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The Triangle of Minority Ownership, Employment and Content:
A Review of Studies of Minority Ownership and Diversity¹

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Abstract

Diversity has been a goal of U.S. communications policy. Yet, the FCC's diversity and minority preference policies governing broadcast ownership have been challenged due to doubts concerning the assumed nexus among minority ownership, a diverse workforce and content provided to the community of owner, the *triangle*. Acknowledging the lack of consensus regarding the existence of nexus, in order to contribute to the ongoing policy debate, this paper reviews previous studies of the triangle, and presents conclusions from empirical evidence accumulated so far. A review of previous studies suggests some level of support for the existence of the nexuses, but it remains unclear whether being a minority owner influences the nature of workforce and programming content. Building on previous studies, this paper suggests future studies can investigate owners/managers, content and audience to inform how they interact in a market, and to potentially establish possible causal inferences of ownership, employment and content.

Key words: media diversity, minority ownership, workforce diversity, minority content

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Diversity has long been a crucial goal of U.S. communications policy (Horwitz, 2005; Napoli, 1999). The importance of diversity in the communications field is based on the metaphor of an “open marketplace of ideas,” meaning that a media environment with divergent views available is desirable for a healthy democracy (Neuman, 2010). In fact, it is a right of the public, the audience, to receive a diversity of views and information over the airwaves³. This right was reiterated by Justice Black’s emphasis on “the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources” for the sake of public welfare in regard to the First Amendment (*Associated Press v. U.S.*, 1945).⁴ Not only is promoting a diversity of views and information an important First Amendment value, it is also a paramount governmental objective. This objective can even be used to justify certain FCC (Federal Communications Commission) policies if they are designed and implemented to promote a diversity of views and information (*Metro Broadcasting Inc. v. FCC*, 1990).

The FCC adopted minority preference policies⁵ such as the distress sale policy in the 1970s to support a diversity of views and information. These minority preference policies essentially promoted minority ownership and employment in broadcast stations. They emerged from a reform movement in the 1960s, especially the public interest standard, which was valued in the Communications Act of 1934. The FCC’s minority preference policies were also in part triggered by societal realization of the serious underrepresentation of minorities in broadcast station ownership (Austin, 2011). This in turn was thought to contribute to insufficient diversity of views and information, which was disadvantageous, not only for minority audiences, but also for general audiences, the public.

However, in the 1980s, the FCC’s minority preference policies started to be challenged in Court due to doubts concerning the assumed nexus among minority ownership, employment and content, or the *triangle* (see figure 1 for graphical

³ A diversity of views and information was also sometimes called “broadcast diversity.” *Metro Broadcasting Inc. v. FCC*, 497 U.S. 547 (1990).

⁴ “(The First) Amendment rests on the assumption that the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to the welfare of the public, that a free press is a condition of a free society.” *Associated Press v. U. S.*, 326 U.S. 1 (1945).

⁵ Examples include considering minority ownership and participation in management in comparative hearings (1973), a minority tax certificate program and a distress sale program (1978) (Austin, 2011).

representation of the triangle). These doubts had arisen because the FCC designed and executed a structural regulation governing broadcast ownership (Baker, 2007; Einstein, 2004) and employment, hoping to promote a diversity of views and information. The FCC's choice of structural regulation was understandable considering that it could not directly regulate content due to the anticensorship constraints of the First Amendment. However, if there were no associations, let alone causal relations among minority ownership, employment and content, the policies governing broadcast ownership and employment might not be justified.

Indeed, concerns have been raised regarding the triangle, the assumed nexus among minority ownership, employment and content. For example, in *Metro Broadcasting Inc. v. FCC* (1990) one of the most challenging arguments raised by Justice O'Connor⁶ revolved around whether there was an association between racial identities of owners and content, viewpoints or programming. The FCC's minority preference policies in employment in broadcast stations were eventually discarded in *Lutheran Church v. FCC* (1998) and *Md/dc/de Broadcasters Associations, et al., Petitioners v. FCC* (2000).⁷

The FCC Diversity Order, which promotes diversification of broadcast ownership and thus, can be seen as another minority preference policy, is still being challenged (*Prometheus Radio Project v. FCC*, 2004, 2011). Arguments challenging the policy revolve around the existence of the triangle, the nexus among minority ownership, employment and content; nevertheless, there is still no consensus among scholars and policymakers whether such a nexus actually exists, let alone a consensus regarding what scholars and policymakers can conclude from empirical evidence accumulated so far about the associations.

Thus, in order to gain a better understanding of the triangle of minority ownership, employment and content, this review paper explores previous studies on the issue of media ownership, which were either funded by the FCC or recognized by the courts.⁸ Approximately one hundred empirical studies were identified, and a total of

⁶ One other significant argument involved the use of racial classifications in policies.

⁷ For the full discussion of the cases, see *Lutheran Church v. FCC*, No. 99-1116 (1998) and *Md/dc/de Broadcasters Associations, et al., Petitioners v. FCC*, 236 F.3d 13 (2000).

⁸ These studies include the 2010 Media Ownership Studies as a part of 2010 quadrennial media ownership proceedings, the Media Ownership 2006 Research Studies as a part of the FCC's comprehensive review of its broadcast ownership policies, 2003-2006 Additional Materials, the studies presented in the 2000 Policy

forty-two of studies relevant to the triangle (see figure 2 for the chronological presentation of the reviewed studies) were individually read and reviewed. By reviewing these studies, this study aims (a) to tabulate the findings regarding the nexus among ownership, employment and content,⁹ (b) to assess the general strengths and weaknesses of the studies, and (c) to offer suggestions for future analyses.

In the following section, studies conducted on each side of the triangle are reviewed separately, and suggestions for future research are made. Then, further suggestions for future research on all three aspects of the triangle of minority ownership, employment and content, are discussed. Throughout this review, this paper aims to make a meaningful contribution to the debates around the FCC's minority preference policies, and more broadly, its diversity policies. It is hoped that this paper may be useful by providing empirical evidence regarding the triangle in the debates as well as in directing future research to further enlighten the FCC's policy design.

A Review of the Literature on the Triangle

Studies of the Nexus between Minority Ownership and Employment

Since the 1980's, a number of studies listed in table 1 (Bachen, Hammond, & Mason, 2000; Fife, 1986; Honig, 1983; NAB, 1986; Schement & Singleton, 1981; Turner, 2007) have repeatedly found a nexus between ownership and employment of minorities and females in radio and TV services. These studies (a) collected broadcast industry data by government agencies such as NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) and the FCC, the NAB (National Association of Broadcasters) and BIA, (b) carried out surveys of minority-owned stations, or (c) content-analyzed the frequency of minority appearance in news staff positions including reporters and anchors adopting different quantitative methods.

Forum On Market Entry Barriers Faced by Small Minority and Women Owned Businesses In the Communications Industry, and the studies recognized in the Metro Broadcasting, Inc. v. the FCC case (1990).

⁹ The findings of each study are summarized in tables 1, 2, 3-1 and 3-2 in terms of whether there appeared to be a nexus, who conducted the study, what data were used, what methodology was adopted – whether it was quantitative or qualitative, and furthermore, what specific method was used –, and what service(s) the study covered.

Minority-owned stations tended to have minority news and public affairs staff at higher rates than white-owned stations (Bachen, et al., 2000), and to be those stations with a female general manager as well as a female CEO or president (Turner, 2007). Also, female-owned stations tended to be those with a minority CEO or president as well as those with a female general manager at higher rates than white-owned stations (Turner, 2007).

Even among stations broadcasting minority content, the difference in minority or female employment between minority-owned stations and white-owned stations seemed to exist. Honig (1983) showed that even among black-formatted radio stations, black-owned stations tended to hire blacks not only as top jobs such as officials and managers, professionals, and salespersons but also as any fulltime employee at higher rates than white-owned stations. Schement and Singleton (1981) demonstrated that even among primary Spanish language radio stations, Latino-owned stations tended to have a majority of Latinos as managers at higher rates than white-owned stations. Furthermore, Schement and Singleton (1981) showed that Latinos employed in white-owned Spanish language stations were in less influential positions than white employees, such as those requiring fluency in Spanish or scarce technical skills.

According to Fife (1986), even among stations in the same market containing substantial minority populations, there appeared to be a difference in minority appearance in news staff positions between minority-owned stations and white-owned stations.

Analysis of studies of the nexus between minority ownership and employment.

Regarding methods, the studies listed in table 1 demonstrated statistically significant differences in employment between minority or women-owned stations and white-owned stations except for the Schement and Singleton (1981) study. However, it is notable that statistically significant differences were found mostly in the radio service, not in TV, except for the Fife (1986) study, while other services such as newspaper or newer media were not included in their analysis.

The studies listed in table 1 adopted rather simple statistical tests such as chi-square and t-test, and even descriptive statistics in the case of Schement and Singleton

(1981) and NAB (1986). Thus, there may still be third factors that could have explained the difference in minority or female employment between minority-owned stations and white-owned stations or between female-owned stations and white-owned stations. Nevertheless, as stated earlier in 2.1., the Honig (1983), Schement and Singleton (1981) research suggested ruling out minority content, and Fife (1986) suggested ruling out market characteristics as potential third factors.¹⁰

It is possible that content serves as a third factor linking minority ownership and employment; for example minority-owned stations air minority content more frequently than white-owned stations, which could explain minority-owned stations' higher rates of having minority employees than white-owned stations. However, Honig (1983) and Schement and Singleton (1981) demonstrated the possibility of ruling out content such as black and Spanish language programming as a third factor; it appeared that even among black-formatted radio stations and primary Spanish language radio stations, minority-owned stations tended to hire minorities at higher rates than white-owned stations.

Also, market characteristics such as minority population ratio to the total population may serve as a third factor connecting minority ownership and employment; for instance, minority-owned stations more frequently than white-owned stations are located in markets with large minority population, which explains minority-owned stations' higher rates of having minority employees than white-owned stations. However, Fife (1986) showed that even among stations in the same market, minorities appeared in news staff positions in minority-owned stations at higher rates than white-owned stations.

Regarding data, the (a) set of studies analyzed broadcast industry data by the NTIA or the FCC while (b) Bachen, et al. (2000) collected a survey data, and (c) Fife (1986) executed a content analysis, all of which suffer from their own weaknesses. Regarding the (a) set of studies, the broadcast industry data were rather unsystematically collected every year, and most studies tried cross-checking of the data. Regarding the (b) study, collecting ownership and employment data by surveys does not seem highly reliable because regarding employment, the respondents might provide answers that were false or respondents were simply unaware of their exact situation. Regarding the (c) study, it was meaningful that Fife (1986) demonstrated that minority appearance in

¹⁰ Also, no causal relation between ownership and employment can be drawn based on these results.

positions such as anchors and reporters during newscasts was related to minority ownership. However, due to the laboriousness of content analysis, the Fife (1986) study just covered four local markets, and seemed to be limited in its scope.

Third, in the studies listed in table 1, there is little exploratory effort to examine what leads to the difference in employment between minority or female-owned stations and white-owned stations.

Suggestions for future research on the nexus between minority ownership and employment.

To have a better picture regarding the nexus between ownership and employment, it might be beneficial to take into account the following three suggestions for future research. First, a reliable dataset can be established to include not only ownership and employment information, but also some third factors that might explain the nexus between minority ownership and employment. It would then be possible to conduct more statistically solid analyses with a reliable dataset, and rule out the possible existence of third factors in explaining the nexus between ownership and employment. Furthermore, if such a dataset can be systematically collected every year, a longitudinal analysis can be carried out to demonstrate the causal direction of ownership and employment – whether minority owners bring about the decision to hire more minority managers and staffs or whether a third factor, such as the need for content tailored toward minority communities leads to both minority ownership and employment.

To derive the possible factors to be included in the dataset, it might be helpful to explore the reasons why minority and female-owned stations tended to hire more minorities and females. Research can be conducted to study the recruitment process of broadcast stations. Such studies could include conducting interviews with owners regarding why they decide to hire certain people, as well as with managers whether certain recruitment philosophy or criteria are delivered from the owners, and examine documents delineating such recruitment criteria. Also, interviews could be carried out with employees regarding why they think they were hired in their stations.

It would be beneficial to take into account differences in jobs within a station in the analysis to understand the nexus between ownership and employment; whether the

level or rank of jobs and tasks of jobs such as management and production (Schement and Singleton, 1981) or on-air jobs (Fife, 1986) are relevant in explaining the nexus.

Studies of the Nexus between Minority Employment and Content

The studies of the nexus between minority employment and content are listed in table 2. Using quantitative methods, Honig (1983) and Bachen, et al. (2000) showed a nexus between employment and content. Analyzing the 1980 broadcast industry data by the FCC, Honig (1983) showed that radio stations airing black radio programming tended to hire blacks at higher proportions than radio stations without black programming in the same market. In 2000, Bachen, et al. (2000) telephone-interviewed news and public affairs programming directors, and found a nexus between ethnic composition of newsroom staffs and the level of programming diversity both in the services of radio and TV.

Analysis of the studies of the nexus between minority employment and content.

Without a longitudinal analysis, the causal direction between employment and content remains unclear. There are two possibilities; (1) minority employees were involved in the station's decision making to air programming to serve minorities, or (2) it was noted that certain minority communities were not being served, and minorities were hired in a station to provide programming tailored toward minorities (Honig, 1983). Honig (1983) illustrated these possibilities; however, back in the 1980's the FCC imposed Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements, and Honig put more weight on the first possibility that minority employees were hired through EEO requirements, and they subsequently contributed to the production of programming serving minorities.

Bachen, et al. (2000) conducted a regression analysis and showed that the ratio of minority staffs in a station's news and public affairs team was statistically significantly related to programming diversity even when factors such as owner race, owner involvement, station revenue and ownership structure were controlled for. Nevertheless, since Bachen, et al. (2000) relied on survey data, they operationally defined programming

diversity as owners and managers' expressed intentions to serve minority communities. Though Bachen, et al. (2000) demonstrated the nexus between ownership and programming diversity, it is still possible that what their stations actually broadcasted was different from what they said they intended to air.

Suggestions for future research on the nexus between minority employment and content.

First of all, regarding the nexus between employment and content, there is no recent study. It would be beneficial to check the nexus using up-to-date data.

To examine the causal direction between employment and content, it would be beneficial to carry out the following two studies. First, it would be of interest to examine minority managers and employees' involvement in decision making in programming content. This could involve interviewing managers, programming producers and other staffs, and analyzing internal documents. Since only a small number of stations can be covered, care needs to be taken in sampling stations so that the analysis would be generalizable beyond the examined stations' markets. Second, more fundamentally, a longitudinal analysis can be conducted to determine the causal direction between employment and content. To run that analysis, employment information of each broadcast station needs to be systematically collected for more than one year, and more reliable ways to measure content need to be devised.¹¹

Studies of the Nexus between Minority Ownership and Content

Since the 1980's, the nexus between minority ownership and content has repeatedly been found (Bachen, et al., 2000; Crawford, 2007; CRS, 1988; Fife, 1986; Ivy Planning Group LLC, 2000; Jeter, 1981; Turner, 2007; Siegelman & Waldfogel, 2001; Spitzer, 1990; Waldfogel, 2011) while it was not found in a few other cases (Erb, 2011; Rennhoff & Wilbur, 2011; Schement & Singleton, 1981; Stroup, 2007).

Listed in table 3-1 are the four sets of studies which found a nexus between minority ownership and content targeted to minority communities based on various

¹¹ To devise more reliable ways to measure content tailored toward minority communities, it might be helpful to conduct exploratory studies of audience and content analyses. More are discussed in the following section, "The Nexus between Ownership and Content."

analyses including (a) analysis of broadcast industry data, (b) analysis of surveys and interviews of broadcast owners and managers, (c) content analysis, and (d) economic modeling.¹²

In examining the nexus, the (a) set of studies analyzed broadcast industry data using statistical tests such as regression (Crawford, 2007; Siegelman & Waldfogel, 2001; Waldfogel, 2011) or t-test (Turner, 2007), and showed that minority-owned stations tended to air more programming whose formats were targeted to minorities than white-owned stations. These studies relied on programming formats such as Spanish-language, urban, jazz, and religious (Siegelman & Waldfogel, 2001; Waldfogel, 2011).

While difficulties in deriving causal inferences were noted given the unavailability of systematically collected ownership data,¹³ Siegelman & Waldfogel (2001) demonstrated using longitudinal evidence, that although small, there was an increase in minority-targeted programming in a market when there was one additional minority-owned station in that market.

The (b) set of studies in table 3-1 showed a nexus between minority ownership and owners' intentions to promote content tailored to their communities. These studies actually sought the views of owners and managers of broadcast stations by collecting firsthand data from surveys of broadcast stations (Bachen, et al., 2000; CRS, 1988) or in-depth interviews with minority-owned stations (Fife, 1986; Ivy Planning Group LLC, 2000). They showed that minority owners had clear intentions to target content based on the ethnicity of their audience; they were attentive to issues and events of greater importance to minority communities and women, and tended to air programming in languages other than English (Bachen, et al., 2000). According to Ivy Planning Group LLC (2000) minority owners were not only seeking profits, but were motivated to serve their communities and to contribute to viewpoint diversity by being the voice of their

¹² Some studies included more than two analyses; for example, Turner (2007) did the (a) set as well as the (c) set of studies and Fife (1986) did not only the (b) set but also the (c) set of studies. Similarly, Crawford (2007) was listed not only in table 3-1 but also in table 3-2.

¹³ Based on the correlational analyses, one cannot cast away the possible existence of a third factor, which is related to both ownership and content. For example, in *Winter Park Communications, INC. v. the FCC* (1989), each owner's racial composition of potential audience was suggested as a third factor. However, CRS (1988) demonstrated that minority owners tended to air content targeted to minority audiences at higher rates than white owners whose rates of broadcasting for minority communities equaled to the ratio of minority population to the total population in their respective markets.

community “who had no voice” (Ivy Planning Group LLC, 2000, p 81).¹⁴ Fife (1986) showed that among the four minority-owned TV stations interviewed, three minority managements took programming approaches of serving their minority communities. Specifically, two stations respectively in Texas and in Michigan aired local news and public affairs programming, which focused on their respective minority communities’ events and personalities, and one station in Maine committed itself to cultural pluralism (Fife, 1986).

The (c) set of studies utilizing content analysis further showed how the minority owners’ efforts to promote content tailored toward their minority communities were actually realized. These content analysis studies specifically evaluated minority appearance in news programming (Fife, 1986), and political orientation of programming hosts (Turner, 2007), and examined minority ownership’s relations with each of them. In minority-owned stations, minorities appeared in the local news items, in newsmaker positions and in different roles more frequently than in white-owned stations in the same market (Fife, 1986). Turner (2007) also found a nexus between minority/female ownership and political orientation of programming hosts. Markets with both conservative and progressive hosts tended to have minority-owned stations (Turner, 2007).

In addition to the (c) set of studies, other studies cited in *Metro Broadcasting, Inc. v. FCC* (1990) found a nexus between ownership and news coverage. In Boston, owners of different races appeared to treat events dissimilarly (Johnson, 1987) and in Detroit black-owned stations covered racially significant issues more than white-owned stations (Fife, 1979).

Lastly, the (d) study, Spitzer (1990)’s economic modeling provided two possible explanations for the positive relation between minority ownership and programming: in producing programming targeted to their own groups (a) minority and female owners are willing to give up some profits because of their “solidarity” with the group they belong to or (b) they enjoy cost advantages. To be specific, minority owners would have an advantage in assessing their programming targeted toward the community they belong to

¹⁴ Also, Wolseley (1972) demonstrated similar findings.

thanks to their familiarity with cultural trends and social customs as well as language such as Spanish.

Listed in table 3-2 includes the studies which did not find a nexus between minority ownership and local news and public affairs minutes (Erb, 2011; Rennhoff & Wilbur, 2011) or being a news station (Stroup, 2007). However, Crawford (2007) and Turner & Cooper (2007) demonstrated that minority owned stations aired more local news.

Analysis of the studies of the nexus between minority ownership and content.

The (a) set of studies utilizing quantitatively solid methods analyzed broadcast industry data covering a large geographic area. However, due to the limitations inherent in the industry dataset, the analyses covered only one service such as TV or radio or covered two services separately.

The studies focused on differences between minority-owned and white-owned stations in terms of programming formats, and successfully demonstrated that minority-owned stations tended to air more Spanish language or Black, Urban, Ethnic, or Jazz programming. Nevertheless, the possible existence of other meaningful differences within each programming format, for example -- whether in news programming more issues significant to minority communities received attention, was not examined.

The possibly existing differences within news programming format between minority-owned stations and white-owned ones were examined in the (c) set of studies. This set of studies utilized content analysis since this research question could be answered by looking directly at media content. News programming aired in minority-owned stations showed minority appearance, and covered items and events, which were of greater interests to minorities more frequently than white-owned stations. Nevertheless, these studies are not without limitations; content analysis is rather dependent on individual coders' interpretation and laborious. Thus, studies adopting content analysis tend to be very narrow in its scope, not only in terms of service covered, but also geographically.

The (b) set of studies analyzed data collected by surveying and interviewing station owners and managers, and demonstrated that minority owners tried to promote

content targeted toward their minority communities. While some third factors might account for the differences in content between minority-owned stations and white-owned ones, the (b) set of studies suggest that minority owners' intentions to promote content tailored toward their communities can at least partly explain the differences.

However, the (b) set of studies overlooked the possibility that what owners and managers intended to promote in their content production was not realized. Also, it is possible that audiences did not think that content conveyed via minority owned stations was tailored toward their needs and wants, despite the owners and managers' intentions to promote such content.

Suggestions for future research on the nexus between minority ownership and content

To build on the existing studies and to create stronger arguments whether there is a nexus between minority ownership and content, it would be beneficial to execute three set of studies focusing on (a) owners/managers, (b) content and (c) audience (see figure 3 for graphical representation of the three set of exploratory studies); and these exploratory studies can be cross analyzed to establish a more comprehensive picture.

One study can build on the studies showing (a) owners and managers' intentions to promote minority-tailored content. This study can examine how individuals in different positions are involved in decisions about their target audience, possibly under the influence of philosophy and criteria flowing vertically from owners to managers, producers and staffs. Data can be collected through such means as surveys and interviews with the individuals, an analysis of internal documents, and observations of the decision making process. This would allow a researcher to examine how and to what extent minority owners' intentions to promote minority-targeted content are realized, and whether the owners listen to their audiences.

Second study on (b) content can build on the studies demonstrating differences within news programming. Specifically, it is possible to delve deeply into content analysis by examining news programming or other programming such as entertainment or music programming. Within news programming, for example, research can examine whether there is a nexus between minority ownership and news sources, which minority-

owned stations rely on for news production. Also, expanding beyond the news programming, one might examine whether minorities appearing in entertainment or TV shows frequently play professional roles.

In a third investigation the focus could be on (c) audience-centered research that examines what the audiences think they are receiving and consuming via minority-owned media, and specifically, whether they think the content provided by minority-owned media is tailored toward their needs and wants. Furthermore, research can examine generally what media audiences follow and closely question the reasons for audiences' use of or preference for certain media,¹⁵ and whether one of the reasons for audiences' preference is their perception of the ethnicity of the media owner. Audience-centered research is especially beneficial in that it can cover the multi-media environment, complementing the limitation of most studies reviewed in this paper, whose analyses were constrained to a single medium.

By looking into these aspects of (a) owners/managers, (b) content, and (c) audience, a more comprehensive picture can be obtained regarding the nexus between minority owners and content tailored toward minority communities. Although some methods which could be adopted in the three studies, such as interpretations of interviews and content analysis, tend to be somewhat labor-intensive and narrow in terms of scope,¹⁶ the three sets of studies could enlighten researchers as well as policymakers to have a broader and more practical picture regarding ownership and content as opposed to having separate pictures of ownership and content with no consideration of the audience.

Furthermore, the three sets of exploratory studies focusing on owners/managers, content, and audience could complement and even improve analyses of hard industry data. To be specific, if certain factors emerge from the three sets of studies and appear to be critical in researching ownership and content, these factors can be included in future construction of a large scale dataset once a systematic measurement of the factors can be

¹⁵ There are some studies demonstrating the nexus between the group status of audiences and their use of or preference for certain media content. Bendixen & Associates For New California Media (2005) showed that ethnic adults tended to prefer ethnic media to mainstream media. Also, Siegelman & Waldfogel (2001) and Waldfogel (2011) demonstrated that Blacks tended to listen more heavily to black targeted radio programming than Whites and Hispanics tended to tune more into Spanish language programming than non-Hispanics.

¹⁶ It is critical that researchers carefully sample their subjects to study.

devised. Analysis of this dataset would allow researchers to validate the findings from the three exploratory studies.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research on the Triangle

A review of studies of the nexus among minority ownership, employment and content suggests some level of support for the existence of a nexus between ownership and employment of minorities, a nexus between minority employment and content targeted to minorities, and a nexus between minority ownership and content tailored toward minority communities. It appears that the prevalence of minority owners has been related to the employment of a more diverse group; the employment of minority groups seems to be associated to the provision of diverse content; and minority-owned stations have tried to air content tailored toward minority communities more than white-owned stations. Based on a review of the studies, there seems to be at least some level of support for the FCC's minority ownership preference and diversity policies. To further support the FCC's policies, or to illuminate different paths for policy development, it would be beneficial to conduct future research on the triangle of minority ownership, employment and content, which builds on the existing literature while acknowledging the inherent weaknesses. The following are suggestions for future research designed to complement the weaknesses in previous studies, and to make meaningful contribution to the scholarly as well as policy-related discussions regarding the triangle of minority ownership, employment and content.

To examine nexuses among ownership, employment and content, each concept needs to be defined and measured using certain data. In previous studies, regarding ownership and employment, racial identities of owners and employees were identified using broadcast industry data. There was more flexibility in measuring minority content. Depending on the data each researcher used, minority content was operationalized differently from programming formats for minorities, owners' intentions to tailor content to their communities, and minority appearance or issue coverage in news.

The fundamental weakness of existing studies involves the limitations of the data used to measure ownership, employment and content. With regard to how to measure the level of minority ownership and employment, there was little ambiguity. Nevertheless,

broadcast industry data used in the measurement of ownership and employment were rather unsystematically collected every year, and therefore, not appropriate for longitudinal analyses. These limitations prevented researchers from going beyond showing that there were associations among minority ownership, employment and content, and explain why there were certain relations. Regarding content, some researchers looked at news and public affairs programming minutes while others measured the levels of content targeted toward minority communities relying on (a) broadcast industry data on programming formats, (b) survey data on owners' intentions to promote minority content or (c) content analysis of news. By focusing on (a) programming formats, other meaningful differences within each programming format were overlooked. On the other hand, by focusing on (b) owners' intentions, one was not checking whether their intentions were realized in the actual content or appreciated by audiences. By (c) actually looking at news content, the scope of analysis tended to be narrow.

When it comes to content, more discussion among scholars and policymakers needs to be made regarding what content we expect to see more by promoting minority broadcast ownership and employment. If we anticipate seeing more of minority owners' intentions to promote content tailored toward their communities in terms of politics or culture, rather than more news and public affairs minutes, the question that remains is whether the owners' intentions are realized in content, and whether audiences actually appreciated it.

Thus, building on the previous studies, three sets of exploratory studies can be conducted to focus on broadcast station people such as owners, managers and employees, content, and audience. The three sets of studies can explore whether what needs to be promoted is actually being promoted by increasing the level of minority ownership and employment. Specifically, research can be carried out to examine (a) whether minority broadcast station people actively seek out content for their communities or listen to the content needs of minority audiences by conducting observational studies, surveys and interviews in the stations; (b) whether minority-owned stations air more content tailored toward minority communities by executing content analysis; and (c) whether audiences perceive content broadcasted by minority-owned stations as better gratifying their

political or cultural needs, and more fundamentally, whether certain groups of audiences feel that their significant content needs and wants are not satisfied by existing broadcast stations¹⁷ by conducting surveys and interviews among audiences. These three sets of studies might inform researchers as well as policymakers in understanding how broadcast station people, content and audience interact in a market, and potentially in making possible causal inferences of minority ownership, employment and content.

An audience-centered approach shows possible room for improvement in which researchers collectively take more than two services into analysis; this is especially valuable considering that today, audiences are surrounded by and make use of multi-media. It is worth noting that existing studies have mostly dealt with radio or TV, either one of them only or both of them separately. It would be beneficial to include newer media such as Cable TV and the Internet into future research, and collectively take them into analysis.¹⁸

Furthermore, to be able to tell a comprehensive causal story regarding the nexus among ownership, employment, and content, it would be helpful to establish a reliable dataset and systematically collect this data annually for longitudinal analyses. Such a data set might include minority ownership, employment and content information along with some tertiary factors, which might contain audience-related factors possibly with a hint from the above-mentioned three sets of studies. It would be beneficial to take audience into account in debates on the nexus among ownership, employment and content because the audience, or the public, is the paramount interest to be served after all these studies and debates.

Table 1

¹⁷ Currently in a market, if there are underserved needs and wants of certain audience groups, the question that remains is who are willing to and can serve their needs and wants.

¹⁸ There seems to be significant research that can most effectively and comprehensively done by scholars in the communications field. Communications scholars have the expertise in understanding and studying audiences, content and broadcast station people as well as the new multi-media environment.

The Nexus between Minority Ownership and Employment

Ne xus	Title	Who	When	Data	Methodology	Service
(a) Analysis of Broadcast Industry Data						
y	Relationships Among EEO, Program Service, and Minority Ownership in Broadcast Regulation	Honig	1983	FCC Form 395 (Equal Employment Report) and <i>Broadcasting Yearbook</i> (80)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Chi Square)	Radio
y	Minority Broadcasting Facts	National Association of Broadcasters	Sep 1986	National Association of Broadcasters (86)	Quantitative Analysis – Descriptive Statistics	TV
y	The Onus of Minority Ownership: FCC Policy and Spanish-Language Radio	Schement and Singleton	1981	FCC license renewal files	Quantitative Analysis – Descriptive Statistics	Radio
y	Off The Dial: Female and Minority Radio Station Ownership in the United States	Turner	June 2007	Ownership: BIA Media Access Pro (07) and the FCC's CDBS Public Access Database	Quantitative Analysis – Statistical Tests (T-test)	Radio
(b) Analysis of Surveys						
y	Diversity of Programming in the Broadcast Spectrum: Is there a Link between Owner Race or Ethnicity and News and Public Affairs Programming?	Bachen, Hammond, and Mason	Dec 12 2000	Broadcast industry data from NTIA (97), telephone interviews of news/public affairs programming directors by a survey firm (98)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Chi Square & T-Test)	Radio, TV
(c) Content Analysis						
y	The Impact of Minority Ownership on Minority Images in Local TV News, in Communications: A Key to Economic and Political Change	Fife	1986	Census of Population Report (80), literature reviews on populations in 4 sampled markets, newscasts of one minority-owned and one majority-owned stations in four markets	Quantitative Analysis – Content Analysis	TV

Table 2

The Nexus between Minority Employment and Content

Ne xus	Title	Who	When	Data	Methodology	Service
y	Diversity of Programming in the Broadcast Spectrum: Is there a Link between Owner Race or Ethnicity and News and Public Affairs Programming?	Bachen, Hammond, and Mason	Dec 12 2000	Broadcast industry data from NTIA (97), telephone interviews of news/public affairs programming directors by a survey firm (98)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Chi Square, T-Test, Step-Wise Multiple Regression)	Radio, TV
y	Relationships Among EEO, Program Service, and Minority Ownership in Broadcast Regulation	Honig	1983	FCC Form 395 (Equal Employment Report) and Broadcasting Yearbook (80)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (T-Test)	Radio

Table 3-1

The Nexus between Minority Ownership and Content

Nexus	Title	Who	When	Data	Analysis	Service
(a) Analysis of Broadcast Industry Data						
y	Radio Station Ownership Structure and the Provision of Programming to Minority Audiences: Evidence from 2005-2009	Waldfoegel	June 6 2011	Station-level data from Arbitron (GFI 05, 07), Longitudinal Radio_Long.dta from the FCC	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Regression)	Radio
y	Television Station Ownership Structure and the Quantity and Quality of TV Programming	Crawford	Sep 10 2007	Ownership: from Diwadi, Roberts, and Wise (2007), Programming: Nielson, Program Schedule: TMS, Ratings: Nielson, Kagan, Advertising Minutes: TNS (two weeks of every year between 03-06)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Regression)	TV
y	Off The Dial: Female and Minority Radio Station Ownership in the United States	Turner	June 2007	Ownership: BIA Media Access Pro (07) and the FCC's CDBS Public Access Database, Radio talk show hosts: program web sites (07)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (t-test)	Radio
y	Race and Radio: Preference Externalities, Minority Ownership, and the Provision of Programming to Minorities	Siegelman, and Waldfoegel	Oct 2001	Duncan's American Radio, Listening: Arbitron's Radio USA, Owner race: NTIA (all 93, 97)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Regression)	Radio
y	A Comparative Analysis of the Programming Practices of Black-Owned Black-Oriented Radio Stations and White-Owned Black-Oriented Radio Stations	Jeter	1981	Black-oriented stations: Standard Rate and Data Service by Spot Radio Black-owned stations: NAB, NABOB, Black Enterprise, Broadcasting Programming: the license renewal applications by the FCC Playlists: A survey	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Test (Regression)	Radio
(b) Analysis of Surveys and Interviews of Owners and Managers						
y	Diversity of Programming in the Broadcast Spectrum: Is there a Link between Owner Race or Ethnicity and News and Public Affairs Programming?	Bachen, Hammond, and Mason	Dec 12 2000	Broadcast industry data from NTIA (97), telephone interviews of news/public affairs programming directors by a survey firm (98)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Chi Square & t-test, step-wise multiple regression)	Radio, TV
y	Whose Spectrum Is It Anyway? Historical	Ivy Planning	Dec 12	Telephone interview with 120 key persons	Qualitative Analysis --	Radio, TV,

	Study of Market Entry Barriers, Discrimination and Changes in Broadcast and Wireless Licensing	Group LLC Rockville, Maryland	2000	representing small, minority- and women-owned business, 30 telephone interviews with key market participants by Ivy (00)	Interpretation of interviews	wire-less
y	Minority Broadcast Station Ownership and Broadcast Programming: Is There a Nexus?	CRS (Congressional Research Service)	June 29 1988	A survey of radio and TV stations by the FCC	Quantitative Analysis – Descriptive Statistics	Radio, TV
y	The Impact of Minority Ownership on Minority Images in Local TV News, in Communications: A Key to Economic and Political Change	Fife	1986	Census of Population Report (80), literature reviews on populations in 4 sampled markets, structured interviews at the minority-owned stations, newscasts of one minority-owned and one majority-owned station	Qualitative Analysis – Interpretation of interviews	TV
(c) Content Analysis						
y	Off The Dial: Female and Minority Radio Station Ownership in the United States	Turner	June 2007	Ownership: BIA Media Access Pro (07) and the FCC's CDBS Public Access Database, Radio talk show hosts: program web sites (07)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (t-test)	Radio
y	The Impact of Minority Ownership on Minority Images in Local TV News, in Communications: A Key to Economic and Political Change	Fife	1986	Census of Population Report (80), literature reviews on populations in 4 sampled markets, newscasts of one minority-owned and one majority-owned stations in four markets	Quantitative Analysis – Content Analysis	TV
(d) Economic Modeling						
y	Justifying Minority Preferences in Broadcasting	Spitzer	March 1990	Review of theories and evidence of programming choices by profit-maximizing owners	Economic Modeling, Review of opinions in Metro Broadcasting	Radio, TV

Table 3-2

The Nexus between Minority Ownership and Content

Nexus	Title	Who	When	Data	Analysis	Service
n	Local Media Ownership and Media Quality	Rennhoff, and Wilbur	June 12 2011	Minority media ownership variable by the FCC (07, 09), TV ratings by Nielson Media Research Galaxy ProFile (05-10)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Correlations, Regression)	TV, Newspaper, Radio
n	Local Information Programming and the Structure of Television Markets	Erb	May 20 2011	Ownership, market-level industry, and demographics by the FCC media bureau	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Regression)	TV, Newspaper, Radio
n	News Operations (section III)	Stroup	July 2007	Arbitron markets (02-05)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Regression)	Radio
n	The Onus of Minority Ownership: FCC Policy and Spanish-Language Radio	Sche-ment and Singleton	1981	FCC license renewal files	Quantitative Analysis -- Descriptive Statistics	Radio
y	Out of The Picture 2007: Minority & Female TV Station Ownership in the United States	Turner and Cooper	Oct 2007	BIA Media Access Pro (06, 07) and the FCC's CDBS Public Access Database, Minority Commercial Broadcast Ownership reports by NTIA (98, 00)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (ANOVA, T-Test, OLS, and Probit Maximum Likelihood Models)	TV
y	Television Station Ownership Structure and the Quantity and Quality of TV Programming	Crawford	Sep 10 2007	Ownership: from Diwadi, Roberts, and Wise (2007), Programming: Nielson, Program Schedule: TMS, Ratings: Nielson, Kagan, Advertising Minutes: TNS (two weeks of every year between 03-06)	Quantitative Analysis -- Statistical Tests (Regression)	TV

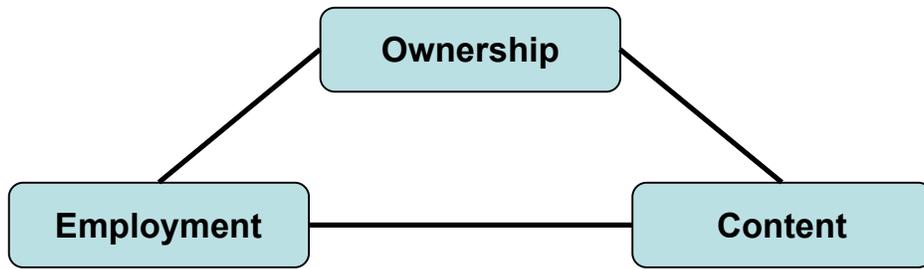


Figure 1

The Triangle of Minority Ownership, Employment and Content

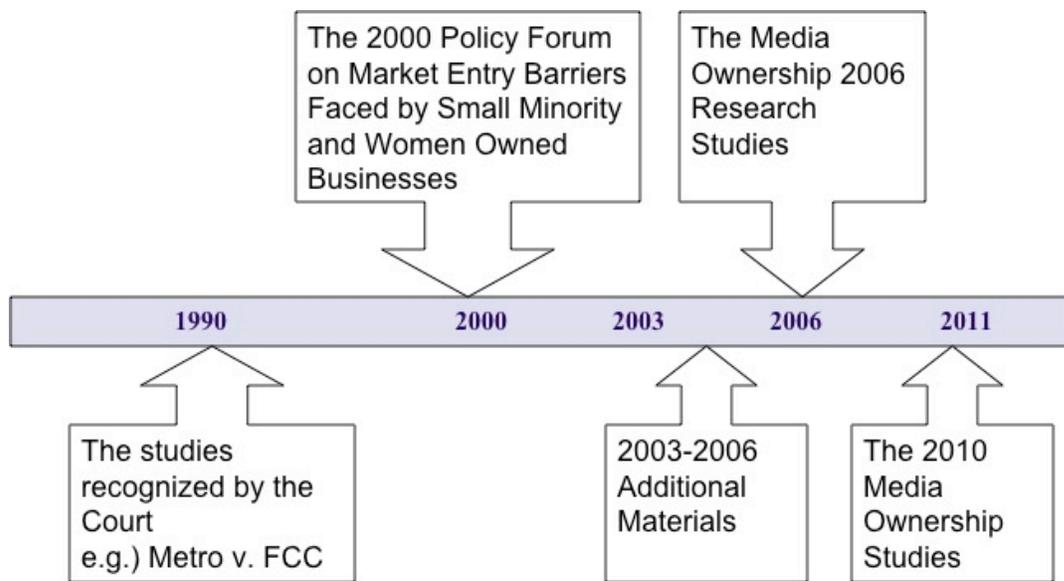


Figure 2

Chronological Presentation of the Reviewed Studies



Figure 3

An Exploratory Effort: Studies focusing on Owners/Managers, Audience, and Content

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