made by African Americans on entertainment television, news portrayals still focus on a menacing Black underclass that presents a threat to social stability (Dates & Barlow, 1990). In that way, the coverage of Simpson as an African American male murder suspect fits into longstanding racial stereotypes of that group. As Gray (1994, p. 179) suggests, this image involves:

representations of deprivation and poverty such as those shown on network newscasts and documentaries. In media reports of urban crime, prisons overcrowded with black men, increased violence associated with drugs, and the growing ranks of the homeless are drawn the lines of success and failure.

Commentators sympathetic to Simpson point to this image when noting that coverage of the Simpson trial exposed the factions, sectors, and divisions in American society. Abu-Jamal (1996, p. 72) notes that, although Simpson's wealth was utilized to preserve his freedom and the verdict had nothing to do with his race, "The reaction to the verdict had to do with prejudice." For these supporters, outdated news caricatures suggest a slowness among media institutions to acknowledge strengths in the African American community, as reporters find it easier instead to emphasize elements of conflict and violence ("O. J., Farrakahn," 1995). When such bias permeates the symbolic world of television news, given its prominence in society, implications for social influence become more compelling (e.g., Entman, 1992). An understanding of these background influences should help us better understand processing of news involving a story principal such as Simpson, as Black audiences may be more sensitized to the patterns of bias that might influence reporting about minorities.

Genesis of the O. J. Simpson Trial

From the onset, the media played a key role in the Simpson murder trial. Shortly after the bodies of Ron Goldman and Simpson's former wife Nicole were found in June of 1994, speculation mounted as to whether Simpson was a suspect. Simpson's attempt to flee arraignment in a Ford Bronco was one of the most highly rated media events in history ("Top Stories," 1996).

After finally turning himself in to Los Angeles police authorities, Simpson set about to assemble a "dream team" of defense attorneys. The jury selection process was fraught with controversy, as all but two of the jurors were Black, and only two were college graduates.¹ The case for the prosecution was based on several thousand pieces of DNA evidence linking Simpson's blood to the crime scene and placing the victims' blood in Simpson's white Ford Bronco. Evidence that O. J. Simpson had a history of battering Nicole, to which he had earlier plead no contest, also was introduced.

The defense countered by suggesting that there were shortcomings in the forensic evidence presented against Simpson, offering theories of a likely frame-up involving racist police officers assigned to the case, such as Mark Fuhrman (e.g., Dershowitz, 1996). As Kaplan (1995) suggests, there was a lot of limited information used in the trial and the acquittal could not have been unexpected. When the predominantly Black jury returned a not-guilty plea for Simpson after deliberating for fewer than three hours, criticisms from sectors of the public and the press were many (e.g., Director, 1995).

The case was thus perhaps tailor made for selective perception along racial lines, where individuals seek and process information that is consonant with their predispositions about judicial treatment of their own or other ethnic groups (e.g.,

Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985). Whites would thus be more likely to believe that African Americans receive fair justice, whereas African Americans would be less likely to see one of “their own” as receiving fair justice. To wit, Gallup poll data found that over 70% of White Americans believed O. J. Simpson was guilty, compared with only 12% of Blacks (Newport, 1995). In probing for the basis of that difference, another Gallup poll taken during the trial found that 66% of Blacks thought that the U.S. justice system is biased against Black people (Saad, 1995; see also Sniderman & Carmines, 1997). As we will explore shortly, cultivation analysis (e.g., Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1980) suggests that television’s mean-world portrayals—in which Whites are more likely to be shown as violent police officers—could reinforce that view.

Critics of the Simpson criminal trial maintain that the defense team “reinvented” him as a poor Black American, even though he had long been associated with country club America (Hazlett, 1995). In discussing Simpson’s acquittal and what it means to Black Americans, Wilkerson (1996) maintains that the trial meant more than just a victory for the Black community; absent the race dimension, the trial would not have been or meant the same thing. Simpson himself lashed out at the media in a Black Entertainment Television (BET) interview, blaming them for lingering misconceptions about him, proclaiming his innocence in the murders of his former wife and her friend (“Simpson criticizes,” 1996). As Thernstrom (1996) recounts, race became the theme of the verdict in the Simpson trial. From the very beginning, then, Simpson sympathizers portrayed him as a victim of the crime. In particular, such Black-on-White crime coverage fits a longstanding pattern of stereotypical reporting that could form a basis for hostile attitudes about Black men.

Trends in Racial Attitudes

Opinion polls document continuing declines since the 1940s in acceptance of overt racial stereotypes, and corresponding increases in support for the principle of racial equality, especially among the more educated (Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985). However, more recent studies give some indication that Whites’ attitudes toward Black Americans have ceased to improve, or even have begun to worsen (e.g., Gibbs’ [1990] report on racist incidents at colleges and universities). Some scholars posit that a new brand of racism, symbolic racism, has replaced “old-fashioned” overt racial attitudes (Sears, Van Laar, Carillo, & Kosterman, 1997). The symbolic racism perspective posits that White Americans exhibit negative responses to societal-level symbols—such as welfare, single motherhood, and crime—as a manifestation of an underlying anti-Black affect, fed by notions that African Americans are violating traditional American values (e.g., the work ethic; Gray, 1994).

Researchers (Kluegel, 1990; Kluegel & Smith, 1982, 1983) found that White Americans tend to believe that Black Americans’ socioeconomic opportunities have increased greatly, that “structural limits” to Blacks’ opportunities have been eliminated, and that Blacks are indeed “unfairly advantaged.” And Kluegel and Smith (1983) found that Whites’ attitudes toward affirmative action policies were related to the degree to which they believed that structural impediments still existed, thus limiting Blacks’ opportunities. Although their study is representative of a raft of findings

that predate the Simpson trial, this broad literature helps contextualize some of the attitudinal dimensions that undergird processing of media reports on race.

Relating the Cultivation of Racial Perceptions to the Simpson Trial

A commonly held view (e.g., Thaler, 1997) suggests the Simpson trial forever changed race relations in America, that it clarified and perhaps increased existing divisions between Black and White America. Cultivation analysis (e.g., Gerbner et al., 1980) can help us obtain clues about how extensive coverage of a trial such as Simpson's influences audience perceptions. Cultivation analysis states that the media foster (or cultivate) for viewers a picture of the world that looks like the "mean world" they see in the media, where homicides like Brown-Simpson's are overrepresented, particularly in the news (Atkin, Jeffres, & Neuendorf, 1997).

Few studies have yet assessed the influence of the Simpson verdict on race relations, although some have addressed corollary trial aspects such as the influence of cameras on the trial (Gerbner, 1995), the effects of the trial on public perceptions of the justice system (Brown, Fraser, & Bocarnea, 1997), and the potential for third-person effects regarding the trial coverage (Driscoll & Salwen, 1997; Salwen & Driscoll, 1997).

A key goal of early cultivation research on the portrayal of race in media was to assess the extent to which images such as these might influence relations between the races. As Gray (1994, p. 177) notes, "Media representations of Black life (especially . . . underclass failure) are routinely fractured, selectively assembled and subsequently become a part of the storehouse of American racial memory." In exploring the dimensions of that influence amongst the Black audience, Matabane (1988, p. 29) noted:

The effect of heavy television seems most evident in isolating pockets of black dissidence among young and better-educated Afro-Americans and, to a lesser extent, individuals not active in their communities or in keeping informed about social events.

One of the catalysts for that dissidence involves perceptions of racism, which Blacks are more likely to indicate is a major problem in society (e.g., Blalock, 1982; Kluegel, 1990; Sniderman & Carmines, 1997).

Armstrong, Neuendorf, and Brentar (1992) found that greater amounts of exposure to television entertainment were associated with beliefs that Black Americans enjoy a relatively higher socioeconomic position with respect to age, income, social class, and educational achievement. In contrast, higher exposure to television news was associated with perceptions that in comparison to Whites, Blacks are relatively worse off socioeconomically. Their results, taken from a midwestern White sample, confirm a cultivation influence that Matabane (1988) uncovered among Black adults. These findings fit into a general pattern of results suggesting that television viewing encourages stereotyping (e.g., Morgan, 1982).

Mendelberg (1997) demonstrated how existing racial biases may provide a template for responses to racially charged media content. In an experiment that exposed subjects to reports about an African American murderer named Willie Horton—a

“centerpiece” of George Bush’s 1988 presidential campaign—Mendelberg found that exposure to the mere reporting about the case was related to increased antagonism toward race-related policies, including increased resistance to affirmative action in schools.²

Klapper (1960) suggests that the processes of selective exposure, perception, and retention serve to minimize media effects. In the present case, people would have a tendency toward selectively exposing themselves to messages compatible with their beliefs (e.g., “Simpson is guilty” reports or news conferences from prosecution, for the majority of Americans); they would avoid messages that are at odds with such beliefs. Even when audiences expose themselves to discordant messages, they tend to distort them through the lens of selective perception, perhaps after discussing them with like-minded individuals. Thus, when Simpson supporters see debates about his guilt or innocence, they would tend to see the sympathizers as more persuasive. Finally, in accordance with selective retention, people’s memories of media presentations are also distorted, so that months later a Simpson supporter might remember that a pro-Simpson rally outside of the Los Angeles courthouse generated great sympathy, even if it fizzled.

So, given the power of news to cultivate attitudes on race in the Simpson case, which included vast amounts of incriminating as well as exculpatory evidence, we expect that selective perception could cause reinforcement along racial lines. As outlined above, African Americans will be more likely to express a belief in Simpson’s innocence, whereas Whites will be more likely to indicate the opposite. Beliefs in Simpson’s guilt should be motivated, in part, by a belief that racism is an important problem, one that has victimized O. J. Simpson. More formally, we examine the following hypotheses:

H1a: White identification will be a negative predictor of beliefs that O. J. Simpson is innocent of murder.

H1b: Black identification will be a positive predictor of beliefs that O. J. Simpson is innocent of murder.

H2: Level of concern over racism will be a positive predictor of beliefs that O. J. Simpson is innocent of murder.

Research Question

Because race emerged as such a significant issue in the O. J. Simpson case, the literature on attitude change is suggestive of cultivation dynamics for racial images that might reinforce attitudes about Black defendants. If the “attitude-change model” is relevant, then long, enduring predispositions were operating as the public watched the trial unfold. One application of the attitude-change model says that media effects should largely be reinforcing, with public appraisals of Simpson’s guilt anchored in such social categories as race and gender.

In this particular situation, race and gender may operate in opposite directions as women focus on spousal abuse and Blacks focus on racial justice or police misconduct, creating cross pressures on Black women. In such situations, media messages

may be used to decide which aspect deserves the greater consideration in one's decision making. Thus, a model that looks at how audiences process media messages is appropriate for examining media effects. We might expect that those facing cross pressures would give the greatest attention to media coverage, whereas those facing the least pressure would give it the least attention. Thus, we would expect Black women to pay the greatest attention to media coverage. However, it remains to be seen whether selective processing of information would favor empathy along the lines of gender (e.g., concern over abuse against women) or race (e.g., sympathy for Simpson as an African American being railroaded by the media and judicial system). Although the actual jury verdict pointed to the latter, we pose the following research question:

RQ: What are the relative influences of media use variables, social locators and opinions about the state of society on perceptions of O. J. Simpson's guilt or innocence?

Method

Study 1

Data collected for this study were based on two waves of the omnibus North Coast Poll, a recurring regional poll of the ethnically diverse Cleveland, Ohio, area. Data set 1, the main set analyzed for this study, consisted of a pretested telephone survey involving a regional probability sample. Completed in June of 1995—while the trial was concluding—it yielded a sample of 313 respondents using traditional random-digit dialing techniques applied via a CATI system. The survey was properly presented to respondents as a general poll about current issues and contained items tapping respondents' opinions on a wide variety of issues. Eleven-point Likert-type items tapped six Quality of Life indicators, the five-item Perceived Reality (of television) index (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994), the three-item Mean World index (Rubin et al., 1994), the four-item Cultivation Index (Rubin et al., 1994), and a number of original items measuring attitudes toward crime and racial issues:

- "Crime is the major problem in the country today."
- "I feel safe walking in my neighborhood at night."
- "Affirmative action is still necessary to help minorities and other groups."
- "Affirmative action is no longer needed and should be abolished."
- "The root cause of crime is poverty."
- "Some people are just plain bad."
- "There has been too much media coverage of the Simpson trial."
- "Ethnic and racial groups are stereotyped in the mass media."
- "Blacks have negative images in the mass media."

And, the primary dependent measure was also a Likert-type item:

- "From the evidence so far, it looks like O. J. Simpson is innocent."

Several other 11-point questions tapped stereotyped attitudes toward racial minor-

ities, including African Americans. These items were derived from the work of Armstrong, Neuendorf, and Brentar (1992) and correspond to several of what Sigelman and Tuch (1997) refer to as “metastereotypes”:

How athletic are Blacks?

How demanding are Blacks getting in their push for equal rights?

How law-abiding are Blacks?

Open-ended questions provided a wide range of responses:

What would you say are the most important problems facing [the area]?

Name three racial or ethnic groups that you think get the *best* treatment in the mass media—television, movies, newspapers, and so on.

Name three racial or ethnic groups that you think get the *worst* treatment in the mass media.

What crimes have you been a victim of in the past 10 years?

How would you describe your ethnic background?

From these open-ended questions, dummy-coded indicators were created:

Has been victim of violent crime

Names crime as a top area problem

Names racism as a top area problem

Names Whites among top 3 best media images

Names Whites among top 3 worst media images

Names Blacks among top 3 best media images

Names Blacks among top 3 worst media images

Self-identifies as Black (or African American or Afro-American)

Self-identifies as White (or Caucasian or other ethnic European American [e.g., German American])

Self-identifies as Black Female, Black Male, White Female, or White Male (four dummy codes—see later section regarding multicollinearity issues regarding this set)

Other items measured social indicators (gender, marital status, educational level, age, income) and media habits (hours of television viewing yesterday, number of books read in the last six months, hours of radio listening yesterday, number of movies seen at a theater in the past month, number of rented or borrowed videos viewed in the past month, number of days reading the newspaper in the past week, and number of magazines read regularly).

The three standard indexes measured were each submitted to reliability analysis. Two showed acceptable levels of Cronbach’s alpha (Perceived Reality, $\alpha = .58$, and Mean World, $\alpha = .73$), and an additive index was constructed for each. One set of items did not achieve an acceptable level of alpha (Cultivation Index, $\alpha = .27$); thus, the four individual items of the set were retained.

The 1995 sample was 55% female, with a median age of 40 years. Sixty-four percent self-identified as White and 14% as Black. Other groups of non-White, non-Black respondents were not numerous enough to warrant separate dummy coding.

Forty-eight percent of respondents gave an assessment of O. J. Simpson’s case that was of the “guilty” valence, whereas 19% were located on the “innocent” side of

the scale. A full 33% fell at the midpoint of the 11-point scale. Splitting the sample by racial self-identification, the "racial divide" is clear—37% of African Americans gave innocent valence responses, compared with only 13% of White Americans. Black females were most likely to report perceived innocence—48% of them endorsed Simpson's innocence.

Study 2

In the spring of 1996, a follow-up was conducted as part of the recurring North Coast Poll. Because the trial was over and the overall focus of the poll had shifted away from racial issues, a smaller number of measures were available for analysis in 1996 than in 1995. This study was also a random-digit dialed (RDD) survey using a CATI system, sampling the same population as the 1995 study. There were 377 completed interviews.

Data set 2 included 11-point Likert-type items tapping five Quality of Life assessments, and the following original items:

"My ethnic background strongly affects my daily life."

"I feel more comfortable talking with people like myself than with people who are different."

"I spend a lot of time talking with friends and associates about things I find interesting, like hobbies, personal interests, or current events."

Social indicators and media habit items were the same as for the 1995 study, with the addition of measures tapping political party identification (a five-point Democrat-to-Republican response scale), subscription to cable television, presence of a computer in the home, and access to the Internet.

The main dependent variable in the 1996 follow-up was dichotomous:

"Do you think O. J. Simpson was innocent or guilty?"

The 1996 sample was 53% female, with a median age of 41. Seventy-five percent were self-identified White, and 17% Black. Nineteen percent of respondents declared their belief that O. J. Simpson had been innocent, a proportion identical to that found in 1995.

However, the racial divide seemed to be wider for the second poll, conducted after Simpson's acquittal. (We must remember, however, that in 1995 the poll used an 11-point metric, whereas in 1996 the measure was a forced-choice "guilty/innocent" dichotomy.) A full 54% of African American respondents endorsed Simpson's innocence, compared with 10% of Whites. Black females, who had distinctively held a stronger belief in Simpson's innocence than Blacks generally (46% versus 37% for all Black respondents) were not so differentiated in 1996; 53% of Black females reported believing Simpson to be innocent.

Analyses

Various types of multiple regression analyses were used for data set 1 (the 1995 study), to explore the relationship of racial identity and perceptions of O. J.

Table 1 Correlates for Racial Identification and O. J. Innocence Evaluations

<i>Variable</i>	<i>White ID</i>	<i>Black ID</i>	<i>O. J. Inno.</i>
Gender (female)	.06	.03	.01
Has been separated/divorced	-.05	.11	.09
Education	.18**	-.12*	-.07
Age	.09	-.10	.05
Income	.18**	-.21**	-.22**
Hours of television viewing yesterday	-.13*	.16**	.09
Number of books read in last 6 mo.	.15**	-.07	.00
Hours of radio listening yesterday	.07	-.07	-.05
Number of movies seen at theater, past mo.	-.04	.12*	.03
Number of videos viewed past mo.	-.03	.07	-.01
Days read newspaper in past week	.11	-.08	-.10
Number of magazines read regularly	.03	-.02	.01
Quality of life—nation	.10	-.15**	-.04
Quality of life—family	-.04	-.03	.02
Quality of life—metro. area	.13*	-.11	.02
Quality of life—work	-.04	.06	.01
Quality of life—neighborhood	.17**	-.19**	-.06
Perceived Reality (of television) Index	-.07	.04	.20**
Quality of life—local media	-.01	.08	.15**
“Some people are just plain bad”	-.06	.06	.05
Mean World Index	-.23**	.17**	.18**
Has been victim of violent crime	.02	-.04	-.04
“Most fatal violence between strangers”	-.13*	.05	.03
“Root cause of crime is poverty”	.01	.05	.07
Names crime as a top area problem	-.03	.03	-0.5
“More males work in law enforcement”	-.12*	.08	.20**
“Crime a major national problem”	-.12*	.10	.12*
“Greater chance of involvement in violence”	-.13*	.10	.16**
“Greater proportion of violent crime”	-.14*	.07	.09
“Feel safe walking in neighborhood”	.08	-.13*	-.03
Names Whites among top 3 best media images	-.09	.25**	-.01
Names Whites among top 3 worst media images	.10	-.08	-.10
Names Blacks among top 3 best media images	.07	-.07	-.10
Names Blacks among top 3 worst media image	-.10	.20**	.12*
“Racial groups stereotyped in mass media”	.01	.13*	-.02
“Blacks have negative images in mass media”	-.04	.11	-.02
Names racism as a top area problem	-.08	.01	.07
“Blacks are athletic”	-.04	.01	-.07
“Blacks are law abiding”	-.06	.13*	.11
“Blacks are demanding in push for rights”	.05	-.07	.01
“Affirmative action no longer needed”	.17**	-.24**	-.00
“Affirmative action still necessary”	-.31**	.27**	.28**
“Too much media coverage of O. J. trial”	.08	-.07	.02
Black (dummy coded)			.21**
White (dummy coded)			-.28**
Black female (dummy coded)			.24**
Black male (dummy coded)			.03
White female (dummy coded)			-.19**
White male (dummy coded)			-.09

Note. Each entry is a zero-order correlation coefficient.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 2 Stepwise Regressions Predicting O. J. Innocence Evaluation

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Final B</i>	<i>Inc. R²/F/p</i>
Model 1: All variables submitted simultaneously.		
White	-.12	.08/17.30/.0001
"Affirmative action still necessary"	.27**	.04/9.02/.003
Perceived Reality (of television) Index	.16*	.03/6.67/.01
"Greater chance of involvement in violence"	.16*	.02/5.46/.02
"Affirmative action no longer needed"	.20**	.02/5.82/.02
Black female (dummy coded)	.15*	.02/4.81/.03
"More males work in law enforcement"	.14*	.02/4.81/.03
TOTAL R ² =		.23/8.43(7, 196)/.0001
Model 2: Racial indicators submitted in second set.		
Set 1		
"Affirmative action still necessary"	.29**	.08/16.68/.0001
Income	-.10	.03/7.62/.01
Perceived Reality (of television) Index	.15*	.02/5.56/.02
"Greater chance of involvement in violence"	.16*	.03/6.06/.01
"Affirmative action no longer needed"	.20**	.02/5.47/.02
"More males work in law enforcement"	.13*	.02/4.28/.04
Set 2		
Black female (dummy coded)	.18**	.03/7.58/.01
TOTAL R ² =		.23/8.34(7, 196)/.0001

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Simpson's innocence. Simple correlational analyses revealed that the Black-female code was the race/gender code most strongly correlated with the Simpson innocence item, and because of the fact that inclusion of multiple race/gender interaction codes would result in fatal multicollinearity, the single Black-female code was chosen for further analysis. This was followed by an exploratory stepwise regression in which all potential predictor measures were submitted simultaneously. Then, to assess further how correlates of racial identity might help explain the expected (and identified) race difference in innocence evaluations, a two-block stepwise regression was conducted—the racial identifiers (Black, White, and Black-female) were submitted in stepwise fashion only after all other predictors had been considered. Finally, a total hierarchical model was tested, once again delaying the entry of racial identifiers until other attitudinal items and social indicators had been included. Condition index and (variance inflation factor [VIF]) inspections revealed no significant multicollinearity problems.

For data set 2 (the 1996 follow-up), logistic regression was chosen as the most comparable technique available, given the dichotomous measurement of the dependent variable. A hierarchical model was tested.

Results

Study 1—1995

Correlational analyses for the 1995 study are reported in Table 1. We see that perceptions of O. J. Simpson as innocent are correlated with a belief in the quality of

Table 3 Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting O. J. Innocence Evaluation

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Final B</i>	<i>Inc. R²/F/p</i>
Gender (female)	-.11	
Has been separated/divorced	.04	
Education	.06	
Age	.07	
Income	-.12	.05/2.12(5, 198)/.06
Hours of television viewing yesterday	-.03	
Number of books read in last 6 mo.	.15	
Hours of radio listening yesterday	.05	
Number of movies seen at theater, past mo.	-.04	
Number of videos viewed past mo.	-.04	
Days read newspaper in past week	-.07	
Number of magazines read regularly	.00	.02/0.54(7, 191)/.80
Quality of life—nation	-.01	
Quality of life—family	.04	
Quality of life—metro. area	.01	
Quality of life—work	.02	
Quality of life—neighborhood	.00	.01/0.26(5, 186)/.93
Perceived Reality (of television) Index	.18*	
Quality of life—local media	.05	.05/4.76(2, 184)/.01
“Some people are just plain bad”	.02	
Mean World Index	.09	.02/2.05(2, 182)/.13
Has been victim of violent crime	.02	
“Most fatal violence between strangers”	-.03	
“Root cause of crime is poverty”	-.04	
Names crime as a top area problem”	-.01	
“More males work in law enforcement”	.14	
“Crime a major national problem”	.06	
“Greater chance of involvement in violence”	.18*	
“Greater proportion of violent crime”	-.01	
“Feel safe walking in neighborhood”	.04	.06/1.34(9, 173)/.22
Names Whites among top 3 best media images	.00	
Names Whites among top 3 worst media images	-.05	
Names Blacks among top 3 best media images	-.03	
Names Blacks among top 3 worst media image	.10	
“Racial groups stereotyped in mass media”	-.05	
“Blacks have negative images in mass media”	-.02	.02/0.76(6, 167)/.60
Names racism as a top area problem	.12	.01/1.79(1, 166)/.18
“Blacks are athletic”	-.09	
“Blacks are law abiding”	.04	
“Blacks are demanding in push for rights”	-.02	.01/0.90(3, 163)/.44
“Affirmative action no longer needed”	.17*	
“Affirmative action still necessary”	.28**	.05/6.18(2, 161)/.003
“Too much media coverage of O. J. trial”	.05	.00/0.44(1, 160)/.51
Black (dummy coded)	-.12	
White (dummy coded)	-.11	.01/1.70(2, 158)/.19
Black female (dummy coded)	.24*	.02/4.49(1, 157)/.04
Total R ² =		.33/1.68(46, 157)/.01

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 4 Correlates for Racial Identification and O. J. Innocence Evaluations, 1996 Follow-up

<i>Variable</i>	<i>White ID</i>	<i>Black ID</i>	<i>O. J. Inno.</i>
Gender (female)	-.03	.05	.00
Has been separated /divorced	-.04	.06	.02
Education	.17**	-.12*	-.13*
Age	.13*	-.14**	-.06
Income	.13*	-.08	.03
Political party identification	.34**	-.37**	-.25**
"Spend a lot of time talking with friends"	.00	.05	.04
Hours of television viewing yesterday	-.17**	.25**	.12*
Number of books read in last 6 mo.	.08	-.05	-.00
Hours of radio listening yesterday	.04	-.04	-.05
Number of movies seen at theater, past mo.	-.05	.09	.07
Number of videos viewed past mo.	.02	-.05	-.05
Days read newspaper in past week	.15**	-.13*	-.12*
Number of magazines read regularly	.04	.00	.02
Have cable television in home	-.01	.06	.05
Have computer in home	.14**	-.10	.02
Have access to Internet	.01	-.01	-.03
Quality of life—nation	.11*	-.21**	-.24**
Quality of life—family	.07	-.06	-.09
Quality of life—metro. area	.10	-.08	-.09
Quality of life—work	.12*	-.07	-.07
Quality of life—neighborhood	.22**	-.18**	-.14**
"Ethnic background affects daily life"	-.24**	.25**	.15**
"Comfortable talking with similar people"	-.04	-.02	.01
Black (dummy coded)			.40**
White (dummy coded)			-.40**
Black Female (dummy coded)			.29**
Black Male (dummy coded)			.26**
White Female (dummy coded)			-.20**
White Male (dummy coded)			-.15**

Note. Each entry is a zero-order correlation coefficient.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

local media and a higher perceived reality of television, beliefs that affirmative action is still needed in America and that crime is a major problem in the country today, and a general sentiment that the world is "mean," with a higher chance of being a victim of violent crime and a perception that more individuals make their living in law enforcement. Also, those who report a perception that Blacks have the "worst" media images are more likely to see Simpson as innocent. Blacks, non-Whites generally, and those of lower income are also more likely to attribute innocence.

The exploratory stepwise regressions reported in Table 2 disclose an overall significant prediction (total $R^2 = .23$, $F = \text{approx. } 8.4$, $p < .001$), regardless of the segmented entry of the racial identifiers. The relationships involving ethnicity provide support for Hypothesis 1a (but not 1b). The relationship between a concern over racism as a top problem and a belief in Simpson's innocence fails to reach significance, leaving Hypothesis 2 without support.

Unrestrained, the White racial indicator emerges as the highest significant predictor. Interestingly, this reveals that it is the White/non-White distinction that is

Table 5 Hierarchical Logistic Regression Predicting O. J. Innocence Evaluation, 1996 Follow-up

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Final B</i>	<i>Inc. X²/p</i>	<i>Overall Classif. Perform.</i>
Gender (female)	-.15		
Has been separated/divorced	-.43		
Education	-.36*		
Age	.00		
Income	.34**	15.7/.008	80.7%
Political party identification	-.30	19.1/.001	81.6%
"Spend a lot of time talking with friends"	.09	0.4/.53	81.6%
Hours of television viewing yesterday	.07		
Number of books read in last 6 mo.	.03		
Hours of radio listening yesterday	-.12		
Number of movies seen at theater, past mo.	.13		
Number of videos viewed past mo.	-.07		
Days read newspaper in past week	-.04		
Number of magazines read regularly	.04		
Have cable television in home	.41	11.48/.18	83.0%
Have computer in home	1.18**		
Have access to Internet	-.33	3.18/.20	84.4%
Quality of life—nation	-.29**		
Quality of life—family	-.05		
Quality of life—metro. area	-.09		
Quality of life—work	.00		
Quality of life—neighborhood	.01	18.37/.003	83.0%
"Ethnic background affects daily life"	.07		
"Comfortable talking with similar people"	.02	4.38/.11	84.4%
Black (dummy coded)	-.37		
White (dummy coded)	-2.33**	24.98/.001	86.2%
Black female (dummy coded)	-.33	0.18/.67	85.3%
Total X ² _(1, 319) = 389.09/.004			

Note. The final column includes the Overall Classification Performance for the equation at each step.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

more important than the Black/non-Black dichotomy in differentiating attitudes toward the guilt or innocence of O. J. Simpson. As the stepwise process continues, we see that, even when controlling for this racial divide, there exist important attitudinal predictors. Thus, regardless of racial identity, attitudes toward the need for affirmative action, perceived reality of television, and perceptions of the world as crime oriented are significantly related to evaluations of Simpson as innocent. And, the factor of being a Black female also contributes a significant increment to the prediction.

The two-block stepwise regression, shown in the second part of Table 2, reveals that when we allow nonrace variables a "first chance" at capturing variance of the dependent variable, the model does not change substantially. The same significant predictors emerge, with the addition of income, now apparently operating as a partial surrogate for race (White and income correlate at $r = .18$).

Table 3 presents the results of the hierarchical multiple regression, with forced

entry of 13 blocks of predictors. Once again, racial identifiers have been delayed until final entry to explore the mechanisms by which the racial schism occurs. Only three significant blocks are seen: (1) Perceptions of media: Perceived reality and perceived quality of the local media are both positive predictors of assessments of innocence. (2) Attitudes toward affirmative action: A perceived need for affirmative action and the perception that it is no longer needed and should be abolished are both positively related to perceptions of innocence (a seemingly contradictory finding). (3) Status as a Black female: Even after controlling for a raft of social indicators and attitudinal variables, Black females are still significantly more likely than others to believe in Simpson's innocence.

Study 2—1996

The follow-up analyses conducted on recent survey data are presented in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 shows the zero-order correlations for all predictors with racial self-identification as White, as Black, and with a perception of O. J. Simpson as innocent. We see that a perception of Simpson as innocent is correlated with lower education, a more Democratic political leaning, greater television viewing, less newspaper reading, a perceived lower quality of life at the national and neighborhood levels, a belief that one's ethnic background affects one's daily life, and a Black self-identification.

The hierarchical logistic regression shown in Table 5 reinforces these findings. The block including basic social indicators is significant, as is political party identification, the quality of life block, and the racial identification block. In this 1996 follow-up, *race* is now a stronger predictor of perceived innocence for Simpson than are any of the various race/gender cross breaks. More strongly than the year before, the White/non-White distinction is the strongest determinant of Simpson innocence evaluations. It should be noted that the primary distinction does not lie along Black/non-Black lines (in fact, the Black coefficient is somewhat *negative*).

Discussion

The present study sought to explore the extent to which perceptions of guilt or innocence are mediated by race or other social locators. In particular, we used the symbolic world of television to examine the theoretical position that audiences will selectively perceive information from trial coverage in accord with their own predispositions, as has been found in past work (Becker, Kosicki, & Jones, 1992). The relatively weak explanatory power of media use and quality of life variables speaks to the relative primacy of social locators, particularly race, in determining attitudes toward issues of crime and social justice.

This study discovered that *regardless* of racial identity, attitudes toward affirmative action were strong predictors of evaluations of O. J. Simpson's innocence, as were perceptions of the prevalence of crime and crime fighting (Table 2). And, intriguingly, simple perceived reality of television remained a strong positive predictor throughout the analyses. Those with a strong belief in the veracity of television were more likely to support Simpson's claims of innocence.

In conducting analyses that forced racial identity indicators to enter predictive equations *last*, we were able to explore which correlates of racial identification are most operative in explaining the Simpson “racial schism.” It is noteworthy that these operative correlates were, by and large, dynamic and attitudinal—changeable over time. This may bode well for a nation faced with predictions by doomsayers of a future of increasing racial antagonism, where debates over such issues as affirmative action are often fueled by symbolic racism (e.g., Sears et al., 1997).

The study was also informative in disclosing which potential predictors, many of them variables that the literature would lead us to believe *should* predict perceived guilt or innocence, did not prove useful. Perceptions of racial stereotyping in the media did *not* relate to evaluations of Simpson. Nor did Quality of Life indicators, nor media exposure patterns. (Although medium-specific measures did follow expected patterns—that is, newspaper exposure related to perceptions of guilt, television exposure to perceptions of innocence—the relationships were not significant.) And most social indicators failed to yield predictive power.

Racial identity—most strongly, in both studies, the White/non-White dichotomy rather than the Black/non-Black division—did prove to be the single most important determinant of perceptions of innocence or guilt in both years. Along with this, an inspection of the correlates of a White identity and of a Black identity (see Tables 1 and 4) begins to build profiles of “Black America” and “White America”—with salient dimensions related to the Simpson trial and to how Americans view the media, crime, and race in general. Black Americans experience a lower quality of life in their nation and in their neighborhoods, they perceive media as providing negative images of Blacks and positive images of Whites, view the world as “meaner” and more crime ridden, and are much more supportive of affirmative action. These findings are consistent with the literature (e.g., Sniderman & Carmines, 1997).

Our original motivation, focusing on such a dichotomy of race, was also a follow-up to syndicated polls suggesting that perceptions of guilt/innocence broke down along racial lines. We see evidence in support of that dynamic here, generally confirming public opinion results dating back to the time of the trial. As Matabane (1988) notes, this race-based perception has been reinforced by the mass media, helping shape distinctive perceptions of racial and social equity. As she notes (p. 29):

Much of this difference has been attributed to a relatively shared perception of social inequality and injustice for blacks . . . in the United States. The prospect that television viewing may have long range influences on black people’s political beliefs about themselves is unsettling.

In this study, the interaction of race and gender was most intriguing. Perhaps mirroring the jury dynamic of the Simpson murder trial itself, it is striking that African American women were the most supportive of Simpson during the trial. That this distinction seems to have evaporated in the year since the trial is cause for further investigation, beyond the brief glimpse given by this study’s limited 1996 follow-up.

In addition to generalizing from the specific to the general, as with most survey samples, it is also interesting to compare certain dynamics with those of a jury subset. Since two-thirds (or eight) of the final jury group was composed of African American women, this group played a decisive role in reaching the final acquittal. Toobin’s

(1995, p. 67) explanation for that jury dynamic may help account for the present findings:

Nicole was a more likely threat to black women than O. J. While the prosecutors were still speaking to (a jury consultant), he told them there was a "psychosexual" reason for black women's disdain for (prosecutor) Clark. . . . African-Americans viewed O. J. Simpson as a symbol of black virility in a predominantly white world. He was handsome, rich, masculine, likable, and charming. As a consequence . . . black women, in particular, saw Clark as a "castrating bitch" who was attempting to demean this symbol of black masculinity.

Toobin goes on to note that the defense's endless focus on such issues as to whether Fuhrman had uttered the "n-word" in the previous 10 years "succeeded in changing the subject of the case—from the evidence against Simpson to the moral fitness of the police who investigated him" (1995, p. 69). Clearly, Marcia Clark's appeal to sisterhood—in painting Simpson as a spousal abuser turned killer—was based on a faulty assumption that issues of gender would preempt those of race. Toobin concludes that such perfunctory consideration of eight months of witnesses "bespoke more than mere disagreement with the prosecution; it showed contempt" (1995, p. 71).

Blalock (1982) provides a striking explanation for stereotyping in light of this race/gender interaction. He notes that, in competitive situations between dominant and subordinate parties, physically identifiable racial or ethnic groups are "highly vulnerable candidates for 'exploitation,'" (p. 43) because of circumstances beyond individual actions, which are tied to larger issues of majority versus minority group status. Perhaps African American women are more likely to think that, in a nation like the United States, where racial division is so marked—and inequality of status based on race is so institutionalized—one can expect race to be a larger determinant of social outcomes than gender.

This, along with the finding that African Americans were much more likely to believe in Simpson's innocence—or that he had been set up by White racists—points to a profound difference in social perceptions across the races. However, in examining the data, we see that this dichotomy is less explanatory than a division that considers race and gender for all examined groups. In other words, the findings indicate that the interaction of race and gender is as important for understanding African American/White differences as it is for understanding male/female differences. In statistical as well as theoretical terms, it is much more important to determine what combination of traits is possessed, rather than simply using race or gender as separate predictors.

In documenting the levels of selective perception here, we can begin to understand how such roles affect audience attitudes about both races. Research indicates that television viewing encourages stereotyping (e.g., Morgan, 1982). Viewer interpretations of characters on television may be role specific, and perhaps mediated by such factors as gender and sex role orientation (Morgan & Rothschild, 1983). Yet, despite evidence that television can cultivate sexist and racist perceptions, a timely Gallup poll found that most racial attitudes remain unaffected by the Simpson trial (Moore, 1995). Although Whites and Blacks hold contradictory views about Simpson's guilt, the ways they view one another remain unchanged.

Evidence of selective processing uncovered here underscores the importance of examining the media context from which viewers derive their information. Research suggests that African Americans have a unique orientation toward television, given their higher levels of viewing and their dependency on the medium for news and information (e.g., Becker et al., 1992; Poindexter & Stroman, 1981).

The rise of new media outlets (e.g., Black Entertainment Television) should present further access opportunities for minorities and other subgroups unfamiliar to the dominant culture. With that, we may see a rise of reporting tailored toward idiosyncratic subcultures. In the present case, a videotaped interview of Simpson sold via infomercial offered a counterhegemonic perspective: the view that Simpson was framed. For that reason, it will be important to conduct similar research for other ethnic and lifestyle groups, as well as to analyze representational dynamics in new program services over time.

The debate concerning whether the Simpson criminal verdict is a sign of greater racial trouble in the United States may never be resolved. The present findings, however, do affirm the utility of a wider range of attitudinal measures and locate additional avenues of research for this topic. Zuckerman (1995a; 1995b) maintains that people have reverted to code words, metaphors, and even silence instead of talking about race. Crouch (1995) suggests that the verdict will, in the long run, lead to better race relations and racial understanding; extensive public discussion of that trial and the Million Man March would support that view.

Although the present findings confirm the notion that America is still very much divided by race, it is only through studying what makes us uncomfortable that we can learn more about who we are as a people.

Notes

¹ Three-quarters of the Black prospective jurors were female, which research by jury consultants reveals to have been the most pro-Simpson group of all. In addition, as Toobin (1995) recounts, all 12 final jurors were Democrats, and 9 rented homes (while three owned). Not one juror read a newspaper regularly, but 8 watched evening tabloid shows such as *Hard Copy* which a jury consultant's report revealed to be the most reliable predictor of a belief in Simpson's innocence.

² A convicted murderer who raped and brutally assaulted a couple while on a weekend pass, Horton was used as a symbol of liberal excess.

References

- Abu-Jamal, M. (1996). The power of money. *Index on Censorship* 1996, 25, 71–72.
- Armstrong, G. B., Neuendorf, K. A., & Brentar, J. E. (1992). TV entertainment, news, and racial perceptions of college students. *Journal of Communication*, 42(3), 153–179.
- Associated Press. (1992, June 29). Rap reflects alienation of black youth. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, p. 10a.
- Atkin, D. (1992). An analysis of television series with minority lead characters. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 9, 337–349.
- Atkin, D., & Fife, M. (1993–1994). The role of race and gender as determinants of local TV news coverage. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 5, 123–137.
- Atkin, D., Jeffres, L., & Neuendorf, K. (1997). Cultivation and public support for censorship of television. *Mass Com Review*, 24(3, 4), 13–27.
- Barber, J. T., & Gandy, O. H. (1990). Press portrayal of African American and white United States representatives. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 2, 213–225.
- Becker, L. B., Kosicki, G., & Jones, F. (1992). Racial differences in evaluations of the mass media. *Journalism Quarterly*, 69, 124–134.

- Bernstein, M. (1990, September 15). Blacks' image is distorted, experts say. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, p. 1f.
- Blalock, H. M. (1982). *Race and ethnic relations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Brown, W. J., Fraser, B. P., & Bocarnea, M. (1997, May). *Media coverage of court cases and effects on the public: Audience responses to O. J. Simpson's criminal trial*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association, Montreal.
- Campbell, C. (1995). *Race, myth and the news*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Crouch (1995, December). The good news. *Esquire*, 124, 109–116.
- Dates, J. L., & Barlow, W. (1990). *Split image: African Americans in the mass media*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press.
- Dershowitz, A. M. (1996). *Reasonable doubts: The O. J. Simpson case and the criminal justice system*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Director, R. (1995, November). Runnin' on enmity. *Los Angeles Magazine*, 40, 15–16.
- Driscoll, P. D., & Salwen, M. B. (1997). Self-perceived knowledge of the O. J. Simpson trial: Third-person perception and perceptions of guilt. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74, 541–556.
- Entman, R. M. (1992). Blacks in the news: TV, modern racism, and cultural change. *Journalism Quarterly*, 69, 341–361.
- Gerbner, G. (1995). Cameras on trial: The "O. J. Show" turns the tide. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 39, 4.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Signorielli, N., & Morgan, M. (1980). The "mainstreaming" of America: Violence profile no. 11. *Journal of Communication*, 30(3), 11–29.
- Gibbs, N. (1990, May 7). Bigots in the ivory tower. *Time*, 104–106.
- Gitlin, T. (1983). *Inside prime time*. New York: Pantheon.
- Gray, H. (1994). Television, Black America and the American dream. In H. Newcomb (Ed.), *Television: The critical view* (5th ed., pp. 176–187). New York: Oxford Press.
- Greenberg, B. S., & Collette, L. (1997). The changing faces on TV: A demographic analysis of network television's new seasons, 1996–1992. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 41, 1–13.
- Hazlett, T. W. (1995, December). Presumed incensed. *Reason*, 27, 66.
- Johnson, J. A. (1996, January 1). O. J. scores again on '95 covers. *Advertising Age*, 67, 6.
- Kaplan, M. A. (1995, December). The Simpson trial. *World & I*, 10, 14–15.
- Klapper, J. T. (1960). *The effects of mass communication*. New York: Free Press.
- Kluegel, J. R. (1990). Trends in whites' explanations of the black-white gap in socioeconomic status, 1977–89. *American Sociological Review*, 55, 512–525.
- Kluegel, J. R., & Smith, E. R. (1982). Whites' beliefs about blacks' opportunity. *American Sociological Review*, 47, 518–532.
- Kluegel, J. R., & Smith, E. R. (1983). Affirmative action attitudes: Effects of self-interest, racial affect, and stratification beliefs on whites' views. *Social Forces*, 61, 797–824.
- Kubey, R., Shifflet, M., Weerakkody, N., & Ukeiley, S. (1995). Demographic diversity on cable: Have the new cable channels made a difference in the representation of gender, race, and age? *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 39, 459–471.
- MacDonald, J. F. (1983). *Blacks and white TV, Afro-Americans in television since 1948*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Matabane, P. (1988). Television and the black audience: Cultivating moderate perspectives on racial integration. *Journal of Communication*, 38(4), 21–31.
- Mendelberg, T. (1997). Executing Horton: Racial crime in the 1988 Presidential campaign. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61, 134–157.
- Moore, D. (1995). No immediate signs that Simpson trial intensified racial animosity. *Gallup Poll Monthly*, 361, 2–9.
- Morgan, M. (1982). Television and adolescents' sex role stereotypes: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43, 947–955.
- Morgan, M., & Rothschild, N. (1983). Impact of the new television technology: Cable TV, peers, and sex-role cultivation in the electronic media environment. *Youth and Society*, 15, 33–50.
- Newport, F. (1995, November). Wrapping up the O. J. Simpson case. *Gallup Poll Monthly*, 362, 24–27.
- O. J., Farrakhan and the race thing (1995, November). *New African*, 8–13.
- Ogburn, W. (1964). *On culture and social change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Poindexter, P. M., & Stroman, C. A. (1981). Blacks and television: A review of the research literature. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 25, 103–122.
- Ross, S. (1996, March 9). N/T, Spanish radio rise in ratings. *Billboard*, 10, 82–82.
- Rubin, R. B., Palmgreen, P., & Sypher, H. E. (Eds.). (1994). *Communication research measures: A sourcebook*. New York: Guilford.
- Saad, E. (1995, March). Black Americans see little justice for themselves. *Gallup Poll Monthly*, 3, 32–35.
- Salwen, M. B., & Driscoll, P. D. (1997). Consequences of third-person perception in support of press

restrictions in the O. J. Simpson trial. *Journal of Communication*, 47(2), 60–78.

Schuman, H., Steeh, C., & Bobo, L. (1985). *Racial attitudes in America: Trends and interpretations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sears, D., Van Laar, C., Carillo, M., & Kosterman, R. (1997). Is it really racism? The origins of White Americans' opposition to race-targeted policies. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61, 87–101.

Sigelman, L., & Tuch, S. A. (1997). Metastereotypes: Blacks' perception of Whites' stereotypes of Blacks. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61, 87–101.

Simpson criticizes media, pleads with detractors to "leave me alone" in BET interview. (1996, February 12) *Jet*, 89, pp. 38–40.

Sniderman, P. M., & Carmines, E. G. (1997). *Reaching Beyond Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Staples, R., & Jones, T. (1985, May/June). Culture, ideology and black television images. *The Black Scholar*, 15, 10–20.

Stroman, C. A., Merritt, B. D., & Matabane, P. W. (1989–1990). Twenty years after Kerner: The portrayal of African Americans on prime-time television. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 2, 44–55.

Thaler, R. (1997). *The spectacle: Media and the making of the O. J. Simpson story*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Thernstrom, A. (1996). From Scottsboro to Simpson. *Public Interest*, 122, 17–27.

Thornton, L. (1990). Broadcast news. In J. L. Dates and W. Barlow (Eds.), *Split image: African Americans in the mass media* (pp. 253–302). Washington, DC: Howard University Press.

Toobin, J. (1995, July 17). Putting it in black and white. *New Yorker*, 71, 31–34.

Top stories of 1995. (1996, January 6). *Editor & Publisher*, 129, 27.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (1977). *Window dressing on the set: Women and minorities on television*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (1979). *Window dressing on the set: An update*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Wilkerson, I. (1996, January) O. J.: Having our say. *Essence*, 26, 82–84.

Wilson, C., & Guitierrez, F. (1985). *Minorities and media*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Zuckerman, M. B. (1995a, October 16). The bitter legacy of O. J. *U.S. News and World Report*, 100.

Zuckerman, M. B. (1995b, January 15). The sad legacy of 1995. *U.S. News & World Report*, 120, 68.