

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF SELECTIVE EXPOSURE AND
SELECTIVE PERCEPTION RELATIVE TO TELEVISION
PROGRAMS WITH NEGRO STARS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many have been the dogmatic statements about the pervasiveness and power of the media of mass communications. Yet, despite the fact that the question of social effects has dominated mass communications research, the findings are generally inconclusive and equivocal. One major reason for this state of affairs is that there exists between media and mass a host of intervening processes which mediate the influence of a communication. Indeed, a logically prior task to determining effect must necessarily be an assessment of these mediating processes. This study attempted to make that assessment.

Statement of the Problem

Giving impetus to this study was the notion that the apparent recent change in television's portrayal of Negroes is likely to have some impact upon television viewers. That is, it was conjectured that the new Negro image which appears to be pervading the medium¹ could conceivably be a powerful force in effecting attitude change and, more generally, in altering the state of race relations in the United States. This idea, however, merely provided the impetus and set the context of

¹Cf. Royal D. Colle, "Color on TV," The Reporter, XXXVII (1967), pp. 23-25, and Thomas R. Cripps, "The Death of Rastus: Negroes in American Films Since 1945," Phylon, XXVIII (1967), pp. 267-275.

the problem. A review of the literature on mass communications research indicated a need to tailor the conjecture so as to put it in tractable, researchable form. In fact, it was finally decided that it would perhaps be most fruitful to investigate certain processes mediating effect, namely, the processes of selective exposure and selective perception.

Specifically, the research reported here represents an attempt to test a set of hypotheses formulated on the basis of the principles of selective attention and perception. The "individual differences theory of mass communications" tells us that "from a multiplicity of available content, the member of the audience selectively attend[s] to messages, particularly if they [are] related to his interests, consistent with his attitudes, congruent with his beliefs, and supportive of his values. His response to such messages [is] modified by his psychological make-up."² Thus, the primary focus of this investigation was on three variables: (1) exposure to programs in which Negroes have starring roles; (2) perception of these programs and the Negroes on them; and (3) the general Negro prejudice of viewers. Because background factors such as age, education, and occupation were known to be related to all three variables, it was essential to include these in the study. Nonetheless, the major objective of the thesis was to investigate the relationship between prejudice and selective attention and perception. It was believed that ultimately such evidence could help provide a basis for predicting susceptibility to attitude change.

²Melvin L. De Fleur, Theories of Mass Communication (New York, 1966), p. 122.

Review of the Literature

It would be extraordinarily difficult to review all studies in which the phenomena of selective exposure or perception were either a central or a peripheral finding, for the number of such studies appears to be in the hundreds. Consequently, limits must be defined, and sometimes they are quite arbitrary. An attempt has been made here to include in the discussion primarily those studies of mass communications based upon a survey methodology in which selective exposure and/or perception was a major finding.³ Nonetheless, there will be places where the boundaries are transgressed. This will especially be the case in the section on selective perception, a concept established in psychological laboratory research long before it was demonstrated in the field of mass communications.

Selective Exposure

The principle of selective exposure is said to be a "basic fact in the thinking of many social scientists about communications effects."⁴

³A few researchers have lamented the conflicting results derived from experimental and survey studies of communication effects, attitude change, and the like (Carl I. Hovland, "Reconciling Conflicting Results Derived From Experimental and Survey Studies of Attitude Change," American Psychologist, XIV (1959), pp. 8-17; Seymour M. Lipset et al., "The Psychology of Voting: An Analysis of Political Behavior," in Gardner Lindzey, ed., Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol. 2 (Reading, Mass., 1954), pp. 1124-1175). One possible source of difference between the two is the nature of experimental studies, which deal with contrived situations that often do not reflect what goes on outside the classroom or laboratory. This is an especially notable caveat in the field of mass communications, where the concept of "mass" connotes a large, heterogeneous, anonymous audience. Cf. W. Phillips Davison, "On the Effects of Communication," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIII (1959), pp. 358-359.

⁴David O. Sears and Jonathan L. Freedman, "Selective Exposure to Information: A Critical Review," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXXI (1967), p. 194.

Indicative of its wide application is the following assertion by Bauer and Bauer:

The reasonable conclusion to reach in any given instance (in the absence of specific information to the contrary) is that any correlation between communications behavior and the personal characteristics of the people involved is a result of selective exposure, rather than evidence for the effects of the communications.⁵

The apparently classic example of the use of selective exposure as an explanatory principle was a study by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet,⁶ who used it to account for the differential exposure to candidates in a political campaign. According to these investigators, the universe of campaign communications--political speeches, newspaper stories, newscasts, editorials, columns, magazine articles--was open to virtually everyone. But supply was not equated to exposure primarily because people selected political material in accord with their own taste and bias. Approximately two-thirds of the constant partisans--people whose voting intentions did not change from May to October---managed to hear more favorable than unfavorable propaganda, and only about one-fifth exposed themselves more to unfavorable than to favorable material.

Studies of the behavior of voters in other election campaigns have generally supported this finding. For example, Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee⁷ demonstrated again in the 1948 election that persons

⁵Raymond A. Bauer and Alice H. Bauer, "America, Mass Society and Mass Media," Journal of Social Issues, XVI (1960), p. 29.

⁶Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice (2nd ed., New York, 1948).

⁷Bernard Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Election, (Chicago, 1954).

exposed themselves predominantly to propaganda supporting their partisan position. In addition, Schramm and Carter,⁸ in a study of the 1958 California gubernatorial election, found that Republicans were about twice as likely as Democrats to have viewed a Republican sponsored political telethon.

Some highly commensurable findings have also been reported by many other investigators with respect to a variety of topics. Information campaigns have been the main source of data for these studies, the earliest of which was performed by Hyman and Sheatsley.⁹ In conjunction with the National Opinion Research Center, these investigators conducted a survey of the American public in several information areas in order to locate psychological barriers to the free flow of information. Among the factors which they found determined exposure to material was the tendency of people "to expose themselves to information which is congenial with their prior attitudes." Similarly, Cartwright,¹⁰ while discussing "some principles of mass persuasion," notes an experiment made by Treasury Department officials who were exploring the possibilities of using documentary movies in order to heighten citizen identification with the war effort. In order to determine the effect of one particular movie, free tickets were distributed widely throughout the population and then interviews were conducted on a random sample of those attending. A "striking finding," says Cartwright, was that

⁸Wilbur Schramm and Richard F. Carter, "Effectiveness of a Political Telethon," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIII (1959), pp. 121-126.

⁹Herbert H. Hyman and Paul B. Sheatsley, "Some Reasons Why Information Campaigns Fail," Public Opinion Quarterly, XI (1947), pp. 412-423.

¹⁰Dorwin Cartwright, "Some Principles of Mass Persuasion," Human Relations, II (1949), pp. 253-267.

the people who attended the movie were the ones whose behavior most closely resembled that encouraged by the movie.

There are many other examples of research on information campaigns in which selective exposure of the public was a major finding. These include: a study by Star and Hughes¹¹ of a six-month experimental campaign in Cincinnati designed to disseminate pro-United Nations information; a research by Bogart¹² on an advertising campaign conducted by the U. S. Information Agency in Greece in 1952; and finally, Cannel and MacDonald's¹³ study of exposure to articles on health among persons in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In each of these studies, exposure was largely predictable on the basis of a person's predispositions. Those whose views were most congenial to the communications most often heard them.

Thus, the evidence for selective exposure seems rather convincing. The argument for the existence of such a phenomenon, however, is not as sound as one might be led to believe. Several questions concerning the above mentioned researches can be raised.

First, although the content of the information did vary, these investigations dealt exclusively with two types of communication-- information, especially of a public affairs nature, and the propaganda of political campaigns. Furthermore, the intent of the messages was

¹¹Shirley A. Star and Helen M. Hughes, "Report of an Educational Campaign: The Cincinnati Plan for the United Nations," American Journal of Sociology, LV (1950), pp. 389-400.

¹²Leo Bogart, "Measuring the Effectiveness of an Overseas Information Campaign: A Case History," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXI (1957), pp. 475-498.

¹³Charles F. Cannel and James C. MacDonald, "The Impact of Health News on Attitudes and Behavior," Journalism Quarterly, XXXIII (1956), pp. 315-323.

almost always to convert. What might happen if designs for instrumental effects were less candid? In other words, what would be the case if the menu were entertainment? Here the primary aim is to amuse, not to manipulate behavior. It could conceivably be argued that the process in question would be less apt to play a role in communication of this type.

Secondly, these investigations antedate, for the most part, the "age of television," and in conjunction with the first question it should be noted that the main course of television is entertainment.¹⁴ To be sure, there has been some research on the medium of television. Gans,¹⁵ for instance, in his monograph on an Italian American community, noted the high preference in mass media programming that "West Enders" have for themes that support their values. Also, Levy and Glick¹⁶ have pointed out differential responses to television among various social classes and age groups. Nonetheless, this testimony scarcely demonstrates the reality of selective exposure to television programs.

Third, it is significant that all this research utilizes survey methodology, with its several accompanying weaknesses. Since the respondents in almost all the studies retrospectively reported their exposure to the intended messages, a plausible alternative hypothesis is that it is not selective exposure but selective recall or retention

¹⁴The data of Steiner indicate that entertainment oriented programs are the standard network fare and that entertainment is far more commonly the diet of viewers than is information. Gary A. Steiner, The People Look at Television, (New York, 1963), pp. 162-168.

¹⁵Herbert J. Gans, The Urban Villagers (New York, 1962).

¹⁶Ira O. Glick and Sidney J. Levy, Living with Television (Chicago, 1962).

that led to the correlation between message content and respondent predispositions. Moreover, such agreement may also reflect attitude change in that only one interview had been used in most studies. It is, therefore, extremely difficult, using the correlational methodology, to demonstrate conclusively an active avoidance of information contrary (or an active seeking out of information congenial) to one's predispositions. Attempts at clarifying the situation by overcoming some of these measurement problems have been made in a number of laboratory experiments,¹⁷ which are almost always designed as tests of Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory.¹⁸ But, significantly, there is no consistent result in this research.¹⁹

Fourth, the possibility exists that background variables may be better predictors of selectivity than social or political attitudes.

¹⁷See, for example, Danuta Ehrlich et al., "Post-decision Exposure to Relevant Information," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LIV (1957), pp. 98-102; Judson Mills, Elliot Aronson, and H. Robinson, "Selectivity in Exposure to Information," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LIX (1959), pp. 250-253; N. T. Feather, "Cognitive Dissonance, Sensitivity, and Evaluation," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXVI (1963), pp. 157-163; and Jon D. Jecker, "Selective Exposure to New Information," in Leon Festinger, ed., Conflict, Decision and Dissonance (Stanford, Calif., 1964).

¹⁸According to cognitive dissonance theory, two elements which exist in a person's cognition are in dissonant relation if the obverse of one element follows from the other. When dissonance is present, says Festinger, a person will be motivated to try to reduce it and will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance. Leon Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Stanford, Calif., 1957).

¹⁹Sears and Freedman, pp. 203-208. The counter-argument, of course, exists that such studies have been carried out with captive audiences wherein subjects are forced to choose between two types of information--one consonant and one dissonant to their views. Whether these same subjects would actively seek out or avoid such information outside the laboratory or classroom is questionable.

in the previously cited studies. Sears and Freedman,²⁰ for example, presented two cases in which education more strongly correlated with exposure than did a favorable attitudinal orientation. Certainly, this is a form of selective exposure. As these authors conclude, however, the choice of which variable is the best predictor may be unnecessarily arbitrary, and there still remains the question of which variable is the more likely causal agent.

Finally, in a recent critical survey, Sears and Freedman²¹ have made the more general point that the literature on selective exposure has been less than satisfying. The crucial issue for them is whether there is an active psychological preference for supportive versus non-supportive information. On this issue, as noted earlier, the evidence is quite equivocal. Also, and more importantly, these authors propose that some new research "suggests a change of emphasis in our thinking about how people deal with discrepant information." In their own words,

It has generally been assumed that selective exposure and other processes that bar information reception are prime mechanisms by which people resist influence. Perhaps such processes are not very important after all. Feather [See footnote 17] reports that smokers do not avoid reading unpleasant information about smoking and lung cancer; rather, they subject it to careful and mercilessly unsympathetic scrutiny. Perhaps resistance to influence is accomplished most often and most successfully at the level of information evaluation, rather than at the level of selective seeking and avoiding of information.²²

²⁰ Ibid., p. 201.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 213.

Selective Perception

The phenomenon to which Sears and Freedman are referring is what has been variously termed perceptual accentuation, perceptual defense, or selective perception. As mentioned above, empirical demonstrations of selective perception antedate communications research. According to Klapper,

Laboratory experiments have established that perception of moving lights, relative size of coins, relative length of lines, and the like, is in part or whole determined by what persons want to perceive, have habitually perceived, or expect some form of social or physical rewarding for perceiving. Various devices have been successfully used to elicit apparently wholly sincere reports of perception quite out of accord with fact.²³

Perhaps the earliest research of this kind with implications for the field of communications was the classic study by Allport and Postman²⁴ on the transmission of rumors. The procedure of the study was to have subjects who were shown a picture describe the content of the picture to others, who in turn were required to describe it to others in chain-like fashion. Almost always, the information passed on in this manner was recast in the process to fit the pre-existing attitudes and knowledge of the subjects. One of the pictures, for example, involved a subway train in which a white man with an open razor in his hand was having an altercation with a Negro. Typically,

²³Joseph T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication (Glencoe, Ill., 1960), pp. 21-22. Examples are the now classic studies by Sherif and Bruner and Goodman. Muzafer Sherif, The Psychology of Social Norms (New York, 1936); Jerome S. Bruner and Cecil C. Goodman, "Value and Need as Organizing Factors in Perception," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLII (1947), pp. 33-44.

²⁴Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman, The Psychology of Rumor (New York, 1947).

by the sixth or seventh reproduction of the subway scene, the Negro was left holding the razor.

Comparable findings have also been reported in studies more intrinsic to mass media research. A number of investigations, for instance, have examined the effects of a "Mr. Biggott" series of cartoons which pictured an absurd man exhibiting ridiculous prejudices.²⁵ The general finding of these investigations was that the intent of the cartoons was far more commonly misperceived by the prejudiced than by the unprejudiced subjects. In a study which has particular relevance to the research reported herein, Wilner found that his subjects "interpreted the expressions and motives of characters in a pro-tolerance film (Home of the Brave) in ways which were largely predictable on the basis of their scores on a racial tolerance test."²⁶

Such findings have also been noted in several of the studies dealing with information or political campaigns. In 1947 the NORC²⁷ conducted a national survey in which they asked respondents if they thought the newspapers they read made Russia look better or worse than she really was. When the sample was dichotomized into those who placed the blame for poor Russian-American relations entirely on Russia and those who said that the United States alone or both countries were to blame, the latter group was far more likely to say that their newspapers

²⁵Patricia Kendall and Katherine Wolf, "Deviant Case Analysis in the Mr. Biggott Study," in Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton, eds., Communications Research 1948-1949 (New York, 1949), pp. 152-179; Eunice Cooper and Marie Johoda, "The Evasion of Propaganda," Journal of Psychology, XXIII (1947), pp. 15-25.

²⁶As reported in Klapper, p. 23.

²⁷Hyman and Sheatsley, p. 419.

presented Russia unfavorably. And this finding existed, the authors note, in spite of the selective exposure of the pro-Russian group to newspapers more apt to present Russia favorably. Similarly, Cannell and MacDonald²⁸ found that whereas a little over one-fourth of the smokers in their sample accepted the relationship between smoking and cancer as proved, somewhat over one-half of the non-smokers accepted this relationship. Finally, more recently, Carter²⁹ discovered the operation of selective perception among viewers of the Nixon-Kennedy debates. Although the nature of the situation seemed to preclude the operation of selective exposure, there was, nonetheless, biased perception of the polemical effectiveness of the candidates. Participants in the study were more likely to have seen the opposition candidate as having made no effective arguments.

Implications of the Review of the Literature

Regardless, therefore, which of the above processes--selective exposure or selective perception--is operative, the evidence strongly suggests that persons tend to insulate themselves from information contrary to their predispositions. The evidence is not totally conclusive, however, and herein lies part of the rationale for the present research.

Perhaps the outstanding implication of the review of literature on these concepts has been expressed by Hilde Himmelweit: "With one or two exceptions, such studies [of communications effects] have been

²⁸Cannell and MacDonald, p. 317.

²⁹Richard F. Carter, "Some Effects of the Debates," in Sidney Kraus, ed., The Great Debates (Bloomington, Ind., 1962), pp. 250-270.

carried out with captive audiences and/or have used communications designed to convert; communications which contained a message,"³⁰ The relative importance of these processes when dealing with communication whose primary aim is to entertain thus remains largely unanswered. Also of considerable relevance to this study, these studies have ignored, for the most part, the medium of television. And this is a rather flagrant omission when one considers that "the major countering factor to self-selection is sheer accessibility," that is, "people tend to see or hear communications to the degree to which they are readily available."³¹ Ninety-four percent of the households in the United States have at least one television set,³² and the average household spends over three and a half hours watching television each day.³³ Such statistics suggest an easy accessibility to the various television programs, an accessibility, in fact, that could possibly counteract the self-selective process to some extent.

In an attempt to further clarify the nature of selectivity of audiences in their exposure to and perception of communication, this study has focused attention on television programs with Negro stars. It was believed that the dissonance presumably created when racially

³⁰Hilde T. Himmelweit, "A Theoretical Framework for the Consideration of the Effects of Television: A British Report," Journal of Social Issues, XVIII (1962), p. 26.

³¹Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings (New York, 1964), p. 531.

³²Television Factbook, XXXVII, Part 2 (Washington, D. C., 1967), p. 72-a.

³³1968 Broadcasting Yearbook (Washington, D. C., 1968), p. 24.

prejudiced persons watch such shows would manifest itself in either a low exposure rate or in perceptions of either the program, the Negro star, or of both, which would differ significantly from the perceptions of the racially unprejudiced person. Based upon a survey methodology, this study suffered from some of the same ambiguities of other studies of the mass media which have utilized this technique. However, an effort was made to alleviate a few of the problems previously noted. Through statistical design and statistical comparison, for example, pertinent background factors were examined for their relationship to variables of the hypotheses, thereby reducing the number of plausible rival interpretations. Furthermore, by combining a study of selective exposure and perception, it was possible to make inferences about the primacy of one of these processes over the other.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Definitions and Hypotheses

As stated in the first chapter, this thesis was concerned with the relationships among four sets of variables: (1) background factors (age, education, and occupation); (2) exposure to certain television programs; (3) perceptions relative to these programs; and (4) racial prejudice. Since each of these is defined by certain questions and/or scales within the questionnaire, which are reviewed in a later section of this chapter, they need not be specified here. However, it is necessary to make explicit what is meant by "selective exposure" and by "selective perception" in the present study.

Sears and Freedman suggest three definitional levels at which the term "selective exposure" has been applied: (1) "any systematic bias in audience composition;" (2) "unusual agreement about a matter of opinion;" and (3) "preference for supportive, rather than nonsupportive, information."¹ For purposes of this study, any application of the first level will be considered as evidence for audience composition bias rather than selective exposure. Hence, any correlation between the first set of variables and the second, as outlined above, does not

¹David O. Sears and Jonathan L. Freedman, "Selective Exposure to Information: A Critical Review," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXXI (1967), pp. 195-196.

constitute selective exposure. This refers to an application at the second definitional level, or more precisely, to any application which fits the following definition by Klapper: "The tendency of people to expose themselves to mass communications in accord with their existing opinions and interests...."² Any correlation between variables (2) and (4) above, therefore, constitutes selective exposure.³

"Selective perception" is the evaluative counterpart of these twin processes. It refers to the tendency for persons to apprehend reality in a manner suggestive of their predispositions. Thus, one would expect racially prejudiced persons to rate a television program with a Negro star unfavorably, because this infers a logical relation between attitude and perception. Any correlation between variables (3) and (4) above, therefore, is operationally defined as selective perception.

Three hypotheses guided the present study. They were as follows.

- H₁: The greater the Negro prejudice of viewers, the less the tendency to expose themselves to television programs with Negro stars.
- H₂: Perceptions of television programs with Negro stars tend to conform to the attitudinal predispositions of the viewer.
- H₃: Perceptions of Negroes on television programs tend to conform to the attitudinal predispositions of the viewer.

²Joseph T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication (Glencoe, Ill., 1960), p. 19.

³The third connotative level is considered to be a statement of causation with respect to the second level; it is the main reason given in the literature for audience selectivity. More will be said about this in a later chapter.

The Research Design

Sample

Data were collected by questionnaire from a random sample of female, Stillwater, Oklahoma residents, exclusive of Negroes and students attending Oklahoma State University. Students were considered undesirable because of the likelihood of their minimal and unnatural exposure to television, because they would cause a preponderance of respondents in the low age-range, and because of the many other ways in which they constituted a "special" group. Furthermore, only women were used for a variety of reasons. This was a means of controlling for a possible confounding variable, i.e., sex. It was also known that women are generally easier to contact than men, and women generally watch more television and enjoy it more than men.⁴

The sample was drawn in March, 1968, from the Stillwater City Directory, 1967,⁵ a comprehensive listing of all Stillwater residents compiled in the summer of 1967. A careful consideration of the necessary statistical analyses suggested that a sample size of near 200 would be adequate. Initially, with the expectation of around a 60 per cent rate of return, 350 names were drawn from the directory. Two major problems were encountered which required that an additional 100 names be drawn. First, between fifteen and twenty-five per cent of the persons initially sampled were either deceased, no longer residing in Stillwater, or in some other way inaccessible. Secondly, due

⁴Gary A. Steiner, The People Look at Television (New York, 1963), pp. 342-343.

⁵Stillwater City Directory, 1967 (Odessa, Tex., 1967).

primarily to certain procedural difficulties the return rate (approximately thirty-five per cent) was much lower than expected. The final sample size, after having eliminated incomplete questionnaires and fourteen respondents classified as "non-TV viewers," was 168. Of this 168, only fourteen had never seen any of the shows.

No attempt has been made to determine with exactitude the representativeness of the sample relative to the city of Stillwater. Representativeness was not considered crucial since relevant population characteristics were controlled through statistical design and it was not the Stillwater population but the television viewer that was the focus of attention.

Instrument

The research instrument employed in this study consisted of an eight-page questionnaire, reproduced in the Appendix. The nature of the questionnaire items with respect to the type of instructions required and the type of information sought, plus the desire to have respondents proceed from simple to more complex items, formed the basis for the organization of the questionnaire into three distinct parts.

Part I consisted of a brief introduction to the questionnaire and twenty-two items which garnered a variety of information. Requested here was pertinent background data, an estimate of the likelihood of the respondent's seeing television at a number of specified times, and answers to ten items dealing with exposure and perception of three

television programs--"Mission: Impossible," "I Spy," and "N.Y.P.D."⁶ Exposure was measured by asking the respondent to circle each of the programs which she had seen at least once (item 13), by asking the respondent if she had seen the program the previous week (items 14, 17, and 20), and by having the respondent judge how often she watches the show on a rank order of categories ranging from "almost always" to "never" (items 15, 18, and 21). Program perception was measured by having respondents rate each show on a five-point scale ranging from "one of the best shows on TV" to "one of the worst shows on TV" (items 16, 19, and 22).

Character perceptions were measured in Part II of the questionnaire by five semantic differentials--one for each character evaluation. Of the latter, three pertained to the principle Negro stars and two were included for reasons of curiosity and serendipity. Each semantic differential contained a series of ten (theoretically) bipolar, descriptive adjectives that appeared at the extremes of a seven-point scale. The list of scales was largely derived from previous studies which employed the semantic differential, although a few of the scales were included because they seemed to have special relevance to the characters being described. Scoring was accomplished by assigning the value "1" to responses in the most favorable position and "7" to those

⁶In the first show a Negro actor (Greg Morris) is a regular on the series, while in the latter two shows Negro actors (Bill Cosby and Robert Hooks) share top-billing. The programs differ in many ways, but they do not by any means represent the extent of program types on television. Even though Negroes have been increasingly assigned a wider range of television roles, there are still few series' regulars. Unfortunately, this limitation also becomes a weakness in this study; for to adequately measure the impact on all viewers, the full extent of television coverage must be assessed, not merely programs which are dramatic, suspenseful, and often violent.

in the least favorable position on each scale. Thus the possible score range for the ten scales was ten to seventy.

Part III consisted of fourteen statements about the behavior of Negroes, to each of which a respondent expressed agreement or disagreement via a six-point Likert-type scale. Scale values assigned responses were: Disagree Very Much = 1, Disagree Pretty Much = 2, Disagree a Little = 3, Agree a Little = 5, Agree Pretty Much = 6, and Agree Very Much = 7. Since nearly every statistical comparison made in the study required a prejudice score to represent the "attitudinal predispositions" of the television viewer, it was essential that this aspect of the questionnaire be carefully constructed or derived from an already standardized test. To conserve time, constructing a new scale was ruled out. Finding an adequate instrument in the literature, however, proved to be more difficult than imagined. Virtually all scales of the type desired were first designed twenty or thirty years ago and were very much outdated. Furthermore, the more recently developed ones are often deficient in that they have not been standardized, their reliability is not known and so on.

The items finally chosen for part III originally comprised 14/16 of an "anti-Negro" scale designed by Steckler⁷ for use with Negro samples. Only one of the items (number 14) on Steckler's device had restricted its use to Negro samples. One other item (number 2) was deleted and four minor word changes were made, thus producing the revised scale that was employed in this study. Two questions about its

⁷George A. Steckler, "Authoritarian Ideology in Negro College Students," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LIV (1957), pp 396-399.

usefulness, however, had to be satisfactorily answered before its use could be justified. First, what effect would two item deletions and four word changes have on the reliability of Steckler's scale? And secondly, did the items constitute a valid measuring device when applied to White samples?

The one possible difference that the word changes could have made was to have changed the meaning of the items and thus have altered their utility and basis for inclusion in the scale. Consequently, care was taken to retain the exact sense of an item when making necessary modifications. The four changes and the rationale behind each of them are listed in Table I.

The latter changes aside, there was still one other question which needed to be answered. Since reliability is known to vary directly with the number of items on a test, what effect did the reduction from sixteen to fourteen items have on the reliability of Steckler's scale. Theoretically, by increasing the number of items by k , we can increase the reliability of a test to r_{kk} by the formula⁸

$$r_{kk} = \frac{kr_{11}}{1 + (k - 1)r_{11}}$$

where r_{11} = the original reliability coefficient. For an N of 449 students, Steckler found a split-half reliability coefficient (corrected by the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula⁹) of .84 for the anti-Negro scale. Thus, substituting $r_{11} = .84$ and $k = 14/16$ in the formula, we obtain a

⁸Jim C. Nunnally, Psychometric Theory (New York, 1967), p. 223.

⁹This is a correction for test length. See G. C. Helmstadter, Principles of Psychological Measurement (New York, 1964), p. 68.

theoretical r_{kk} of .82, which is not an appreciable reduction in the original reliability.

TABLE I
ITEM MODIFICATIONS IN STECKLER'S ANTI-NEGRO
SCALE AND THE RATIONALE FOR THEM

<u>Item and Change</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
9. Too many Negroes have abused the privilege of attending baseball games by being rowdy, noisy, and cheering only for the colored ballplayers. ("baseball games" replaced by "sporting events")	"Baseball games" was too restrictive; this change would generalize the item.
10. Segregation and jimcrow will never end unless the average colored person becomes better educated and better mannered. ("and jimcrow" deleted)	"Jimcrow" would not have meaning for many respondents.
12. With all of the drinking, cutting, and other immoral acts of some Negroes, white people are almost justified for being prejudiced. ("cutting" replaced by rioting")	"Cutting," a Negro subcultural term, would have no meaning for many respondents. Also, "rioting" has special contemporary relevance.
15. A great many Negroes become officious, overbearing, and disagreeable when given positions of responsibility and authority. ("officious" replaced by "loudmouthed")	"Officious" would not have meaning for most respondents.

It still can be argued, of course, that one should not expect retention of this reliability coefficient when dealing with a different population. Consequently, the final rebuttal to this polemic can only

be an estimate of the reliability of the revised scale applied to the population under study. Table II compares the results of an analysis of the revised scale with Steckler's own analysis of his anti-Negro scale. The comparison is favorable, and the reliability coefficient--.94--is high.

TABLE II
COMPARISON OF STECKLER'S ANTI-NEGRO SCALE
WITH THE REVISION USED IN THIS STUDY

	Steckler's anti- Negro scale	Revision used in this study
reliability	.84	.94
mean	4.55	4.23
S. D.	1.06	1.51
range	1.1 - 6.6	1.0 - 7.0
N	449	182
no. of items	16	14

With respect to the question of validity, it can be claimed that the items have at least face validity, and they appear to possess content validity. Among the items, the cultural stereotype of the Negro is sampled heavily and diverse situations and events involving Negroes are represented. One source of invalidity might exist, however, in the unidirectionality of the items. All statements are anti-Negro. Thus,

one possible source of variance is the widely held acquiescence response set. This study can gain some comfort from a critical review by Rorer¹⁰ of the literature on the "yeasaying" effect, in which the author maintained that the acquiescence response set has generally been overestimated. Still, the unidirectionality of the items constitutes a weakness in the scale and in the study.

Procedure

To insure a reasonably high return rate, it was decided to deliver, rather than mail, the questionnaires. Distribution was to be accomplished by a campus sorority. This arrangement was not entirely satisfactory, as the following account of the data collection procedure points out.

To facilitate questionnaire distribution, the list of prospective respondents was sorted into twenty different groupings based upon residential location. Each of these twenty groups was given to a sorority woman who was instructed to first call each respondent on the telephone and arrange an appointment and then to deliver the questionnaires and pick them up at the earliest time convenient for the respondent. The women were told that they would have two weeks within which to submit as many questionnaires as they could possibly gather. This deadline was twice extended one week when the number of questionnaires submitted was meager. On the third deadline, all questionnaires, completed or not, were called for.

For many reasons, several of which can be traced to the administrators, the rate of return when employing the above procedure was very

¹⁰L. G. Rorer, "The Great Response-Style Myth," Psychological Bulletin, LXIII (1965), pp. 129-156.

low--approximately 35 per cent. The refusal rate ranged from ten to twenty-five per cent,¹¹ depending on the section of town. Also, a small number of respondents (five to ten per cent) either did not own a television or were too old and feeble to watch one. Mostly, however, the problem rested with the sorority women (or conceivably with the failure of the researcher to communicate with them). Six women submitted none, one, or two questionnaires. Furthermore, when a validity check was made, it was discovered that two women had filled their questionnaires out solo, and one other had indiscriminately instructed the respondents' husbands to fill them out.

Due to such difficulties, six high school students and two young married women were hired in order to increase the sample size to a desirable level. Besides contacting again many of the respondents of the initially drawn sample, 100 additional names were randomly selected from the directory. Using the same procedure outlined above, these administrants brought the number of complete questionnaires to 182.¹²

For the completed questionnaires items were coded and transferred to IBM cards, and the statistical tests discussed below were applied.

Statistical Tests

The statistical analysis was performed in three stages, each of which employed different statistical tests and required separate

¹¹A refusal rate within this range is not extraordinary. Making prior telephone commitments has been shown to lower the rate somewhat. See G. Allen Bruner and Stephen J. Carroll, Jr., "The Effect of Prior Telephone Appointments on Completion Rates and Response Content," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXXI (1967-1968), pp. 652-654.

¹²Seventeen other respondents partially filled out a questionnaire. Among these, nine refused to fill out part III--the anti-Negro scale.

statements and subroutines in the computer program. The objectives of the first stage of the analysis were to (1) see how the background variables were related to the prejudice scale scores, (2) test the hypotheses using a one-way classification scheme, and (3) locate those extraneous but possible confounding variables which could decrease the internal validity of the results and make less tenable any interpretations that might be made. The statistical tests employed for these purposes were the chi-square test for k independent groups,¹³ and the Kruskal-Wallis¹⁴ and Mann-Whitney U ¹⁵ tests. These are, respectively, a test for significant differences among k independent groups when the data (or responses) for these groups are discrete, a one-way analysis of variance technique applicable to ordinal data, and a nonparametric equivalent of the t-test. When the response categories were nominal, as in items 14, 17, and 20--one set of measures of exposure--the chi-square test was used. When the response categories were ordinal, as in items 15, 18, and 21 (frequency of viewing each program) and items 16, 19, and 22 (rating of each program), the Kruskal-Wallis H value was computed to determine that k independent samples had been derived from the same population. The variable k_i in the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic represented categories of background factors and prejudice score quartiles. The Mann-Whitney U statistic tested for significant differences among all possible pairs of k_i .

After statistically significant relationships had been defined in

¹³Sidney Siegel, Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (New York, 1956), pp. 175-179.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 184-193.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 116-126.

stage one of the analysis, the hypotheses were tested again. This time, however, pertinent background factors were controlled for through the use of the Friedman test,¹⁶ the nonparametric equivalent to two-way analysis of variance. The independent samples N in the statistical formula were classes of the extraneous variables found to be statistically significant in stage one, and the k categories were quartiles of prejudice scale scores. A cell value in this case was the average rank of the responses in the particular cell (N_i, k_i) obtained from the ranking of all scores in that row (N_i) . In computing Friedman's X_r^2 these average rank scores were ranked in each row from 1 to k .

Stage three consisted of the computation of Spearman's rho, a correlational measure applicable to ordinal data, from the scores on parts II and III of the questionnaire. Scores on the prejudice scale were ranked and compared with ranked scores on the various semantic differentials.

The exact probability statements made about the chi-square tests were obtained from the incorporation of Veldman's¹⁸ probability function subroutine into the computer program. All other expressions of significance levels were acquired from tables prepared by Siegel.¹⁹

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 166-173.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 202-213.

¹⁸Donald J. Veldman, Fortran Programming for the Behavioral Sciences (New York, 1967), pp. 129-131.

¹⁹Siegel, pp. 245-301.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Findings, derived from a statistical analysis of the data, are presented in this chapter. No interpretations or conclusions are offered, as a thorough discussion of the results has been reserved for the final chapter. The results of this study will be detailed in three major sections: an analysis of the prejudice scale scores with regard to the selected attributes of age, education, and occupation, an analysis of the selective exposure hypothesis, and an analysis of the selective perception hypotheses.

In the first section, age, educational, and occupational categories are defined. The basis for the age and educational classifications is somewhat arbitrary and self-explanatory. The occupational classification scheme needs some clarification. When the data was coded, responses to the item requesting husband's occupation were given code values based upon the NORC occupational prestige scale revised by Albert J. Reiss, Jr.¹ This latter score represents the singular measure of general socioeconomic status employed in this study. In establishing the four occupational levels, these scores were divided into four groups which roughly correspond to "blue collar," "white collar," "managerial-business," and "professional" occupational "classes." The skewedness

¹Albert J. Reiss, Jr., Occupations and Social Status (New York, 1961), pp. 263-275.

of the distribution toward higher status occupations prompted the division between "professional" and "managerial" occupational groups.

Though directional hypotheses have not been posited with respect to the relationships between the background factors and exposure/perception, one-tailed tests are employed in testing all relationships. This was done in order to keep the power levels equal, since it would seem unreasonable to use the more powerful one-tailed test for the prejudice-exposure and prejudice-perception relationships and the less powerful two-tailed test for all other relationships.

To render some lucidity to the tabular presentation of the results, mean responses are shown in Table III and Tables VIII through X and XII through XIV even though the statistical tests are based upon sums of ranks. Statistically significant relationships are indicated by asterisks at the right of the attribute name for the Kruskal-Wallis test and at the right of the Z_u score for the Mann-Whitney U tests of intra-attribute comparisons.

Relationship of Respondent Attributes to Prejudice

Numerous studies² have demonstrated a direct relationship between age, education, and social status and prejudice showing that older, less educated persons of low social status are more apt to hold prejudicial attitudes than are persons with opposing characteristics. The findings presented in Table III function as an external validity check on the prejudice scale used in this study by lending nearly unqualified support to these studies.

²See George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, Racial and Cultural Minorities (3rd ed., New York, 1965), pp. 66-79.

TABLE III
 PREJUDICE SCALE SCORES AMONG CATEGORIES OF THE
 ATTRIBUTES AGE, EDUCATION, AND OCCUPATION

Response Category	No of Obs	Mean Response	Z Scores from the Mann-Whitney U Statistic			
			26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 60	Over 60
AGE**	(168)	4.216				
Under 26	(33)	3.868	-0.148	0.473	1.394	3.166***
26 - 35	(31)	3.756		0.941	1.836*	2.901**
36 - 45	(38)	4.060			1.006	2.755**
46 - 60	(36)	4.438				1.578
Over 60	(30)	5.007				
EDUCATION***	(168)	4.216				
			<u>H.S. Graduate</u>	<u>13 15 Years</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>	<u>Graduate Work</u>
1 - 11 Years	(23)	5.217	-1.309	-3.534***	-3.781***	-3.093**
H.S. Graduate	(48)	4.677		-3.003**	-3.060**	-2.269*
13 - 15 Years	(45)	3.876			-1.055	-0.185
College Grad	(32)	3.549				0.583
Graduate Work	(20)	3.793				
OCCUPATION**	(126)	4.144				
			<u>White Collar</u>	<u>Man- gerial</u>	<u>Pro- fessional</u>	
Blue Collar	(33)	4.578	-0.288	-0.799	-3.290***	
White Collar	(36)	4.502		-0.826	-3.452***	
Managerial	(22)	4.253			-2.181*	
Professional	(35)	3.298				

*Indicates significance at the .05 level, one-tailed test.

**Indicates significance at the .01 level, one-tailed test.

***Indicates significance at the .001 level, one-tailed test.

The Kruskal-Wallis technique was applied to test for differences between any two categories, and the Mann-Whitney U statistic was then computed to allocate the specific differences between categories within each of the three attributes. Age and occupational levels were found to be statistically significant at the .01 level, whereas education was statistically significant at the .001 level.³ Location of the differences occurs within the age categories between the "Over 60" range and the groups under 46 years of age. For education, differences exist mainly between persons with and persons without college training. Within the occupational categories, the chief source of significant variation is between "professionals" and all other occupational groups. Also, particularly noteworthy is the fact that for each attribute there is a nearly perfect gradient of mean responses commensurate with the posited relationship. Though all intra-attribute differences are not statistically significant, prejudice is inversely related to education and occupational status and directly related to age with the exception of two slight deviations.

The Selective Exposure Hypothesis

Three sets of items were employed in measuring exposure to the various television programs. For each set of items statistical tests were applied to each of the aforementioned attributes and to the prejudice variable. The classification scheme for the background factors reviewed in the foregoing section was retained, and prejudice scale scores were divided into quartiles based upon the original 168

³The fewer number of observations relative to "occupation" resulted from an inability to classify eighteen women whose husbands were students at the local university and twenty-four women who either failed to respond to the item or whose husbands were retired or unemployed.

respondents with the "first" quartile representing lowest prejudice. In addition, only those persons who said they "had ever seen" the program in question were included in the tests of the second and third item types. The proportion of respondents so classified generally did not differ markedly from one attribute category to another, and without such provision there would merely have been an overabundance of respondents in the "no" and "never watch" cells.

The first variety of data on exposure derived from item number 13, which asked the respondent to circle each of the three programs which she had seen at least once. Dichotomization of the number of programs seen into the nominal categories "none or one" and "two or three" allowed for analysis by the chi-square technique for k independent groups. The specific hypothesis tested was that the proportion of responses in the two categories would be the same for all groups, that is, the same for all age groups, educational groups, and so on.

Table IV shows that no significant differences were found between either quartiles of the variable of central attention--prejudice--or between the different educational and occupational categories. A highly significant difference was detected, however, between age ranges. Younger people appear far more likely to have viewed these programs. Only 6.1 per cent (2/33) of persons under 26 years of age had seen "one or none" of the shows, whereas 56.1 per cent (17/30) of persons over 60 fell in this category. Such a finding is interesting in that one would suspect the existence of this relationship to affect the analysis by prejudice, since these same age categories also differ significantly with respect to their prejudice scores. Apparently, however, there was very little carry-over, and the chi-square test failed to support the

TABLE IV
 NUMBER OF PROGRAMS EVER SEEN BY AGE, EDUCATION
 OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Number of Programs Respondent Has Ever Seen	Age				
	Under 26	26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 60	Over 60
None or One	2	4	7	11	17
Two or Three	31	27	31	25	13
$X^2 = 26.6429$		df = 4		P < 0.0001	

Number of Programs Respondent Has Ever Seen	Education				
	1 - 11 Years	H.S. Graduate	13 - 15 Years	College Graduate	Graduate Work
None or One	8	12	10	6	5
Two or Three	15	36	35	26	15
$X^2 = 2.0534$		df = 4		P < 0.7292	

Number of Programs Respondent Has Ever Seen	Occupation				
	Blue Collar	White Collar	Mana- gerial	Pro- fessional	
None or One	10	8	6	5	
Two or Three	23	28	16	30	
$X^2 = 2.7323$		df = 3		P < 0.5628	

Number of Programs Respondent Has Ever Seen	Prejudice				
	1st Quartile	2nd Quartile	3rd Quartile	4th Quartile	
None or One	6	12	10	13	
Two or Three	36	30	32	29	
$X^2 = 3.7104$		df = 3		P < 0.2943	

selective exposure hypothesis when a composite measure of exposure to all three programs was employed.

A second variety of items estimated exposure to each individual program by asking the respondent if she had seen the program the previous week. The nominal responses "yes" and "no" provided the basis for chi-square tests on differences between the various attribute categories. Tables V, VI, and VII summarize the findings of these tests with respect to the three programs of interest. No significant differences existed. That is, neither prejudice nor age, education, or occupation was related to exposure to these programs when exposure was measured in this explicit but rather rigid manner.

TABLE V
EXPOSURE TO THE "LAST" "MISSION; IMPOSSIBLE" SHOW BY
AGE, EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Attribute		Chi-square	Degrees of Freedom	Probability Less Than
Age	(N=132)	1.7156	4	0.7902
Education	(N=132)	3.0633	4	0.5499
Occupation	(N=102)	7.7377	3	0.0513
Prejudice	(N=132)	0.2419	3	0.9697

TABLE VI

EXPOSURE TO THE "LAST" "I SPY" SHOW BY AGE,
EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Attribute		Chi-square	Degrees of Freedom	Probability Less Than
Age	(N=138)	3.3555	4	0.5026
Education	(N=138)	6.0898	4	0.1922
Occupation	(N=103)	1.3871	3	0.7129
Prejudice	(N=138)	0.3067	3	0.9579

TABLE VII

EXPOSURE TO THE "LAST" "N.Y.P.D." SHOW BY AGE,
EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Attribute		Chi-square	Degree of Freedom	Probability Less Than
Age	(N=78)	5.9090	4	0.7848
Education	(N=78)	7.3024	4	0.1205
Occupation	(N=60)	4.6238	3	0.2007
Prejudice	(N=78)	5.6282	3	0.1303

A somewhat more flexible series of items was employed as a third assessment of the selective exposure hypothesis. In this case, the extent to which respondents watched each of the shows was ascertained by having respondents judge their exposure rates on a five-point "almost always-to-never" continuum. The mean responses to these items relative to attribute categories and the intra-attribute comparisons are shown in Tables VIII through X. A statistically significant relationship was obtained in only one instance--"Mission: Impossible"--with respect to differences among prejudice quartiles, and even this result was not unequivocal in that younger people tended to view the program far more frequently than their more prejudiced elders. Furthermore, when age differences were controlled via two-way analysis of variance (Table XI), statistical significance did not exist either among any two categories for all age groups (as measured by the Friedman X_r^2 test) or for the first versus the fourth quartile within each age group (as measured by the Mann-Whitney U statistic⁴).

One other significant difference was detected relative to "frequency of viewing" these shows. The lowest occupational prestige group--"blue collar"--was found to view "N.Y.P.D." more often than all other occupational groups. In addition, though statistically significant differences were not found, it seems appropriate to note that older and less educated persons also tended to indicate a higher rate of exposure to this program. In other words, the groups that correlate most highly

⁴When the largest sample size is less than 21, the probability of U is obtained directly from tables prepared by Seigel (pp. 271-277). Otherwise, U is transformed to a z score from which the probability level is obtained. See Sidney Seigel, Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (New York, 1956), pp. 116-126.

TABLE VIII

FREQUENCY OF VIEWING "MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE" BY
AGE, EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Response	No of Obs	Mean Re- sponse	Z Scores from the Mann-Whitney U Statistic			
			26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 60	Over 60
AGE**	(132)	2.667				
Under 26	(30)	2.367	-0.190	0.750	1.274	3.529***
26 - 35	(29)	2.172		1.320	1.864*	3.293***
36 - 45	(33)	2.700			0.703	3.246***
46 - 60	(26)	3.000				2.227*
Over 60	(14)	3.643				
EDUCATION	(132)	2.667				
			<u>H.S.</u>	<u>13 -</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>Gradu-</u>
			<u>Graduate</u>	<u>15 Years</u>	<u>Graduate</u>	<u>ate Work</u>
1 - 11 Years	(14)	2.643	0.208	-0.000	0.512	-0.365
H.S. Graduate	(37)	2.703		-0.297	0.551	-0.692
13 - 15 Years	(36)	2.611			0.672	-0.494
College Grad	(29)	2.828				-0.902
Graduate Work	(16)	2.438				
OCCUPATION	(102)	2.647				
			<u>White</u>	<u>Mana-</u>	<u>Pro-</u>	
			<u>Collar</u>	<u>gerial</u>	<u>fessional</u>	
Blue Collar	(25)	2.800	-0.280	-1.373	-0.044	
White Collar	(30)	2.667		-0.951	0.116	
Managerial	(17)	2.294			1.072	
Professional	(30)	2.700				
PREJUDICE*	(132)	2.667				
			<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	
			<u>Quartile</u>	<u>Quartile</u>	<u>Quartile</u>	
1st Quartile	(34)	2.265	0.891	1.601	2.922**	
2nd Quartile	(31)	2.516		0.738	2.080*	
3rd Quartile	(34)	2.735			1.166	
4th Quartile	(33)	3.152				

Footnotes are shown following Table III.

TABLE IX
 FREQUENCY OF VIEWING "I SPY" BY AGE, EDUCATION,
 OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Response Category	No of Obs	Mean Response	Z Scores from the Mann-Whitney U Statistic			
			26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 60	Over 60
AGE	(138)	2.877				
			26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 60	Over 60
Under 26	(32)	2.688	0.214	0.721	1.273	1.531
26 - 35	(28)	2.786		0.314	0.754	1.141
36 - 45	(33)	2.848			0.527	1.052
46 - 60	(27)	3.000				0.589
Over 60	(18)	3.222				
EDUCATION	(138)	2.877				
			H.S. Graduate	13 - 15 Years	College Graduate	Graduate Work
1 - 11 Years	(17)	3.000	0.110	-0.250	-0.981	0.112
H. S. Graduate	(39)	3.000		-0.512	-1.275	0.057
13 - 15 Years	(39)	2.846			-0.871	0.490
College Grad	(27)	2.592				1.073
Graduate Work	(16)	3.000				
OCCUPATION	(103)	2.903				
			White Collar	Managerial	Professional	
Blue Collar	(24)	2.708	0.465	1.063	0.781	
White Collar	(30)	2.900		0.584	0.268	
Managerial	(17)	3.059			-0.427	
Professional	(32)	2.969				
PREJUDICE	(138)	2.877				
			2nd Quartile	3rd Quartile	4th Quartile	
1st Quartile	(38)	2.605	2.007*	1.611	0.509	
2nd Quartile	(34)	3.147		-0.634	-1.265	
3rd Quartile	(34)	3.029			-0.875	
4th Quartile	(32)	2.750				

Footnotes are shown following Table III.

TABLE X
 FREQUENCY OF VIEWING "N.Y.P.D." BY AGE, EDUCATION,
 OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Response Category	No of Obs	Mean Response	Z Scores from the Mann-Whitney U Statistic			
AGE	(78)	2.987				
			<u>26 - 35</u>	<u>36 - 45</u>	<u>46 - 60</u>	<u>Over 60</u>
Under 26	(20)	2.950	0.411	0.503	-0.095	-0.474
26 - 35	(18)	3.111		0.208	-0.324	-0.863
36 - 45	(15)	3.133			-0.372	-0.831
46 - 60	(17)	2.882				-0.209
Over 60	(8)	2.750				
EDUCATION	(78)	2.987				
			<u>H.S. Graduate</u>	<u>13 - 15 Years</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>	<u>Graduate Work</u>
1 - 11 Years	(12)	2.333	1.482	2.028*	1.342	1.431
H.S. Graduate	(23)	2.956		1.371	0.072	-0.000
13 - 15 Years	(22)	3.364			-0.903	-1.095
College Grad	(12)	3.000				-0.000
Graduate Work	(9)	3.000				
OCCUPATION**	(60)	2.900				
			<u>White Collar</u>	<u>Managerial</u>	<u>Professional</u>	
Blue Collar	(18)	2.222	2.013*	2.835**	1.890*	
White Collar	(20)	3.000		2.722**	0.433	
Managerial	(6)	4.167			-1.908*	
Professional	(16)	3.062				
PREJUDICE	(78)	2.987				
			<u>2nd Quartile</u>	<u>3rd Quartile</u>	<u>4th Quartile</u>	
1st Quartile	(20)	3.250	-0.179	-1.002	-1.766*	
2nd Quartile	(21)	3.190		-0.801	-1.591	
3rd Quartile	(19)	2.947			-1.122	
4th Quartile	(18)	2.500				

Footnotes are shown following Table III.

with prejudice appear to watch this particular show most often. Apparently these associations are reflected in the perfect gradient of mean responses among prejudice quartiles which is the inverse of the predicted relationship.

TABLE XI
FREQUENCY OF VIEWING "MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE":
PREJUDICE BY AGE CATEGORIES

Age	Prejudice Quartiles				1 vs. 4
	1	2	3	4	
Under 36	1.85 (N=20)	2.13 (N=15)	2.86 (N=14)	2.50 (N=10)	U = 65 (n.s.)
36 - 45	2.88 (N=8)	2.33 (N=9)	2.40 (N=10)	3.50 (N=6)	U = 21 (n.s.)
Over 45	3.17 (N=6)	3.28 (N=7)	2.90 (N=10)	3.41 (N=17)	U = 40 (n.s.)
$\chi^2_r = 3.40$		df = 3		P < 0.446	

The Selective Perception Hypotheses

Two different predictions were made with respect to respondent perceptions. It was hypothesized that prejudice would be inversely related to (1) program evaluations and to (2) Negro character evaluations.

The first hypothesis was tested in the same manner as "frequency of viewing" was above. Respondents were asked to judge each show on a five-point scale ranging from "one of the best shows on TV" to "one of the worst shows on TV." Data garnered from these ratings was then partitioned into attribute categories for application of the Kruskal-wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests.

Results of these tests relative to each of the three programs can be seen in Tables XII, XIII, and XIV. Several statistically significant relationships were found to exist between the various attributes and the program ratings. In only one instance was prejudice not associated with program rating. Insignificant differences were revealed between prejudice quartiles with respect to how "N.Y.P.D." was judged. In this regard, however, it is not remarkable that the null hypothesis of no difference is more tenable when one again considers the greater popularity of this program among some higher prejudice groups (e.g., "blue collar," and "46 - 60" age range).

While "N.Y.P.D." ratings did not yield support for selective perception, the data on "Mission: Impossible" and "I Spy" did lend qualified support to the hypothesis. When one-way analysis of variance was carried out on ratings of the latter two programs, age, education and prejudice all possessed statistical significance vis-a-vis rating. The association between prejudice and rating, nonetheless, was problematical insofar as the less prejudiced age and educational groups also tended to give the programs a higher rating. Consequently, it was essential to hold these background variables constant through statistical design and reassess the prejudice-rating relationship. Due to the relatively small number of observations, the simultaneous control of

TABLE XII

RATING OF "MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE" BY AGE,
EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Response Category	No of Obs	Mean Response	Z Scores from the Mann-Whitney U Statistic			
AGE***	(147)	2.347				
			<u>26 - 35</u>	<u>36 - 45</u>	<u>46 - 60</u>	<u>Over 60</u>
Under 26	(31)	1.806	1.226	1.971*	2.528**	4.541***
26 - 35	(31)	2.064		0.861	1.509	3.926***
36 - 45	(35)	2.314			0.619	3.235***
46 - 60	(28)	2.428				2.793**
Over 60	(22)	3.454				
EDUCATION*	(147)	2.347				
			<u>H.S. Graduate</u>	<u>13 - 15 Years</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>	<u>Graduate Work</u>
1 - 11 Years	(18)	2.944	-1.486	-1.822*	-2.774**	-1.461
H.S. Graduate	(40)	2.425		-0.291	-2.012*	-0.149
13 - 15 Years	(41)	2.317			-1.933*	0.104
College Grad	(30)	1.933				1.556
Graduate Work	(18)	2.333				
OCCUPATION	(113)	2.283				
			<u>White Collar</u>	<u>Man- gerial</u>	<u>Pro- fessional</u>	
Blue Collar	(30)	2.533	-0.261	-1.649*	-2.272*	
White Collar	(31)	2.452		-1.511	-2.110*	
Managerial	(19)	2.105			-0.482	
Professional	(33)	2.000				
PREJUDICE**	(147)	2.347				
			<u>2nd Quartile</u>	<u>3rd Quartile</u>	<u>4th Quartile</u>	
1st Quartile	(39)	2.102	0.774	1.313	3.078**	
2nd Quartile	(36)	2.167		0.221	2.769**	
3rd Quartile	(37)	2.243			2.869**	
4th Quartile	(35)	2.914				

Footnotes are shown following Table III.

TABLE XIII

RATING OF "I SPY" BY AGE, EDUCATION,
OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Response Category	No of Obs	Mean Response	Z Scores from the Mann-Whitney U Statistic			
			26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 60	Over 60
AGE**	(148)	2.581				
Under 26	(33)	2.061	1.426	1.827*	3.399***	3.427***
26 - 35	(29)	2.483		0.255	1.603	2.068*
36 - 45	(37)	2.594			1.480	1.984*
46 - 60	(30)	2.833				1.076
Over 60	(19)	3.210				
EDUCATION*	(148)	2.581				
			<u>H.S. Graduate</u>	<u>13 - 15 Years</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>	<u>Graduate Work</u>
1 - 11 Years	(19)	3.105	-1.584	-1.984*	-3.161**	-1.890*
H.S. Graduate	(43)	2.674		-0.111	-2.177*	-0.648
13 - 15 Years	(42)	2.595			-2.441**	-0.693
College Grad	(29)	2.138				1.171
Graduate Work	(15)	2.467				
OCCUPATION	(113)	2.593				
			<u>White Collar</u>	<u>Managerial</u>	<u>Professional</u>	
Blue Collar	(30)	2.633	-0.086	0.546	-1.191	
White Collar	(33)	2.636		0.636	-1.030	
Managerial	(19)	2.842			-1.699*	
Professional	(31)	2.355				
PREJUDICE*	(148)	2.581				
			<u>2nd Quartile</u>	<u>3rd Quartile</u>	<u>4th Quartile</u>	
1st Quartile	(39)	2.231	2.086*	1.659*	2.371**	
2nd Quartile	(35)	2.686		-0.730	0.622	
3rd Quartile	(37)	2.540			1.212	
4th Quartile	(37)	2.892				

Footnotes are shown following Table III.

TABLE XIV
 RATING OF "N.Y.P.D." BY AGE, EDUCATION,
 OCCUPATION, AND PREJUDICE

Response Category	No of Obs	Mean Response	Z Scores from the Mann-Whitney U Statistic			
			26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 60	Over 60
AGE*	(112)	2.893				
Under 26	(26)	2.500	1.382	3.040**	0.906	2.055*
26 - 35	(23)	2.870		1.498	-0.328	0.896
36 - 45	(25)	3.240			-1.655*	-0.289
46 - 60	(23)	2.783				1.113
Over 60	(15)	3.200				
EDUCATION	(112)	2.893				
			<u>H.S. Graduate</u>	<u>13 - 15 Years</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>	<u>Graduate Work</u>
1 - 11 Years	(18)	3.000	-1.052	-0.614	-0.900	-0.305
H.S. Graduate	(31)	2.806		0.474	-0.475	0.313
13 - 15 Years	(32)	3.032			-0.808	0.031
College Grad	(20)	2.800				0.556
Graduate Work	(11)	3.000				
OCCUPATION*	(88)	2.886				
			<u>White Collar</u>	<u>Man- gerial</u>	<u>Pro- fessional</u>	
Blue Collar	(28)	2.536	1.701*	2.827**	0.853	
White Collar	(26)	3.000		2.198*	-1.051	
Managerial	(11)	3.636			-2.464**	
Professional	(23)	2.826				
PREJUDICE	(112)	2.893				
			<u>2nd Quartile</u>	<u>3rd Quartile</u>	<u>4th Quartile</u>	
1st Quartile	(33)	2.967	-0.357	-0.430	-0.472	
2nd Quartile	(25)	2.880		-0.010	-0.169	
3rd Quartile	(28)	2.857			-0.171	
4th Quartile	(26)	2.846				

Footnotes are shown following Table III.

these factors unfortunately was not possible. However, the Friedman two-way analysis of variance by ranks was applied separately to each variable, thereby introducing some clarity into the situation.

Results of two-way analysis of variance, as well as of comparisons of the lowest versus the highest prejudice quartiles in each row (or category), are shown in Tables XV through XVIII. Though none of the X_r^2 's are significant, several facts deriving from the statistical analysis are of importance. First of all, the conjectured relationship between prejudice and perception did hold for three categories. Among persons younger than 36 years of age, there was a significant difference between the lowest and highest prejudice groups with respect to both "Mission: Impossible" ($P < .01$) and "I Spy" ($P < .05$) ratings. Also, among persons without college training who rated "Mission: Impossible," the first differed from the fourth quartile at the .01 significance level. Furthermore, even though differences of significant magnitude were not found for all categories, of the twelve comparisons made between low and high prejudice groups, ten were in the predicted direction (based upon average ranks⁵); and the probability of a chance selection of ten favorable relationships out of twelve is only .019.⁶ It is also noteworthy that the number of observations in both of the high prejudice quartiles of the two discrepant comparisons, i.e., the "36 - 45" age range for "Mission: Impossible: and for "I Spy," are very

⁵ Though means are shown in the tables, tests were on the basis of average rank. The mean differences coincide with the average rank differences in every case but one. Among persons with "some college training," the average rank of the first quartile is less than that of the third, even though the means indicate otherwise.

⁶ This value is derived from a table of probabilities associated with the binomial test which can be found in Siegel, p. 250.

TABLE XV

RATING OF "MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE":
PREJUDICE BY AGE CATEGORIES*

Age	Prejudice Quartiles				1 vs. 4
	1	2	3	4	
Under 36	1.57 (N=21)	1.69 (N=16)	2.21 (N=14)	2.64 (N=11)	$z_U = 2.79(P<.01)$
36 - 45	2.64 (N=11)	2.11 (N=9)	2.10 (N=10)	2.40 (N=5)	$U = 26$ (n.s.)
Over 45	2.86 (N=7)	2.91 (N=11)	2.38 (N=13)	3.21 (N=19)	$U = 80.5$ (n.s.)
$\chi^2_r = 3.80$		df = 3		P < 0.342	

TABLE XVI

RATING OF "MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE"
PREJUDICE BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL*

Age	Prejudice Quartiles				1 vs. 4
	1	2	3	4	
No College Training	1.57 (N=7)	2.56 (N=9)	2.37 (N=19)	3.09 (N=23)	$z_U = 2.74(P<.01)$
Some Coll. Training	2.69 (N=13)	1.92 (N=13)	2.27 (N=11)	2.50 (N=4)	$U = 25$ (n.s.)
College Degree	1.89 (N=19)	2.14 (N=14)	1.86 (N=7)	2.62 (N=8)	$U = 50$ (n.s.)
$\chi^2_r = 5.80$		df = 3		P < 0.148	

*All cell values are mean responses on a five-point rating scale.

TABLE XVII
 RATING OF "I SPY": PREJUDICE
 BY AGE CATEGORIES*

Age	Prejudice Quartiles				1 vs. 4
	1	2	3	4	
Under 36	1.79 (N=19)	2.19 (N=16)	2.56 (N=16)	2.73 (N=11)	U = 62.5 (P<.05)
36 - 45	2.73 (N=11)	3.10 (N=10)	2.00 (N=9)	2.43 (N=7)	U = 34 (n.s.)
Over 45	2.56 (N=9)	3.11 (N=9)	2.92 (N=12)	3.16 (N=19)	U = 57.5 (n.s.)
$\chi^2_r = 3.40$		df = 3		P < 0.446	

TABLE XVIII
 RATING OF "I SPY": PREJUDICE
 BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL*

Education	Prejudice Quartiles				1 vs. 4
	1	2	3	4	
No College Training	2.62 (N=8)	3.11 (N=9)	2.47 (N=19)	3.00 (N=26)	$z_U = 0.70$ (n.s.)
Some Coll. Training	2.46 (N=13)	2.62 (N=13)	2.67 (N=12)	2.75 (N=4)	U = 21 (n.s.)
College Degree	1.89 (N=18)	2.46 (N=13)	2.50 (N=6)	2.57 (N=7)	U = 46 (n.s.)
$\chi^2_r = 3.80$		df = 3		P < 0.342	

*All cell values are mean responses on a five-point rating scale.

small--five in one case and seven in the other. Such discordant results thus could perhaps be the product of small sample sizes. To conclude, then, even though there is not a perfect inverse relation between prejudice and program perception for this data, there is nonetheless a consistent and sometimes substantial difference between the lowest and the highest prejudiced persons in the sample.

The second prediction concerning selective perception--that prejudice is inversely related to character evaluations--was tested by use of the Spearman rank correlation coefficient. Scores obtained from the semantic differentials in part II of the questionnaire were ranked and correlated with ranked prejudice scores. Table XIX illustrates the results of this analysis in addition to a comparison of the extreme prejudice quartiles. The findings are not significant statistically, but, again there are certain facets of the data that warrant further consideration. Not surprisingly, the character evaluations are consistent with the program ratings above. Alexander Scott of "I Spy" and Barney of "Mission: Impossible" received slightly more favorable and Jeff Ward slightly less favorable evaluations from the least prejudiced viewers. This would appear to indicate either that these two perceptions vary together or that one perception is affecting the other. Statistical significance points to the primacy of the program ratings, but it is important to note that each character has received a highly auspicious evaluation from both unprejudiced and prejudiced persons. Hence, the lack of significance with respect to selective perception of Negro characters may merely be an artifact of the low discriminatory power of the semantic differentials.

TABLE XIV
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CHARACTER EVALUATION SCORES
AND PREJUDICE SCALE SCORES

Character, Program, Actor	r_s	t	1st vs. 4th Quartile (mean responses)
Alexander Scott "I Spy" (Bill Cosby) (N=120)	0.11	1.23 (n.s.)	1.96 vs. 2.24 (n.s.)
Jeff Ward "N.Y.P.D." (Robert Hooks) (N=74)	-0.05	-0.41 (n.s.)	2.53 vs. 2.19 (n.s.)
Barney "Mission: Impossible" (Greg Morris) (N=107)	0.10	1.01 (n.s.)	1.96 vs. 2.26 (n.s.)

Summary of the Results

In the course of this investigation statistical analysis was applied to empirical data in testing three hypotheses. Several statistical techniques were utilized but the results of their application have often been rather ambiguous. To aid the reader in following the reasoning to this point in the thesis, a summary of each hypothesis, the statistical tests used in analyzing it, and the results of those tests is presented below.

I. Hypothesis

The greater the Negro prejudice of viewers, the less the tendency to expose themselves to television programs with Negro stars,

Statistical Tests

Chi-square test for k independent samples; Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance; Friedman two-way analysis of variance by ranks.

Results

No significant differences were detected between high and low prejudiced viewers when exposure was measured by (1) the number of programs viewers had ever seen and by (2) whether a viewer had seen each program the previous week. When respondents were asked to judge their frequency of viewing each program, one-way classification analysis revealed a relationship between prejudice and exposure to "Mission; Impossible" in the predicted direction. However, when age groups were held constant through two-way analysis of variance, this relationship did not hold. Hence, statistical tests indicated a failure to uphold the research hypothesis.

II. Hypothesis

Perceptions of television programs with Negro stars tend to conform to the attitudinal predispositions of the viewer.

Statistical Tests

Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance; Friedman two-way analysis of variance by ranks; Mann-Whitney U test.

Results

One-way analysis of variance showed that higher prejudiced persons attached a less favorable rating to "Mission: Impossible" and to "I Spy" than did persons of low prejudice. Nonetheless, the relationship was obscured by the fact that younger and better educated persons also tended to rate these programs high. When

the background factors were separately controlled for, significance was obtained for three attribute categories. Among persons under 36 years of age the high and low prejudice quartiles were substantially different for both "Mission: Impossible" and "I Spy." Among persons with no college training the first differed from the fourth quartile at a probability level of .01. Furthermore, in ten out of twelve comparisons made between the lowest and highest prejudice groups, the difference was in the predicted direction. On the other hand, a significant difference was not obtained between prejudice quartiles for the "N.Y.P.D." rating. Thus, statistical analysis yields qualified support for the research hypothesis with respect to two of the programs--"Mission: Impossible" and "I Spy"--but fails to reject the null hypothesis with respect to the third--"N.Y.P.D."

III. Hypothesis

Perceptions of Negroes on television shows tend to conform to the attitudinal predispositions of the viewer.

Statistical Tests

Spearman rank correlation coefficient; Mann-Whitney U test.

Results

Even when the extreme prejudice groups were compared, no significant difference was found relative to Negro character evaluations. Hence, the data fail to reject the null hypothesis of no difference.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Limitations

Before discussing the findings presented in the previous chapter, they should be placed in the context of the number of qualifications and limitations which apply to this study. Several possible sources of invalidity have already been mentioned and a few of these will be reiterated. For the most part, the major problems considered here can be subsumed under the headings "adequacy of the instrument" and "generalizability of the findings."

With respect to the first problem, certain parts of the questionnaire displayed greater facility than did others. The scale measuring prejudice against Negroes indicated high reliability and held up under the rigor of several validity checks. The one noticeable weakness concerned the unidirectionality of the items, which could possibly have caused elicitation of the acquiescence response set and/or have enhanced the split-half reliability coefficient. Apparently much less successful were the semantic differentials used in measuring character evaluations. A very narrow range of scores was obtained for all characters and virtually every character description was favorable. It is impossible to tell, of course, whether respondents were reporting their "true" feelings or if this were indicative of the low discriminatory power of the measuring device. The latter explanation, however, seems the more

feasible.

Second, possible generalizations are limited for several reasons. The sample size is small and unrepresentative of any particular population. Also, in conjunction with this inadequacy, an overview of the sample attributes studied indicates imbalances in the direction of the higher occupational status and the better educated groups. This was due, in part, to the lower refusal rate and better receptiveness and accessibility of persons possessing these traits. Hence, this study suffered from a selective-return bias which might have affected the results.

One other limitation pertinent to sample characteristics has to do with the intentional exclusion of men from the study. Though this was justified on several grounds, a comparison by sex would have increased the generalizing power of the findings.

A third problem related to the statistical analysis resulted from the insufficient number of observations found in some cells when two-way analysis of variance was applied to the data. As mentioned previously, this may have played a part in producing certain discrepant findings. Because two extraneous variables--age and education--tended to confound the results on program perception, there was actually a need for a three-way classification scheme. Again, however, too few observations precluded application of this statistical design.

Still another limitation, imposed upon this study by the present state of the Negro in the media, should be mentioned. The television programs which were analyzed may all be classed as "suspense-mysteries." Thus, a question must be raised concerning how these processes would operate with respect to the presence of a Negro on some other types of programs, e.g., situation comedies, soap operas, westerns, or variety

shows. The study by Glick and Levy¹ has convincingly demonstrated that each of these program types evokes different reactions and has its own peculiar audience. To generalize, therefore, to all television fare would be unwarranted.

Finally, in connection with the latter caveat, the sample deviates in salient parameters from the universe of television viewers. The Home Testing Institute studies of television audience composition have shown a preference among the top income and occupational groups for two of the programs studied--"Mission: Impossible" and "I Spy."² Hence, the preponderance in the present study of viewers in these particular groups could very well have influenced the findings. For this reason, generalizations to all television audiences are indeed hazardous.

Interpretations and Conclusions

Due to the several limitations cited above, any statements made about findings are necessarily highly provisional. This study is perhaps best classified as "exploratory." Few of the questions initially raised have been adequately answered; however, several areas of possible inquiry have been uncovered.

The first problem to which attention was directed was concerned with how prejudicial attitudes affected exposure to television programs with Negro stars. Three different indices of exposure failed to support the hypothesis of selective exposure on the basis of prejudice against

¹Ira O. Glick and Sidney J. Levy, Living with Television (Chicago, 1962).

²"Movies Still Tops in Prime Time TV," Media/Scope, February, 1968, p. 59; "Farm and Retired Families are Atypical TV Viewers," Media/Scope, May, 1968, p. 69.

Negroes, although support was found for audience self-selection on other bases. Specifically, this study indicates a stronger preference among younger and more educated viewers for "I Spy" and "Mission: Impossible" than for "N.Y.P.D." Also, there appeared to be a tendency for "blue collar" workers to prefer the latter program to the other two. There are several implications of these findings. First, the situation creating audience self-selection is obviously rather complex. Audience composition bias has been demonstrated in numerous studies, but the underlying causes of it are often ambiguous. Something about the past experiences or psychological makeup of viewers seems to dispose them to watch certain kinds of programs. With respect to programs with Negro stars, this study tends to imply that prejudice is not a salient attitude affecting exposure. These findings also indicate the importance of holding constant pertinent social characteristics when looking at specific attitudes. The greater the number of plausible rival hypotheses,³ the less conclusive are the findings and the less validly interpretable is the comparison one wishes to interpret. Whenever one is measuring attitudes, especially attitudes with a high affective quality, background factors will act as alternative predictors, i.e., as rival hypotheses.

Incorporating a suggestion put forth by Sears and Freedman,⁴ this investigation sought to discover which of the two processes--selective exposure or selective perception--is the primary mechanism by which

³For this concept as well as several others pertinent to the methodology, the author acknowledges his debt to Webb and his associates. Eugene J. Webb et al., Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Behavioral Sciences (Chicago, 1966).

⁴David O. Sears and Jonathan L. Freedman, "Selective Exposure to Information: A Critical Review," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXXI (1967), p. 213.

people resist influence. The findings would appear to support Sears and Freedman's contention that selective perception seems more important. The failure, however, to find support for this process relative to both program and character evaluations and the qualified nature of the findings on program ratings make this conclusion very tentative. Particularly puzzling is the fact that significant differences were not detected with respect to how extreme prejudice groups perceive characters but were detected with respect to how these same groups perceive the shows. The possibility has already been suggested that the lack of significance may have been an artifact of the measuring device. But assuming this is not in fact the case, what other explanations can be offered? Perhaps prejudice per se bears no relationship to how persons respond to the shows and to the characters in them. It has been argued by some that prejudice is an aspect of a general personality type.⁵ If this is so, then these findings may be reflecting the particular preferences of persons of two divergent personality "syndromes," who may like or dislike these programs for reasons quite apart from the presence of a Negro. Another explanation involves the different degrees of awareness respondents may have had of what the questionnaire items were testing. It is entirely possible that respondents, hesitant about expressing their prejudices and knowing that the characters were Negroes, may not have indicated their "true" feelings. On the other hand, the program ratings were a more subtle measure of perception. Finally, it is also conceivable that prejudiced persons perceive the characters as possessing desirable traits. At the same time, however, they disapprove of what

⁵See, for example, Theodor W. Adorno et al., The Authoritarian Personality (New York, 1950).

they sense to be a false portrayal of Negroes and hence devalue the program.

This study did not seek an answer as to what causes selective perception. The most satisfactory explanations to date derive from cognitive dissonance theory.⁶ The general line of reasoning in this theory is that people tend to be consistent in their behavior, attitudes, opinions, and the like. When in the presence of an inconsistency (dissonance), a person experiences psychological discomfort which will motivate him to try to reduce it. In the context of this investigation, then, the exposure of a highly prejudiced person to a television program with a Negro star will presumably produce dissonance. That is, it would if it were not for that person's ability to render consistency to the situation through various psychological mechanisms. Thus, this prejudiced person may watch the show "because nothing else any good is on at the time," and he may give the program a low rating because this is consistent with his attitudinal predispositions.

Aside from the above mentioned theoretical implications, this study may have some relevance for the use of the media as an instrument of social change. One apparent means of affecting prejudice is to alter the normative system which supports the stereotypes upon which it is based. Indications are that much progress has been made recently toward enhancing the image of the Negro in the media.⁷ Whether such changes will have much impact on "audiences," however, is partially dependent

⁶Leon Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Stanford, Calif., 1957).

⁷Cf., Royal D. Colle, "Color on TV," The Reporter, November 30, 1967, p. 23; "The Race Race," Newsweek, July 15, 1968, pp. 74-75.

upon the extent to which members can effectively refute arguments counter to their pre-existing attitudes. Past studies have demonstrated that persons often accomplish this by selectively exposing themselves to media and by selectively perceiving the communications transmitted. The tentative conclusion of this study is that it is selective perception which is the more salient process for resisting influence.

Because of the many deficiencies in the research design, the findings of this study are inconclusive. Consequently, certain recommendations regarding methodology are offered to future investigators in this area. To deal with the complex relationship between communication and audience, more intricate measures of exposure and perception should be employed. Also, future studies should obtain a measure of relevant attitudes prior to the transmission of the communication in question. This would make less doubtful the "predisposition" classification and would make the study more dynamic by allowing for a direct assessment of impact. Finally, the representativeness and adequacy of one's sample would appear to be a crucial consideration.

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APPENDIX

This questionnaire was prepared by the Broadcasting Research Committee (BRC) in order to find out the opinions of television viewers regarding certain television shows and personalities. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in filling it out. It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

At the beginning of each part of the questionnaire there are brief instructions that explain how to fill out that part. Please answer all of the questions.

Your answers to all items will be kept confidential. Please do not sign your name on the questionnaire. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

PART I Background Information

Instructions: Unless you are given other directions, please circle the number of the most appropriate answer to each question.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What is your marital status? | 4. Circle highest year of school you have completed: |
| 1 single | 1 2 3 4 elementary |
| 2 married | 5 6 7 8 |
| 3 widowed | 9 10 11 12 high school or trade school |
| 4 divorced | 13 14 15 16 college or university |
| 5 separated | 17 18 19 20+ post-graduate |
| 2. How many children do you have? | 5. Are you employed? |
| 0 none | 0 no |
| 1 one | 1 yes, part-time |
| 2 two | 2 yes, full-time |
| 3 three | |
| 4 four | 6. If you are employed, what do you do? |
| 5 five or more | _____ |
| | _____ |
| 3. What was your age at your last birthday? | _____ |
| _____ Years | |

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7. What is your husband's main occupation? (What does he do for a living?) Be specific.
- _____
- _____
- _____
8. Which category comes closest to representing your total family income?
- 1 Under \$3,000
- 2 \$3,000-5,999
- 3 \$6,000-8,999
- 4 \$9,000-11,999
- 5 \$12,000-14,999
- 6 \$15,000 or more
9. How many television sets do you have?
- _____ (write number)
10. Do you have a color set?
- 0 yes
- 1 no
11. About how many hours a day do you watch TV? (For example, if you think yesterday was an average day, put how many hours you watched TV yesterday.)
- _____ (write number)
12. Circle each hour you would be likely to see some television:
- 1 Sunday evening 7-8 P.M.
- 2 Sunday evening 8-9 P.M.
- 3 Sunday evening 9-10 P.M.
- 4 Monday evening 7-8 P.M.
- 5 Monday evening 8-9 P.M.
- 6 Monday evening 9-10 P.M.
- 7 Tuesday evening 7-8 P.M.
- 8 Tuesday evening 8-9 P.M.
- 9 Tuesday evening 9-10 P.M.
13. Circle each of the following television programs which you have seen at least once:
- 1 "Mission Impossible"
- 2 "I Spy"
- 3 "N.Y.P.D."
14. Did you watch "Mission Impossible" last Sunday night?
- 0 yes
- 1 no
15. About how often do you watch "Mission Impossible"? (Circle the most appropriate answer.)
- 1 almost always
- 2 frequently
- 3 occasionally
- 4 rarely
- 5 never

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16. How do you rate the television program "Mission Impossible"?
- 1 one of the best shows on TV
 - 2 above average show
 - 3 average show
 - 4 below average show
 - 5 one of the worst shows on TV
17. Did you watch "I Spy" last Monday night?
- 0 yes
 - 1 no
18. About how often do you watch "I Spy"?
- 1 almost always
 - 2 frequently
 - 3 occasionally
 - 4 rarely
 - 5 never
19. How do you rate "I Spy"?
- 1 one of the best shows on TV
 - 2 above average show
 - 3 average show
 - 4 below average show
 - 5 one of the worst shows on TV
20. Did you watch "N.Y.P.D." last Tuesday night?
- 0 yes
 - 1 no
21. About how often do you watch "N.Y.P.D."?
- 1 almost always
 - 2 frequently
 - 3 occasionally
 - 4 rarely
 - 5 never
22. How do you rate "N.Y.P.D."?
- 1 one of the best shows on TV
 - 2 above average show
 - 3 average show
 - 4 below average show
 - 5 one of the worst shows on TV

PART II Television Characters

Instructions: You are asked to describe each of five TV characters on a list of scales like the following:

good :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: bad.

If you think both words apply equally, mark an X in the middle:

good :---:---:---: X :---:---:---: bad.

If you think one word applies a little, mark an X here:

good :---:---:---: X :---:---: bad.

If you think one word applies pretty much, mark an X here:

good :---:---:---: X :---:---: bad.

If you think one word is extremely characteristic, mark an X here:

good :---:---:---:---:---: X :---:---: bad.

IMPORTANT:

- (1) Be sure to mark an X on every scale--do not omit any.
 (2) Never put more than one X on a single scale.

1. Describe Alexander Scott, or "Scotty," (played by Bill Cosby), of the NBC series "I Spy."

indifferent :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: warmhearted

smart :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: dumb

friendly :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: unfriendly

pleasant :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: unpleasant

sloppy :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: neat

brave :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: cowardly

irresponsible :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: responsible

lazy :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: hard-working

insincere :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: sincere

smart aleck :---:---:---:---:---:---:---: funny

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2. Describe "Al" Mundy, the thief, (played by Robert Wagner), of the ABC series "It Takes a Thief."

indifferent :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: warmhearted
 smart :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: dumb
 friendly :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: unfriendly
 pleasant :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: unpleasant
 sloppy :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: neat
 brave :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: cowardly
 irresponsible :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: responsible
 lazy :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: hard-working
 insincere :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: sincere
 moral :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: immoral

3. Describe Jeff Ward, one of the two police detectives, (played by Robert Hooks), of the ABC series "N.Y.P.D.."

indifferent :—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—: warmhearted
 smart :—:—:—:—:~:~:~:~:~:~: dumb
 friendly :—:—:—:~:~:~:~:~:~: unfriendly
 pleasant :—:~:~:~:~:~:~:~:~: unpleasant
 sloppy :—:~:~:~:~:~:~:~:~: neat
 brave :—:~:~:~:~:~:~:~:~: cowardly
 irresponsible :—:~:~:~:~:~:~:~:~: responsible
 lazy :—:~:~:~:~:~:~:~:~: hard-working
 insincere :—:~:~:~:~:~:~:~:~: sincere
 moral :—:~:~:~:~:~:~:~:~: immoral

4. Describe Kelly Robinson, (played by Robert Culp), of the NBC series "I Spy."

indifferent :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: warmhearted
 smart :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: dumb
 friendly :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: unfriendly
 pleasant :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: unpleasant
 sloppy :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: neat
 brave :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: cowardly
 irresponsible :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: responsible
 lazy :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: hard-working
 insincere :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: sincere
 smart aleck :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: funny

5. Describe Barney, the electronics technician of the Impossible Missions force, (played by Greg Morris), of the CBS series "Mission: Impossible."

indifferent :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: warmhearted
 smart :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: dumb
 friendly :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: unfriendly
 pleasant :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: unpleasant
 sloppy :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: neat
 brave :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: cowardly
 irresponsible :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: responsible
 lazy :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: hard-working
 insincere :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: sincere
 moral :---:---:---:---:---:---:---:---: immoral

PART III

Instructions: In this part you will read fourteen different statements. For each statement, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with it by circling one answer code. The answer codes are defined as follows:

DV means "Disagree Very Much"

DP means "Disagree Pretty Much"

DL means "Disagree a Little"

AL means "Agree a Little"

AP means "Agree Pretty Much"

AV means "Agree Very Much"

Remember, circle only one answer code.

Disagree.....	Agree
---------------	-------

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. A large part of the problems facing Negroes today are caused by Negroes themselves..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 2. The lower-class Negro is to blame for a lot of anti-Negro prejudice..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 3. Whites and Negroes can get along on jobs until too many Negroes try to push themselves in..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 4. One big reason why racial prejudice is still so strong is that Negroes offend people by being so sensitive about racial matters..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 5. One important reason why Negroes are discriminated against in housing is that they don't keep up the property... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 6. One reason why racial prejudice still exists today is the fact that many Negroes are dirty, loud, and generally offensive in their ways..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 7. One trouble with Negroes is that they are even more jealous of each other's success than are whites..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 8. Too many Negroes have abused the privilege of attending sports events by being rowdy, noisy, and cheering only for the colored ballplayers..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |

Disagree.....Agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 9. Segregation will never end unless the average colored person becomes better educated and better mannered..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 10. Colored people can hardly be expected to gain social equality until many more of them exert some effort to better themselves and live more decently..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 11. With all of the drinking, rioting, and other immoral acts of some Negroes, white people are almost justified for being prejudiced..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 12. Too many Negroes, when they get a little money, spend it all on whiskey, flashy cars, or expensive clothes..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 13. A great many Negroes become loud-mouthed, overbearing, and disagreeable when given position of responsibility and authority..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |
| 14. Negroes would solve many of their problems if so many of them were not irresponsible, lazy, and ignorant..... | DV | DP | DL | AL | AP | AV |

VITA

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