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THE AGENDA SETTING AND USES AND GRATIFICATIONS IMPLICATIONS OF AFROCENTRICITY IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

presented by

Julie Ann Winkfield

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Master of Arts degree in Communication-Urban Studies

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THE AGENDA SETTING AND USES AND GRATIFICATIONS IMPLICATIONS OF AFROCENTRICITY IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

By

Julie Ann Winkfield

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Communication

1995

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ABSTRACT

THE AGENDA SETTING AND USES AND GRATIFICATIONS IMPLICATIONS OF AFROCENTRICITY IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

By

Julie Ann Winkfield

Researchers recommend inquiring *why* African-Americans make certain media choices. African-Americans' social, economic, historical, and cultural circumstances are significant factors. A cultural orientation that strongly considers these factors, and guides perspectives concerning, education, communication, philosophy, and politics is Afrocentricity.

Afrocentricity guides philosophical and practical endeavors from an African-centered perspective. This qualitative, critical study assesses Afrocentric public affairs programming via agenda setting, and uses and gratifications. It reveals three Afrocentricity components; an oral tradition that favors verbal communication, a subjective analytical base that focuses on African-centered concerns, and a collectivist socio-political orientation that advocates group action. The critical analysis reviews supportive and critical positions on the strength of Afrocentricity based on cultural relevance, the presence of a behavioral mandate, and its conceptual clarity.

Recommendations include a plan for further measurement of Afrocentricity in public affairs programming, and instruments for a quantitative approach.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Alice A. Tait of Central Michigan University for her kindness, leadership, and scholarship on this work. Without Dr. Tait, this would not have been possible and I sincerely thank her. I also dedicate the continuation of the ideas presented here to the continuation of her research agenda.

As the unicorn
Sprouts her wings to fly solo
She will fly so high

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I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This study is an attempt to answer the call for improved theoretical approaches in the study of African-Americans and their portrayals within, and uses of, news and public affairs television programming. As such, it is a qualitative analysis which:

1. Proposes a model for a theoretic approach
2. Defines the central concepts of the model
3. Illustrates a practical use of the model
4. Urges new research directions in order to further the development of the proposed approach

Many new theoretical approaches have evolved from the explanatory value of qualitative research (Jensen, 1987). Significant to communications research is Walter Lippman's (1922) qualitative analysis *Public Opinion*, which is often credited with inspiring the agenda setting theory. Presenting a model qualitatively can contribute and advance research in many ways, particularly with new questions, and unique approaches to investigate familiar phenomena. Laying the groundwork for a new approach qualitatively can guard against findings from methodology, or sampling proceedures that may serve to stunt its future use and application. This thesis is written to invite other scholars to advance the positions, arguments, and recommendations presented in this paper.

This study also responds to the call for theoretic approaches, and "a planned program for developing a cohesive picture" (Poindexter and Stroman, 1981, p. 120) and methods for understanding African-Americans and television. Greenberg (1986) discussed a need for studies that look specifically at the kinds of interactions that study

alternative content areas, and studies that have some theoretical basis in prior research. Greenberg also stresses that the multichannel televison environment should be studied as more choices become available to viewers, and increasing opportunities for specialty programming are possible. Greenberg and Brand (1992) urge the television industry to embark upon and support research that would aid it in understanding, and responding to their minority communities' need for more and better information.

Greenberg (1986) calls for the development of analytic procedures that take into account the importance that individual viewers place on specific portrayals. Greenberg further suggests that analyses investigate the specific features and themes of television programming for how it appeals to minority audience members. Poindexter and Stroman (1981) call for analyses that examine the impact of African-American ownership of mass communication channels and means of production. Especially concerning the impact of African-American ownership on gatekeeping and message selection, and audience loyalty and response from African-American and other audiences.

In response to these calls, this study uses two communication theoretic approaches, agenda setting, and uses and gratifications. *Agenda setting* explores the media's ability to influence the salience of issues and topics within its audience (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Agenda setting also explores the possible influence of media sources on the media's agenda regarding the content presented to the public. *Uses and gratifications* identifies an individual's felt needs for the use of media content, and any possible rewards attained from actively exposing one's self to media content (Fisher, 1978). These theories are presented simultaneously because the use of one implies the existence of the other. As an audience activity model, uses and gratifications implies media effects, which merits the introduction of agenda setting which is a media effects model.

Second, this study responds to the call to develop Afrocentricity away from a "level of concrete particulars" (Wortham, 1992, p. 65) and, for the purpose of applying it

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to communications behavior, develops generalizable principles and observable practices. Afrocentricity can be defined as a cultural orientation that mediates one's perspective on history, culture, and behavior. Afrocentric philosophies and concepts emanate from an African or Black outlook, as such it is viewed as a *centrism*, or perspective which focuses very tightly upon culturally defined precepts and practices. As a centrism, Afrocentricity would guide communication behaviors within specific contexts. This analysis will synthesize Afrocentricity and public affairs programming, to structure a form of *Afrocentric contextual interaction* that should be observable in Afrocentric public affairs programming.

As a qualitative effort to investigate a cultural orientation useful in communication research, and viewed as a relevant mass communication orientation for African-Americans, this study introduces the explication of the separate components of Afrocentricity, and a critical analysis of Afrocentricity based upon communication theories. This paper also includes a chapter of recommendations for future research directions, which further includes instruments with which to observe and measure the adherence to the components of Afrocentricity in a public affairs talk show discussion.

Chapter one of the study provides a discussion of the qualitative analysis approach, and the purpose and design of the study. Chapter two discusses public affairs programming and early media responses regarding stereotypical portrayals of African-Americans. Chapter two also includes a discussion of *For My People* as an exemplar "Afrocentric" public affairs television show, a chart synthesizing the features of public affairs programming, and a chart that delineates the components of Afrocentricity. Chapter three is a literature review of research on African-Americans and news and public affairs programming, Afrocentricity and relevant concepts, agenda setting, and uses and gratifications. Chapter four provides a review of some general criticisms, and supportive positions of Afrocentric practices and principles, followed by a critique of Afrocentricity based on agenda setting, and uses and gratifications communication

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theories. Chapter five contains recommendations that propose a methodology for future quantitative research. It includes instruments developed for testing Afrocentricity in public affairs programming, with questionnaires and coding forms as an integral part of this chapter. Chapter six, the conclusion and discussion provides a discussion of suggestions for advancing the proposed quantitative approach.

The author's goal is to enhance mass communication scholarship regarding, public affairs information serving the needs of African-Americans, a population that historically has had unequal access to opportunities. Because the mass media is a very significant social force in the United States, it is significant that it be considered an important social resource. Equal access and representation have been the subjects at issue in numerous studies. This particular study evaluates Afrocentricity in mass communication as a possible solution to, policy for, and, or problem in addressing African-Americans' uses of, access to, and portrayals within news and public affairs mass media.

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II. PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING

Early Responses to Bias in News and Public Affairs Programming

The Kerner Commission report resulting from nationwide riots during the 1960s, brought on a compendium of legislation, executive orders and court decisions (Tait, 1989). Findings indicated that the communications media had failed "to portray the Negro in a matter of routine and in the context of the total society...," and additionally has, "...contributed to the black-white schism in this country" (Werner, 1968 p. 366; cited in Tait, 1989, p. 313). During the heat of civil rights protests in the 1960s, the leadership of the African-American community focused on the mass media and singled out television as a prime offender for its lack of fair employment practices, and for its failure to present accurate, credible representations of African-Americans to the larger society. A number of groups and organizations made an effort to increase the number of communication jobs held by minorities. The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence proposed in one of its reports "that the media hire and train increased numbers of newsmen from minority groups" ("Bias in the media," 1970, p. 16). This proposal was also the theme of a series of special conferences held around the country on minority employment in the media. One of these, held at Fordham University, urged direct action by top management to implement special training programs and to facilitate upward mobility of minority employees already on the job ("Bias in the media," 1970).

A more direct attempt to institute equal opportunity employment in the media came through the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) in response to a petition for rule-making filed in April 1967 by the United Church of Christ's Office of Communications. In July 1968, the FCC asked that TV and radio station owners adopt affirmative recruitment and training programs for minorities because they might face possible loss of license if they continued to discriminate against Negroes in employment

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(Shanahan, 1968, p. 41). The FCC pointed out that the proposed new rules, which would be a simple adaptation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and required broadcasters to document that they were following non-discriminatory employment policies before granting or renewing licenses. In addition, the new rules would require broadcasters to display some notice of non-discrimination in their personnel offices and on their job application forms. Before enacting these proposals, however, the FCC called for reply and comments from all interested parties (Shanahan, 1968).

Citizen groups responded by insisting that broadcasters demonstrate compliance within their respective communities. Broadcasters felt in turn that compliance should be assumed in the absence of any specific complaints ("Racial Proposal," 1968, p. 56). The chairman of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) delivered a general response to such disputes that a periodic showing of affirmative action is usually necessary to effectively eliminate discrimination ("FCC Gets Varied," 1968, p. 46).

The FCC announced its new ruling in June 1969, requiring all licenses to afford equal opportunity in employment to all qualified persons and prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin. A second ruling required every station to "establish, maintain, and carry out a positive continuing program of specific practices designed to assure equal opportunity in every aspect of station employment policy and practice" (U.S. Federal Communications Commission, 1969). The FCC also settled on a form already in use by other federal agencies that listed each member of the four minority groups (Negroes, Orientals, American Indians, and Americans with Spanish surnames) according to job level ("Rules to Prohibit," 1969, p. 2).

For My People: An Exemplar Case

One response to the inequities in the media was initiated by Project BAIT with the show *For My People.* They saw television as a way to serve the "Black Power Struggle," (see chapter four for literature review of Black Power). Project BAIT designed *For My People* to be a continuation of the Black Power Movement. David Rambeau is the executive producer/director and interviewer of *For My People,* the longest-running program dedicated to the news and public affairs information needs of African-Americans in Detroit. *For My People* airs weekly, on FOX network affiliate WKBD Channel 50 in Detroit. The overall programming focus is community based public affairs information, and aired for the first time in December 1970. In 1971, *For My People* also began a 10-year run on WDET, Detroit's public radio station (Rambeau Project BAIT files, 1987). *For My People* airs on Saturday mornings from 6:00 until 7:00 a.m., and at present is a one hour show but began as a half hour show. Channel 50 maintains records regarding issues discussed on *For My People,* and guests that appear on the show via ascertainment data. *For My People* also airs seven-days-a-week on Detroit based independent cable station Barden Cable on a rotating schedule. Barden Cable channel 67 offers the show a possible audience of 119,000 subscribers in the city of Detroit only. Barden Cable does not maintain ratings information, nor keeps records of any viewer responses regarding the show.

Topics for discussion "focus primarily on economics and, or finance, politics, education, and social struggle" (Project BAIT Manual, 1983, p. 1). *For My People* interviews consist of an African-American Project BAIT interviewer and an African-American guest. Guests are ordinarily from an African-American organization, and discuss a topic from the African-American perspective that is of basic interest to the survival or prosperity of the African-American community (Project BAIT Manual, 1983). Afrocentricity mediates the conscious effort to use African-Americans exclusively as sources and experts on any subjects. According to Rambeau, whenever guests are

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solicited from any organization for the show, Project BAIT explicitly requests African-Americans, the purpose for which is to hold local African-American political and economic leaders accountable to the issues discussed.

Rambeau hopes that the interview format transmits Afrocentricity by directing the audience to view the discussion within the context of Afrocentricity. The production staff of *For My People* consists of Project BAIT workshop members who view Project BAIT as a "school" of art and communication. It offers hands-on training and experience in video production among other activities, and encourages members to become actively involved in their community (Project BAIT Manual, 1983). To demonstrate the Afrocentric focus, the host of the interview wears a traditional African dashiki (a loose usually brightly colored tunic [American Heritage Dictionary, 1985, p. 366]).

As expressed by the producer/host/founder, David Rambeau, Project BAIT's Afrocentric ideals regarding all projects, including *For My People,* are:

- That African-Americans are the focal point of any and all concerns.
- That any issue is validated with respect to its impact on the African-American community.
- That the discussion format of *For My People* is not accountable to represent, nor is interested in the Eurocentric viewpoint.

Black Nationalist and Pan-Africanist ideology (referred to here as Afrocentricity) as outlined in the Project BAIT membership training manual of 1982 is as follows:

> BAIT is a Black Nationalist or/and Pan-Africanist organization. Study of either or both of these political positions can and must be done. We don't push this ideology on members but it should be clear to everyone that this is our position. Most folk enter without any kind of conscious position. Within the group we ask people to do certain tasks that if they possessed a nationalist philosophy they would do automatically. This is perhaps best since people generally don't [want] ideology, they want skills, jobs, etc. The leadership merely gives them assignments or tasks that fulfill a nationalists' ideology and ordinarily folk will be along simply because it is in their own best interest anyway. However, there must be some consciousness raising in the group about our relationship to each other, to our community (that's why among other reasons we request that members bank at

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> the Black bank) and to the other communities that we come in contact with. [Then] when there are differences of position on a particular question we don't make our decision on an arbitrary basis we attempt to make our decisions in congruence with our philosophy of life and that is Black nationalism (BAIT Notes On Practice, 1982, p. 7).

Audience response in the form of viewer mail is fairly sparse. David Rambeau was only able to provide seven letters for inspection to include in this paper that specifically addressed issues regarding audience response to *For My People*. Responses included reactions to; information presented on the show, the manner in which the information was presented, the hosts and guests, and WKBD's decision to change the time in which the show aired. The seven letters provided by David Rambeau covered the years, 1987, 1990, 1991, and 1992. The comments in the letters were generally positive.

Regarding the information in the show, viewers feel that "it is pertinent," and "vital" to African-Americans. Concerning the presentation of the information, viewers commented that the show was "expertly formatted." One viewer however has the viewpoint that the show's problem orientation misdirects attribution of the problems of Detroit to "the White Man." This viewer is particularly disturbed by the amount of trash strewn about in African-American communities as a significant problem, and suggests to Project BAIT that they "Make announcements on (their) T.V. program, put posters around" to motivate community members to clean up their *own* areas. A reaction to the hosts is that they frequently end interviews rather abruptly, to see a host graciously thank a guest made a viewer feel that "all the ingredients are in place," making the show a pleasure to watch. Some Lansing, Michigan viewers requested expansion of the show to the Lansing area, especially in expanding guest selection to better address issues of concern to Lansing viewers. There was much dismay concerning WKBD's decision to change the time in which the show aired. Four of the seven letters addressed this issue. One viewer questioned whether the change in air time was reflective of "racism which

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must certainly be a factor in this decision." Although this is an extremely small sample, it does provide some inclination of viewer mail responses to the show.

As a public affairs program *For My People* serves a significant purpose for WKBD as well. Specifically, *For My People* plays a role in the station's FCC commitment to public affairs programming. That WKBD maintains ascertainment data of the program's topics and guests indicates that WKBD has an interest in maintaining the show and its content. According to Rambeau, *For My People* is still on the air because it serves Channel 50 as "a foil against complaints concerning equal representation" because, within the African-American community, *For My People* covers news and public affairs programming by, for, and about African-American people.

As a public affairs program, *For My People* uses the talk show format to present discussions on issues of concern to the African-American community of Detroit. It does however, reach audiences outside Detroit because WKBD channel 50 reaches well beyond Detroit. The formal features of the show call for it to:

- Explore varying perspectives on issues relevant to the Detroit community of African-Americans;
- Relay perspectives and viewpoints of significant community representatives and officials via discussions with and about these individuals;
- Present a *problem orientation* (for the most part) in terms of addressing issues of immediate concern to the community it serves;
- Interpret the community agenda in terms of activities, concerns, and significant individuals;
- Comment and editorialize as a part of the programming focus, to clarify issues and illustrate topics in the news as they affect the African-American community.

Asante (1989) conceptualized Africentricity by contrasting Eurocentric and Afrocentric nationalist ideals. Using *classical* music as an example, Asante wrote that "there is no *classical* music to you other than that which comes out of your culture" (p.

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46). Asante views cultural perspective as the primary force by which one should regard examples of *classical* art forms.

> When the Europeans use classical they use it to refer to the highest of their art forms. To me, because of Afrocentricity, what they refer to is European Concert Music because the only classical music I know is the polyrhythms and syncopated eights of Ellington, Coltrane, Eubie Blake, Charlie Parker, Mingus, and Gillespie. I cannot deny the possibility of others speaking of classics within their contexts; I applaud their nationalism. I do not have to share in it when my tradition is so rich and varied (Asante, 1989, p. 46).

Asante's argument is essentially that one's own culture should influence his or her perception pure and original art forms. Within the context of Afrocentricity, the only art forms that can be considered classic are those developed and practiced by African-Americans specifically, or people of African decent in general. It is in this spirit that *For My People* producers create programming by, for, and about people of African descent. Afrocentricity is the programming philosophy of *For My People* and as such it is a cultural orientation evident during in show's presentation.

During the 1970s, when Project BAIT was able to attain access to the WKBD Channel 50 broadcast facilities, the nationalist atmosphere in Detroit, Michigan was very potent. During the late 1960s, rioting had taken place in the city, which spurred activism in the community, and resulted in governmental action as well. Project BAIT originally began as a programmed response to the urban crisis in Detroit. It was first a theatrical endeavor and moved from this direction to mass media projects. As an extension of a college theater program, Project BAIT received one million dollars from the Archdiocese of Detroit to respond to racial problems. To access television time, Project BAIT challenged WKBD Channel 50's FCC license, by questioning the fair representation of Blacks on television.

The Black Nationalist/Pan-Africanist Movement had all but replaced the former Civil Rights Movement by the end of the 1960s (Walters, 1987). It emphasized pro-Black, politically independent strategies in various arenas of action ... At the same time,

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in the early 1970s, there arose a body of Black elected officials, largely as a result of the increased use of the vote in the Black community, made possible both by the Voting Rights act of 1965 and the ambitions of northern Black politicians who understood the mass mobilization potential of the new Black-oriented movement (Walters, 1987, p. 42; cited in Jennings, 1992, p. 99). As an extension of this movement, Project BAIT developed *For My People* to communicate the ideology of Black nationalism, and create a public forum to hold African-American leaders accountable to the African-American community.

Because Afrocentricity calls for a specific cultural orientation, this orientation should be reflected in the public affairs programming focus of the exemplar public affairs television show *For My People*. According to the goals of *For My People*, this cultural orientation should be reflected in the *For My People* audience, as well as among the Project BAIT crew. *For My People* producer David Rambeau's focus on Pan-Africanism, Black Power, and Afrocentricity as expressions of nationalism on *For My People*, has formed the basis for elaboration of the relevant concepts of Afrocentricity for this writing. One should be aware however, that any and all previous empowerment and mobilization ideologies have had a definite and critical impact on the philosophical underpinnings of Afrocentricity.

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The Synthesis of Public Affairs Programming, Afrocentricity, and Contextual Interaction

The discussion format of public affairs television casts an interpersonal interaction episode before an audience who (presumably) expects to view this interaction as progressing according to a particular format. The *discussion* is the format followed by ***For My People***, and while every discussion is an interaction, not every interaction is a discussion. Discussion is conceptualized here as the systematic exploration of issues and topics. While any interaction is rule governed to some degree, the discussion *must* follow and adhere to specific topical constraints, and contextual rules. An interaction can *become* a discussion, however it must have undergone structural changes wherein the interactants begin to follow rules, whether explicit or implicit. Within public affairs programming, the producers of the programming have assigned the task of leading the interaction to an interviewer or moderator (among two well-known titles). He has the responsibility of directing the interaction toward a discussion of specified topics and/or issues. A guest has been invited, and appears on the show because he has some previous, valued knowledge and, or experience/involvement with the topic/issue of interest selected for discussion. It is further assumed that the guest has some understanding of the rules of public affairs discussion format programming.

The general rules of public affairs discussion format programming exist for the sake of congruence between the interviewer and the guest, not necessarily agreement. The discussion entails the following:

1. Focus on an issue
2. Assignment of responsibility in addressing the issues
3. Question and answer format
4. Commentary and analysis

According to Shimanoff (1980) rules are followable, prescriptive, contextual, and they pertain to behavior (p. 39). Shimanoff (1980) observes that speakers know and follow

contextual interaction rules, and adhering to rules for interaction accounts for observed regularities in speech. The discussion format in public affairs programming allows for fluidity between the contextual interaction of a public affairs discussion, Afrocentricity, and the formal features of public affairs programming.

Some general features of public affairs programming were extrapolated from the anniversary broadcast of *60 Minutes.* As a standard in public affairs programming, *60 Minutes* served as the impetus for developing the communicative framing aspects of public affairs programming. The anniversary show aired in November 1993, and was a two hour review of previous broadcasts that examined its unique agenda setting effects, and the signature *60 Minutes* reporting style. The anniversary show served three main functions, they are as follows:

1. Explore the public affairs information presentation style that *60 Minute* developed (i.e., public affairs news magazine format).

2. Explore the agenda-setting effects of the show, or the remarkable impact that *60 Minutes* has had on the lives of people featured on the show and/or viewing the show, and on the public policy agenda as well.

3. Introduce the people responsible for producing and creating the public affairs information for the show, including an examination of the people responsible for the appeal that *60 Minutes* has as a result of its reporters and their unique modus operandi.

Public affairs programming comes in a variety of production, interaction and communicative contextual formats. Each format contributes to the genre. While *For My People* has the discussion interaction format, *60 Minutes* uses the interview format. Both styles were developed for a specific impact upon an audience. *For My People* is a local/community oriented show, and hashes out issues through discussion with community and opinion leaders. *60 Minutes* is a national show and explores issues through investigative journalism and exposé. Figure 1 was developed for this paper to chart the formal features of public affairs programming, with appropriate descriptors provided to define each specific element.

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As defined by Asante (1989), during "Nommo" Afrocentric discussions of all the problems of the world occur. Using Asante's concept, an Afrocentric public affairs discussion equates a "Nommo" activity. It is assumed that there is an adherence to Asante's Nommo concept in Afrocentric public affairs programming and evident within the discussion orientation. Afrocentricity implies some knowledge and following of either explicit or implicit rules of discussion. Figure 2 is an overview chart developed for this paper to illustrate the way in which components of Afrocentricity, the formal features and framing aspects of public affairs programming, and how Afrocentric contextual interaction in public affairs programming should be reflected in Afrocentric public affairs programming.

A. Production Method Description	B. Interaction Format	C. Goals and Objectives for Public Affairs Programming	D. Interaction Setting or Set Design	E. Communicative Context
Studio production: consists of a studio setting with stationary cameras. **On location:** mobile camera crews film at the site of a significant event, or for visuals to illustrate the subject of a discussion. **Documentary:** presents the factual information of an issue of topic primarily consisting of on location film with narration.	**Panel discussion:** consists of a group of guests that represent varying perspectives on an issue and answer questions from many audience members or interviewers, or from one interviewer on a number of related subjects. **Interview:** basic question and answer session participated in by interviewer and guest, normally one on one. **Media interview:** a member or members of a media organization question a significant individual or individuals concerning an important issue. **Discussion:** each interactant expresses viewpoints and introduces new perspectives on a topic wherein no specific interactant possess a dominant form or amount of knowledge on a the topic, however one interactant may direct the discussion. **Telephone questioning:** audience members make telephone calls to a studio to ask questions of the interactants.	**Problem orientation:** addresses issues which are of immediate concern and are considered problematic to the community at large. **Community activities orientation:** exploration of community activities to promote understanding of varying sectors of the community based on sponsored events. **Social needs orientation:** promotes the need for specific social services via exploration of and attention to sponsored events. **Action orientation:** show topic developed and presented for the purpose of spurring community action. **Progress orientation:** show focuses on a specific topic area in which notable improvements have been made. **Topic of interest:** show focuses on information which is presented in the context of informing the audience of events or happenings.	**Living room arrangement:** generally with interviewer(s) and guest(s) seated, and facing one another in a semicircular fashion to facilitate conversation and camera angles. **Panel setting:** setting that facilitates a number of interactants often with a table between the interviewer or host and the panel. **Occupational setting:** an on location filming which takes place in the occupational environment of the primary subject of an interview.	**Interview of professionals:** expert perspective is presented concerning issues and topics that highlight individuals' viewpoints in terms of their professional roles. **Commentary and editorializing:** a show's producers, crew members, hosts, or generally anyone involved with producing the show presents opinions on issues or topics as a representative of the show. **Debate:** opposing perspectives are debated by noted individuals who are thought to have a relevant opinion of the issue at hand. **Direct perspective:** interactants communicate to promote a specific viewpoint or activity. **Issues perspective:** topics are discussed categorically in terms of issues that are relevant, significant, and pervasive in the lives and lifestyles of community members; interactants provide clarification of issues and illustrate major points.

Figure 1: Formal Features of Public Affairs Programming

Afrocentric Components	Framing Aspects of Public Affairs Programming	Afrocentricity as Reflected in Public Affairs Programming
Oral Tradition Purpose—Activism, Liberation, Unification Process—Engaging and Relational Language—Inverse and Ebonic Style—Verbally Expressive	**Exploration of Unique Programming Style** Exploration of the unique programming style developed within the design and format of the show.	**Afrocentric Contextual Interaction** Afrocentric contextual interaction is rule governed in its focus on Afrocentric components.
Subjective Analytical Base Perspective—Afrocentric world view Framing Mechanisms—View of the impacts of any and all issues primarily in terms of how people of African descent are affected Standards—Purposely subjective and opposed to objectifying standards	**Exploration of the Unique Agenda Setting Effects of the Program** Exploration of the impact that the show has had on its audience and, or public policy with evidence of a tape library of previous broadcasts, viewer mail or other types of audience response, or discussion of public policy affected due to a broadcast.	**Cultural Focus** Cultural focus is apparent in discussions of the guest's or host's actions as reflective Afrocentricity, or the guest or host issues a call to action based on the Afrocentric components to confront other problematic conditions.
Collectivist Socio-political Orientation Ingroups—Individuals who recognize themselves as sharing a common African racial and/or ethnic heritage Ideology/Attitude—Collectivist which calls for the downplay of individualism Cultural Constraints—The relative difficulty that African-Americans may find in becoming allocentric individuals within an individualistic culture	**Introduction to the Show's Crew** Introduction to crew and staff members during the broadcast, examining the unique contribution that they make, and the ways in which the show influences their lives.	**Collective Intellectual Imperative and Commitment** Program crew and staff members' goals should be evident in their plans to continue the Afrocentric focus in other aspects of their lives.

Figure 2: Framing aspects of public affairs programming and Afrocentricity

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III. LITERATURE REVIEWS: RELEVANT THEORETIC APPROACHES

African-Americans and News and Public Affairs Programming

In a 1992 analysis of "U.S. Minorities and the News," African-Americans were not portrayed as criminals, as is more likely in entertainment television, rather they were disproportionately portrayed as athletes and entertainers (Greenberg & Brand, 1992). In their comprehensive literature review, Greenberg and Brand (1992) conclude that the portrayal of African-Americans in the media "is no longer how many there are, but how they are portrayed and in what context" (Greenberg & Brand, 1992, p. 31).

From a review of more than thirty years of empirical literature on African-Americans and television, Poindexter and Stroman (1981) proposed that:

1. Historically, African-Americans have been underrepresented in television portrayals.
2. There has been a trend toward increased visibility of Blacks on television.
3. Blacks are generally presented on television in minor roles and in low-status occupational roles.
4. Stereotyping and negative connotations of Blacks continue to be presented in television programs.

The primary media source of interest here is television news and public affairs programming, however it is important to recognize the relevance of general media, both print and television, in the development of African-Americans' presence in news and public affairs programming. Wilson and Gutierrez (1985) have developed a five stage typology of the developmental, and historically traceable introduction and portrayal of minorities within mainstream American news media. Those phases are identified as follows.

Exclusionary Phase; this phase is identifiable by the virtual invisibility of non-whites in the news media. The United States Declaration of Independence proclaiming its emergence as a sovereign nation needed no actual exclusionary statements. The

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phrase "all men are created equal" was understood to exclude Indians and Africans—there was no need to include the word "White" between "all" and "men" (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985). As a result the developing American press saw no need to include all people in its coverage.

Threatening-Issue Phase; when minorities are portrayed as subjects of perceived threats to the existing social order, that portrayal is a threatening issue. Shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation, newspapers were filled with articles speculating on the effects of emancipation on the existing social order. Similarly, in 1879, the *San Francisco Chronicle* led a press attack against Chinese laborers and instigated fears that they would displace whites in the labor market (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985).

Confrontation phase; when an ethnic minority presence stimulates fear and apprehension in the majority population, the response is inevitably a social confrontation. News media having already brought the threat to society's attention, then proceed to cover the response (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985). A contemporary example of this type of coverage is evident in the news coverage of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, particularly with the abundant coverage of individuals participating in violence and looting in South Central Los Angeles.

Stereotypical selection phase; this phase is identifiable by the selection of news stories that ostensibly appear to be favorable to minorities. Success stories are a good example of stereotypical selection. These stories accomplish the two objectives of stereotypical selective reporting: (1) the majority audience is reassured that minorities are still "in their place" (that is, the reservation, ghetto, or wherever) and (2) those who escape their designated place are not a threat to society because they manifest the same values and ambitions of the majority (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985, p. 138).

Integrated coverage phase; this phase is the antithesis of exclusion in which Wilson and Gutierrez (1985) envision the last vestiges of prejudice and racism being removed from the gatekeeper ranks. While this objective may seem far off, one possible

method to alleviate the problem of uneven and biased coverage in news and public affairs programming might be as simple as providing more choices. Specialized news and public affairs programming choices such as BET for African-Americans, and Univision for Hispanic Americans, offer opportunities to hear different perspectives. These options may make serving diverse populations more possible. As such *For My People* is an example of an attempt to serve a public which historically has not achieved integrated coverage.

Although African-Americans are more visible on television in both entertainment and news, the coverage remains biased. Some research finds news presentations to promote racist affect (Entman, 1990; Entman, 1992), and (as previously discussed) that portrayals of African-Americans in news media reflect stages of inclusion. With increased coverage of African-Americans the present stage of inclusion seems to be reflective of stereotypical coverage. Due perhaps to this type of coverage, news and public affairs information in mainstream media seem to have limited relevance in the lives of African-Americans. This viewpoint is supported by findings that indicate that most African-Americans give limited attention to mainstream news and public affairs programming, and choose alternative media outlets (Poindexter & Stroman, 1981; Tan & Tan, 1979).

African-Americans have been the subject of many studies in television news and public affairs programming. Since the Kerner Commission report sought to discover some root causes for the civil disobedience incidents of the 1960s, and revealed that African-Americans were treated negatively, and sparsely in American media, and as examples of social ills, there have been many studies on African-Americans and the media. In research that focuses on television as a mass communications medium, entertainment and media effects seem to dominate research. However, the combined effects of both entertainment and news media content have a definite effect upon beliefs about social reality (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982). Of particular interest here are African-

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Coverage/Portrayals of African-Americans in Television News Media

Moving away from the exclusionary phase (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985), African-Americans became more visible in the news media during the 1970s. Roberts' (1975) study of the presentation of African-Americans in network news found that although African-Americans appeared in 23% of network TV newscasts, they were in primarily non-speaking roles. Additionally, Roberts (1975) found that African-Americans primarily appeared in stories that had to do with civil rights. The author concluded that in the context of world and national affairs, the African-American viewpoint is seldom expressed.

Regarding increased visibility in the news media, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights claimed that in 1977 there were few African-American television news correspondents and that they seldom handled lead stories. By 1979, the Commission had conducted a follow-up study (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979) and reported that less than 2% of the network stories dealt with minorities, a smaller proportion than 2 years earlier, and that 8% of the correspondents were minorities (Greenberg and Brand, 1992, p .7).

In terms of coverage and portrayals within the threatening issue phase of African-Americans in the television news media, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1977) found that African-Americans are sparsely covered in mainstream television news media. The news media overall have been criticized as having shown little interest in Black life other than drawing attention to conflict. Several studies have found that coverage tends to be negatively stereotypical (Entman, 1990; 1992; Poindexter & Stroman, 1981); and that coverage tends to reflect a concentration of negative bias, and involvement with social problems (Entman, 1990; 1992; Rainville & McCormick, 1977; Chaudhary, 1980;

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Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985). Particularly in the context of news reporting on race relations issues, the news media's methods have come under scrutiny. As a threatening issue, coverage of racially sensitive stories has been criticized as having aggravated race relations (Court, 1990, p. 28). At other times coverage of racially sensitive crimes has been criticized as operating by a "convenient rule of thumb: Black-on-White crimes... are typically assumed *not* to be racially motivated; White-on-Black violence... presumptively *does* stem from 'bigotry'" (Anderson, 1990, p. 54). The implication is that news coverage is not "even-handed" when it comes to reporting on threatening issues such as racially sensitive stories. Reed (1993) criticized the news media coverage of African-Americans as being based on social prejudices; stereotypical coverage as welfare recipients, and as unjustly benefiting from affirmative action legislation; and as primarily focusing the violence and drugs in African-American communities. Reed's criticism of the news media centers on its depiction of African-Americans as a threat to the comfort of mainstream society.

The stereotypical selection phase reflects informational items that conform to existing attitudes that are selected and given repeated emphasis (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985). In a 1976 presentation during the National Conference on Human Experimentation, Yette (1976) cited the *Today Show's* bicentennial program for amplifying existing prejudices that mainstream society holds for African-Americans. The program used a camera shot of "the opulence of Michigan Avenue" to contrast what the reporter then called "a poor side, a corrupt side of Chicago," and summed up the report with a tight camera shot of a small Black child, standing beside a fence that looked [as if] it should have been taken from the set of either the *Sanford and Son* junkyard, or *Good Times* tenement (Yette, 1976, p. 18). Here, television media served to reinforce the prejudice that Black identity is characterized by corrupt behavior (Spurlock, 1982, p. 75).

Crime reporting which suggests that African-Americans are more dangerous than whites (Entman, 1990; Entman, 1992) is evidence of stereotypical selection. Portrayals

of African-Americans political leaders as self-serving and one sided is stereotypical selection as well (Entman, 1990; 1992). African-American teenagers have endured particularly difficult life circumstances, including teenage pregnancy, crime, and poverty to name a few. In terms of teenage pregnancy, a review of local Peoria television newscasts revealed that the birth of a teenage African-American mother was ignored as the actual first birth of the new year. Apparently television stations saw this birth as having struck the wrong note for the upbeat story they were after ("Lost Voices," 1989). The message that African-American teenagers get from their surroundings, from society—and from many if not most of society's newspapers and newscasts—is that Black life is not very interesting or valuable or newsworthy, that young African-Americans don't have much of a future, and that the world they live in is irrelevant to mainstream American life ("Lost Voices," 1989, p. 19).

Contrasting coverage of African-Americans is especially evident. Coverage of African-Americans in athletics appeared fair and balanced accorded to findings in Sneed, Riffe and Van Ommeren (1988). However, African-Americans legislators universally agreed that press coverage of news involving crime was not (Sneed, Riffe & Van Ommeren, 1988). The legislators in the Sneed et al. study also felt that the white press lacked understanding for issues concerning the Black community, and that coverage was inadequate.

Black Entertainment Television (BET) has produced public affairs programming such as *America's Black Forum* and *Portraits* (Parr, 1984, p. 68) to serve the information interests of African-Americans. *America's Black Forum* examines how national and international events affect African-Americans, and *Portraits* is a talk show that features prominent African-Americans in the fields of literature, music, architecture and the performing arts (Parr 1984). BET is a national and fully dedicated cable network whose mission is to present programming about African-Americans.

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BET describes "Black" television as that which features Black actors and actresses in leading roles, or programming that reflects Black culture and lifestyles (Parr, 1984, p. 67). BET describes its programming objective as showcasing "the creativity and vitality of the Black entertainment community and provide[ing] a national video network to inform and enlighten the Black television public" (Parr, 1984, p. 67). Of particular importance is the contribution that organizations such as BET make to the presentation of African-Americans in news and public affairs programming. BET presents news and public affairs information in terms of how African-Americans are involved, and, or how African-Americans are affected.

A 1985 study of a television show called *Profiles in Black* (*Profiles)* investigated the extent to which *Profiles* provided alternative perspectives in public affairs television programming for African-Americans (Tait, 1985). In November 1969, *Profiles* first aired locally in Detroit, Michigan, and regarding public affairs programming dedicated to the information needs of African-Americans, it was one of the first of its kind (Tait, 1985). The primary purpose of *Profiles* was to "portray African-Americans realistically in its broadcasts, thus, reversing the trend of portraying African-Americans in demeaning and low-status jobs" (Tait, 1989, p. 314). In chronicling African-Americans' lives and occupations, the producer/host of *Profiles,* Gilbert Maddox used an on-location interview format to foster positive images of African-Americans in news and public affairs programming. According to Gilbert Maddox, producer of *Profiles* the show was designed to counteract local television's neglect of African-Americans in news and public affairs programming and to replace the medium's traditional stereotyping, if not misrepresentation, of African-Americans with realistic and positive portrayals of African-American life (Tait, 1985, p. 87). The majority population in Detroit, Michigan is African-American, and presents particularly fertile grounds for public affairs programming fashioned to meet the needs of African-Americans.

Television oriented print news media conglomerate Gannet Inc. has instituted an "affirmative action policy" regarding what it prints. Reporters and photographers are strongly encouraged to interview and take pictures of minority groups for all kinds of stories, not just about racial issues, and to find stories and pictures that present minorities in a positive light (Nickerson, 1992, p. 12). Overall African-American media professionals have regarded this policy positively, and as a push for portraying African-Americans as a relevant part of the normal scope of American life (Nickerson, 1992).

Effects of Television News and Public Affairs Programming

The effects of television news and public affairs programming are of interest here regarding their impact on African-Americans. As a function of how this programming relays images, and helps audiences form impressions of African-Americans, this review is also concerned with what other racial/ethnic groups learn about African-Americans, and how this affects social conditions for African-Americans. Greenberg and Hanneman's 1970 study on the impact of African-Americans on television and racial attitudes touched on the effects of information likely to appear in news and public affairs programming. In the Greenberg and Hanneman (1970) study, African-American respondents rated television news as far less fair to minorities than did white adults. White viewers who were antagonistic toward race related issues and associated with individuals or organizations labeled as radical, were significantly more likely to report that they see more Blacks on television than did people more favorable to these race related issues. These respondents also regarded television news as fair to minorities (p. 32). Whites' attitudes to moderate race related issues indicated parallel results. The more negative the view toward these more moderate concepts, the fairer they found television to be in its news treatment of minorities (p. 32).

Greenberg and Reeves (1976) found that minority children generally perceive *television news* people as more credible than news people from other media. Poindexter

and Stroman, in their 1981 literature review concluded, based on clusters of research that African-American children learn behaviors from televised models. Social role learning research models have reinforced the position that televised images have specific effects on attitudes about African-Americans (Greenberg, 1982; Greenberg & Atkin, 1982; Greenberg, 1986). Armstrong, Neuendorf, and Brentar (1992) found that whites with high exposure to television news and relatively little interracial contact, was associated with perceptions that, in comparison to whites, African-Americans are relatively worse off socio-economically.

Entman (1990) argued that local television news in Chicago possibly reinforces modern racism. Modern racist beliefs do not ascribe to the viewpoint that African-Americans are inherently inferior as would traditional racism. The first component of modern racism is anti-Black affect—a general emotional hostility toward Blacks. The second element of modern racism is resistance to the political demands of Blacks. The third component of modern racism is a belief that racism is dead and that racial discrimination no longer inhibits Black achievement (Entman, 1990, pp. 332-333). Via content analysis, Entman suggests that local television reinforces modern racism by its use of African-American newscasters along with portrayals which suggest that African-Americans are more dangerous, the dominance of whites' perspective in stories which also involve African-Americans, and images of "self-serving" African-American political leaders juxtaposed against "altruistic" white political leaders. This juxtaposing of images cancels out the affect of seeing an African-American in a positive light as a newscaster.

The net result of this portrayal is anti-Black affect (Entman, 1990). Entman (1992) expanded this idea to suggest that local television news serves as a cultural forum which transforms and preserves values, and encourages modern racism. African-American journalists have also criticized the media for its possible effects, especially that when African-Americans are shown on newscasts primarily as criminal suspects, the idea that African-Americans are indeed a criminal group is planted (Crosson, 1989). Others

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have observed that news media coverage may lead some to believe that African-Americans are poor, criminal, addicted and dysfunctional, and that the coverage of this "small" segment is presented not as the exception, but as the norm (Raybon, 1989). Armstrong (1992) conducted a study of university students, whose results revealed that entertainment portrayals of African-Americans left white students with the impression that African-Americans enjoy a relatively higher socioeconomic position with respect to the average income, social class, and education achievement. News portrayals however left them with the impression however, that African-Americans are relatively worse off socio-economically.

Television portrayals of African-Americans and the effects of those portrayals on whites' perceptions have very definite social consequences for African-Americans, especially in terms of social contact, be it casual, professional, or intimate. This can be a problematic condition, or at least an issue of concern for African-Americans, because white Americans outnumber African-Americans social contact with whites inevitable. Because they are not in control of the primary media outlets, they are not in control of the portrayals therefrom. Consequently, African-Americans have become sensitive to, and vigilantly aware of other groups' perceptions of them as a whole due to media portrayals.

African-American Uses of Television News Media and Public Affairs Programming

African-Americans tend to rely on television as a source of information (Poindexter and Stroman, 1981). In terms of public affairs viewing behavior, Poindexter and Stroman (1981), suggest the following about African-Americans.

- Television figures prominently among the sources which Blacks tend to rely on for information, especially political information.
- African-Americans are heavily dependent upon television for information on other African-Americans and the African-Americans community.

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- African-Americans are among the heaviest consumers of television, although there are variations within Black SES groups.
- Although African-Americans are heavy viewers of television, they are not as likely to watch news and public affairs programs (pp. 107-109).

Poindexter and Stroman's (1981) proposition that African-Americans are not as likely to watch news and public affairs programs is at least partially attributable to the relevancy that the mainstream news media holds for African-Americans. When African-Americans do appear on camera on national network news, the majority of the time they are seen but not heard (Roberts, 1975). The implication is that the viewpoint of African-Americans not important.

Other research however contradicts the Poindexter and Stroman (1981) conclusions. Impact Resources report that Blacks watch an average of 171 minutes of television daily, 3% below the norm for all adults. African-Americans are also more likely than the general population to watch television news. Compared to the general population, African-Americans are 30% more likely to read a local morning daily newspaper (Ambry, 1988).

An Indianapolis study found that African-Americans turn most often to television, as opposed to newspapers and other people, for news about the African-American community (Shostech, 1969). In San Francisco and Chicago, African-Americans that were the most dependent upon television as a source of information about African-Americans were older, higher income African-Americans. African-Americans with more education were found to be less dependent on television for information about African-Americans than those with less education (Shostech, 1969).

A secondary analysis of 1974 election data from the Institute for Social Research reported that African-Americans, as heavy viewers of television, were likely to watch news and public affairs programs, and that they were more likely than whites to watch morning and late evening news and less likely to watch the early evening news (Bogart, 1972). Stroman and Becker's 1978 study of television as a source of political

information found that African-Americans were more likely to rely on television for this information. Tan and Tan's 1979 study found that African-Americans are much less likely than whites to be *regular* viewers of all news, including national, local news specials, and documentaries.

Weber and Fleming (1984) researched knowledge and news acquisition of African-American and non African-American adolescents in selected school districts in Virginia. In predominately African-American districts, African-American knowledge acquisition scores were equal to or superior to those of non African-Americans in other districts (Weber and Fleming, 1984). Regarding awareness of current events, both African-Americans and non African-Americans used television as their main source of news acquisition. Greenberg and Brand (1992) observed, based on a literature review of various aspects of minorities and the news, that minority groups prefer and depend on television for news even more than whites, and that television as a medium has greater credibility (p. 32). A Michigan study of students of African decent (who were not American citizens) revealed that these students relied heavily on radio for information about the relative political stability in their respective countries (Pratt, 1993).

Based upon observations that minority groups prefer and depend on television for news, that television models generally serve as teaching and socializing tools, and with the increased exposure of African-Americans in television news and public affairs programming, portrayals still tend to be negative, Afrocentricity is examined as an approach for observing communication with a cultural orientation. Of particular interest is exploraing the idea that specialized, targeted programming can serve to facilitate integrated news and public affairs programming by providing services to audiences previously under-served, in terms of its use by the audience and the effects of its use. The use of Afrocentricity as a communications philosophy in public affairs programming gives Afrocentricity a relatively concrete application for actual observable behaviors.

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The following section therefore is an analysis of Afrocentricity, its component parts, and relevant concepts.

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IV. AFROCENTRICITY AND RELEVANT CONCEPTS

Many studies and analyses claim an Afrocentric orientation, and some are critical of the Afrocentric orientation, yet there has been no clear systematic explication of Afrocentricity and its component parts. This study will provide an explication of Afrocentricity by its components, and the related concepts therein. The use of *For My People* as an exemplar public affairs show has contributed to this analysis of Afrocentricity.

Pan-Africanism, Black Power, and Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity can be regarded as cultural nationalism for African-Americans. With respect to American mass communication, and cultural nationalism, a glaring example of such exists in television news reporting on victims of tragic and deadly accidents that occur outside the United States. Foremost, reporting concerns whether any and, or how many Americans were involved. For example, one expects information from American media concerning how many *Americans* survived, were injured, or died in a plane crash. If this type of reporting is acceptable based on nation state nationalism, then it should follow that an Afrocentric nationalist perspective on news presentation is responsible and acceptable. News and public affairs information dedicated to African-Americans would then focus on material that serves the information needs of its primary audience, just as mainstream American media dedicate its focus to mainstream America. Afrocentricity then defines Afrocentric nationalism as its communication focus in relaying news and public affairs information.

The history of African-Americans is reflective of varying movements for empowerment. The concept of mobilization was born in the southern portion of the United States and used primarily "indigenous" (Morris, 1984) resources; that is, resources which included churches, community organizations, community leaders, local money,

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and organized masses. By the 1950s African-Americans had learned to transform these resources into power resources and marshal them in conflict situations to accomplish political ends (Morris, 1984, p. XII). In urban America, African-Americans have experienced much disillusionment with national party politics, but since the late 70s and early 80s, there were indications that a new kind of political activism was beginning to emerge, especially at the local level (Jennings, 1992).

Local calls for the development of Black agendas have emerged in major cities —New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, Rochester, Philadelphia, Detroit. This activism focuses on making Black politics more responsive and effective regarding depressed conditions in the Black community, and developing a political strategy that would force local government to advocate more strongly, and appeal to the private sector on behalf of the quality of life in the Black community (Jennings, 1992, p. 72). Another, more "nationalist" (Jennings, 1992) strain of social activism has always existed to continually challenge the Black integrationist framework, but its political saliency was periodic. The level of efficacy for the more nationalist strand has depended on overall social and economic conditions facing the Black community. During periods of progress, the nationalist strand has not been as popular as in times of Black social, educational, and economic retrogression (Jennings, 1992).

C. V. Hamilton listed several themes associated with Black political thought: "constitutionalism," "plural nationalism," "sovereign nationalism," "leftist thought," and "Pan-Africanism" (Hamilton, 1973, cited in Jennings, 1992). Hamilton also cited several ideological orientations that could be dominant within the African-American community, his list included the following: Traditional Integrationist, Black Moralist, Alienated Reformer, Alienated Revolutionary, and Black Anarchist (Hamilton, 1973, cited in Jennings, 1992). He proposed that these orientations may be useful in understanding the varying philosophical directions of Black politics in America. Furthermore, all the orientations "have a vast constituency within the Black populace, which are

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simultaneously operating on virtually all political issues affecting Blacks" and continually interacting and molding a "silent Black majority," to use C. V. Hamilton's phrase (Jennings, 1992, p. 65). Among Blacks there is constant movement and fluidity between these orientations (Jennings, 1992). This fluidity is also evident between the practices and ideologies of Pan-Africanism, Black Power, and Afrocentricity.

Pan-Africanism

In the 1930s the veteran Afro-American scholar and agitator, W. E. B. DuBois, stated that the Pan-African movement aimed at an intellectual understanding and cooperation among all groups of African descent in order to bring about "the industrial and spiritual emancipation of the Negro people" (The Crisis, 1933, p. 247). Among the early leaders of the Pan-Africanist movement, there were many conflicting ideas concerning the overall purpose (Esedebe, 1982). In developing a working definition of the term "Pan-Africanism," Esedebe (1982) lists major component ideas, namely: Africa as the homeland of Africans and persons of African origins, solidarity among men of African descent, belief in a distinct African personality, rehabilitation of Africa's past, pride in African culture, Africa for Africans in church and state, and the hope for a united and glorious future Africa (p. 3).

Pan-Africanism is one of the earliest manifestations of color consciousness used to mobilize action, and build a recognized relationship of Africans in the diaspora to the African continent. Pan-Africanism has been likened to the Zionist movement in terms of the centralization of race effort and the recognition of racial fount (Legum, 1962, p. 14). From its inception in 1900, the Pan-Africanist Movement has sought the liberation of African peoples (Muyumba, 1988, p. 1), and has been described in terms of four dimensions. The first dimension is National Pan-Africanism that emerged as an expression of nationalism in most African nations. In this sense, Pan-Africanism rejects all forms of prejudice and discrimination based on narrow, ethnic, kinship ties among

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people of African descent (Muyumba, 1988, p. 2). The second dimension is Continental Pan-Africanism which proposed the unification of all African states organically under one government (p. 2). Central to this dimension is the concept of political unification.

Trans-Atlantic Pan-Africanism has emerged as a third dimension, and seeks the unification of African people in the "New World" and the African continent. The focal point of this movement is a renewed discovery and recognition of cultural ties and historical roots (Muyumba, 1988, p. 2). Finally the fourth dimension is Global Pan-Africanism which raises the issue of a *global* community and *global* unity of humans, the struggle for human freedom from oppression, and a universal struggle for liberation. In this dimension, Pan-Africanists work to free Africans and Africa from neo-colonialism, to abolish racism everywhere, and to plant the seeds of peace, justice, and equality in the socio-economic and political systems of their societies (Muyumba, 1988, p. 3).

Particular to the concept of Afrocentricity in the United States are the Trans-Atlantic and Global Pan-Africanism concepts. African-Americans' need to engage in Trans-Atlantic and Global Pan-Africanism is rooted in feelings of dispossession, oppression, persecution, and rejection. The most prominent and well-known activists of the Pan-Africanist movement, in terms of Africans in the American diaspora, were W. E. B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey (Legum, 1962). A meaningful transformation of the African-American, as inspired by Pan-Africanism, was to recognize his connection to the African continent regarding spiritual, intellectual, and social development.

The Black Power Movement

Kwame Ture (formerly Stokely Carmicheal) and C. V. Hamilton, in the (1967, 1992) publication *Black Power*, one of the most recognized publications of the movement in the 1960s, said that: "Black Power means proper representation and sharing of control. It means the creation of power bases, of strength, from which Black people can press to change local or nation-wide patterns of oppression—instead of from weakness" (p. 46).

The Black Power Movement was the movement called for in the 1960s—a concept both explosive and threatening to established civil rights leaders and their white allies. The significance of the call was the realization that only substantive and systemic change in social and economic arrangements could produce equal social relations between Blacks and whites in America (Jennings, 1992, p. 38). Fundamental to the political modernization effort of Black Power was critical analysis of traditional power structures. Ture and Hamilton defined the Black Power political modernization effort as inclusive of three major concepts: (1) questioning old values and institutions of the society; (2) searching for new and different forms of political structure to solve political and economic problems; and (3) broadening the base of political participation to include more people in the decision making process (Ture & Hamilton, 1992, p. 39). While emphasizing access, Black Power advocates also began to focus, more clearly than the established civil rights movement leadership had, on changing the wealth and power relationships in American society (Jennings, 1992).

Because Black Power sought to make a claim for a viable share of the power base in American society, critics have called the Black Power movement *reverse* racism. However according to Ture and Hamilton (1992) "The goal of Black Power is full participation in the decision making processes affecting the lives of Black people... The goal of Black power is positive and functional to a free and viable society. No white racist can make this claim" (pp. 47-48). In defense of the goals of Black Power, a group of Black churchmen affiliated with the National Council of Churches, published a statement in the *New York Times* of July 31, 1966. "...America has asked its Negro citizens to fight for opportunity as *individuals*, whereas at certain points in our history what we have needed most has been opportunity for the *whole group*, not just for selected and approved Negroes ... We must not apologize for the existence of this form of group power, for we have been oppressed as a group and not as individuals" (Ture & Hamilton, 1992, p. 48).

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One of the foremost challenges identified in The Movement was how to combat the indirect rule of African-American communities by *powerless* African-American leaders, a situation reminiscent of the politics of colonialism. As its central focus, the Black Power Movement sought African-American political mobilization in the form of active participation in the political process, particularly in voting and leadership accountability. According to Ture and Hamilton (1992):

> Broadening the base of political participation, then, has as much to do with the quality of Black participation as with the quantity. We are fully aware that the Black vote, especially in the [N]orth, has been pulled out of white pockets and delivered whenever it was in the interest of white politicians to do so. That vote must no longer be controllable by those who have neither the interests nor the demonstrated concern of Black people in mind (p. 43).

This component of Afrocentricity is especially concerned with active and effective political participation in the United States.

Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity is a way of interpreting the history, culture, and behavior of Blacks from an African or Black perspective. Having been labeled as one of the *new* centrisms challenging assumptions taken as truths for generations, Afrocentric and female-centric groups have directed attention to the overwhelming stranglehold that Eurocentrism and androcentrism have had, and continue to have on defining "tradition," and on passing tradition down to subsequent generations (Williams, 1992, p. 17).

Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, Chairperson of the Department of African-American Studies at Temple University, is one of the more recognized academicians at the forefront of developing Afrocentricity as a cultural theory. In Asante's (1989) publication *Afrocentricity*, Afrocentric transformation is described in terms of five levels of awareness. Asante describes those levels as follows:

> The first level is called *skin recognition* which occurs when a person recognizes that his or her skin and/or her heritage is Black but the person cannot grasp any further reality. The second level is *environmental recognition.* At this level, the person sees the environment as indicating his or her Blackness through discrimination and abuse. The third level is *personality awareness.* It occurs when a person says 'I like music, or dance, or chitterlings and indeed the person may be speaking correctly and truthfully but this is not Afrocentricity. The fourth level is *interest concern* this level accepts the first three levels and demonstrates interest and concern in the problems of Blacks and tries to deal intelligently with the issues of the African people. However, it lacks Afrocentricity in the sense that it has not become a commitment to an Afrocentric cultural base. *Afrocentric awareness,* the fifth level, is when the person becomes totally changed to a conscious level of involvement in the struggle for his or her own mind liberation. Only when this happens can we say that the person is aware of the collective conscious will (p. 49).

Afrocentricity can be viewed as the contemporary color conscious cultural, and philosophical orientation that can be applied to educational, political, and social movements within the African-American community. As a cultural orientation, it incorporates all previous conceptions of color conscious movements, and to acknowledge any and all activities in terms of what is in the best interest of people of African descent.

Components of Afrocentricity

Upon examination of Pan-Africanism, Black Power, and various movements that have influenced Afrocentricity, three components emerge as meaningful to the development of Afrocentric ideology:

- The significance of an *Oral Tradition* among people of African descent;
- A *Subjective Analytical Base* in articulating concerns; and
- A *Collectivist Socio-Political Orientation* regarding mobilization and empowerment efforts.

Although Asante's definition will be the primary guide for the conceptualization of Afrocentricity, ideas from other sources are utilized to support the three components. Following is a review of the literature detailing pertinent information on each of the components. Asante's conceptualization of the theme is reviewed afterward. Within the oral tradition the identification and defining of; purpose, process, language, and style are of importance for Afrocentricity. Regarding the subjective analytical base, the identification and defining of; perspective, framing mechanisms, and standards for analysis are of importance for Afrocentricity. Finally, for the collectivist socio-political orientation the identification and defining of; ingroups, ideology and attitude, and cultural constraints are of importance for Afrocentricity.

Oral Tradition

A rich and varied oral tradition is one of the more recognizable facets within the historical background of African-Americans. That almost three hundred years of systematically reinforced illiteracy in America sustained the oral tradition among African-Americans (White, 1987), is one of the reasons why the oral tradition is Afrocentrically relevant. Because of strict anti-literacy laws during slavery, vocal communications became, for a much greater proportion of Blacks than whites, the fundamental medium of communication. Orature, the total oral traditions of Africans and

African Americans, provides a comprehensive corpus of work for examination (Asante, 1987, p. 38). As Matthew Holden (1973) wrote, "The Black culture is a culture in which, relatively speaking, oratorical-debating competence is far more praiseworthy than technical bureaucratic skill ... A Black preacher ... had better be a good talker! The same thing is more often than not true for the Black politician" (p. 21-22; cited in Morrison, 1987, p. 109). Mastery of such techniques has been known to sway an audience, indeed evoking a direct response is a very important measure of success, as noted in field observations (Morrison, 1987).

The oral tradition in African-American life has helped to instill important verbal oriented life-skills in children. Both children and adults participate in "verbal play" which complements children's learning within the oral tradition. This verbal play includes looking, playing, imitation, listening, and learning oral language skills for negotiating, interpreting, and adapting information. These abilities transfer well into individual and group survival in adult life (Heath, 1989, p. 368). In traditional patterns of rural life, especially in the southeastern part of the United States, open spaces and climatic conditions have favored a considerable amount of outdoor public life that, in turn, ensured that youngsters heard and participated in a great variety of oral language performances (Levine, 1977; cited in Heath, 1989, p. 368). Children inherited an ethos of group involvement in oral decision making.

These public occasions for oral performances helped sustain certain other characteristics such as persistence, assertive problem-solving, and adaptability in role-playing (Spencer, Brookins, & Allen, 1985; cited in Heath, 1989). Older adults do not simplify or mediate the world for children of the community, they *expect* the young to adapt to changing contexts, speakers, and caregivers. They say of the young: "Children have to make their own way in this world" and "have their own heads" (Heath, 1989, p. 368). Speakers neither censor nor simplify their talk around children, and when they want children to hear them, they often do not address children directly, assuming they are

active listeners to the multi-party talk that swirls around them in everyday life (Heath, 1983, in press; Ward, 1971; Young, 1970; cited in Heath, 1989).

The oral tradition can also in part account for the way that African-Americans use verbal skills differently than whites. Because of the way that African-Americans use verbal aggressiveness, when Blacks and whites engage each other in public debate about an issue, not only might they be divided over content—the issue itself—but, more fundamentally, over process: how disagreement on an issue is appropriately handled (Kochman, 1981, p. 17).

According to Kochman (1981):

> The modes of behavior that Blacks and whites consider appropriate for engaging in public debate on an issue differ in their stance and level of spiritual intensity. The Black mode—that of Black community people—is high keyed: animated, interpersonal, and confrontational. The white mode—that of the middle class—is relatively low keyed: dispassionate, impersonal, and non-challenging. The first is characteristic of involvement; it is heated, loud, and generates affect. The second is characteristic of detachment and is cool, quiet, and without affect (p. 18).

Process in the oral tradition means that spoken communication among African-Americans has taken on a much more meaningful role in African-American culture. The oral tradition in this sense dictates that for example in argument Blacks distinguish between argument used to debate a difference of opinion and argument used to ventilate anger and hostility (Kochman, 1981). In the first form of argument—for persuasion—the affect shown is expressive of debaters' relationship to their material. Its presence indicates that people are sincere and serious about what they are saying (Kochman, 1981, p. 18). Argument for ventilating hostility is more intense—more passionate than earnest. The significance of adhering to the rules of this style is also an element within the oral tradition. Black cultural norms require levels of public interaction that are more emotionally intense (Kochman, 1981, p. 117). As a norm within the oral tradition, an

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Holt (1972) has described the "linguistic survival process" as functionally related to the conflicts in American society, and the African-American experience of oppression and social conflict. Holt called this process "inversion" (Holt, 1972, p. 152). Inversion is a type of resistance that African-Americans developed linguistically to maintain some measure of dignity because white verbalizations defined Blacks as inferior (Holt, 1972). Holt further described the inversion process as follows:

> Blacks gradually developed their own ways of conveying resistance using "The Man's" language against him as a defense against sub-human categorization. The socio-cultural context formed the basis for the development of inversion as a positive and valuable adaptive response pattern. As Cobbs and Grier state, 'The slaves turned the language as it was presented to them to their own purposes, and in fact the precise purposes which their owners sought to prevent' (1968, p. 103). The phenomenon of inversion is a practical necessity for people in a subordinate position. The socio-historical progression of slavery went from physical restraint to legal restraint, followed by a de facto restraint and succeeded by a psychological restraint (p. 153).

Inversion is a defensive mechanism that enables African-Americans to fight linguistic, and thereby psychological entrapment. Used as a defensive mechanism, inversion allows African-Americans a sort of "guerrilla warfare" which allows protection and masking of one's true feelings while allowing the subtle assertion of self, while promoting group solidarity (Holt, 1972, p. 154). Because whites, were denied access to the semantic extensions of duality, connotations, and denotations that developed within Black usage, they could only interpret the same material according to its original singular meaning (Holt, 1972). White interpretation of the communication event was quite different from that made by a Black person in the interaction, enabling Blacks to deceive and manipulate whites without penalty (Holt, 1972).

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One example of inversion is the word "black" adopted and *inverted* by African-Americans as a noun for *self definition.* Blacks' adoption of the noun "black" represents a determination to call themselves by any name other than that used by whites. The developmental and functional aspects of inversion furnish an interesting and significant sociolinguistic development in contemporary America (Holt, 1972, p. 157). The Black struggle for collective survival and for social, economic, and political power (commonly called the "Black Revolution") utilizes the criterion of Blackness as an imperative of unity, a catalyst which cannot be lost, stolen, preempted, or devoured by white society (Holt, 1972, p. 158). "Black" is a unifying term, pro-Black and anti-colonialist. It crystallizes self-awareness, ideological direction, and solidifies bonds of the national Black experience in confrontation with white domination (Holt, 1972). At the heart of inversion is the contrast in referential and contextual functions. In essence, the idea is to make any word of denigration used by the power group take on shades of meaning known only to the inverter (Holt, 1972, p. 154).

Oral Tradition in Afrocentricity

Purpose within the oral tradition can be to empower, liberate, and/or unify. Afrocentricity further mandates that the purpose or goal of the oral tradition is for "manipulation" of African-American reality (Asante, 1989, p. 32). As Holt explained, inversion allowed African-Americans to manipulate their reality by transforming terms previously used to denigrate, into terms that unify and empower (e.g., the term Black). Using the oral tradition allows African-Americans to manipulate their reality by exercising skill in audience manipulation and transforming the material characteristic meanings for the language they use. Based upon Asante's conceptualization, the purpose of an Afrocentric discussion (or *Nommo*, to use Asante's terminology) is the systemic exploration of the relationships, social codes, cultural and commercial customs, and oral traditions and proverbs of African people, within a structured rule governed environment.

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Process in the Afrocentric oral tradition is engaging and relational. Process is described as engaging because communicative force is meant to attract an audience with the *way* the speaker delivers a message. Within African-American culture there is a premium on embellishment, much related to similar language usage in West Africa (Smitherman, 1977; cited in Morrison, 1987). Besides the way that a speaker frames his argument, and the words he chooses, a speaker's effectiveness is also dependent upon the strength of his speech inflections, and nuances used to move an audience (Morrison, 1987; Holt, 1972). Rhythmic flow, lyrical qualities, and tone intensity as stylistic characteristics in the oral tradition, are used to arouse an audience (Holt, 1972; Kochman, 1972; Smitherman, 1977; Asante, 1987).

The relational element in the Afrocentric oral tradition is based on the type of response that the speaker hopes to illicit from an audience. As stated above, stylistic qualities engage the audience, the relational element however, lies in the speaker's ability to build a relationship with his audience. According to Asante (1987) a speaker must capture an audience not only through the words he uses and the way he uses them, he must also use the "power" of images and "principal myths":

> African discourse is given to concrete images that are capable of producing compulsive relationships and invoking the inner needs of audiences because of the inherent power of the images ... To maintain that [audience] fascination, the African-American speaker seeks to appeal to the principal myths. The African, with an unbroken link to the traditions, maintains that linkage organically. For the African-American, the task is to find the myths that have developed in our American history (p. 79-80).

Essentially, Asante defines the engaging quality in the oral tradition process as contextual, in that the spoken word is given additional meaning via elements of folklore and myth, of which the speaker and audience have mutual knowledge and understanding.

Process also defines a speaker's relationship with the subject matter. To engage in a debate with the speaker who initially advanced a thesis in the white (Eurocentric)

mode of debate one would dictate theses to the group as a whole in an impersonal manner. The Afrocentric mode requires one to consider the debate of an issue as much a contest between individuals as a test of opposing ideas (Kochman, 1981). Blacks consider it essential for individuals to have personal positions on issues and assume full responsibility for arguing their validity (Kochman, 1981, p. 25).

Language, according to Asante may not include actual African vocabulary terms, but do include elements of African character. In spite of the myth that African-Americans had "lost virtually the whole of their linguistic and cultural heritage after their arrival in North America" (Dalby, 1972, p. 171), there is evidence of some remaining linkages to their African ancestry. The use of certain English words is traceable to Western African words of similar meaning. Take for example use of the word "bad" to describe something that is considered *very good* in English terms. In a similar sense, something can be described in positive extremes in African languages. For example in Mandingo (Bambara) *a ka nui kyo-jugu* means it is very good, literally this phrase means "it is good badly" (Dalby, 1972, p. 177). There is also evidence of newly created terminology that resembles, and is directly traceable to African terms (Dalby, 1972). According to Asante "Africans have shown a remarkable ability to humanize any language we have spoken whether it was Portuguese, English, Spanish, French, or Russian" (p. 32). This is especially what enables the process of inversion. The subtle manipulation of meaning, with the covert incorporation of African character in language, has allowed people of African descent to customize any language that they adopted.

Afrocentric use of language includes eliminating terminology from one's vocabulary which: lacks a world view of ethnicity and identifies people of color as a "minority," (when in reality people of European descent—i.e., white—are actually a "minority"); relates an ethnocentric perspective to define cultural norms different from one's own as violent; and shows disregard for spiritual and cultural sensitivity. Asante (1989) has provided an exemplar list of such terms as follows:

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war-like	colored
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headman	bushman
witch doctor	African slave trade
Black Death	African dialects
Black Africa	sub-Saharan
	native (p. 46)

According to Asante the preceding terms must be dispensed with as European pejoratives [*sic*] (1989, p. 106) and the Afrocentric communicator should not use them. If these terms are used they should be clearly addressed as improper or clearly inverted, provided that inversion has proven feasible and necessary on some level.

On the basis of literature review, and my understanding of the imperative for self definition and the dispensation of pejorations, Asante's exemplar list has been conceptually defined for pejorative nature of the words therein, and with the *American Heritage Dictionary* (1982) definition provided first, and italicized where available, as follows:

non-white — Assumes that white is the standard and that all that deviate do not require a separate definition.

African slaves — Dehumanizes the enslaved Africans by making the word "African" an adjective to define slaves which disregards the cruelty and racist nature of the practice of trading humans. The capture and enslavement of Africans has been regarded as a holocaust, and the idea of trading humans is considered pathological and murderous.

tribe — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: Any of various systems of social organization sharing a common ancestry, language, culture, and name* (p. 1292). Derogatory term which implies backwardness or lack of modernization; disregards the significance and cultural uniqueness among distinct ethnic groups.

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minority — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: The smaller in number of two groups forming a whole; A racial, religious, political, national, or other group regarded as different from the larger group of which it is part* (p. 800). Eurocentric and inaccurate definition of people of color from a world view—According to Asante (1989, p. 90) "The Afrocentric vocabulary does not include the use of the word minority because the identity of the people included in one's meaning is necessary. Therefore, we say African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Cubans, etc. We cannot continue to use this ambiguous term created by a European to designate non-Europeans."

pygmy — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: Gk. Myth. A member of a race of dwarfs. A member of any of several African and Asian peoples with a hereditary stature of from four to five feet* (p. 1008). European definition of a cultural and ethnic group, derogatory in its disregard for the self defined title of this group.

jungle — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: 1. Land densely overgrown with tropical vegetation and trees. 2. A dense thicket or growth. 3. Slang. A hobo camp or place of rendezvous. 4. A place or milieu characterized by intense often ruthless competition for struggle for survival* (p. 694). According to Asante, linguistically, the word jungle is derived from the Sanskrit "jangala" meaning "desert." It was later used to mean primitive and savage and then applied to the African rain forest (1989, p. 88). This misrepresented (i.e., the [idea] of an impenetrable forest [as defining] jungle more closely resembles Asian and South American rain forests which have the characteristics of tangled bush and vines [Asante, 1989, p. 88]) understanding of jungle imposed on Africa is significantly pejorative due to the common acceptance of European pejorations. One child who attends an Afrocentric school in Chicago commented, after attending the school's annual study trip to Africa, that she had "expected it to be a jungle" (Kantrowitz, Wingert, Rogers, Joseph, & Lewis, 1991, p. 45). The significance of the term jungle is not only in its definition of landscape. The term

is derogatory due to the distortion it causes for a person without understanding or empathy who might adopt the inaccuracies in meaning by applying the violent disorderly connotations of the word jungle to the people of Africa.

primitive — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: Of or pertaining to an earliest or original stage or state; Archetypal; Characterized by simplicity or crudity; unsophisticated* (p. 984). Derogatory regard for indigenous cultures and the contributions they offer to their environment, quality of life, or view of spirituality.

war-like — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: Belligerent; hostile* (p. 1363). In the context of African and European relations, the term is an ethnocentric view of a people's response to evading forces; regarding the evaded population as more likely to wage war than the evading population.

colored — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: Having color; Of an ethnic group not regarded as Caucasian, esp. Negro; Of mixed racial strains* (p. 293). Assumes that white is the standard and that all that deviate from it are non standard. Used in the South African context it also defines a racial code and ranking order. It bears noting that in the struggle against apartheid, this term has been inverted by those upon which it is imposed. It is reported that when American media refers to these people as of "mixed race" or as "mulatto," South African "colored" people regard these terms as pejorative because they imply miscegenation.

chief — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: One who is highest in rank or authority; leader; Often Chief. Nautical. A chief petty officer; the chief engineer of a ship; Slang. A boss* (p. 265). Simplistic and rudimentary regard for one who is likely held in high regard in his cultural context.

Hottentot — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: A people of southern Africa held to be related to the Bantu and Bushmen* (p. 264). European definition of the cultural and ethnic group Khoi of South Africa, derogatory in its disregard for the self defined title of this group. Used in the South African context it also defines a racial code and ranking order. It bears noting that in the struggle against apartheid, this term has been inverted by those upon which it is imposed.

headman — Implies lack of rank; simplistic and rudimentary regard for one who is likely held in high regard in his cultural context.

bushman — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: A member of a nomadic Negroid people of southwestern Africa, characteristically of short stature* (p. 220). European definition of the cultural and ethnic group San of South Africa, derogatory in its disregard for the self defined title of this group. Used in the South African context it also defines a racial code and ranking order. It bears noting that in the struggle against apartheid, this term has been inverted by those upon which it is imposed.

witch doctor — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: A medicine man or shaman among primitive peoples* (p. 1386). Has negative connotations as related to the European "dark" ages, and Salem persecutions and accusations of witchcraft. Discredits herbal and religion based healing.

African slave trade — This pejoration attributes victimization to the victim i.e., worded as if Africans orchestrated the European capture and enslavement of Africans. Further, it dehumanizes the enslaved Africans by making the word "African" an adjective to define slaves which disregards the cruelty and racist nature of the "slave trade." The capture and enslavement of Africans has been regarded as a holocaust, and the idea of trading humans is considered pathological and murderous.

Black Death — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: A form of plague, caused by the bacillus Yersina pestis, that was pandemic throughout Europe and much of Asia for several years following 1353. [From the dark splotches it causes on its victims]* (p. 184). Pejorative due to the coupling of the words black and death. In the Afrocentric context the term Black Death would be taken to mean the death of people of African descent.

African dialects — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: (dialect) A regional variety of a language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, esp. a variety of speech differing from the standard literary language or speech pattern of the culture in which it exists. A variety of language that with other varieties constitutes a single language of which no single variety is standard* (p. 391). Arbitrarily used to describe distinct African languages.

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Black Africa — In many contexts this term is used for Eurocentric definitions of cultural advancement and sophistication. This term infers proximity, in terms of the Sahara, and perceived differences in European influence implying not only that this portion of the continent is geographically below the Sahara, but also humanistically below in comparison to those above the Sahara.

sub-Saharan — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: (Sahara) Vast desert of north Africa, extending from the Atlantic coast to the Nile valley and from the Atlas mountains south to the Sudan* (p. 1518). In many contexts this term is utilized for Eurocentric definitions of cultural advancement and sophistication. Not only does this term identify proximity, but also perceived differences in European influence implying not only that this portion of the continent is geographically below the Sahara, but also humanistically below in comparison to those above the Sahara.

native — *Defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: One born in or connected with a place by birth. One of the regional inhabitants or lifelong residents of a place as distinguished by immigrants. One belonging to a people of primitive culture originally occupying a country as distinguished from visitors or invaders* (p. 832). Pejorative nature of this term is in the derogatory consideration of one who belongs to a people of ancient culture as primitive, with primitive implying backwardness and lack of sophistication.

For Africans in the American diaspora, their prototypical use of English has been described as *Ebonic*, and distinguished separately from English. The word is "a composite of *ebony* and *phonetics*..." (Asante, 1987, p. 35). Ebonics is accepted and recognized as the African-American standard form of linguistic adoption of English. African Americans' way of adopting English is due in part to the systematic denial of literacy, limited access to educational and learning tools, and the combining of African ethnic languages into the American crucible. The creative response of the Africans who developed this unique linguistic response to their environment cannot be gainsaid. The Yoruba, Asante, Ibo, Hausa, Mandingo, Serer, and Wolof had to combine elements of their language in order to communicate with each other, and the English.

Ebonic language is a creative enterprise arising out of the materials of interrelationships, and the energies of the African ancestral past (Asante, 1987, p. 57). Elsewhere, the adoption and adaptation of English is referred to as Creole. This terminology for the linguistic adaptation of English is used in the Caribbean region of the African diaspora. The Creole adaptation of the well known adage "He laughs best who laughs last," would for example read, " Fos laugh da no laugh" (Young, 1988, p. 11). Characteristic of Creole is an amalgamation of African languages, Spanish, some French (depending on region), English, and some native Central American languages. Afrocentric language must posses certain semantic qualities, and renounce the use of specific words. This element of the oral tradition defines Afrocentric speaking, and clearly suggests rules that one should follow in Afrocentric orature.

Style in the Afrocentric oral tradition is expressive in the sense that the outward manifestation of mood or disposition in verbal behavior tends to be viewed negatively if subdued or restrained (Kochman, 1981). With expressiveness a common goal in African-American cultural activities, three elements are necessary: (1) a sufficiently powerful agent-stimulus to activate the emotional (spiritual) forces that the body has imprisoned, (2) a structure like song, dance, or drum that allows for the unrestricted expression of those forces that the agent-stimulus has aroused, and (3) a manner of participation that gives full value to the power of the agent-stimulus and to the individual's power to manipulate it (Kochman, 1981, p. 108). African-American cultural norms generally prescribe levels of public interaction that are emotionally intense (Kochman, 1981).

In the oral tradition, speakers and audience members seek to form a connection with each other that approaches kinship on an internally responsive level. This outward manifestation of emotion sets the tone for cohesiveness and the ritual of expected response to an anticipated situation, act, or expression (Holt, 1972, p. 196). The height of the call-and-response pattern in the church or religious setting occurs for example when, primarily women church members, begin to "shout." A woman will suddenly begin to

get rigid: her head and face become trance-like, her arms and feet begin to move, her body twists and convolutes according to the way the Spirit moves (Holt, 1972, p. 196). The woman may sit or stand upright where she is as she screams or shouts her joy (Holt, 1972). Women's *expected* vigorous reaction to the preacher's sermon assists the congregation to rise in collective rejoicing as a response to the preacher's message.

The call-and-response style in Afrocentric communication is especially evident in church or religious settings however, it can be evident in any situation where a speaker and audience are assembled. Apart from the religious setting, an audience may not react quite as vigorously as a church congregation, but a speaker may *call* for a *response* to his message just the same as would a preacher. The speaker will utilize certain phrases such as "Can I get a witness," to illicit a response and affirmation from the audience. The Black cultural pattern of *call and response* is basic to Black expressive behavior because it integrates all three elements of stimulus, structure, and manner of participation (response) into a working relationship with one another (Kochman, 1981, p. 109). Essentially the call and response pattern creates the synergism necessary to realize the emotional energy necessary to generate the internal response speakers use to "get down into" (Kochman, 1981, p. 108) the expressive style of communication.

Particular to Afrocentricity and the oral tradition is the Nommo concept which has an essential place in Afrocentric praxis. Asante (1987) described Nommo as a time during which "discussions of all the problems of the world occur" (p. 23). Nommo is the verbal expression of all Afrocentric ideals, wherein a "universe of alternative discourse" (Calloway-Thomas, 1989, p, 231) guides physical, psychological, and political resistance. Asante asserts three main points on the significance of the spoken word, the function of the speaker, and the character of the audience, regarding the African concept of rhetoric: (1) the notion of form and substance do not plague African thought; (2) the foundation of African-centric society is based upon communication as a control aspect of group solidarity; and (3) power is derived from the experience of the "orality" and spirituality

between speaker and audience (Calloway-Thomas, 1989, p, 232). Because of the strong preference for oral communication in Afrocentricity as a cultural orientation, individuals would give preference to this type of communication, and supplement other forms of communication with oral communication.

Subjective Analytical Base

The subjective analytical base is related to the oral tradition in that, as Kochman (1981) noted, "The truth of the matter is in the matter" (p. 21). In comparison to the white mode of relating to knowledge based material to form an argument, the African-American mode dictates that truth, and argument emanates from the individual and, or group experience. This comparison illustrates the subjective attribute. In the African-American mode of communication, "Black community people do not strive for totally neutral objectivity" (Kochman, 1981, 21). The separation of truth and belief is heavily influenced by what whites understand of the scientific method, where the goal is to achieve a stance of neutral objectivity with regard to the truth that is "out there": a truth that is not to be possessed or created but, rather, discovered (Kochman, 1981). This accounts for the impersonal mode of communication that whites use. The Afrocentric subjective analytical base means that truth is not simply "out there," truth emanates from the unique African experience. In much the same way that regard for objectivity in the scientific method emanates from the European subjective experience.

The Afrocentric subjective analytical base embodies a specific perspective, framing mechanisms which guide an Afrocentric view of the world, and standards for Afrocentric methods. The subjective analytical base would guide philosophical and political stances, professional and cultural activities, and educational curricula. For example, empowerment activism calls on African-Americans to seek more than just a "piece of the pie," Black activists seek to determine the size and flavor of the pie, as well as who the baker is and how the economic pie actually will be cut and shared (Jennings,

1992, p. 11). The subjective analytical base here is evident in the impetus for political orientation. Because African-Americans began to see themselves as a formidable part of the political process, and deserving of control within the political arena, they began to analyze the effects of political access inwardly for group power building.

In terms of the philosophical and political positions within the subjective analytical base, African-American political activists have differed in philosophical positions, they do however have the subjective analytical base in common. Their philosophies have placed the unique experience of African-Americans at the center of all activities, due to the perception that the pluralist American political system has failed African-American interests in many areas. The Black nationalists' position came forth to validate and act in the interests of African-Americans. Black nationalistic thought was, and is an important component of the subjective analytical base within Afrocentricity. The civil rights movement of the 1960s was responsible for bringing many issues to surface particularly in urban America where population transition, uneven wealth distribution, and poverty were (and are) important issues. Black nationalist ideology viewed issues traditionally handled independently of one another as interdependent to drive home the importance how the net effects of each issue affected the African-American condition as a whole.

Ira Katznelson (1973) wrote that:

> The holistic world view of Black nationalism produced demands that in two respects were radically different from the usual articulation of urban issues. First, it did not respect traditional boundaries between issues. School, welfare policy and housing issues were treated together, as aspects of a total condition. As a result, authorities had to manage conflict that was much more intense and less susceptible to piecemeal solutions that they had been accustomed to. Second, these policy areas were the objects of demands for a radical redistribution of resources and opportunities (p. 121; cited in Jennings, 1992, p. 101).

Therefore, the subjective analytical base calls on African-Americans to redefine themselves, and critically analyze traditional socio-political institutions from an Afrocentric perspective.

Asante discusses culture and context in terms of universal and classical art. From the Afrocentric perspective, "classical" art forms are standard and authoritative examples from of an Afrocentric culture. This perspective is in conflict with the traditional ideal of "classical" European renaissance music and art. As previously quoted, Asante states that, "I cannot deny the possibility of others speaking of classics within their contexts; I applaud *their* [emphasis added] nationalism" (Asante, 1989, p. 46). Essentially for one to regard a *classical* art form it should originate from one's *own* culture. On the subject of universality, Asante (1989) regards the word "universal" as having forced African-Americans to disregard their own works as having no real use or applicability outside of the African-American context. Asante (1989) says of criticisms on African-American writers and poets regarding the idea of universality:

> When a poet or writer speaks on matters that relate to us, white critics are apt to say that the poet is not universal, meaning that he does not submit to white images or a Eurocentric framework. Such arrogance perceives the Afrocentric writer as narrow, but promotes the Eurocentric writer as universal (p. 46).

Essentially Asante levels the same criticism against Eurocentric writers and scholars regarding the idea of universality that he asserts is leveled against Afrocentric writers i.e., that their self promotion makes *them* narrow.

Within the field of psychology there is considerable debate over the traditional assumptions of Western psychology and its legitimacy in treating the African-American psyche. There is support in the field of psychology for *culture sensitive* treatment of African-Americans. The fundamental and only substantive justification for an African (Black) psychology or the special treatment of African-Americans as a racial or ethnic group, is that African people are culturally, philosophically, biologically, and spiritually

distinct from other geo-political-socio-cultural groups (Nobles, 1989, p. 224). Consequently, the "meaning and definition" of the African psyche and African psychological attributes, qualities, and functioning would have to be conceptually grounded in the philosophical and cultural reality of African people (Nobles, 1989). Therefore the treatment of African-Americans must be grounded within an Afrocentric epistemological paradigm. An Afrocentric based model for psycho-analysis would have to assume that African philosophical and cultural precepts were in operation in the context of a non-African environment. Accordingly, from an Afrocentric perspective, identity formation and development would need to describe and explain the goal-directed and culturally meaningful activities or experiences that African people undertake as active agents in a world in which they are transformed, and simultaneously transforming (Nobles, 1989, p. 256).

Advocates of Afrocentric curricula assert that the persistence of segregation and the uneven effects of integration make an alternative curriculum appropriate for removing the stigmas African-American children still face in schools that have resegregated (or never were desegregated). Advocates such as Professor Tsehloane Keto, and Molefi Asante assert that Black children will no longer feel a need to reject their Blackness as a "badge of inferiority" if given the opportunity to study from an Afrocentric perspective (Jarvist, 1992, p. 1287). An Afrocentric curriculum provides students with an opportunity to study ideas, history, and the world from an Africa-centered perspective (Asante, 1987). Instead of centering education solely on the perspectives and experiences of white Europeans, who rely on Ancient Greece as the focal point of civilization, Afrocentric scholars posit Ancient Kemetic or Egyptian civilization as the point of reference for the study of civilization (Jarvist, 1992, p. 1294).

It is argued that the Afrocentric curriculum would empower Black school children by improving their self-confidence, their self esteem, and consequently, their educational achievement (Putka, 1991, pp. A-1—A-2). It has been further noted that a school board's

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adoption of an Afrocentric curriculum, recognizing the importance of African-American values and culture to its children, could also be viewed as part of an ideological movement to transform the traditional curriculum (Gay, 1990, p. 61). In seeing their own cultural values reinforced in educational environment, this movement toward transformation helps African-American school children feel validated within the formal education process.

While the subjective analytical base provides singularity in perspective, it is not myopic. The subjective analytical base as explained here, recognizes the socio-historical roots in all ideology and epistemology, and the intricate ways in which culture permeates thought and action. Therefore all things, according to this perspective, are considered to be subjective.

Subjective Analytical Base in Afrocentricity

Perspective in terms of the subjective analytical base is grounded in an Afrocentric world view, which according to Asante (1989) means that people of African descent on the continent and in the diaspora, "have a dynamic and flexible ideology rooted in the historical and cultural processes ... which (are) grounded simultaneously in the symbol and spirit of Africa" (p. 22). This perspective is only superficially related to color, it is more accurately a philosophical outlook determined by history (Asante, 1989, p. 27). The Afrocentric perspective gives credence to definitions and articulations of the African experience only as they emanate from an African source, and leadership at any level (political, spiritual, business, education, etc.) only as it emanates from an African source. Collaboration with non-Afrocentric sources is accepted on the basis that any contribution can be transformed to meet the unique needs of African people.

In terms of the Afrocentric perspective in practice, according to Asante (1989) one should ask:

> ... does a city have schools controlled by Afrocentrics, a museum, bookstore, a documentary center, and a cultural-spiritual gathering place which houses all the arts? ... These become the yardstick by which communities are measured for and by African people. We are seriously in battle for the future of our culture; Afrocentric vigilance is demanded to preserve our culture. Politicians must no longer be allowed to speak in grand terms about employment and housing until they have addressed the value and spiritual issues which continue to plague the community (p. 49).

Asante essentially views the necessity of an Afrocentric perspective for African people as matter of cultural, intellectual, and practical survival.

Framing mechanisms define the Afrocentric system of ideas through which one interprets and assigns meaning to actions, ideas, events, etc. The context in which framing mechanisms operate within the Afrocentric subjective analytical base are reflected in: the political agenda in which African politics must respond to depressed conditions in African communities; the turning inward and rejection of the legitimacy of institutions and norms in the white world (Jennings, 1992); belief in the centrality of Africans in post modern history; the "creative motif" of Africans as discovered through African customs of language, dress, behavior, and games; and awareness of the systematic oppression African people endure globally in terms of how Africans can be liberated from oppressive conditions (Asante, 1989).

Standards of the Afrocentric subjective analytical base determine the methods by which Afrocentric activities are practiced. Most significant here is Asante's research and analysis impetus, Afrology. Afrology is the study of ideas, issues, and behaviors with particular bases in the African world, diasporan and continental. Black Studies, African Studies, and African-American Studies are essentially Afrological studies, that is, persons within the departments or programs with such names are usually engaged in the Afrocentric study of concepts, issues, and behaviors in the African world (Asante, 1989, p. 57). Afrocentric study integrates culture and nature with scholarship (Asante, 1989). Afrology tends to favor and place primary emphasis on descriptive and interpretive

qualitative modes of analysis, largely due to the ahistorical and uncritical stance that quantitative approaches favor. This choice is made for philosophical reasons, because the focal point of an Afrological study is content rather than quantity. Regarding any Afrological study in any field, be it music, art, dance, sports, law medicine, science, sociology, philosophy, communication, and any other aspect of life and society, the method starts with the primary measure—it should place Africans in the center (Asante, 1989).

Culturally focused studies such as Afrology have been criticized as ultimately detrimental to a culturally cohesive society (Carey, 1992). Roger Kimball, among the more prominent conservatives who opposes cultural studies, criticizes such efforts as inconsistent with God, science, method, and objectivity (Carey, 1992). It bears noting however that the very fact that Kimball and others who share his viewpoints are being recognized as "conservative," indicates an ideology that encompasses a cultural orientation which he defends while supporting the concepts that cultural studies supposedly offend.

The precepts upon which the Afrocentric subjective analytical base determines opposition to objectifying standards encompasses an approach that stresses individual responsiveness to assertions that, for example, data could 'speak for itself' without careful examination of data collection methods, or the data collector. Neither can be truly bias-free. The Afrocentric subjective analytical base focuses on the social and cultural factors that mediate perspectives and methods.

Collectivist Socio-Political Orientation

Cultures differ in the extent to which cooperation, competition, or individualism (Mead, 1967) are emphasized (Trandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1988, p. 323). At the psychological level, these differences are reflected in personality dimensions labeled *allocentrism and idiocentrism.* Afrocentricity calls for people of African descent to adopt

a collectivist attitude (allocentrism) within an individualist culture, within which they may have already developed an individualist attitude (idiocentrism). Allocentrism is positively correlated with social support (both quantity and satisfaction with it), and with low levels of alienation and anomie; idiocentrism was found to be positively correlated with emphasis on achievement and perceived loneliness (Trandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988, p. 323). An essential attribute of collectivist cultures is that individuals subordinate their personal goals to the collective, which is usually a stable ingroup (e.g., family, band, tribe), and much of the behavior of individuals may concern goals that are consistent with the goals of this ingroup (Trandis et al., 1988). The Afrocentric cultural orientation calls upon the individual within the Afrocentric collective to relate individual goals to group goals.

Afrocentricity bases its stability on the strength of African identity. As an ideology it calls on those who adopt Afrocentricity to define their personal identity in terms of an ingroup status. Furthermore, Afrocentricity calls on one to be committed to collectivist goals, and define ingroup members in terms common ethnic and cultural characteristics of diasporan and continental people of African descent. Collectivist goals particular to Afrocentricity include uplifting the national and international, racial, political, and economic conditions of all people who have adopted an African identity. In this sense, Afrocentric demands on ingroup members are as diffuse as demands on ingroup members in collectivist cultures.

Because Afrocentricity advocates the collectivist cultural norm and seeks to alter its adopter psychologically toward allocentrism, it is useful here to adopt the Trandis et al. (1988; Trandis et al., 1990) method of discussing collectivist cultures and allocentric individuals, and individualistic cultures and idiocentric individuals. In extremely complex cultures (e.g., modern industrial cultures) the number of ingroups that one can have is much greater than in collectivist cultures (Trandis et al., 1988, p. 324). Modern cultures are neoindividualistic, characterized by independence from ingroups, as well as

distance (emotional detachment) from ingroups. Thus one is able to "do one's own thing" and get away with it (Trandis et al., 1988). Hostede (1980) has observed high levels of individualism in the United States (cited in Trandis et al., 1988, p. 324). Regarding Afrocentricity, Americans of African decent operate within an individualist culture as allocentric individuals with collectivist cultural norms.

To adopt Afrocentricity, African-Americans define themselves as part of a large ingroup—people of African descent everywhere—to which they have a collective responsibility due to collectivist Afrocentric norms. There are specific contexts within which the Afrocentric person would be responsible to this large body of ingroup members. As previously mentioned, the context in which Afrocentric people must be responsible to ingroup members is with active commitment to uplift the national and international, racial, political, and economic conditions of all people who have adopted an African identity based on Afrocentric philosophy.

Political mobilization within the African-American community encompasses economic concerns as one of the most important components. The economic progress of African-Americans is especially of concern on the community level in depressed areas. However that does not concern the measure and comparison of household-to-household income. Efforts toward economic progress should be judged in terms of the improvement of all sectors in the community rather than on the basis of individual mobility (Jennings, 1992, p. 76). The political mobilization in the African-American community embraces the notion of collectivism. The resource perspective on mobilization refers to the acquisition of collective control over resources. A mobilizing entity would be most concerned with "accumulating resources" and then with "increasing collective claims on the resources." The latter is achieved "by reducing competing claims by altering the program of collective action, (and) by changing the satisfaction due to the participation in the group" (Tilly, 1978, p. 69; cited in Morrison, 1987, p. 10).

McAdam (1985) discusses "insurgency" within social movements instead of mobilization. "Social movements would appear to be collective phenomena arising first among segments of the aggrieved population that are sufficiently organized and possessed of resources needed to sustain a protest campaign." Therefore "protest activity is the result of a combination of expanding political opportunities and indigenous organization, as mediated through a crucial process of collective attribution" (McAdam, 1985, p. 15; cited in Morrison, 1987, p. 10). Gamson (1975) also pinpoints organization, even to the extent de-emphasizing activation: "Mobilization is a process of increasing the readiness to act collectively by building the loyalty of a constituency to an organization of group leaders. Activation is a part of an influence attempt, and mobilization is part of an organizing process that precedes specific efforts at influence" (Gamson, 1975, p. 15; cited in Morrison, 1987, p. 10). Similarly, in Oberschall's (1973) conflict model, mobilization is defined as the process of forming crowds, groups associations, and organizations for the pursuit of collective goals" (Oberschall, 1973, p. 102; cited in Morrison, 1987, p. 10).

Particular to the political mobilization sought by African-American activists is the resolution of the seemingly dichotomous interests of the African-American electorate, and the pluralism in American politics. Black political participation suggests not an interest-group behavior, similar to white political behavior, but participation as a distinct racial group, which then raises both divisible and indivisible issues (Jennings, 1992, p. 23). Black empowerment activism differs from earlier forms of Black political activism in several ways:

- The use of electoral arena by new Black actors;
- The emphasis on power sharing rather than access to decision makers as an ultimate goal for mobilization;
- Direct political challenges to the accumulation and distribution of wealth in America as well as challenges to institutional arrangements that

maintain such distribution (rather than accommodation or integration into such institutional networks);

- The control of territory or land;
- The development of independent organizing strategies outside democratic party based structures;
- The revitalization of nationalist and separatist sentiment in the Black community for mobilizing potential Black voters;
- The call for Black "self determination;"
- The promotion of neighborhood interests over "downtown development" interests;
- The rejection of "pro growth" or fiscal austerity strategies as a response to local fiscal crisis or economic development;
- The acknowledgment of linkages between domestic and international issues (Jennings, 1992).

With the collectivist socio-political orientation, what becomes important here is emphasis on group political participation, vested interest in collective power attainment, community based organization and mobilization independent of traditional political structures, and a recognition of the African-American community's connection with global issues.

Although some political bifurcation exists in the African-American community regarding issues of philosophy, values, and organizational relationships to white dominated political and social mainstream processes within American society (Jennings, 1992), there has always been an effort at promoting political unity. One of the sources of ideological bifurcation within the African-American community was the Black Power movement. Even though this was the case, the collectivist theme present within other previous and subsequent movements was present in the Black Power ideological stance as well. According to Ture and Hamilton (1992): "The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: *Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks.* By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively

from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society" (p. 44). While there is no overall definition of collectivism (Trandis et al., 1988, observed that the global characterization of collectivism is inaccurate), Afrocentricity advocates many elements of collectivism thereby showing preference over individualism. Those specific elements of Afrocentricity that reflect collectivism merit investigation.

Collectivist Socio-Political Orientation in Afrocentricity

The *ingroup* basis for definition for African-Americans is, according to Asante (1989), rooted in the special process of "detribilization and re-tribilization" into Africans. African-Americans have overstepped the boundaries of ethnicity in order to reformulate an *African* view of the world. As an amalgamation of African ethnicities (Hausa, Asante, Yoruba, Ewe, Ibo, Wolof, Mandingo, Congo, and many other ethnic groups) and racial groups within the American crucible, African-American is a unique ethnicity unknown prior to the 15th Century (Asante, 1989). Asante defines the African-American ingroup as follows:

> By Afro-America we mean the domicile of people of African decent in the Americas. Our concern is not simply the United States, but includes Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies. Over 40 percent of the new world Africans live in Brazil, 37 percent live in the United States. Any study of Afrology, however, must consider the total geographical distribution of Africans. As an inclusive discipline, Afrology brings together our creative, political, and geographic dimensions as a Pan-Africanist reality (p. 62).

The collectivist theme is evident in Asante's identification of the group as the unit of analysis as opposed to the individual. Collectivists tend to think of *groups* as the basic unit of analysis of society (Nakane, 1970; cited in Trandis et al., 1990). The tendency to perceive groups as the basic unit of analysis would result in ingroups being considered as more homogeneous than outgroups in collectivist cultures (Trandis et al., 1990, p. 1007).

Related to Asante's idea of a "collective conscious will" is the collectivist *common fate* idea that defines the ingroup. Regarding *common fate* Trandis et al. (1990) write that, "In prehistoric times the ingroup must have been the unit of survival, or the food community. If there was no food, all members of the ingroup starved together" (p. 1007). Similarly Asante interprets common fate in terms of a psychological imperative for committing oneself to collectivist behavior. He wrote that, "There can be no effective discussion of a united front, a joint action, or a community of interest until we come to good terms with collective consciousness, the elementary doctrine of economic political and social action" (Asante, 1989, p. 30). Furthermore, Asante refers to the "collective history and future" (p. 24), "shared commitment," and "collective awareness of ... destiny" (p. 26) for people of African descent. Asante (1989) defines the collective cognitive imperative as follows:

> It is the overwhelming power of a group of people thinking in the same direction. It is not unity in the traditional sense of a group of people coming together to achieve a single purpose; it is a spiritual and intellectual commitment to a vision which constitutes the collective imperative (p. 53).

Ideology and attitude in collectivist cultures tend to be reflective of a high degree of cooperation among ingroup members, but cooperation is unlikely (or at least difficult to realize) when an allocentric encounters an individual that belongs to an outgroup. In collectivist cultural patterns of exchange, due to the high degree of cooperation between ingroup members, there tends to be different patterns of exchange comparatively between collectivists and individualists. Foa and Foa (1974) observed differing patterns of exchange in modern cultures and in traditional cultures. Modern cultures tend reflect universalistic exchange patterns e.g., primarily exchanges of money, information, and goods. Traditional cultures reflect patterns of particularistic exchange e.g., love, status, and service (Foa and Foa, 1974). Particularistic exchanges tend to be interpersonal, and culture specific.

Concerning Afrocentric exchange patterns, particularistic exchanges are expected and viewed as acceptable patterns of behavior. Harriet Tubman's act of assisting enslaved Africans in the United States to escape their captors is described by Asante (1987) as "the caring mythoform" (p. 105). Asante adds that African-Americans are "confronted by (this exemplary behavior) in the daily interactions of our lives from the extended family philosophy to the assistance to the needy in our churches" (p. 105). These exchanges are further considered to involve *sacrifice* to the ingroup which according to Asante (1989) means that ingroup members are willing to give up certain aspects of themselves for the advancement of the group. The Afrocentric pattern of exchange occurs within the particularist context. The primary context in which particularist exchanges take place in Afrocentricity is that of service, and that service has taken the form of political mobilization as a primary example of Afrocentric particularistic exchange.

Cultural Constraints for Afrocentric African-Americans primarily involves coordinating life in an individualist culture (i.e., the United States cultural norm) with the acquired allocentric attitude. The cultural constraint is primarily the result of an internal conflict reflected by the adoption of a personality/attitude position that is in conflict with one's overall environment. According to Trandis et al. (1990, 1988), acceptance of group norms is modified by individual difference. Allocentric persons in collectivist cultures feel positive about accepting ingroup norms and do not even raise the question of whether or not to accept them (Trandis et al., 1990, p. 325). However, idiocentric persons in collectivist cultures feel ambivalent and even bitter about acceptance of ingroup norms (Trandis et al., 1990). They wonder if this or that norm is necessary, or if they should comply, and thus challenge the idea of complying. Asante addressed the possible difficulty involved in adopting Afrocentricity in his observation that Afrocentricity should be introduced at every step to, "shock the unconsciousness into awakening postures" (p. 40). In other words, idiocentric African-Americans should actively embrace

allocentric behavior to insure that they do not drift toward individualistic behavior during the process of adoption.

There is some evidence that African-Americans favor collectivism. Folk tales and proverbs can be reflective of socio-cultural orientation. A careful study of both culture and narrative traditions reveals a pattern toward equilibrium within the group, and any situation that causes disequalibrium is eschewed (Ansah, 1989). Particularly the "Anansi" folk tales wherein characteristics like cunning, cleverness and wisdom, which enhance the survival of the group and species, are very much admired and encouraged (Ansah, 1989). Anansi folk tales that reflect this orientation are prevalent in African-American culture, and have origins in African cultures. This particular folk tale is present in other diasporan African cultures as well. Following is an example of an Anansi proverb from Belize, Central America, a part of the Caribbean region of the African diaspora:

> **Creole Phonetic Proverb:** Hanasi say two trouble better dan one.
>
> **Literally:** Hanasi (the spider-hero in African-originated folk-tales common in Belize as in the rest of the Caribbean) says two troubles are better than one.
>
> **Meaning:** Quoted when someone already in trouble gets into worse trouble. (It is likely that) this proverb was originally part of a folk-tale in which Brer Hanansi found himself in such a predicament. Note that "Hanassi" is variously "Hanansi," "Anansi," "Anaasi" (Young, 1988, p. 13).

Ananse narratives not only reflect, but also seek to provide resolutions to underlying eternal conflicts, and illustrate differences between; good and evil, right and wrong, life and death, love and hate, wisdom and folly, and collectivism and individualism (Ansah, 1989, p. 50-51). The narratives enhance the audience's understanding of acceptable values by contrasting and juxtaposing positive values and negative ones throughout in the actions of the characters.

All components of Afrocentricity combine to form a cultural orientation that can be practiced in varying ways. Some include politics, education and of primary interest here, mediated communication in the form of public affairs programming. A fruitful examination of Afrocentric public affairs programming should have a theoretical background. The following chapter reviews agenda setting and uses and gratifications as means by which to apply theory to this qualitative analysis. Agenda setting and uses and gratifications gives structure to this analysis of a cultural philosophy applied to a media genre.

V. AGENDA SETTING AND USES AND GRATIFICATIONS

The Agenda Setting Media Effects Model

Agenda-setting research was born of an effort to overcome the limited effect findings of past communication research (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). Agenda-setting is one of the few media effects models to explicitly prescribe a particular way of dealing with media content. Basically, it says that the amount of space or time devoted to particular issues should be measured, and that this measurement should relate to either the amount of attention people pay to issues or to their judgments of the issues' importance (Kosicki, 1993, p. 104). This approach to agenda-setting inquiry is referred to as *public agenda-setting*. Public agenda-setting methods follow the approach laid out by McCombs and Shaw (1972) whose work is recognized as the premiere model for understanding media effects. This early conceptualization mainly focused on how media producers and owners influence the salience of issues in the media for the public by varying the amount of issue emphasis (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Agenda-setting is possible on three levels, which combined, form what Rogers and Dearing (1988) refer to as the "agenda-setting process." This more broadly conceptualizes agenda-setting as a *media effects* model, and submits that agenda-setting is a complex media effects hypothesis linking media production, content, and audience effects. Lang and Lang (1983) recommend a shift in the focus of agenda-setting toward agenda-building, asserting that it is a collective process in which media, the political arena, and the citizenry reciprocally influence one another and the resulting public agenda.

Several communication scholars have responded to recommendations to forge new directions in agenda setting research (Gandy, 1982; Manheim, 1987; Megwa & Brenner, 1988). These scholars observe that actors, groups, and institutions set the agenda of the mass media under certain conditions and on some issues. Media then plays

a conduit role in the agenda-setting process in which news sources, upon whom the media depend for public affairs information, set the agenda of the media. Manheim (1987) has proposed that agenda-setting involves the interaction of three agendas—the media agenda, the public agenda, and the policy agenda. The result is *agenda building* which takes place as an interaction among these three agendas. Each of these is conceptualized as involving three important dimensions:

1. For the media agenda, the three dimensions are *visibility* (the amount and prominence of coverage given an issue) *audience salience* (the relevance of news content and audience needs), and *valence* (the favorable or unfavorable coverage given to an issue).

2. For the public agenda, the three dimensions are *familiarity* (the degree of public awareness of a given topic), *personal salience* (interest or perceived relevance to one's self), and *favorability* (the favorable or unfavorable judgment on the topic).

3. For the policy agenda, the three dimensions are *support* (action more of less favorable to a given issue position), *likelihood of action* (probability that a governmental body will act on the issue), and *freedom of action* (range of possible governmental action) (Severin & Tankard, 1992, p. 226).

The central agenda-setting hypothesis, that "people tend to know about the things that the media deal with and adopt the order of priority assigned to different issues" seems to have escaped the doubts that early experiments cast on notions of powerful media effects (McQuail & Windahl, 1981). Much agenda-setting research has followed the tradition set by the early studies of McCombs and Shaw. McQuail (1983) however cautions that while such studies have provided evidence of a correspondence between the order of importance given in the media to issues and the order of significance attached to the same issues by the public and politicians, the evidence is insufficient to show a *casual correlation* between the various issue agendas. McQuail further criticizes, that this flaw tends to leave agenda-setting with the status of a plausible but unproved idea, a doubt that stems from methodological demands and theoretical ambiguities.

Stages of Development

Lippmann's (1922) keen observation about the media's ability to influence the "pictures in our heads" was a clear developmental movement toward an agenda-setting model. It is Lippman's thesis that the news media, primarily newspapers in his day, are the principle conduit between the world outside, and the images we hold in our minds of that world (McCombs, Einsiedel, & Weaver, 1991, p. 5).

Mass media inquiry has historical periods that as well are movements toward stages of development for the agenda-setting model:

- Direct effects period — period in which the prevailing thought on media influence was that the mass media exclusively determine issues' importance;
- Attitude change research — period in which mass media inquiry was active in research which focused on mass media's ability elevate issue importance;
- Media issue reality versus public issue reality — period in which media issues are juxtaposed with issues determined important to the audience independently from issues shown prominent in the media.

The agenda-setting hypothesis has been one of the more popular ideas in communication research since the early 1970s. The hypothesis is important because it suggests a way the mass media can have an impact on society that is an alternative to attitude change (Severin & Tankard, 1992, p. 227).

McCombs and Shaw (1972) were the first to provide empirical verification that newspapers and other news media, through selectivity and emphasis, shape the agenda of public thinking about certain issues, events and personalities. In terms of the development of the agenda-setting model, the McCombs and Shaw (1972) study is widely cited by many researchers because: first, their study (a) named the research specialty, and (b) delineated a specific methodology i.e., content analysis and audience agenda; second, the research fulfilled the limited effects mass media expectation of

scholars at the time; and third, the research enjoyed exposure to mass communication scholars and political scientists alike (Rogers, 1993, pp. 78-79).

In this seminal study, the authors argue that contemporary political candidates go before the public through the mass media rather than in person; the information in the media is the only contact many audiences have with politics and may shape the decisions that audiences make about voting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). To test this idea, the researchers analyzed selected media issues and their importance to the press as reflected in the number of appearances of those issues. Subjects were asked to identify the key issues in the campaign as they saw them, without regard for positions on those issues taken by the candidates. A high correlation between what the media treated as important and what the subjects considered to be important was interpreted as media power to influence the salience of issues, and thereby set the public agenda.

While there is evidence that the media are shaping people's views of the major problems facing society, there are also arguments that the problems emphasized in the media may not be the ones that are dominant in reality. Funkhouser's (1973) study suggests that the news media did not give a very accurate picture of what was going on in the nation during the 1960s. Funkhouser concludes, "The news media are believed by many people (including many policy makers) to be reliable information sources, but the data presented here indicates that this is not necessarily the case" (1973, p. 75; cited in Severin & Tankard, 1992, p. 211).

Audience Perspectives of Agenda Setting Research

The idea that the media tells its audience not *what to think*, but *what to think about* is considered a classical pre-developmental assertion. This notion refers to the idea that agenda-setting is a theory about the transfer of salience, both the salience of objects and the salience of their attributes (McCombs, 1993, p. 62). Agenda-setting is considerably more than the classical assertion that the news tells us *what to think about.*

The news can also tell us *how to think about* issues by the way that the news communicator frames an issue (McCombs, 1993). More generally, the key agenda-setting role of the media may be the promotion of social consensus on what the agenda is, whether it be the promotion of social consensus on what the agenda is, the traditional agenda of issues, or whatever (McCombs, 1993, p. 64). Becker (1982) developed a list of assumptions which conceptually link media and audience agendas:

1. individuals have a desire to keep themselves informed about their environment;
2. the mass media provide a means for individuals to keep themselves informed about their environment;
3. because of the limitations on resources, often the mass media are the most efficient way for audience members to keep themselves informed;
4. included in the information provided to audience members by the mass media is material identifiable by the audience members as dealing with something called an issue;
5. the media provide cues as to which issues are more important through techniques of selection and display; and
6. audience members accept the media cues regarding importance of issues and adopt them as their own (p. 530).

The audience, or public agenda-setting concept rests on the notion that the news media increase the public's awareness of an issue, and that by their display of news, come to determine the issues the public thinks about and talks about (Severin & Tankard, 1992). Media agenda-setting ability is initiated by media attention to an issue, which elevates its importance to the public (Severin & Tankard, 1992). Experimental evidence on the agenda-setting effect was collected by Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder (1982) who manipulated television newscasts to put emphasis on certain issue types. This experiment provides support for the media's ability to elevate the importance of issues within the audience, as reflected by exposure to *manipulated* mass media messages (Severin & Tankard, 1992).

The priming effect is an another model with which to evaluate the agenda-setting possibilities of mass media messages. Iyengar and his associates called priming the process in which the media attend to some issues and not others, thereby altering the standards by which people evaluate election candidates. They discovered the priming effect when they found that issues that were important to the audience affected how the audience evaluated other issues. For example when test audiences rated president Carter's performance, judgment criteria were reflective of the agenda established by manipulated newscasts which emphasized varying issues (Severin & Tankard, 1992).

Consistency and repetition were vital elements in the agenda-setting effect of television. In a massive study of the agenda-setting function of television news conducted in West Germany, Brosius and Kepplinger (1990) suggested that public awareness is likely to influence and increase media coverage when problem awareness showed a long-term steady increase with little variation. Intensive media coverage was found to have a significant effect upon problem awareness.

Zucker (1978) suggested that the obtrusiveness of an issue may be an important factor in whether or not agenda-setting takes place. Zucker argued that the less direct experience the public has with a given issue area, the more it will have to depend on the news media for information about that area. Issues that the public experiences directly, like unemployment, are obtrusive issues. Issues that the public may not experience directly, like pollution, are unobtrusive. The results demonstrated that agenda-setting may take place for unobtrusive issues but not for obtrusive issues (cited in Severin & Tankard, 1992, pp. 219-220).

Because agenda-setting places emphasis on the idea that the media agenda will be reflected in the audience's perception of significant public issues, researchers began to question the amount of time it takes for media content to have a significant effect. Stone and McCombs (1981) conducted a study aimed at investigating the time lag for agenda-setting. Using several different data sets, they found agreement in showing that a period

ranging from 2 months to 6 months seemed to be necessary for an item to move from the media agenda to the public agenda. Eyal, Winter, and DeGeorge (1980) looked at the correlation between the media agenda and the public agenda over a 22 year span of time (with survey data from an earlier study and survey data collected 22 years later). The authors examined responses categorized as "civil rights" to see the change in media and public agenda in terms the perceived "most important issue facing the American public today." The authors found that a four- to six-week time span was the strongest correlation between the media agenda and the public agenda on the civil rights issue. Shoemaker, Wanta, and Leggett (1989) found evidence that supports both the Stone and McCombs and the Eyal, Winter, and DeGeorge time span studies. The 1989 study of public concern over the drug problem revealed two time periods in which media coverage of drug issues correlates with later public concern about drugs—1 to 2 months and 4 to 5 months. McCombs, and Weaver suggested that individuals differ in the need-for-orientation, which may determine whether or not agenda-setting takes place (Weaver, 1977).

For the interplay between mass media standards and perspectives on audience effects, Lang and Lang (1983) have developed mechanisms by which to assess the flow of media influence to audience effects. Lang and Lang proposed that inquiries into the agenda-setting effect be evaluated in terms of agenda building. In a study of Watergate and the Nixon administration used to illustrate the issue of political corruption, Lang and Lang discovered a more complex agenda-setting effect.

They suggest that *agenda building* takes place in six steps:

a. The media puts emphasis of events or activities;

b. The kind of issue, i.e., obtrusive or unobtrusive, defines the amount of coverage necessary to continue that emphasis;

c. Events and activities must be framed, that is, given a defining perspective from which one understands and interprets the importance of issue;

d. The media selects the appropriate language of referents which can affect the perception of the importance of an issue (e.g., words such as "scandal," or "caper" can attach specific meaning to an issue);

e. The media link primary activities or events, to secondary symbols or concepts which are easily recognizable, and suggest the necessity for taking a position on an issue;

f. Well-known and credible individuals begin to speak out on an issue which accelerates the agenda building process when *relevant* individuals take a position.

This suggests that not only does the agenda-setting effect depend upon the time it takes to realize an effect, it also depends on the media to systematically frame the issue in several steps.

Media Agenda and the Impact of Media Sources

Lippmann (1922) noted the role of the news media in defining the world, especially in terms of the media's primary news sources. Individuals and organizations with access to the media have an advantage in shaping news presentations from their own perspective:

> Therefore, on the whole, the quality of the news about modern society is an index of its social organization. The better the institutions, the more all interests concerned are formally represented, the more issues are disentangle, the more objective criteria are introduced, the more perfectly an affair can be presented as news. At its best the press is a servant and guardian of institutions; at its worst it is a means by which a few exploit social disorganization to their own ends (p. 79).

In this eloquent and equally ominous statement, Lippmann (1922) sets the tone for questioning the origins of the media's agenda.

Megwa and Brenner (1988) propose extending the agenda-setting model and method, to include a paradigm that identifies crucial and contingent conditions, roles, and sequential effects. Three stages of issue development are crucial to the paradigm; issue creation, issue expansion, and issue consumption. Issue creation is characterized by initial media activity which establishes defining properties and problematic conditions

present in similar topics and events. Issue expansion is characterized by subsequent media activity that defines the issue as significant, and useful in grouping other topics of concern with similar characteristics as a part of a comprehensive issue. Issue consumption occurs when there is evidence of the media audience's awareness, attentiveness to, and acceptance of the issue as significant to the public agenda.

Rogers and Dearing (1988) observe that there is an agenda-setting process which involves the interplay of three agendas, which are reflected in three corresponding subareas of agenda-setting research. First, indigenous to mass communication, there is *public agenda-setting* which deals with the link between issues as portrayed in mass media content and the issue priorities of the public (Kosicki, 1993, p. 101). Second is what Rogers and Dearing (1998) define as *policy agenda-setting* research which grew out of institutional analysis perspectives in political science. Policy agenda-setting studies are those making their dependent variables the issue agenda of public bodies or elected officials, to media content or procedures (Kosicki, 1993, p. 101). Third is the *media agenda-setting* literature, which examines the antecedents of media content relating to issue definition, selection, and emphasis. This work grows largely out of sociology but has other sources as well, including political science and mass communication (Kosicki, 1993, p. 101).

Manheim (1987) suggests that it is more useful to consider a *comprehensive system of interactive agendas*, rather than focusing on agenda building. Other researchers attesting to this view further reflect the belief that information control is central to agenda-setting. Sources are construed as having the power to exert control on the media, and consequently influence the media audience (Mueller, 1973). This type of media influence can be understood as agenda-setting (Megwa, 1987). Gandy (1982) suggests focusing on the journalistic practice of pursuing information sources, in terms of the resultant impact on information provided to the public:

> Journalists decide whether to invest time in the pursuit of one source rather than another, based on their estimation of the probable returns such investments will produce. ... Certain classes of sources have been identified as being more reliable than others. Official bureaucracies, or bureaucratically organized institutions, tend to be most reliable, and as result bureaucratically supplied information comes to dominate mass media channels. ... Reliance on bureaucratic sources is facilitated by a tendency of journalists to accept information from these routine sources as factual (pp. 11-12).

Source agenda-setting occurs when power elites present issues to the media audience through mass media channels to influence public opinion, political behavior, and public policy-making (Megwa, 1987). Power elites, having access to source organizations and political groups, can influence legislation and policy agendas that are transmitted to the public through news media coverage. Media agendas, having been shaped by the flow of information from political sources, can influence other political agendas by the flow of information from the news media (Linsky, 1986).

Visibility salience, and valence comprise content attributes of the source agenda. Visibility is characterized by the prominence in media coverage given to individuals, events, or issues as a result of a media source. Salience is characterized by the implicit or explicit significance attributed to source-induced information to media needs. Valence is characterized by media portrayal of an issue or object in a manner that implies favor, disfavor or neutrality (Megwa, 1987; Manheim, 1987). The source agenda also has proactive and reactive behavioral attributes as determined by behavioral, informational, and institutional characteristics. A proactive attribute is manifest when media sources disseminate unsolicited information to the media in various forms. A reactive attribute is manifest when media sources avail themselves to media queries. Media source behavioral characteristics are apparent in their relationship with the media regarding the amount and type of information offered, which in turn is determined by the media source's institutional affiliation (Megwa, 1987).

Megwa (1987) conceptualizes a source agenda that consists of information concerning actions, issues, and topics that media sources give the news media, to either

persuade the media to accept their version of news or dissuade the media from giving those issues and topics attention. As such, the source agenda includes the interactions of the source, policy, media, and audience agendas. The source, which may be an individual, group, organization or institution, takes certain actions to gain visibility in the media to address issues that are important to the source, and constituents that the source represents. Through such actions as proposing legislation, conducting hearings, and passing laws, the source seeks a controlling role in the content of the media agenda (Gandy, 1982; Megwa, 1987). As the media addresses the issues expounded upon by media sources, they publish news material about those issues thereby communicating issue salience. The audience then gives media issues priority, and consequently those issues become a part of the agenda of public thinking (McCombs, and Shaw, 1976).

News sources, whether individuals, groups, or institutions, under certain conditions and on certain issues, could influence news content or set the media agenda. Some news sources are more successful than others in influencing or inducing media content. Daniel and Allen (1988) and a study of newsmagazines, public policy, and the "Black agenda" found a vivid illustration of the obstacles to agenda-setting faced by Blacks and other minorities whose preferences for addressing the problems of their own communities are sharply opposed by influential policy makers with greater media access (p. 23).

Daniel and Allen (1988) content analyzed what they determined as "Black agenda" sources, which were: *The State of Black America 1986*, a 220-page report published January 23, 1986, concerning the events and developments of 1985 as they related to the economic, political, and social condition of Blacks; and the set of 48 "To Be Equal" newspaper columns by Urban League President and Chief Executive Officer John E. Jacob, which appeared near-weekly in newspapers throughout the country in 1985 (Daniel & Allen, 1988, p. 31). Information published by the Urban League

President and Chief Executive Officer was compared with *Time* and *Newsweek* articles during the same period to compare the different "Black agendas".

While the Urban League presented a "Black agenda" giving priority to civil rights, poverty relief, and economic policies free of undue adverse impact on the poor, *Time* and *Newsweek* focused attention on the elimination of affirmative action, de-emphasis of civil rights, and the idea of Black "self-help" in lieu of federal aid. Daniel and Allen focused on agenda-setting by *newsmagazines,* and how their agendas can mold the media audience's perception of public policy regarding African-Americans. Public policy related to Blacks, and hence potentially related to newsmagazines' "Black agendas", falls into roughly four broad categories: *civil rights* policy, *poverty* policy, *special impact* policy, and *aspirational* policy.

The first, *civil rights* policy, consists of constitutional, decisional and statutory law, and executive orders whose express purpose is to establish civil rights parity between Blacks and whites (Daniel & Allen, 1988). The second category, *poverty* policy, is embodied in legislation designed to alleviate the consequences of poverty for the poor of all races. Because African-Americans disproportionately occupy the ranks of impoverished and low income status Americans, many rely on government subsidy programs. More than 33% of the population had incomes below the poverty line in 1985 (Williams, 1986; cited in Daniel & Allen, 1988). The third category, *special impact* policy, is law and governmental practice that, though not expressly aimed at the civil rights, or poverty status among African-Americans, has serious implications for one or the other. (For example, impact for Blacks was especially evident in the Grahm-Rudman Budget Deficit Act which was a policy mandate to reduce poverty programs.) The fourth category of public policy related to Blacks and potentially to the "Black agenda" is *aspirational* policy. This consists of the moral and ideological conceptions of how public life ought to be conducted that are announced in or implied by the assessments, priorities,

legal interpretations, and publicized proposals of officials and private citizens (Daniel & Allen, 1988).

Major "Black agenda" items from the content analyzed sources compared as follows:

Time and Newsweek

- Highest priority: Eradicate reverse discrimination disguised as affirmative action, quotas, and numerical goals
- Attain color-blind society
- Eliminate Black dependence on welfare and other government social programs
- Promote self-help strategies advocated by Black scholars and businessmen sympathetic to President Reagan and conservatives
- Recognize class and social problems, not racism, as the major causes of Blacks' problems

Urban League and Publications

- Highest Priority: Eradicate unemployment, hunger, and homelessness
- Oppose budget cuts, deficit reduction, educational policy, and court-packing likely to harm the interests of poor Blacks
- Preserve civil rights legislation of 1960s and 1970s
- Promote affirmative action and continuation of Executive Order 11246
- Attain racial equality (Daniel & Allen, 1988, p. 32)

The Daniel and Allen study revealed that disparate, conflicting "Black agendas" were presented; that African-American viewpoints were not deeply or frequently represented by the newsmagazines; and that many events, trends, and developments with serious implications for African-Americans and public policy related to them, were covered superficially or not at all by *Time* and *Newsweek.*

America's Black civil rights policy was very much on "Black agendas" in 1985, with the central issue being the fate of governmentally mandated affirmative action. The

Urban League put forth a "Black agenda" that placed the maintenance of past civil rights gains as a priority, including affirmative action legislation, and programs that alleviate poverty and provide assistance for the poor. In contrast, newsmagazines drew attention to eliminating "reverse discrimination," and to espousal of the philosophy of "self-help" by the Reagan administration and some Black scholars and businessmen. Although addressing African-Americans' problems by putting an end to racism and discrimination were prominent on the "Black agenda" presenting by the Urban League, *Time* and *Newsweek* articles focused instead on curbing governmental involvement and responding to African-Americans' problems with attention to socio-economic class, social pathologies, and family life (Daniel & Allen, 1988).

These findings suggest there is a very clear difference in the agendas set forth in the mainstream media and the agenda set forth in a reputable African-American controlled media. This is a very significant aspect of source agenda setting. It brings to bear the realization that African-Americans have limited access to mainstream media, as well as the significant part that African-American controlled media play in providing information for African-American audiences.

The Black Agenda Issues Category Structure

The Black Agenda Issues Category Structure is based upon observed differences between mainstream media and African-American controlled media, and can serve as a guide with which to determine relevant issues and concerns for African-Americans. It is the result of a survey of some Michigan based publications that place emphasis on African-American concerns. Those publications are as follows: *The State of Black Michigan Report* produced by Michigan State University's Urban Affairs Programs, NAACP annual reports for Michigan, and the Urban League annual reports for Michigan. Local media sources gathered from Detroit, Michigan (from whence *For My People* is produced) were not necessarily African-American controlled and produced. However

because Detroit is predominantly African-American populated, these sources are determined to contain a significant reflection of the sentiments and concerns of African-Americans in the Detroit community. Those sources are: New Detroit Incorporated annual report, Detroit City Council Journal entries, Community Ascertainment Survey, The Detroit News Index, and WKBD (cable television) Ascertainment data.

The survey revealed many topics which were categorized in terms of broad issues. They are ranked from 1 to 19 in order of the frequency with which topics related to each issue category:

1. African Diaspora
2. Business Development
3. Maintenance of Culture
4. Education
5. Family
6. Housing
7. Media Access and Coverage
8. Sports and Recreation
9. Social Welfare Programs/Services
10. Youth
11. Economic Concerns and Conditions
12. Community Involvement and Development
13. Employment
14. Equality
15. Health
16. Crime and Law Enforcement
17. Politics
18. Socially Disadvantaged Groups/Conditions
19. Transportation

It is through agenda setting that one can begin to understand the impact of media messages on media audiences. Regarding agenda building and agenda reflection, the need-for-orientation influences the amount of importance audience members place on issues, according to involvement with the issue. The audience's dependence on the media as an information resource places significance upon the media's impact upon the framing of public issues as a function of the agenda setting media effects model. Afrocentricity further introduces the need for investigating the intricacies of agenda setting in terms of an audience member's need-for-orientation, as a function of an

Afrocentric cultural orientation, and the framing of public issues as a function of an Afrocentric media message philosophy.

The Uses and Gratifications Approach

Uses and gratifications researchers seek to explain the effects of the mass media in terms of the purposes, functions or uses as controlled by the choice patterns of the media audience (Fisher, 1978). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) outlined the primary concerns of uses and gratifications research as:

> (1) the social and psychological origins of
> (2) needs, which generate
> (3) expectations of
> (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to
> (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in
> (6) need gratifications and
> (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones (p. 20).

Based upon a review of earlier studies and human needs models, Rosengren (1974) developed an outline for the uses and gratifications research paradigm. By focusing attention to the audience "needs" in the uses and gratifications paradigm, Rosengren sought to further define and direct attention to variables that interact with audience needs to produce media consumption. Rosengren's paradigm is as follows:

1. Certain basic human needs of lower and higher order
   under interaction with
2. Differential combinations of intra- and extra-individual characteristics
   and also with
3. The structure of the surrounding society, including media structure
   result in
4. Differential combinations of individual problems, being more or less strongly felt,
   as well as
5. Perceived solutions to these problems;
   the combination of problems and solutions constituting
6. Differential motives for attempts at gratifications-seeking or problem solving behavior,
   resulting in
7. Differential patterns of actual media consumption

and

8. Differential patterns of other behavior
both behavior categories giving

9. Differential patterns of gratifications or non-gratifications
and, possibly, affecting

10. The individual's combination of intra-and extra-individual characteristics
as well as, ultimately

11. The media structure and other social, political, cultural and economic structures in society (p. 270).

The first item in the Rosengren paradigm epitomizes the biological and psychological infra-structure that forms the basis of all human social behavior. Particular attention was paid to the traditions established in behavioral psychology and especially Maslow's (1954) needs categories which according to Rosengren "can be drawn upon to give some structure" to item 1. Items 2 and 3 focus on the intervening societal and individual characteristics which mediate needs. Rosengren observes that the primary difference between these categories is that within a given society, different individuals may occupy different positions and enact different roles, each being ascribed, and achieving, a special combination of values on a number of extra-individual variables. In another society, of a different structure, the same individuals would have been assigned, perhaps, not only different values but also values on different variables (Rosengren, 1974, p. 273).

Items 4 and 5 (perceived problems and problem solutions) of the paradigm are examples of concepts that researchers are challenged with operationalizing. Regarding item 4, Rosengren defines its part in the paradigm in terms of "problem" covering what Katz, Gurevitch and Haas (1973) call "needs," at the same time that their expression "needs" also seems to refer to parts of item 1 of the paradigm: basic human needs of higher and lower order (Rosengren, 1974, p. 275). In developing the uses and gratifications approach for items 4 and 5, Rosengren cautions that one should first,

distinguish between needs and problems. Second, one should incorporate a larger perspective on human needs into the media needs conceptualization, within which Rosengren considers the hierarchy constructed by Maslow (1954) to be an appropriate starting point. Item 5 focuses upon solutions to problems, Rosengren suggests that answers here can be captured in an investigation which inquires as to the perceived instrumentality of the media in helping an individual to achieve goals.

Item 6 of the paradigm focuses on individual level motives wherein perceived problems and perceived solutions might combine to form a motive. "Biological and psychological needs in conjunction with characteristics of an individual and his environment give rise to problems. Problems in combination with perceived means for solving them may then give rise to a motive for action" (Rosengren, 1974, p. 276). Item 7, differential patterns of media consumption, entails three discernible main areas of consideration: (a) media consumption in terms of amounts of time spent on the various media; (b) types of media content consumed; (c) various relations between the individual consumer and either the media content he is consuming or the media more generally (Rosengren, 1974, p. 277).

Rosengren observes that the full appreciation of the meaning of media uses and gratifications demands an assessment into the context of other activities and the gratifications obtained therefrom as is called for in item 8. This could be obtained in two ways: (a) estimating the relative importance of mass media consumption visa-a-vis other activities by comparing them in terms of certain indicators, such as the time spent on them and the perceived utility of different activities for serving various purposes; and (b) following causal or functional practice, identify a certain pattern of media consumption (including time spent on the different media, type of content consumed, and consumption and outside relations) which might then be regarded as having casual or functional relations to other activities (1974, p. 280). Item 9 focuses attention on the gratifications sought or obtained from a particular medium, and the causes as well as effects of

differential uses and gratifications of a medium or media. Rosengren further observes that the two concepts of uses and gratifications, although analytically distinct, empirically speaking are so intimately intertwined that one should take special care not to confuse the two, or to infer one (gratification) from a measurement of the other (uses).

Items 10 and 11 of the paradigm, Rosengren (1974) considers to be more difficult to incorporate into a single uses and gratifications study. They represent the effects of media uses and gratifications on the audience member and his society (Rosengren, 1974, p. 282). This aspect has been more or less neglected by empirical uses and gratifications research, although it has been widely discussed. Whereas audience functions have been actively studied, the long-term effects of the existence of such functions have so far only been an object of speculation (Rosengren, 1974). Items 10 and 11 considered together seem to ultimately require an integration of the agenda setting model with uses and gratifications. As Rosengren has observed, the effect using a medium due to a perceived gratification naturally infers that the uses and gratifications of media would have an observable effect on the user.

Contemporary studies utilizing the uses and gratifications model generally accept that the principal elements include the needs and motives of individuals for communication behavior, the social and psychological environment of people, the mass media, functional alternatives to media use, communication behavior, and the consequences of such behavior (Rubin, 1986, p. 285). The three objectives of uses and gratifications research are: to explain how the mass media are used by individuals to gratify their needs; to understand the motives for media behavior; and to identify the functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives, and communication behavior (Rubin, 1986). The units of analysis are individuals; the structures are the relationships between the individual, the media, and the social system; the activities are media consumption, and other communication behavior; and the functions are the consequences of this pattern of behavior (Rubin, 1986, p. 286).

Stages of Development

In a literature review of uses and gratifications research, Rubin (1986) observed that early gratifications investigations aimed to determine why people used or what gratifications people sought from certain media content (p. 286). In this form, gratifications research was seen by Lazarsfeld (1940) as a vehicle for determining the appeals of radio programs (Rubin, 1986). Although they were not really guided by the broader needs-motives-uses-consequences paradigms of contemporary uses and gratifications, the studies primarily were interested in exploring audience needs and motives as variables that intervene before media impact instead of the persuasive effects of the media (Rubin, 1986). Early gratifications investigations include the appeals of a radio quiz program for its listeners (Herzog, 1940), the gratifications obtained by women who listened to radio daytime serials (Herzog, 1944), and the reasons why people read the newspaper (Berelson, 1949; cited in Rubin, 1986, p. 286).

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) surveyed early media use studies such as Lazarsfeld and Staton (1942, 1944, 1949); Herzog (1942) on quiz programs and the gratifications derived from listening to soap operas; Suchman (1942) on the motives for getting interested in serious music on radio; Wolfe and Fiske (1949) on the development of children's interest in comics; and Berelson (1949) on the functions of newspaper readings. According to Katz et al. (1974), these studies, precursory to the uses and gratifications model, had several features in common. First those early studies share a similar methodological approach whereby statements about media functions were elicited from the respondents in an essentially open-ended way. Second, they shared a qualitative approach in their attempt to group gratification statements into labeled categories, largely ignoring the distribution of their frequency in the population. Third, they did not attempt to explore the links between the needs that were thus satisfied. Fourth, they failed to search for the interrelationships among the various media functions, either quantitatively or conceptually, in a manner that might have led to the detection of the latent structure of

media gratifications (Katz et al., 1974, p. 20). These studies however, did not result in a cumulatively more detailed picture of media gratifications conducive to the eventual formulation of theoretical statements (Katz et al., 1974, p. 20). Katz et al. continue on with their review of the research designs emerging in the 1970s observing that "each attempts to press toward a greater systematization" (1974, p. 20) of the approach for conducting uses and gratifications research.

Uses and gratifications research of the early 1970s began with a focus on the development of typologies of mass media gratifications (Rubin, 1986, p. 287). McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) formulated a typology of media-audience interactions wherein the authors observe that individuals are motivated to use television for: diversion (escape and emotional release); personal relationships (companionship and social utility); personal identity (personal reference, reality exploration, and value reinforcement); and surveillance (e.g., acquiring news and information). They concluded that because television is multidimensional in terms of programming, the escapist view of television is incomplete (p. 162).

Rosengren and Windahl (1972) developed a typology based on measures of: degree of dependency on functional alternatives that can supplement, complement, or substitute for media use, wherein motives for media use include change, compensation, escape, or vicarious experience; degrees of involvement which can result from audience needs for interaction and identification including detachment, parasocial interaction, solitary identification or capture; and finally needs for interaction were viewed in terms of degrees of reality proximity of media content, ranging from noninformative, fictional content, to informative, nonfictional content.

Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) see the mass media as a tool with which individuals connect themselves with others (or disconnect). They listed 35 needs taken "from the (largely speculative) literature on the social and psychological functions of the mass media" and organized them into five categories: cognitive needs (acquiring

information, knowledge, and understanding); affective needs (emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience); personal integrative needs (strengthening credibility, confidence, stability, and status); social integrative needs (strengthening contacts with family, friends, etc.); and tension release needs (escape and diversion) (pp. 166-167).

Greenberg (1974) developed a scale of television uses and gratifications in a study of television watching among young people in England. The following typology emerged based on independent sets of reasons provided for watching television: learning, use of television learn about things in the world and how to behave; habit, referred to as a general, non-specific enjoyment of television; arousal, use of television for excitement and finding "thrills" and feeling "stirred up"; companionship, use of television to avoid feeling alone; relaxation, use of television to calm down and rest; to forget (also referred to as escape), use of television as a means of diversion from problems; to pass time, use of television to relieve boredom and when no other activities are pressing (Greenberg, 1974, p. 77).

In a literature review of contemporary uses and gratifications inquiry, Rubin (1986) observed that one research direction has been an analysis of media use motives, their interrelationships, and their associations with media attitudes and behaviors (Eastman, 1979, Rubin, 1977, 1979, 1981a, 1981b, 1983, 1984; A. Rubin & R. Rubin, 1982). These studies have found consistent relationships and patterns of media use (Rubin, 1986, p. 292). A second direction has been a comparison of motives for media use across several media or categories of media content (Bantz, 1982; Elliot & Quattlebaum, 1979; Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld, 1983; Payne & Caron, 1982; cited in Rubin, 1986, p. 292). A third research direction has been the examination of the social and psychological circumstances of media use (Adoni, 1979; Dimmick, McCain & Bolton, 1979; Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980; Lull, 1980; Miyazaki, 1981; A. Rubin & R. Rubin, 1982a; R. Rubin & A. Rubin, 1982; cited in Rubin, 1986). One other research direction has been an analysis of the relationships between gratifications sought and

gratifications obtained by individuals in their uses of certain media or media content (Galloway & Meek, 1981; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979, 1982; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980, 1981; Wenner, 1982; cited in Rubin, 1986).

Audience Perspectives of Uses and Gratifications Research

Studies have shown that audience gratifications can be derived from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and the social context that typifies the situation of exposure (Katz et al., 1974, p. 24). The early developmental stages of the uses and gratifications approach grew out of the desire to redress an imbalance evident in previous research. The first concern was that audience needs deserved as much attention as the persuasive aims of communication with which so many of the early "effects" studies had been preoccupied (Katz et al., 1974). The second major aim of uses and gratifications research was to treat audience requirements as intervening variables in the study of traditional communication effects (Katz et al., 1974, p. 28). Katz et al., (1974) provide a structuring of five possible social factors that may be involved in the generation of media-related needs (each of which has attracted some comment in the literature):

1. Social situation produces tensions and conflicts, leading to pressure for their easement via mass media consumption (Katz and Foulkes, 1962).

2. Social situation creates an awareness of problems that demands attention, information about which may be sought in the media (Edelstein, 1973).

3. Social situation offers impoverished real-life opportunities to satisfy certain needs, which are then directed to the mass media for complementary, supplementary, or substitute servicing (Rosengren and Windahl, 1972).

4. Social situation gives rise to certain values, the affirmation and reinforcement of which is facilitated by the consumption of congruent media materials (Dembo, 1972).

5. Social situation provides a field of expectations of familiarity with certain media materials, which must then be monitored in order to sustain membership of valued social groupings (Atkins, 1972) (p. 27).

Katz et al. (1974) outlined five elements which focus on the media audience, in terms of basic assumptions of theory, method and value, based an early "uses and gratifications model" (p. 21) as proposed by Lundberg and Hulén (1968). Firstly, the audience is considered to be active, and assumed to be goal directed in media consumption. Individuals are considered to actively select certain media or content. Secondly, audience members are believed to seek certain media to satisfy specific needs. This perspective is in direct contrast with early persuasion and direct effects models of mass communication. Thirdly, because the media compete with other sources of communicative stimuli, the audience initiates media exposure conducive to satisfying specific needs. The power of selective media exposure is placed within the audience. This perspective views the audience as using the media rather than being used by the media (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973). Fourth, methodologically speaking, many of the goals of mass media can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves—that is, people are sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives in particular cases, or at least to recognize them when confronted with them in an intelligible and familiar verbal formulation (Katz et al., 1974, p. 22). Fifth the uses and gratifications approach should suspend value judgments concerning the cultural significance of audience orientations toward mass media. To explore audience orientations on their own terms separates the uses and gratifications approach from other speculative writings on popular culture (Katz et al., 1974).

Uses and gratifications inquiry also focuses on the functional approach to identifying media use. According to Fisher (1978), uses and gratifications researchers seek to explain the effects of the mass media in terms of the purposes, functions or uses as controlled by the choice patterns of receivers (p. 2; cited in Rubin, 1986). Functional analysis in uses and gratifications research seeks to identify media elements regarding

use, content, media that provide the gratification, the consequences of media consumption, and the role of functional alternatives (Rubin, 1986). Functional sociological analysis, from which this perspective derives, is based on the assumption that the actions and phenomena of the social world are functionally interdependent, i.e., systematically related in causal chains and circles (McQuail and Gurevitch, 1974, p. 288). Because of its emphasis on causal explanation, the functional approach is readily amenable to a paradigmatic formulation, in which needs (and their "origins"), motivation, action, and subsequent gratifications are linked in an essentially sequential manner (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974).

The functional approach seeks to provide a pragmatic elucidation of the uses of mass media. McQuail and Gurevitch (1974) identify two foci which have characterized some of the studies conducted within this approach: the first has been concerned with explaining media gratifications in terms of the intensity and extensity of "felt needs" (e.g., for information, diversion, social integration) and the social and social-psychological origins of these needs (McQuail et al., 1972; Katz et al., 1973; cited in McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 298). The second attempts to explain media gratifications regarding individual capacities and inclinations for satisfying these needs in a variety of different ways, including attendance to mass communication (Rosengren & Windahl, 1972; cited in McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974).

Within these two foci, McQuail and Gurevitch (1974) observe that the first focus assumes direct causal relationships between media gratifications and their social and psychological determinants; the second underlines the importance of differential social and psychological resources available to different people, the various options for action open to them, and the choices they then exercise among these options, for explaining the ways in which they go about satisfying their needs, either through media exposure or via other "functional alternatives" (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 289). McQuail and Gurevitch elaborate further on the functional perspective by observing that media

gratifications have generated predicative hypotheses based on social and psychological determinants. The authors observe three major categories of gratifications variables relating to the life circumstances of individual members of the audience based on: (1) personality characteristics; (2) social roles and social experience (both past and present); and (3) variations in environmental and situational circumstances (p. 289). Hypotheses might be based either on discrete variables (e.g., age, sex, level of education, degree of anxiety, loneliness) or on "typical" combinations of interrelated variables (e.g., education level, occupation and income) constituting *types* of individuals with common social backgrounds (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974).

A view of systemic relationships among individuals, the media, and society emerges from a functional or pragmatic approach to mass communication study (Rubin, 1986, p. 282). It is assumed that component subsystems are interrelated and integrated within the complete system (Rubin, 1986). For example, individuals are related to one another through group memberships, groups are interconnected with each other and societal structures, individual and group behavior is influenced by social structure and norms, media are affected by audience use and by societal components such as advertising, regulation, and the like, societal components are influenced by the media and audiences, and so on (Rubin, 1986). Television lends itself quite easily to the functional approach to uses and gratifications inquiry. Researchers have found television to serve a number of need gratifications for certain groups (McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, 1972; Rosengren & Windahl, 1972; Greenberg, 1974; Rubin, 1977, 1979, 1981; cited in Rubin, 1986). A systemic view of the functions of television news operating in a free enterprise system includes informing the citizenry and selling products among other functions (Rubin, 1986).

McQuail and Gurevitch (1974) also examine the structural/cultural perspective of audience uses and gratifications. The authors define this approach as concerning the character of human experience in urban industrial society, with the overall

characterization of such a society and with the potential for future change in its quality of life (1974, p. 29). The dominant theme of the structural/cultural perspective is the idea that audience expectations and satisfactions derived from the media should be explained primarily in terms of (1) the patterns of media materials that are made available, and (2) the customs, norms, and conventions—defining what counts as appropriate ways of using and reacting to media provision—that prevail in particular societal settings (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 291). Both of these are molded, in turn, by structural and cultural factors that, on one hand, shape media contents and the intimations they hold for the gratifications that might be gained from them and, on the other hand, help to institutionalize the approved ways using the media and responding to cultural goods of various kinds (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974).

The emphasis in the structural/cultural approach is on how the dominant cultural definitions constrain elements of subcultural variations in a given society, wherein each individual has some opportunity to make choices. The audience preference in media choice is interpreted in terms of how choices are mediated by the observer's overall view of the social-structural and cultural situation (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974). Those taking this approach generally avoid explanations of audience gratifications that originate from internal need states.

Although external factors such as social and cultural circumstances are significant elements in the formulation of needs and gratification through media exposure, psychological factors play an important role as well. When people show a clear and loyal preference, from among equally accessible mass communications, such persistence cannot be viewed as mere continuation of a chance habit (McGuire, 1974). Learning theory's law of effect posits that repetition does not stamp in a response unless there is reinforcement; without reinforcement, repeated exposure would have the opposite effect of extinguishing the habit (McGuire, 1974, p. 173). McGuire (1974), in a review of psychological motivations that would factor into media exposure, observed that cognitive

motives and affective motives are primary theoretical approaches in the psychological underpinnings for media exposure.

Within the cognitive motives subdivision, those stressing preservation of current equilibrium and cognitive growth theories are examined. Two motives are considered here within the category of those that stress preservation of current equilibrium, these consider the individual as active: the *consistency* theoretical approaches that stress the attainment of an internal equilibrium and the *attribution* theoretical approaches that stress the individual's maintenance of his external orientation to the environment (McGuire, 1974, p. 173). In this paper, the emphasis is on the audience as active and selective in media exposure, and focuses on those theoretical approaches that agree with this perspective.

Consistency approaches suggest that mass communications present an individual with an opportunity for gratifying the need for consistency. For example, individual can select media content, perceive it and retain it selectively and use the information therein to help resolve conflicts, or to live with any compromise resolution with any possible conflict regarding a life issue. This is possible via the presentation of various rationalizations, or by the presentation of helpful distinctions or syntheses, or at least by offering the comparative consolation that other people have more serious problems or have arrived at even less happy solutions (McGuire, 1974, p. 175).

The attribution theoretical approach stresses the person's internal orientation toward maintaining an interpretation of his environment (McGuire, 1974, p. 175). This view regards the individual as an implicit theorist attributing causes and motives to occurrences in his experience, and responding to any occurrence, not so much in terms of its appearance as in terms of the causal interpretations that he makes of it (McGuire, 1974). Mass communication presents the individual with a neatly packaged "culturally stereotyped and sanitized oversimplification of an untidy and unsatisfying reality" (McGuire, 1974, p. 175). By offering recipients an opportunity for the gratification of

bolstering their implicit theories of the world, via customary formulae and convention (e.g., black hats for the bad guys and white hats for the good guys), the media offer a sense of security for the individual by verifying definitions of expectations of the world.

Cognitive growth theoretical approaches include autonomy and stimulation theories. Autonomy approaches depict the person as seeking self-realization by developing an integrated, autonomous identity. Mass communication can become significant in this process in terms of considering one's motivations for keeping current with politics, entertainment, sports, or other current topics, through the newspaper, radio, or television. McGuire (1974) speculates that fulfilling one's need to be aware of current information via the mass media may contribute to the realization of self actualization in fulfilling integration needs. The individual views himself as part of the larger whole and therefore feels participation, power, and the illusion of control.

Stimulation approaches emphasize external orientations which view the person as having a stimulus hunger, a need for varied experience constituting an exploratory drive that makes the individual characteristically curious, seeking after novelty, rather capricious, playful, and prone to fads (McGuire, 1974, p. 180). Mass communication theories adhering to this approach view the mass media experience as having much more action, excitement, and stimulation than the individual's actual world. Because most people tend to associate primarily with individuals of their own age, sex, socioeconomic class, etc., mass communication content is a vastly broadening experience, putting them in touch with a much wider range of people than do their daily lives (McGuire, 1974). Insofar as there is a human need to be stimulated, mass communications furnish a wealth of actualities and fantasies that provide its recipients with something to think about and an escape from boredom (McGuire, 1974).

The affective motivation theoretical approach examines affective motives stressing preservation of the current equilibrium and affective growth approaches. Of the preservation motives, two stress active initiative in obtaining gratification, namely,

tension reduction theories and expressive theories. The tension-reduction paradigm of motivation suggests that one may obtain release from other emotional tensions through identifying with and abreacting one's own pent-up feelings in fantasies facilitated by the factual and fictional materials presented in mass communication (McGuire, 1974, p. 184).

The gist of the expressive theoretical approaches is that the person gains gratification through self expression and acting out. Attesting to one's existence by leaving one's mark in the form of an achievement, a trivial graffiti, or even a destructive act are all considered within this partial view of the person as being rewarded in their own right, independent of any utilitarian return that they may occasion (McGuire, 1974, p. 184). By acquainting the person with issues, whether in the passing political scene or the perennial human condition, mass communications facilitate the person's developing an attitude or point of view, ideological development itself can be a gratifying, self-enhancing activity besides furnishing the basis for subsequent action in a word or deed that might constitute a further rewarding self-expression (McGuire, 1974, p. 185).

Affection growth approaches of the affective motives includes two "individual as active" approaches in which the initiation of behavior in *assertion* and *affiliation* theoretical approaches are placed. Assertion approaches view human motivation in the active mode, and stress an internal orientation of the individual's drives (McGuire, 1974). The individual is a competitive achiever, seeking success, admiration, and dominance, striving to develop his potential in order to enhance esteem by self and others (McGuire, 1974). Society is conceived of as an organized struggle in which the individual's aim is personal aggrandizement, and advancement of one's position over other people (McGuire, 1974). For a large part of the adult public, mass communications constitute the main educational provision of society, offering information, indicating needed skills and even supplying some of them, depicting ways of coping and suggesting new worlds to conquer (McGuire, 1974, p. 188). These can be easily translated into gratifications to fulfill a person's need for power and achievement.

Affiliation theoretical approaches view people as altruistic and cohesive, seeking acceptance and affection in interpersonal relations. The affiliative concepts focus on those elements of human motivation that drive individuals to establish connections characterized by mutual helpfulness and reciprocated positive effect, with other people. Among the communication theorists, Katz, Gurevitch and Haas (1973) have particularly emphasized the usefulness of mass communication in connecting the individual with various human networks (McGuire, 1974, p. 188). Mass media reaffirms its audience's sense of participation in the events and institutions depicted, of being a part of the human drama on a broader stage than their own personal concerns (McGuire, 1974). Media also provides one with conversational topics which could also serve the function of cohesion.

While McGuire (1974) has provided an action oriented psychological examination of the possible gratifications derived from media content, there is an approach that roots itself in phenomenological sociology (McQuail and Gurevitch, 1974). The action/motivation perspective stresses the idea of media use as a rational, goal-directed activity (McQuail and Gurevitch, 1974, p. 294). Within this perspective the research is concerned with situations in which media use appears to be purposeful wherein the actor is able to explain his choices. The primary source of evidence is the actor's own view of what he is doing. McQuail and Gurevitch (1974) list the following methodological rules for studying the experience of the mass media audience based on the action/motivation perspective:

1. To find out why viewers, listeners, or readers attend to media, *ask them.* They are likely to have some awareness of their motivation, and in any case their answers are the only relevant explanation of the actions in question.

2. Do not assume that any experience has a *unitary meaning.* Different people will give different accounts of the same media experience and will attribute personal meanings to that experience. Let the respondents provide the components of any explanatory framework.

3. In asking questions, focus on the *anticipated outcomes* of a communication experience. Direct inquiry to the future, not to the past.

4. Concentrate so far as possible on the *communication experience*. The personality, life circumstances, and past experiences of the person, as well as the content of the message, are secondary to the *relationship* between the message and the recipient (p. 295).

This approach suggests identifying an audience situation wherein a high level of conscious choice action is likely to exist, which suggests a concentration on "fans"—either of a particular and established type of content or of an item typical of a genre, or possibly fans of a given medium in general (McQuail and Gurevitch, 1974). Data collection should utilize inquiry techniques which guide research toward descriptive, qualitative, and exploratory procedures. Interviewing in depth and participant observation are techniques well suited to the approach.

It is through uses and gratifications that one can begin to understand the significance of media choices. Regarding the idea that media audiences make active and conscious decisions in media consumption, the social/cultural and functional analysis subcomponents of uses and gratifications are primarily useful in the analysis of Afrocentricity in media. The audience's social and cultural condition has a very definite impact upon patterns of media consumption, particularly in a culturally diverse society such as in the United States. Because the social/cultural experience of African-Americans is, as the literature review has revealed, a significant one, Afrocentricity as applied to mediated communication should be analyzed according to its social/cultural implications for media choices. Functional analysis in the uses and gratifications of media choices would contribute to understanding the implications of Afrocentric mediated communication. Afrocentric media can offer a functional alternative to, or a functional contribution to, other types media or activities, in the lives of people that use, and are gratified by Afrocentric media.

VI. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF AFROCENTRICITY

Introduction

The goal of this critical analysis is to illustrate the relative critical and supportive positions of Afrocentricity. In doing so, several evaluative themes have emerged and been expounded upon to discuss various published positions taken on Afrocentricity. Extrapolated from various sources, the themes are derived from discussions on *cultural relevance*, the relative necessity of *behavioral mandates*, and debates and definitions regarding the *conceptual clarity,* of Afrocentricity. This critical analysis is not an outline of *all* viewpoints and perspectives on Afrocentricity, rather it is a representative sampling of evaluative themes expressed both by supportive, and critical perspectives on Afrocentricity. Earlier in this paper Afrocentricity was explicated according to its components parts, and those components were elaborated upon via literature review. These evaluative themes are *not* the Afrocentricity components in another form. Rather, they provide a way to assess the merits of Afrocentricity. All the Afrocentricity components address and explore cultural relevance, constitute a behavioral mandate, and address conceptual clarity.

A critique of Afrocentricity based on the communication theories agenda setting and uses and gratifications is also a part of this critical analysis. This critique explores the previously discussed evaluative themes via specific features of the two theories. With respect to agenda setting, the *need-for-orientation* audience interest and motive feature is the first focus of the critique. This particular substantive feature of the theory is relevant due its emphasis on differential patterns of media uses, and media effects. A person's *motives* for using mass media may be just as important, if not more so, as his or her levels of media exposure in predicting and explaining media effects (Weaver, Graber, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981, p. 96). As applied to public affairs television programming,

Afrocentricity may mediate audience motives, interests, and therefore levels of media exposure in a possible agenda setting effect.

In terms of the media perspective of agenda setting, the second focus of the agenda setting piece of this critical analysis pertains to the media's ability to *frame public issues*. Earlier in this paper, public affairs programming framing mechanisms were discussed in the defining characteristics of the public affairs show *60 Minutes*. *60 Minutes* employs specific techniques by which it identifiably and uniquely presents public affairs information. Regarding the media focus of agenda setting theory, the framing of public issues is also the focus of this critique due to the ability of news and public affairs media to use thematic formats with which to disseminate information. The media frames public issues by differentially concentrating on specific issue attributes, which thereby influence issue salience within the media audience. As applied to public affairs television programming, Afrocentricity may mediate the framing of public issues through the communicator's ability to translate the Afrocentricity components into thematic communicative formats.

As discussed earlier in this study, uses and gratifications is an approach that identifies an individual's felt needs for the use of media content, and any possible rewards attained from actively exposing one's self to media content. As such, the functional approach, and the structural/cultural approach will be discussed in this critique. In terms of the functional approach, *functional analysis* is the focus of this critique. According to this perspective, the media exists within a system of actions and phenomena of the social world. Viewing media exposure as a functional alternative to satisfying felt needs, the approach questions what situational variables such as (1) personality characteristics; (2) social roles and social experience (both past and present); and (3) variations in environmental and situational circumstances (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974) lead individuals to selective media exposure. This particular substantive feature of uses and gratifications is relevant to a critical analysis of Afrocentricity due to its attempt to

explain media gratifications regarding individual capacities, and inclinations for satisfying needs in a variety of different ways, including attendance to mass communications. Afrocentricity may mediate an individual's capacity and inclination for media exposure as reflected in any one, or all the aforementioned circumstances regarding media exposure.

The social/cultural approach of uses and gratifications views audience behavior as being *prescribed* by social and cultural factors which, on the one hand, shape media contents and the intimations they hold for the gratifications that might be gained from them and, on other hand, help institutionalize the approved ways of using the mass media and responding to cultural goods of various kinds (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 291). Of particular interest in this critique is the perspective that the social and cultural approach takes in offering rationale for differential audience behavior as being the result of subcultural variations within a given society, such as social class distinctions. In the case of Afrocentricity, the experience of being an individual of African descent is the subcultural variation at issue, for it is that subcultural experience that motivated the development of Afrocentricity. The African-American subcultural variation may mediate adherence to the tenets of Afrocentricity, as reflected in the interaction between media output and audience response.

Evaluative Themes

As discussed in the introduction, the evaluative themes which emerged from a review of published supportive and critical positions on Afrocentricity are the cultural relevance, behavioral mandate, and conceptual clarity of Afrocentricity.

Cultural Relevance

The first of the three evaluative themes, cultural relevance, is the idea that ideology, principles, and practices must be based upon a recognition and comprehension of, and relationship with the cultural sensitivities of groups defined by common racial characteristics. As adapted from Karenga's (1982) seven components of culture, in an Afrocentric context, cultural relevance is interpreted as sensitivity that attends to the: (1) myths and legends; (2) history and impact upon civilization; (3) social conditions; (4) economic conditions; (5) political activities; (6) creative and artistic endeavors, and; (7) common geographic group identity, of people of African descent.

As reflected in the components of Afrocentricity, the cultural relevance of the oral tradition lies in the manipulation of language into a more culturally purposeful form (specifically in the case of the African diaspora). The oral tradition of Afrocentricity claims cultural relevance due to evidence that supports a preference for oral communication among people of African descent. The subjective analytical base of Afrocentricity gives particular attention to cultural relevance regarding the explicit centering, and focus of any analysis, on the concerns and issues of people of African descent. The collective socio-political orientation in Afrocentricity attends to the relevance of cultural ideas, norms, and practices which support collectivist behavior. Asante (1988) discusses cultural relevance in terms of *Nija*. Nija, Asante says is;

> ...the collective expression of the Afrocentric world view which is grounded in the historical experience of African people. ... Nija represents

> the inspired Afrocentric spirit survival of African essence in America. Thus, Nija places Afrocentricity within the African population of the [D]iaspora and the continent. ... With its coming, we have a dynamic and flexible ideology rooted in the historical and cultural processes of African-Americans which is grounded simultaneously in symbol and spirit of Africa (p. 22).

Asante's "Nija" concept is understood as descriptive of cultural relevance because it suggests that historical referents, cultural identity, and particularistic attention and involvement are an integral part of Afrocentric cultural relevance. *Historical referents* are significant to this evaluative theme due to an expressed need to structure a connection with the cultures and ethnicities of Africa. The significance of which is to establish the importance of past and present conditions, and to illustrate the evolution, and advancement of people of African descent. *Cultural identity* relates to the idea of establishing one's geographic cultural identity as related to people and cultures of the content of Africa. *Particularistic attention and involvement* relates to the development of practices and philosophies that mirror those of African cultures and ethnic groups, the purpose of which is identity development via specialized customs and rituals.

Review of Critical and Supportive Perspectives: Cultural Relevance

In observance of changing perspectives on history, culture, and power, Delores S. Williams (1992), contributing editor of "Christianity and Crisis" magazine reported on the "challenge of the centrisms," of which she sees Afrocentricity as a primary force. In support of the *idea* of diverse perspectives, Williams writes sympathetically of Afrocentricity in terms of the desire to redefine "tradition,"

> ...African Americans and women with a liberation perspective have claimed that those in charge of disseminating the traditions of our culture have been biased in favor of a European and male heritage.
>
> More recently, the *New York Times*, television, and many popular periodicals have reported on the Afrocentric claims that are pushing us to see Africa as a vital contributor to, indeed as a source of, the many patterns of Western culture. The origins of these patterns had previously

> been identified as Greek, as if the so-called classical culture had no predecessor beyond Greece and Rome (p. 17).

Williams' position on Afrocentricity focuses on the cultural relevance evaluative theme, specifically in terms of historical referents traditionally employed regarding the origin of Western civilization. Williams' comments imply a supportive evaluation of an Afrocentric perspective on history.

Executive Director of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, Sonia Jarvist, reflected on the meritorious aspects of arguments that favor of an Afrocentric curriculum from the precedent set by *Brown v. Board of Education.* Jarvist (1992) writes supportively of an Afrocentric curriculum in terms of the cultural relevance it holds for African-American children,

> Afrocentric curriculum advocates accept *Brown*'s premise that stigma is the greatest obstacle to Black students' education opportunities. However, they argue that even if *Brown* was correct to order integration, the persistence of segregation and the uneven effects of integration make an alternative curriculum appropriate for removing the stigmas Black children still face in schools that have resegregated (or never were desegregated). Advocates such as Professor Tsehloane Keto and Professor Molefi Kete Asante assert that Black children will no longer feel a need to reject their Blackness as a "badge of inferiority" if given the opportunity to study from an Afrocentric perspective. The societal contributions of their ancestors and their own experiences would not be marginalized or devalued. In practical terms, such a perspective would improve Black children's self esteem and ability to function in society at large (p. 1287).

Jarvist's (1992) position on Afrocentricity focuses on the cultural relevance evaluative theme. She addresses this theme specifically in discussing the need for education systems to recognize and value the African-American cultural identity, to preserve African-American children's self esteem.

Wade Nobles of the San Francisco State University Department of Black Studies observes "the need for an authentic theoretical and therapeutic praxis relative to African and African-American psychological functioning." Nobles (1989) supports an

Afrocentric perspective in terms of cultural relevance it holds with regard to particularistic attention or involvement concerning the psychological health of people of African descent,

> An Afrocentric analysis would have to assume that African philosophical and cultural precepts were in operation in the context of a non-African environment. Accordingly, from an Afrocentric perspective, identity formation and development would need to describe and explain the goal-directed and culturally meaningful activities or experiences that African people undertake as active agents in a world in which they are transformed and are simultaneously transforming (p. 256).

An Afrocentric "model of identity" Nobles writes, "would help to illustrate and explain how African people reproduce themselves in a non-African reality" (1989, p. 256) to provide more accuracy in the psycho-therapeutic treatment of African-Americans.

Pulitzer Prize winning historian, and Humanities Professor at City University of New York, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has published a book on the subject of multiculturalism entitled, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (Smoler, 1992). In a 1992 interview, Schlesinger offered his opinion of Afrocentricity, in particular efforts aimed at developing an Afrocentric curriculum,

> The Afrocentric curriculum withdraws Blacks from America in favor of a fictitious connection with Africa. Many Black American families have been in this country for eight or ten generations. The whole notion that Black Americans are not part of America, that they are part of African culture, is absurd. Its consequences are potentially disastrous. There are those, for example, who argue that Blacks should not be taught standard English, that they should be taught Black English. If there is anything that is going to disable people for a role in American society, it would be to speak a separate dialect. The whole enterprise is designed to re-create American apartheid (Smoler, 1992, p. 47).

Schlesinger's criticism of Afrocentricity is reflective of the cultural relevance evaluative theme with regard to the particularistic attention or involvement necessary for developing a separate curriculum specifically for African-Americans. Schlesinger further defines

African-Americans' cultural identity as non-African, as well as the diverse ethnicities in Africa is being non-homogenous,

> 'Afrocentricity,' the idea that Black Americans, the vast majority of whom have ancestors who have been in this country for more than three hundred years, have some kind of live, potent cultural connection with Africa, is unsustainable. Blacks are very much a part of American culture. Given the fact they are only 12 percent of the population, they have played rather an extraordinary role in shaping that culture. And the idea that the continent of Africa from Saharan desert to rain forest to savanna to Nile Delta to the Cape of Good Hope has in any sense a homogeneous culture is ridiculous. The artificiality of this whole thing is particularly dismaying. In its more extreme form it is not merely historically mistaken, it is profoundly racist. The only case that can be made is a virulently racist one: that because Black Americans have dark skins and Africans have dark skins, they have some kind of mystical affinity" (Smoler, 1992, pp. 47—48).

Here, Schlesinger addresses cultural relevance in terms of cultural identity by defining African-Americans as Black Americans who have no realistic cultural connection to African ethnic groups.

While supportive authors advocate the need for African cultural relevance in varying ways, critical authors appear to take offense to the assertion that the American element of the African-American cultural identity is inadequate. Schlesinger particularly takes a critical stance to the idea that "Black Americans" should seek a cultural connection with Africa, and further asserts that this idea is "unsustainable." While his point is well taken in observing that Africa as a continent does not constitute a singular homogenous culture, he seems to miss the point of the Afrocentric argument. The Afrocentric cultural relevance argument vies for support of African culture present within the enslaved Africans, and passed on to their descendants. It is argued that there is a sustainable connection with the cultures and ethnicities of Africa enough to serve cultural relevance in Afrocentricity.

Behavioral Mandate

The second of the evaluative themes is the idea that one must adhere to specific behavioral and attitudinal conventions to conduct one's self according to an *Afrocentric cultural mode*. One of the main points in the behavioral mandate is that individuals should implement, or adjust behavior to engage in activities wherein the impetus for action are the needs of the collective i.e., people of African descent. Haki Madhubuti (1980) in listing components concerning the necessary attitude for "positive change," cites culture specific items which suggested that one become, "progressively collective" in order to achieve "maximum cultural development" (Warfield-Coppock, 1990, p. 67). The African-American holiday *Kwanzaa* incorporates behavioral principles that ascribe to collectivism in three of the six principles that define the holiday, those are:

1. Umoja (Unity) To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

2. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) To build and maintain our community together and make our sisters' and brothers' problems our problems and solve them together.

3. Nia (Purpose) To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness (Warfield-Coppock, 1990, p. 100).

As is illustrated by the previous discussion, the *subversion of individual* goals for the promotion and concern of group goals is one key point within the behavioral mandate evaluative theme. Group goals are to take precedent in the life of one who adopts the Afrocentric cultural orientation. Warfield-Coppock (1990), in a publication designed as a handbook that explicates various behavioral mandates as instructions for "adolescent rites of passage," illustrates other Afrocentric principles that reflect collectivist behavioral mandates. Those include cooperativeness regarding the ability to work harmoniously with others, and the desire for inclusiveness. The subversion of individual goals suggests that people of African descent can achieve solidarity and advancement by placing individual needs for advancement second to the group needs for advancement.

Another main point of the behavioral mandate is the idea that *actions and attitudes should be based upon perceived oppression.* This is rooted in the notion that people develop coping mechanisms more successfully in an environment that responds to evidence of oppression. Afrocentric behavior would then serve as a mechanism to devise activities for advancement. Madhubuti (1980) lists items for which perceived oppression serves as the impetus for action, this is evident in his observation that one should "fight against Black on Black crime, understanding that the roots of Black on Black crime is white on Black crime" (Warfield-Coppock, 1990, p. 67). Asante defines this key point as "levels of transformation." Asante (1988) observes that when an individual grasps for levels of *Afrocentric awareness* he is able to recognize the pervasiveness of "racist oppression" in the lives of people of African descent. The most significant level of Afrocentric awareness, as Asante defines it, is that of a "victorious awareness," wherein one begins to recognize the necessity for collective responsibility for one's race. Asante's (1988) advisement on the matter of attitudes and actions as based upon perceived oppression is that, "No example of oppression consciousness is stimulating in a progressive sense," and that "Struggle itself becomes oppression consciousness when one cannot see victory" (p. 51). In other words when one recognizes oppression, consciousness of oppressive conditions does not alone constitute responsibility; one must consciously seek collective liberation as the means to become an active agent in the struggle for liberation.

The last main point of the behavioral mandate emphasizes *innate behavioral qualities.* Asante (1988) illustrates expressiveness as representative of an African behavioral mode reflected among African-Americans. Innate behavioral qualities are defined as an individual's *natural* preference for specific types of attitudes and, or behaviors. In observing expressiveness as an innate behavioral quality, Asante finds "continuity" in the similarity of cultural norms, and further cites music as particularly reflective of the "epic memories" of African-Americans of an African cultural norm.

Asante further states that musical forms such as gospel spirituals and blues "speak to (African-Americans') essential pathos, and jazz suggests all the intricate ways we create and communicate which are the legacies of our epic memories" (1988, p. 51).

The oral tradition component of Afrocentricity serves as a behavioral mandate, as oral communication is used to facilitate mobilizing efforts to liberate people of African descent from oppressive conditions. The behavioral mandate is governed by a perspective which mediates the framing mechanisms that one uses to process public affairs information, and the standards with which one acts upon public affairs issues. The collectivist socio-political orientation component of Afrocentricity is in and of itself a behavioral mandate. As previously discussed, one of the main points of the behavioral mandate evaluative theme is the subversion of individual goals. In addition to subverting one's individual goals, the Afrocentric cultural orientation further calls upon one to adopt a collectivist attitude by placing the needs of the group (of people of African decent) above his own.

Review of Critical and Supportive Perspectives: Behavioral Mandate

Norman Harris, professor and chair of African American studies at the University of Cincinnati, writes in support of Afrocentricity in terms of developing a "philosophical base for an Afrocentric orientation." He discusses the behavioral mandate regarding how an Afrocentric orientation affects behavior, and writes that,

> The idea that consciousness determines being derives from an Afrocentric ontology and epistemology. The Afrocentric ontology is characterized by a communal notion of existence, and can be stated as follows: we are, therefore I exist (1992, p. 156).

This evaluative perspective on Afrocentricity calls attention to the subversion of individual goals as a behavioral mandate for an Afrocentric orientation. Harris also speaks directly to the issue of individualism as an artifact of American culture in another

statement concerning the relative difficulty that African-Americans may find in becoming collectivist in an individualist culture. The following statement speaks directly to the issue of collectivism in terms of its importance for African-Americans as the *correct* attitude for racial responsibility,

> ...the individualistic ontology into which we have all been socialized makes it all but impossible for many African Americans to conceptualize the idea of racial responsibility, particularly as it relates to racial empowerment. At worse, racial responsibility ends at the tip of one's nose... (p. 156).

Harris' discussion of the subversion of individual goals within the behavioral mandate evaluative theme is the equivalent of the cultural constraints element of the collectivist socio-political orientation component of Afrocentricity discussed in chapter three of this paper.

Wade Nobles (1989) bases his support of an Afrocentric approach to the treatment of the African psyche upon what he observes as distinct behavioral qualities of people of African descent,

> The fundamental and only substantive justification for an African (Black) psychology or the special treatment of African-Americans as a racial or ethnic group that is African people are culturally, philosophically, biologically, and spiritually distinct from other geo-political-socio-cultural groups. Consequently, the "meaning and definition" of the African psyche and African psychological attributes, qualities, and functioning would have to be conceptually grounded in the philosophical and cultural reality of African people" (1989, p. 256).

Nobles' observation addresses the behavioral mandate evaluative theme specifically with regard to people of African descent as having innate behavioral qualities that make them distinct from other racial groups.

Most perspectives that focus specifically on the behavioral mandate evaluative theme, as reviewed here, regard Afrocentricity positively, partially due to the defining and instructional nature of the supportive perspectives. Critical perspectives reviewed

here are of the point of view that African-Americans should not *actively seek* a cultural connection with Africa.

Conceptual Clarity

The third of the evaluative themes is conceptual clarity and pertains to discussions that define or dispute conceptual elements pertinent to the comprehension and application of Afrocentricity. Conceptual clarity is of concern due to the focus upon, and construction of particularistic concepts which often are applicable only to one author's thinking on Afrocentricity. Also involved are seemingly indisputable claims that appear so due to the relative unavailability of supportive evidence, or absence of data to counter claims made in support of Afrocentricity. The condition of inarguability upon which ideas used to define and explicate Afrocentricity is especially at issue concerning the debate over the relative merits of Afrocentricity. Critical positions of Afrocentricity are primarily reflective of prejudicial criticism, while supportive published positions consistently define and redefine conceptual elements of Afrocentricity.

One point of contention regarding conceptual clarity is in regard to the Trans-Atlantic and continental enslavement of Africans. The debate over the enslavement of Africans has primarily centered on the starting point, proliferation continuation, and resulting abolition of slavery, and who (Africans or Europeans) was responsible. Another point of conceptual contention regards an individual's opinion of and, or perspective on Afrocentricity. Especially public comments that seem strange, peculiar, or outrageous in some fashion. The last point of contention regarding conceptual clarity concerns ancient Egyptian *Negritude*. Because some Afrocentric scholars adhere to the view that the inventions and innovations of ancient Egypt were in fact the inspiration of, and as well the basis for ancient Greek civilization, the argument for an Afro-Egyptian model, as opposed to the Euro-Greek model, is vied for as the *true* model of modern human civilization. Authors debate the subject of Negritude is based upon the undetermined

racial composition of the ancient Egyptian civilization at the time of the pyramid dynasties. Some Afrocentric scholars argue that the racial composition of those ancient Egyptians was that of Black skinned African people (Asante, 1987).

One of the main points of the conceptual clarity evaluative theme is the *universal applicability of concepts*. This main point concerns the relative applicability of the concepts and principles utilized in the analysis and criticism of Afrocentricity, for analysis and criticism of other cultural orientations. The matter of *conclusive evidence* gathered in support of claims made to further the validity of Afrocentricity is another main point of conceptual clarity. As previously discussed, the points of conceptual contention are a major component of conceptual clarity concerning conclusive evidence presented in support of claims made regarding the validity of Afrocentricity. *Definitive statements* are another element within the conceptual clarity theme. Due to attempts to further Afrocentricity as a theoretic approach to analysis, authors often take different supportive or critical sides on Afrocentricity based upon various definitions developed to support arguments for the necessity, utilization, and characteristics of an Afrocentric cultural orientation. *Causal arguments* are another one of the main points of the conceptual clarity theme. This main point is significant for the elucidation of viewpoints or findings for creating a causal connection between independent ideas.

Review of Critical and Supportive Perspectives: Conceptual Clarity

Anne Wortham, author of *The Other Side of Racism: A Philosophical Study of Black Race Consciousness*, and Associate Professor of Sociology, Illinois State University, Normal, adopts a critical stance on the subject of Afrocentric curricula. Wortham (1992) observes a major point of contention in the conceptual clarity regarding the precepts which support the Afrocentric curriculum,

> Afrocentrism aims to liberate students from the demands of rationality, objectivity, the scientific method, and economic self-interest.

> Afrocentrism's doctrine that truth and logic vary with racial groups and collectivity has primacy over independent judgment can only work against Black students as human beings because it requires arresting their thinking at the level of concrete particulars. It undermines pedagogy itself—by fragmenting it and making it impossible for the teacher to rise above the concrete level to the level of generalization (1992, p. 65).

Wortham directly addresses the absence of universality in the concepts which support Afrocentricity asserting the use of "concrete particulars" which, presumably, cannot be applied to other cultural orientations.

Time magazine published an essay by Robert Hughes (1992), wherein Hughes reflected on the diversity in the United States as "the fraying of America." Hughes specifically addresses the subject of Egyptian negritude (the perspective that claims Pharaohs of ancient Egyptian dynasties were dark skinned Africans) as a major flaw in arguments for an Afrocentric approach,

> No plausible evidence exists for these claims of Egyptian negritude, though it is true that the racism of traditional historians when dealing with the cultures of Africa has been appalling. Most of them refused to believe African societies had a history that was worth telling.
>
> [However], to plow through the literature of Afrocentrism is to enter a world of claims about technological innovation so absurd that they lie beyond satire, like those made for Soviet science in Stalin's time (1992, pp. 48—49.)

Hughes is critical of Afrocentricity in terms of the conceptual clarity evaluative theme, specifically with regard to the lack of conclusive evidence available to support the plausibility of claims of Egyptian negritude.

Mary Lefkowitz, author and Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Wellesley College, views Afrocentricity as a "threat to the rationalist tradition." By using imprecise terms such as "steal" and "borrow" regarding the similarity of ancient Greek and ancient Egyptian civilizations, Lefkowitz (1992) charges that Afrocentrics' use of these terms keep their audiences from seeing that there are many different ways to

explain similarities among cultures and writers. This effort, she says, effectively reveals the bias embedded in the Afrocentric perspective,

> To emphasize their common origins, European scholars concentrated on myths about the settling of the Greek mainland by invaders from the North and described the vocabulary and linguistic patterns that Greek and European languages had in common. But partly because of their cultural bias, and partly because they did not have all the information we have today, they did not give sufficient credit to the cultural influence of other Mediterranean peoples on the Greeks.
>
> In appropriating the Greeks to themselves, 19th-century Eurocentric scholars were only seeking to do what the Afrocentrics are now trying to accomplish through a new (and equally misleading) emphasis on the African characteristics in Greek civilization. Afrocentrist historians who claim that Greek philosophy is African in origin are as guilty of chauvinism and nationalism as were 19th-century Europeans (1992, p. A52).

Lefkowitz' critical position on Afrocentricity concerns the conceptual clarity evaluative theme, and specifically identifies a point of contention in the lack of conclusive evidence to support claims concerning ancient Greek and Egyptian civilizations.

Sonia Jarvist (1992) observes that Afrocentric curriculum advocates run the risk of being charged with being too narrow, just as the Eurocentric approach is charged with,

> Moreover, multicultural proponents argue that an Afrocentric perspective, much like the Eurocentric approach, is too narrow and fails to value properly the contributions of other minority cultures. Without a holistic, multicultural approach to education, the Afrocentric curriculum runs the same risk of distortion and cultural bias existing in the Eurocentric curriculum. The multiculturalists contend that a better alternative is to restructure classroom instruction to reflect the full diversity of American society (p. 1295).

The previous perspective is reflective of the conceptual clarity evaluative theme, and focuses on the universal applicability of concepts as a point of contention between Afrocentric and multicultural curricula. Jarvist is supportive of the Afrocentric curriculum, and counters this multiculturalist perspective with the Afrocentric advocates' argument that "non-Black students can benefit from receiving Afrocentric instruction

because it neither assumes European superiority nor denigrates non-Black students' experiences" (1992, p. 1285).

Authur Schlesinger (1992) asserts that many of the arguments and assertions made in support of Afrocentricity are harmful, misleading, and based on myth and fantasy. Of particular interest is the debate concerning the enslavement of Africans about which Schlesinger makes the following observation,

> The slave trade is essentially represented as a white conspiracy. In fact, as we all know, the slaves were delivered by Black Africans to Arab slave traders and by the Arabs to white ships at the ports. And it was Europeans, not Africans, who finally abolished slavery and the slave trade. All cultures commit atrocities, but the Afrocentric party wants to maximize the atrocities committed by Europeans and deny the Atrocities committed by Africans. It's a corruption of history, and it really doesn't matter whether people purvey it because they really believe it or because they think it's good for Black kids to have pride in their past (Smoler, 1992, p. 50).

Here Schlesinger addresses the evaluative theme of conceptual clarity and specifically finds a point of contention with the definitive statements *that he has observed*, which lay the sole responsibility of enslaving Africans at the feet of Europeans.

Critical points of view on Afrocentricity are strong regarding the conceptual clarity evaluative theme, especially with regard to the lack of evidence to support Egyptian negritude. As a historical reference point from which to support Afrocentricity, it is easily debunked. The Afrocentric perspective on slavery however is not so conveniently negated. Using Schlesinger's comments as an example, it may be true that Europeans did in fact abolish *their* enslavement of Africans, however this fact does not annul European responsibility for the cruel enslavement of Africans. Using the American example, during slavery Europeans (males *only* at this time) had full access to voting rights, communication channels, and opinion leadership, in other words access to those materials which make it possible to change legislation. Africans on the other hand

abolished slavery one person at a time in the exodus north, freeing *themselves* from bondage in the absence of humanitarian societal conditions.

Both media and audience perspectives of agenda setting and uses and gratifications theories are used for this portion of the critique. Consideration of both perspectives is important to elaborate on Afrocentricity in media. The media audience is viewed as practicing purposeful exposure to media messages. The media is viewed as purposefully developing messages with an intentional desire to influence and set the audience's agenda in terms of public affairs information. It is with this understanding that agenda setting theory is discussed regarding the *need-for-orientation* audience perspective, and with regard to the media perspective in its ability to *frame public issues*. The uses and gratifications theory is discussed from the audience perspective in terms of the *social/cultural* approach. With regard to the media perspective, *functional analysis* is discussed for its ability to operate as a functional alternative to other activities.

Agenda Setting: Audience Need for Orientation

In using agenda setting theory to structure a theoretical approach to the study of Afrocentric media, the most significant perspective for the utilization of agenda setting theory from the audience perspective, is the *need-for-orientation*. This approach pertains to analyses of audience receptiveness to media, and relieve uncertainty. Following is an audience perspective of agenda setting that specifically explores the need-for-orientation, in a critical analysis of Afrocentricity in mass communication. This review of the need-for-orientation perspective includes a discussion of its defining characteristics, the background concerning its development, and a review of relevant studies. The agenda setting hypothesis presupposes a process of influence from the priorities of political or other interest groups, to the news priorities of media, in which news values and audience interests play a strong part, and from there to the opinions of the public (McQuail, 1983, p. 197). Originally developed as a result of research on political candidates and voter

interest, need-for-orientation in agenda setting is based on two factors: the relevance of the information (to the individual), and the degree of uncertainty concerning the subject of the message (Severin & Tankard, p, 222, 1992). McCombs and Weaver have suggested that individuals differ in their need-for-orientation, and that this may determine whether or not agenda setting takes place (Weaver, 1977; cited in Severin & Tankard, 1992, p. 222). The need-for-orientation posits that the greater the relevance of the information to the individual, and the greater the uncertainty concerning the subject, the greater the need-for-orientation. McCombs and Weaver hypothesized that the higher the need-for-orientation, the more susceptible the individual is to mass media agenda-setting effects (Severin & Tankard, 1992).

Audience interests and motives lead to differential media effects (Weaver, Graber, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981). Tolman's (1932) theory of "cognitive mapping," is the basis of the need-for-orientation theory, and is a combination of level of interest in a subject, such as politics, and level of uncertainty about that subject. Tolman, a psychologist, argued in 1932 that each individual strives to "map" his world, to become familiar with his surroundings (both physical and mental), and to fill in enough detail to orient himself. From Tolman's theory of cognitive mapping and from various studies of information seeking, McCombs and Weaver have developed the following diagram of political need-for-orientation (Weaver et al., 1981, p. 96).

		Uncertainty	
		Low	High
Relevance	Low	Low need-for-orientation	Moderate need-for-orientation
	High	Moderate need for orientation	High need-for-orientation

In this definition, a high level of relevance in the subject of a message (for example, political campaign information) coupled with a high level of uncertainty regarding this subject (for example, not knowing which candidate to support) produces a high need-for-orientation. Both high relevance and low uncertainty, and low relevance and high uncertainty, result in a moderate need-for-orientation. Finally, low relevance combined with a low level of uncertainty produces a low level of need-for-orientation (Weaver et al., 1981). Previous studies support the hypothesis that voters with a higher need-for-orientation are more susceptible to media agenda-setting than are those with a lower need-for-orientation (Weaver et al., 1981, p. 97).

In the Weaver et al. (1981) study of the 1976 presidential campaign, those voters who said they were "very interested" were considered to have a high level of political interest, and those who said they were "somewhat" or "not at all interested" were considered to have "low" level of political interest. Political uncertainty was measured by asking each voter how he or she felt at that time about voting for president in November (Weaver, 1981, p. 97). Those voters who said they would "definitely" vote for a particular candidate were considered to have a "low" level of political uncertainty. Those who had made a tentative decision to vote for a particular candidate and those who didn't know which candidate for whom they would vote were considered to have a "high" level of uncertainty (Weaver, 1981). Voters were divided into three groups, those with a low level of political need-for-orientation, those with a moderate level, and those with a high level of political need-for-orientation. Results supported the need-for-orientation hypothesis in the voters' intrapersonal agendas for specific months during the campaign, however among interpersonal agendas, the level of similarity was not as high. Perceived community agendas were most similar of all.

Afrocentric Need for Orientation

Audience members show a need-for-orientation for specific types of media due to a high degree of relevance and a high degree of uncertainty. Afrocentric methods (specifically Afrocentric media) are said to have been developed in response to unsatisfied needs. In the case of Afrocentric media, the need-for-orientation would result in response to the uncertainty as a result of unsatisfied needs in attending to mainstream media. Afrocentric media attempts to heighten the relevance level of media content for African-Americans by factoring the evaluative themes (i.e., cultural relevance, behavioral mandate, and conceptual clarity) into the information presentation to satisfy an individual's need for more sympathetic media. The evaluative themes serve as orienting motivators to reinforce the utilization of Afrocentric media and reduce uncertainty.

Cultural Relevance. Individuals responsive to the need-for-orientation based upon by the cultural relevance would:

a. give special consideration to the development of public affairs issues which place a clear focus on people of African descent (e.g., one who pays close attention to the events concerning apartheid in South Africa, considers this information to be significant to life as an African-American);

b. identify people of African descent as having a common cultural identity (e.g., bases interest in the events concerning apartheid in South African upon the perception that Black South African people and African-Americans share a cultural and racial kinship);

c. advocate, support, and/or practice particularistic attention and involvement in issues of concern with culture specific emphasis (e.g., has children educated in a system which has adopted an Afrocentric curriculum).

Behavioral Mandate. The need-for-orientation based upon the behavioral mandate evaluative theme would orient individuals toward media that has an action or activist orientation. Individuals attentive to this evaluative theme would be:

a. responsive to media that advocates, or models action attributed to perceived oppression (e.g., gives consideration to news and public affairs

information about drug trafficking if framed to highlight activities structured to remedy the negative impact of drug trafficking on African-American communities);

b. adherent to the subversion of individual goals by supporting, and/or practicing collectivist behavior (e.g., is active in an organization such the NAACP and especially participates in group activities);

c. conscious of similarities in behavior of people defined by common racial heritage in terms of innate behavioral characteristics (e.g., considers similarities in preference for, examples of, and responses to music to be directly responsive common racial descent).

Conceptual Clarity. Individuals responsive to the need-for-orientation as determined by the conceptual clarity evaluative theme would analyze and evaluate issues and concerns according to a speaker's skill at oral debate. Ideals which support the conceptual clarity need-for-orientation are that; the plausibility of arguments is evident according to the believability of one's verbal presentation, supporting evidence is acceptable as it is observable in the everyday world, and the plausibility of arguments is in accordance with generally accepted beliefs. Individuals responsive to the conceptual clarity need-for-orientation would weigh the above characteristics with regard to the:

a. conclusive evidence offered to support an assertion, theory, or argument;

b. relative universality and applicability of the concepts for comparison and contrast to other cultural perspectives;

c. definitional statements utilized to define the parameters of arguments assertions or theories;

d. causal arguments utilized to link independent concepts to support a perspective.

The orienting function could however have a negative effect on the agenda setting effects of Afrocentric media. For example, if individuals need more sympathetic media (and therefore have a degree of uncertainty), have developed a need-for-orientation, and have turned to Afrocentric media to satisfy this need, there is a chance for negative affect. An individual may have a negative reaction toward Afrocentric media in terms of the

evaluative themes, especially if his view of the appropriate use of the Afrocentricity components, as reflected in the framing of public issues, differs with the media's use.

Agenda Setting: Media Framing of Public Issues

The framing perspective of agenda setting is utilized here due to the possible use of the components of Afrocentricity to frame public issues in news and public affairs programming. The following review of the media's perspective of agenda setting will include a definition of the perspective, background of the perspective, and a review of relevant studies. Media agenda setting literature examines the antecedents of media content as related to issue definition, selection, and emphasis. This line of research is found largely in sociology, but has been given attention in other research areas as well, including political science and mass communication (Kosicki, 1993, p. 101). In this context, agenda setting views the source of mass media messages by how the shaping of public issues is developed within the media through the process of issue framing. Public issues are the primary thrust of public affairs programming, and issues are purposely framed in public affairs programming for particularistic emphasis.

According to Gitlin (1980), media frames are, persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual. Frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely and recognize relevant information, assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences (p. 7; cited in Kosicki, 1993, p. 112). Studies of journalistic standards and news practices are important for understanding how issues are framed to *create* news.

An examination of the media's framing of public issues allows for greater insight into types of possible effects. Starting from the point of view that the media do not mirror reality, one can understand news and public affairs information to be actively constructed from available "raw materials," and how issues are formed (Kosicki, 1993).

Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, and Roberts (1978) view framing public issues in terms of the media's choice of "primary definers" of issues and attribute it to the media's preference for the opinions of the powerful:

> Effectively, then, the primary definition sets the limit for all subsequent discussion by framing what the problem is. This initial framework then provides the criteria by which all subsequent contributions are labeled as "relevant" to the debate, or "irrelevant"—beside the point (p. 59; cited in Kosicki, 1993, p. 112).

Framing, as a way of organizing the world's experiences, owes much to the work of Goffman (1974). Goffman has described frames as devices that enable individuals to "locate, perceive, identify and label" occurrences or information (p. 21). According to Gitlin (1980), media frames are:

> ...persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual. Frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognize it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences (p. 7; cited in Kosicki, 1993, p. 112).

According to Becker's (1991) perspective on the defining qualities of an issue, attention should be given to those topics that have qualities which are "in dispute, that is, something about which it is possible to articulate more than one point of view" (p. 343). Defining an issue entails the identification of a controversy, a point of contention, or problematic characteristic within a topic or subject. Developing a framework within which to place issues provides a unique explanation of the topic as an issue, and locates it within a particular conceptual category. According to Goffman (1974) we use frameworks as principles to organize events in everyday life. The frame helps classify, interpret and direct reasoning about the event. Goffman (1974) notes:

> Some (frames) are neatly presentable as a system of entities, postulates and rules; others—indeed, most others—appear to have no apparent articulated shape, providing only a lore of understanding, an approach, a perspective. Whatever the degree of organization, however, each primary framework allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a

> seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its limits (p. 21).

Although there are some minor differences in style and in the operating procedures dictated by the nature of the medium employed to reach a mass audience, both newspapers and television assemble a daily news report composed of news stories (McCombs, Einsiedel, & Weaver, 1991, p. 115). Central to the profession of journalism is creating the *story,* wherein the journalist is a fact gatherer and a story writer. The conventions of this genre and its inventory of story types influence the framing of daily news (McCombs et al., 1991). The active construction of messages, emphasizing certain aspects of an issue and not others, and simultaneous creation of a news story adds "distinctive elements to the stream of public discourse" (Kosicki, 1993, p. 113) that primarily serve to advance the *story* rather than enhance public discourse.

Hall (1977) has argued that the news works ideologically to create consensus that appears to be grounded in everyday reality or common sense. Thus, the "preferred reading" of a text, produced by codes through language and symbolization, represents the dominant meaning that is the basis of popular consensus (Hall, 1980; cited in Meyers, 1992). The resultant effect is that reporters of mainstream news organizations are compelled to present a version of reality (as defined by Berger and Luckman, 1966, reality as socially constructed knowledge, rather than objective awareness separate from the experiences and subjectivity of social beings) that upholds a status quo, reflecting the interests of elitist media owners.

Turow (1985) contends that conflicting tendencies within media ensure that "certain kinds of mass media firms are more likely than others to please the establishment" (pp. 144—145). Television studies have found room for diversity within television's function as a "cultural forum" (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1984) presenting a range of ideas and ideologies, or as an "empty vessel" (Barkin & Gurevitch, 1987) that is textually open-ended (Meyers, 1992, p. 77). Morely (1980, 1985) observed that while the

text of news organizations may be supporting the dominant values, the audience interprets the text according their own discursive or decoding strategies. Meyers (1992) studied the "making of oppositional news" in a major Midwestern newspaper in an investigation of how reporters framed stories on the Midwestern farm crisis. Oppositional news was conceptualized as that which deviates from the norm insofar as it challenges establishment ideas (Meyers, 1992, p. 75). Meyers found that oppositional news is constructed by reporters according to their personal ideologies, while still articulating media management ideology as a component within their news stories.

Solomon (1992) studied news frames used for reporting on El Salvador from the offense in November 1989, through the peace accord of January 1992. The news magazines *Time, Newsweek,* and *U.S. News & World Report* were qualitatively analyzed and found to share a common "media package." This media package depicts U.S. policy on El Salvador as well-meaning. The range of views in the coverage corresponds to the range of views among ruling U.S. elites. Differences in coverage were linked to the relative differences reflected in the respective news organization's world views, and links with segments of the elite. In a study of the *framing mechanisms* used in Gulf War coverage, Liebes (1992) discovered "widely different framing mechanisms." In "our" war coverage, television journalists tend to excise the opposite side, sanitize the suffering inflicted on it, attribute equal strength to both sides, personalize "our" side, demonize "their" side, and decontextualize their own nation's aggressive actions.

Afrocentric Framing of Public Issues

The media framing focus of this paper is that of news and public affairs television programming. While information is varied, the framing of information is fairly constant, and in terms of an Afrocentric orientation, unique. The framing mechanisms of Afrocentric programming are governed by the Afrocentricity components, i.e., issues are systematically explored within a contextual discussion, issues and concerns are given a

subjective analysis with no attempt to objectify analytical perspectives, and the sociopolitical orientations clearly advocate collectivism among in-group members.

Cultural Relevance. With regard to news and public affairs programming, producers would frame issues with historical referents which place people of African descent at the helm of issue development. Specifically as issues develop at the community, city, state, national, and/or international levels, the development of an issue is deemed culturally relevant according to how it can be analyzed concerning its impact upon people of African descent. The culturally relevant framing of public issues would also introduce the cultural identity of people of African descent as the group of primary focus and interest. Public affairs issue framing from cultural relevance standpoint would aim to:

a. structure the development of public affairs issues by seeking out historical referents which illustrate the cultural significance of an issue (e.g., the Los Angeles riots of 1992 would be discussed as an issue of urban unrest, utilizing the Watts riots of 1965 as a similar occurrence of common origins with implications for African-American communities);

b. frame public affairs issues as though those issues impact people of African descent most significantly, and translates issues of concern to all people of African descent as a collective unit (e.g., U.S. military intervention in Somalia is regarded in terms of the impact upon African-American military personnel concerning their presence on the continent of Africa);

c. place focus on highly visible individuals or organizations, which are engaged in exemplary culture specific activities (e.g., focus discussion on a community assistance organization which targets activities toward young African-American males to illustrate the desirability of such activities).

Behavioral Mandate. As a media perspective of agenda setting, the framing of public issues would focus upon behaviors that model the Afrocentricity components. Public affairs issue framing from a behavioral mandate standpoint would aim to focus

issue definition, selection, and emphasis upon activities, individuals, and/or organizations which:

a. are engaged in activities, the purpose of which is to remedy oppressive conditions (e.g., issue of apartheid in South Africa is addressed via focusing upon a protest organization's efforts at pressuring a U.S. corporation's divestiture in South Africa due to the oppressive nature of apartheid);

b. are set as examples for success illustrating activities as exemplary due to a focus upon the subversion of individual goals (e.g., focus upon community organization efforts that make an example of the generosity and collectivist behavior of organizational members toward in-group members);

c. can demonstrate expertise of various examples of in-group members' autonomic responses to the social environment, and integration and acceptance into the social structure (e.g., issue of Afrocentric curricula is addressed via focusing upon the students' autonomic responses to social the environment, and integration and acceptance into the social structure, that necessitate the development of said curriculum to achieve specific educational goals).

Conceptual Clarity. The framing of public affairs issues serves the purpose of developing an issue for conceptual clarity. As an evaluative theme, conceptual clarity aids in assigning symbolic and contextual meaning to issues by framing them via commonly held beliefs, and supporting evidence which is observable in the everyday world. Public affairs issue framing from conceptual clarity perspective would aim to:

a. provide conclusive evidence to support an assertion, theory, or argument;

b. illustrate the relative universality and applicability of the concepts for comparison and contrast to other cultural perspectives;

c. provide definitional statements to define the parameters of arguments assertions or theories;

d. allow for the explication of causal arguments to link independent concepts to support a perspective.

The Afrocentric framing of public issues could be perceived as narrow by some individuals who, while they are oriented toward Afrocentric media, they also desire

exposure to other perspectives. If this were the case, individuals would seek other media to supplement Afrocentric media.

Uses and Gratifications: Social/Cultural Approach

The social/cultural approach of uses and gratification theory has a specific focus on the cultural orientation/cultural context perspective on media use. This perspective is especially befitting of a critical analysis of Afrocentric mass communication and public affairs programming. As a cultural orientation, Afrocentricity contextualizes mass communication according to the components of Afrocentricity discussed in chapter three of this paper. Afrocentric contextual mass communication assumes its audience's cultural orientation is also Afrocentric, and structures messages according to this assumption.

The social/cultural approach is significant to a critical analysis of Afrocentric mass communication because this approach is, "marked by a more positive approach to the products of mass culture" (McQuail, 1983) and by the wish to understand the meaning of popular culture to particular groups in society—the young, working class, ethnic minorities, and other marginal categories. The cultural approach seeks also to explain how mass culture plays a part in integrating and subordinating potentially deviant or oppositional elements in society (McQuail, 1983, p. 63). As such, the social/cultural perspective of uses and gratifications can serve the theoretical requirements of a critical analysis of the qualities of Afrocentricity as a subcultural (or oppositional) element in mass communications. The following review of the social/cultural approach will present general definitional statements of the central concepts, an audience centered discussion of the approach, and a discussion of some cultural indicators that have implications for audience involvement with mass media.

The person most associated with the work of this 'school', Stuart Hall, has written of the cultural studies approach that it;

> ... stands opposed to the residual and merely reflective role assigned to the 'cultural.' In its different ways it conceptualizes culture as inter-woven with all social practices; and those practices, in turn, as a common form of human activity ... It is opposed to the base-superstructure way of formulating the relationship between ideal and material forces, especially where the base is defined by the determination by the 'economic' in any simple sense ... It defines 'culture' as both the means and values which arise amongst distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationships, through which they 'handle' and respond to the conditions of existence ... (McQuail, 1983, p. 63).

The dominant theme of the structural/cultural perspective, as defined by McQuail and Gurevitch (1974), is the idea that audience expectations and satisfactions derived from the media should be explained primarily in terms of (1) the patterns of media materials that are made available and (2) the customs, norms, and conventions—defining what counts as appropriate ways of using and reacting to media provisions—that prevail in particular societal settings (p. 291). Both of these are mediated, in turn, by social-structural and cultural factors. Thus, audience behavior is seen as being *prescribed* by social and cultural factors which, on the one hand, shape media contents and the intimations they hold for the gratifications that might be gained from them and, on the other hand, help to institutionalize the approved ways of using the mass media and responding to cultural goods of various kinds (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974). Differentiation in audience behavior may stem either from subcultural variations within a given society (such as social class distinctions) or from variations across societies (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974).

The social/cultural approach is similar in focus to the need-for-orientation due to common concerns with intra- and extra-individual factors, as well as the media structure and other social, political, and cultural structures, which have an effect upon perceived media gratifications. The idea that gratifications are sought through the use of media content further infers an effect on the user in terms of the need-for-orientation, which

posits that individuals seek out media content to relieve uncertainty caused by social conditions.

Extrapolated from the McQuail-Gurevitch (1974) comparative paradigmatic diagram, definitional statements of the audience focused components of the social/cultural perspective are as follows:

- Origins — Generally patterned by culture and social structure; conditioned by past experience with content
- Needs — Externally imposed and defined, with limited choice
- Expectations of mass media — predictable and regular; unselective
- Gratification of needs — Fulfillment of a given expectation
- Consequences of Media Use — Reinforcement of pattern of media use
- Consequences for Individual and/or Social System — Consistency and continuity of individual and collective link (p. 298)

The social/cultural approach seeks to provide an understanding of media behavior that attends both to the message and to the public, seeking, by a sensitive and critically-directed understanding of the real experience of people, to account for patterns of choice amongst media (McQuail, 1983). Regarding attention to mass media as part of a wider process of attention-giving gives patterns of media use consideration according to the same principles governing other communication behavior (particularly attention-giving). Individuals (including groups or categories) have socially constructed reality. They pay attention to things they encounter within this socially constructed reality, and develop a structure of attention-giving which is appropriate to their social position. In general, we can expect attention to what is close, familiar, positive, unthreatening, equal or subordinate in social power and we can expect avoidance of objects with reverse characteristics (McQuail, 1983, p. 167).

The social/cultural approach would, for example, predict working class avoidance of content which is unfamiliar, socially or physically remote, or likely to recall

powerlessness in work contexts or intellectual inadequacy (McQuail, 1983, p. 167). There are other situations of varying dependency and powerlessness which might produce similar patterns of selection and avoidance (McQuail, 1983). One acquires an orientation to such artifacts through experiences that are likely shared with others. The orientation thus becomes a collective phenomenon (McQuail, 1983). The social facts that create social/cultural phenomena and shape individuals' social realities, are in themselves arbitrary (that is, not themselves open to further causal explanation) (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974). However, the nexus of interaction between media output and audience response is treated as if shaped by the social facts which shape individuals' social realities, and therefore *orient* them toward media.

Social/cultural analyses focus more on the collective features of mass communication phenomena, for instance interrelating aggregate findings about media contents, audience orientations, and social and cultural contexts. The interpretation of such evidence is influenced by the observer's perspective on social-structural and cultural situations, which encourages a holistic style of explanation, taking into account of as many concurrent features of the situation as possible (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 292). Hypotheses about the determinants of audience tastes and preferences tend to derive from rather general views about the nature of social and culture phenomena. For instance, they might start from a social-critical view of the typical mass media "article" as a standardized product that is shaped by the dominant forces of industrial society and is consumed by people whose lives are conditioned by the same forces (McQuail and Gurevitch, 1974).

Particular groups in the total public may be faced with limited alternative media sources and encouraged by their social and cultural environment to make a particular kind of choice, which is reinforced in turn by their media experiences (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 293). Greenberg and Brand (1992) found that African-Americans as well as other American minority groups tend to generally *depend* upon television as a medium

for news and public affairs information. As discussed previously in this paper, Poindexter and Stroman's (1981) literature review reveals trends in the news and public affairs media use among African-Americans as well. By pointing out African-Americans' preference for media use, these findings (see chapter three of this paper) also suggest that this group may have a particular orientation toward specific *modes* of media use. The social/cultural perspective is especially valuable in providing a theoretical framework in which to place findings about patterns of audience behavior; and in directing research along lines that are likely to be fruitful for purposes of macro-sociological analysis (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 293).

Afrocentric Social/Cultural Analysis

This critical analysis, using the audience focused social/cultural approach, explicates Afrocentric media in terms of its being created in response African Americans' social/cultural position. Afrocentric media is dedicated to the African-American cultural situation specifically, and the common social/cultural experiences that people of African descent experience collectively. Socially and culturally Afrocentricity seeks to form a collective response to social phenomena, such as the media. Social/cultural characteristics would define individuals' orientation toward Afrocentric media are: historical exclusion and legislated equilibrium; limited opportunity for equilibrium within mainstream social and cultural practices; predictable and patterned use of media regarding reactions to media models; and fulfillment of expectations for media functions to reinforce media influenced beliefs.

Cultural Relevance. Individuals responsive to the Afrocentric social/cultural approach as determined by the cultural relevance evaluative theme would react to social and cultural processes by orienting toward media in terms of:

a. historical referents which are attentive to the development of issues in terms of how mass culture has integrated or subordinated the collective

goals of sub-groups in society (e.g., the issue of segregation in schools would be explored in terms of how segregation has historically subordinated the goals of education for people of African descent);

b. media models which are consistent with the cultural identity of the audience (e.g., use of individuals of African descent as examples of the issues explored, especially with regard to public affairs programming);

c. examples of particularistic attention or involvement which attend to the limitations, and advantages of the social/cultural environment (e.g., use of people, or activities that exemplify culture specific activities which illustrate efforts to overcome racism, and realize the full potential of civil rights legislation).

Behavioral Mandate. The Afrocentric social/cultural approach as determined by the behavioral mandate evaluative theme evaluates media orientation in terms media models that serve to illustrate socially and culturally patterned behaviors. The social/cultural response to media as determined by the behavioral mandate evaluative theme requires that an individual demonstrate media oriented behavior in terms of media models that are:

a. engaged in socially and culturally focused activities wherein individuals attribute the impetus for action to perceived oppression (e.g., individuals utilized as examples of acceptable behavior respond to problematic situations by attributing the inspiration for their activities to overriding social, and cultural factors that are defined as oppressive conditions);

b. actively advocating the subversion of individual goals as socially and culturally acceptable (e.g., organizations such as the NAACP who advocate racial responsibility, i.e., group responsibility as necessary for the prosperity of individuals within the group);

c. representative of socially and culturally defined behaviors as innate and characteristic of individuals within a group (e.g., media modeled African-American use of music to marshal emotional response as a means for inspiring activity as an example of a characteristic behavior).

Conceptual Clarity. The social/cultural approach for assessing the use of media for conceptual clarity is reflective of the comparatively diverse ways in which cultural phenomena are represented in mainstream media and Afrocentric media. Afrocentric media portrayal of so-called "radical" African-American political and/or religious leaders

would differ in comparison to mainstream media's portrayal, especially in assigning the term radical. The primary issue regarding the social/cultural analysis of orientations toward Afrocentric media, concerning the conceptual clarity evaluative theme, is the assignment of evaluative and definitive descriptors to issues and individuals. For example, while Louis Farrakahn may be variably evaluated in Afrocentric media as positive or negative for the value of his leadership qualities, he is usually evaluated in terms such as "radical" and "racist" in mainstream media. Afrocentric conceptual clarity in public affairs programming would be viewed for the ability of media models to provide a socially and culturally sensitive analysis of issues concerning:

a. conclusive evidence to support an assertion, theory, or argument;

b. the relative universality and applicability of the concepts for comparison and contrast to other cultural perspectives;

c. definitional statements that outline the parameters of arguments assertions or theories;

d. the explication of causal arguments to link independent concepts to support a perspective.

While the social/cultural approach is appropriate to the uses and gratifications analysis of Afrocentricity, one should also account for the varying modes of cultural experience among African-Americans. While racism as a cultural experience may be a reality in the lives of African-Americans, it may manifest itself in various ways in various regions in the U.S. As well, the social/cultural experiences of males and females, middle class and impoverished, and adolescent and adult African-Americans are diverse and should not be regarded as universal based upon common racial/ethnic heritage.

Uses and Gratifications: Functional Analysis

A discussion of the functional approach in uses and gratification theory is the focus of this critical analysis of Afrocentricity in mass communication due to its concern

with the consequences of standardized, patterned, and repetitive social phenomena, such as social roles and institutional patterns (Wright, 1974). It has been argued that the development of an *Afrocentric approach* has come about primarily in response to the systematic, and institutionally sanctioned exclusion of people of African descent. Afrocentric scholars assert that African-Americans are ignored regarding their accomplishments within the social and economic environment, and disregarded as a key group in the development of world civilization. A review of the functional perspective of uses and gratifications follows, and includes a discussion of its defining qualities, background concerning its development, and a review of relevant studies utilizing the approach.

The functional approach to analysis of mass communication determines the influence of mass media on a social system beyond the individual. ***Function*** and ***functionalism*** are key ideas of this approach. The focus is upon understanding the interdependence of mass media subsystems (Timasheff, 1967), and how they coalesce to form a coherent media presentation. Lasswell (1948) proposed that mass media content performs several functions within society; surveillance of the environment, correlation of parts of the environment, and transmission of social heritage. A fourth function, entertainment, was added to this scheme by Wright (1960) to analyze mass communication functionality (Rubin, 1986).

Lasswell's media functions scheme maintains its usefulness in current studies. How a mass media audience responds to media content functions is viewed according to uses and gratifications considerations. A uses and gratifications perspective places the focus of analysis upon the audience's desire to satisfy felt needs via active exposure to mass media content (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). Extrapolated from the McQuail/Gurevitch (1974) comparative paradigmatic diagram, definitional statements of the audience focused components of the functional perspective are as follows:

- Origins — Generally patterned by culture and social structure; conditioned by past experience of content
- Needs — Externally imposed and defined, with limited choice
- Expectations of mass media — Predictable and regular; unselective
- Gratification of needs — Fulfillment of a given expectation
- Consequences of Media Use — Reinforcement of pattern of media use
- Consequences for Individual and/or Social System — Consistency and continuity of individual and collective link (p. 298)

The functional view maintains that: mass communication is not a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effect; mass communication is only one source of influence in the social and psychological environment; and the media perform certain activities for individuals, groups, and society and, by so doing, have various consequences (i.e., functions or dysfunctions) (Rubin, 1986, p. 283).

In structuring a functional analysis of mass communication phenomena, three questions of significance emerge: (1) What is the communication mix that characterizes a society? (2) What difference does this make? and (3) What are the conditions (both external and within the media systems) which affect the kinds of social consequences that the media have? (Wright, 1974, p. 199). There are vast opportunities available to media audiences that can supplement, and in some cases substitute interpersonal communication. These opportunities can make social isolation more manageable for those that can be considered social isolates. Social isolates are characterized by low levels of, and limited opportunities for interpersonal communication. The United States has a propensity toward the creation and support of social isolation due to a highly urbanized social culture which supports individualism, and the utilization of electronic communication.

With increasing broadcast choices available, some have argued, transformed *broadcasting* into "narrowcasting." Generally, narrowcasting refers to the targeting of

particular video, audio, text or data transmissions to relatively narrow audience segments in contrast to "broadcasting," which is characterized by more limited channel availability and larger audiences per channel (Shapiro, 1988, p. 1). Narrowcasting targets audiences that comprise a very specifically designated and segmented public. A culturally diverse society (both nationality-oriented cultural diversity, as well as activities/interests-oriented cultural diversity), such as the United States lends much opportunity and feasibility to the narrowcasting concept. The myriad of cultural orientations in the U.S., coupled with the desire for cultural autonomy among groups, has increased the demand for specialized mediated communication dedicated to specific cultural orientations. Narrowcasting is a mass communication method with which telecasters seek to satisfy this demand, as well as seek new media market niches.

The previous discussion about narrowcasting focused on a macrosocial examination in terms of questions that emerge in functional analyses of group behavior. However individuals within groups exhibit a preference for mass media as a result of the media's ability act as a functional substitute for need satisfaction. Mass media use is not necessarily related to all, or even most, human needs, but rather to certain well defined, albeit varied, areas of need for which mass communication might be especially suited. It either meets a need (e.g., for information) for which it is the "natural" solution, or it stands in as a substitute, or "functional alternative," for some missing "natural" solution to a need (e.g., for personal contact) (Rosengren & Windahl, 1972; cited in McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 188). Within the functional framework, only those effects of mass communication that are of serious consequence or significance for the system under examination, for example the society, are of concern (Wright, 1974).

A brand of well-defined needs is identifiable according to cultural orientation, wherein the mass media identifies possible media needs, and transmits uniquely structured programming designed to communicate to the audience on a cultural level. George Gerbner (1967, 1972) maintains that mass communication (which he defines as

the mass production and distribution of messages) provides the *main* thing that members of the "audience" share and that in this sense, mass communication creates its own public. This viewpoint suggests one macrosociological function of mass communication, namely, the creation of new publics (Wright, 1974, p. 200). According to the framework for functional analysis, one cannot simply assign a broad social effect to mass communication phenomena (Wright, 1974). As a social phenomenon, cultural orientation provides a practical direction for analysis utilizing a functional theoretic approach. With cultural orientation as a guide, one can use knowledge of cultural and subcultural variations to formulate a more critical and sociological analysis of the functions of mass communication.

Whatever the social phenomenon under examination, one should be aware that it should be based not on an indiscriminate number of discrete social and psychological variables that might activate communication needs, but rather on *types* of social and psychological circumstances that might give rise to certain orientations toward the media (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974). The functional perspective in uses and gratifications theory allows for the macrosocial consideration of the development of mass communication needs. Its focus on social phenomena as a significant force allows for the broader understanding of *media use* as social phenomena. As Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) observe:

> ...media-related needs are not by and large, generated by the media. Most predate the emergence of the media and, properly, ought to be viewed within the wider range of human needs. As such, they have always been, and remain, satisfied in a variety of ways, most quite unrelated to the mass media. The surprising thing is to realize the extent and range of the media's encroachment on the 'older' ways of satisfying social and psychological needs (p. 180).

Afrocentric Functional Analysis

Functional analysis as a media oriented perspective on uses and gratifications, assesses Afrocentric news and public affairs programming as a functional element in the lives of its audience. Due to the culturally focused nature of the components of Afrocentricity, the functional elements of interest here are that Afrocentric media functions as a reflection of social reality, as surveillance of the social environment, for social comparison, and to reinforce existing beliefs. Afrocentric methods as applied to media, serve a functional purpose in response to the observations: that mainstream media is exclusionary and unsympathetic, and affords limited representation to people of African descent; and that Afrocentric media is sustainable because individuals within the audience have an established, patterned use of media.

Cultural Relevance. Culturally relevant functional analysis of Afrocentric media would focus analysis on the media's functioning as a reflection of the cultural identity of its target audience. Functional analysis of Afrocentric public affairs programming would view media functions with regard to:

a. issue development as a reflection of social reality that uses historical referents to relate present day issues, to issues of the past to illustrate improved conditions for people of African descent (e.g., an example of contemporary school segregation is given comparative analysis in terms of conditions pre *Brown v. Board of Education*);

b. reinforcing existing beliefs in terms of cultural identity that maintains a belief in the existence of distinct audience characteristics (e.g., regarding the issue of school segregation, the cultural identity of African-Americans as a distinctly separate group, apart from the majority population in the U.S., is reinforced in exploration of the issue);

c. media as a means for social comparison especially in terms of particularistic attention or involvement, as particularistic attention or involvement involves a problematic situation, and a proposed solution with culture specific activities (e.g., exploration of an issue in which an action/solution orientation is advocated, the media would function for social comparison in terms of the media's ability to inspire others to adopt

particularistic attention or involvement, especially when the audience has high involvement with the issue).

Behavioral Mandate. Functional analysis of Afrocentric public affairs programming based upon the behavioral mandate evaluative theme, would focus analysis upon the media's ability to evaluate issues based upon media models that illustrate appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Behavioral mandate functional analysis would evaluate media based upon media models that illustrate:

a. action as based upon perceived oppression which would be viewed in terms of the media's ability to function as a reflection of social reality (e.g., the media's coverage of a problematic situation would further serve as an interpretation of social reality, in terms of Afrocentric media, the problematic situation would be further interpreted as an oppressive condition);

b. the subversion of individual goals which would serve the media's ability to function for social comparison (e.g., with low social distance between the media audience and persons viewed in the media as examples of the issues explored, audience members would use media examples of collectivist behavior as an impetus for their own behavior, especially in using individuals in activist organizations as behavioral models);

c. innate behavioral qualities which would serve the media's ability to function as a reflection of social reality, particularly media models which illustrate (1) patterned responses to external stimuli, (2) autonomic responses to the social environment, and (3) integration into the overall social structure (e.g., Afrocentric media coverage would explore innate behavioral qualities regarding the above examples in terms of common racial characteristics).

Conceptual Clarity. The functional purpose of the media for conceptual clarity serves to reinforce of existing beliefs, especially because conceptual clarity involves supporting a theory, assertion or argument. Often theories about the everyday world and people in the social environment are used for generalizations to support stereotypes, and as mechanisms to defend one's self concept against over generalizations that may be considered harmful. Afrocentric conceptual clarity in public affairs programming would be viewed according to its function to serve the purpose of reinforcing existing beliefs with regard to:

a. providing conclusive evidence to support an assertion, theory, or argument;

b. illustrating the relative universality and applicability of the concepts for comparison and contrast to other cultural perspectives;

c. providing definitional statements to outline the parameters of arguments assertions or theories;

d. allowing for the explication of causal arguments to link independent concepts to support a perspective.

Access to media channels may be the primary factor in understanding the function that Afrocentric media might serve for African-Americans. Access to media channels, in terms of economic control and ownership elude African-Americans for the most part. Afrocentric media are therefore an alternative to mainstream media formats, hence the label Afrocentric. Because it is sought as an alternative outlet, Afrocentric media serve some significant function. Further study is necessary and useful for understanding African Americans' media needs. Chapter seven outlines a research strategy and presents instruments for further research.

VII. FUTURE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

As a *qualitative* analysis, this paper has provided literature review and developed the basis for a unique analytical approach to determining African-American uses of mass media, and the possible effects of Afrocentric media, with regard to public affairs television programming. This chapter suggests, in great detail, a *quantitative* approach for *future* study of Afrocentric public affairs programming and its audience. The exemplar show *For My People*, was used for the development, and is suggested for the utilization of the instruments presented in this chapter. As a public affairs show that has vehemently held true to *its* interpretation of Afrocentric objectives, it is discussed as a standard for the Afrocentric approach to analysis of public affairs programming.

The exemplar television show, *For My People* is African-American owned in terms of its production and staffing. As a public access show the producing organization does not *own* transmission equipment to broadcast the show, however it does provide programming for the station on which it is aired, and determines its own programming agenda. The proposed methodology provides an instrument by which to determine the importance of Afrocentricity as a theme in public affairs programming dedicated to informing African-Americans. As such, the methodology presents content analysis instruments to determine the *observability* of Afrocentricity, as well as several questionnaires consisting of items to assess audience reaction to this type of programming.

Agenda Setting, and Uses and Gratifications with the Study of *For My People*

Mere coverage of specific issues within a program is reflective of an agenda, and observing the issues covered in the exemplar show *For My People* alone would justify the use of agenda-setting in the proposed methodology. However, Afrocentricity as an

mix, agenda-setting lends structure to the investigation of this orientation on three levels. First, agenda-setting lends structure to the investigation of how (and whether or not) the producers introduced an Afrocentric focus. Second, agenda-setting lends structure to testing whether the audience experienced some level of change in their orientation or agenda in terms of Afrocentricity, or as a result of the issues and subject matter presented on *For My People*. Third, agenda-setting lends structure to an analysis of the agenda set forth in *For My People* as it is reflective of an agenda of issues and concerns relevant to African-Americans, as articulated in African-American controlled sources, and as illustrated by the Black Agenda Issues Category Structure (discussed in chapter five of this paper).

The idea that a rational audience is capable of making conscious choices from a barrage of media, has inspired researchers to study the ways that cable television and other new media (i.e., computer bulletin boards, e-mail, interactive television, and the like) offer expanded user choices, and relate to the user's pursuit of uses and gratifications (Severin and Tankard, 1992). This increased level of choices presents the audience with new opportunities to become active. A 1988 study of African-Americans' use of television found that almost half of the subjects surveyed owned a video cassette recorder, and 41% subscribed to a cable television service (Ambry, 1988). Considering the changes in the scope of media choices, gratifications possible from those choices, and shifts in levels of activity possible within the audience, a relevant venue toward uses and gratifications inquiry is to focus on a specific medium (in this study, television), a particular genre within the medium (in this study, a news and public affairs show), and a mass media program (in this study the exemplar show, *For My People*).

Because *For My People* positions itself as a news and public affairs show dedicated to informing African-Americans, it is assumed that viewers will be uniquely gratified by Afrocentric media. As Poindexter and Stroman (1981) proposed, African-Americans tend to rely heavily on television for information, including information about

African-Americans, and the African-American community, and that they have distinct tastes and preferences in television programs. African-Americans are among the heaviest consumers of television, and prefer to watch shows that feature African-American characters. These observations are consistent in the literature on African-American preferences for mainstream media content.

Because television appears relevant to African-American viewers as an information source, it follows that the apparent habitual use of television for various gratifications merits further investigation. As mentioned above, African-Americans rely on television for information and specifically information about the African-American community, and have distinct tastes in programming. The recommended approach for future study extends these ideas to inquire as to the uses and gratifications of television as a primary information source and the effects thereof. *For My People* was used to develop this approach because it fits the bill quite appropriately as a public affairs show whose purpose is to inform. As an "Afrocentric" public affairs show its viewers must have a distinct taste for its programming.

Recommended Research Questions

The following research questions would be the basis for the recommended quantitative approach using the exemplar show *For My People*:

Afrocentricity

1. To what degree does the program adhere to the Afrocentric model in terms of the framing components as well as Afrocentric contextual interaction?
2. To what extent was *For My People* successful in communicating an Afrocentric orientation, as determined by the audience's understanding of the Afrocentric orientation of the show?
3. Can *For My People* be credited with any change in cultural orientation within the show's crew as a result of producing the show?

Agenda Setting

4. What conditions exist within the Detroit area that cause the program's ideological position to be remain relevant since its introduction in 1970?
5. To what degree does the Black Agenda Issues Category Structure reflect the relevance of *For My People* to African-Americans?
6. To what extent does the program's agenda reflect the audience's agenda in terms of issues and concerns?
7. What importance did WKBD place on the show as a source of public affairs information?

Uses and Gratifications

8. What is the audience's impression of the comparative presentations of public affairs information between *For My People* and mainstream media?
9. For what purpose did the audience use the information presented in the program in terms of its utilization as a primary, secondary, or supplementary information source?
10. What alternatives to the programming format presented in *For My People* did the audience feel could substantively replace *For My People* in terms of gratifications realized in viewing the program?
11. How did *For My People* fit individual audience members' self concept in terms of content covered or method of presentation?
12. How did the information presented in *For My People* supplement individual audience members' lifestyles?

Recommended Instruments

Two techniques are recommended to examine shows like the exemplar show *For My People*, namely questionnaire/interview and content analysis. Questionnaire and/or interview data would be collected from: (1) the audience, to determine uses and

gratifications, agenda setting effects, and Afrocentric orientation as a result of viewing the program; (2) any staff and or personnel responsible for public affairs programming broadcasts, specifically any policies for the production, creation, support of, and/or coordination of public affairs programming for the station (in this case WKBD Channel 50); and (3) questionnaire and/or interview data would be collected from the crew/production staff of the public affairs show to determine their goals and objectives for working with the program, especially with regard to their Afrocentric orientation. Additionally questionnaire/interview data would be collected from the producer of the public affairs show to gain a systematic and analytic assessment of his/her programming philosophy, and the issues he/she has dealt with (and deals with) in the production of the show.

Two coding forms have been developed, and are recommended for content analysis. The first form comprises fundamental coding components, referred to as a *general* coding form, it would be used to record: the program's number (the consecutively numbered show and segment in the sample available); date that the segment aired; and a number to identify issues as they are reflected by the Black Agenda Issues Category Structure listed on the coding form. The second coding form is quite complex and involves multiple variables comprising Afrocentricity components, and the operationalization of those components, concerning the contextual interaction between the interviewer and guest. The first part of the coding form includes Afrocentric framing components both communicative and visual. The second part of the coding form includes Afrocentric contextual interaction components formulated according to how those components are acted out by both the interviewer and the guest. The second part of the coding form is constructed to record the components of the interaction between the guest(s) and host as rule governed and contextual interaction, which is mediated by the Afrocentric components.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire is a tool used to gather sample information pertinent to a given research problem (Smith, 1988). All of the questionnaires in the proposed methodology include factual and opinion questions, and closed and open ended questions (see questionnaires on pages 154 through 184). Factual questions solicit information about a respondent's background and his or her communication behaviors or habits (Smith, 1988, p. 225). These questions request demographic information, and media use information. Opinion statements seek information about a respondent's inner motives and intentions, and likes and dislikes (Smith, 1988). In the following questionnaires, factual statements are used to form rating questions that make use of 1-to-10 scales. These rating-scale question types can solicit information concerning the uses and gratifications, agenda setting, and Afrocentricity components of the questionnaire. The opinion question is also structured as an open-ended question, as well as a closed-ended question in the proposed methodology. An open-ended question is a free-response scaling technique which invites respondents to supply unstructured answers to questions, or discuss specified subject matter (Smith, 1988). This question type would be utilized to solicit information concerning the uses and gratifications, agenda setting, and Afrocentricity components of the questionnaire. This question type is especially important in assessing the audience's understanding of the goals and objectives of the public affairs show.

Audience Questionnaire

Part A of the audience questionnaire explores comprehension of the goals and objectives of the exemplar show *For My People*, and its Afrocentric programming perspective (see pages 154 through 156, questions 1 through 8). As David Rambeau, the primary individual in Project BAIT, which is the producing organization of *For My People* has stated (as mentioned previously in this paper), the Afrocentric ideals with regard to all projects, including *For My People,* are:

- That African-Americans are the focal point of any and all concerns;
- That any issue is validated with respect to its impact on the African-American community;
- That the discussion format of *For My People* is not accountable to represent, nor is interested in the Eurocentric viewpoint.

Further, the 1982 Project BAIT manual defines the Afrocentric component of the *For My People* programming philosophy, as a study of Pan-Africanist or, and Black Nationalist political positions. Part A of the audience questionnaire seeks elaboration of the audience's understanding of the *For My People* goals, regarding why certain topics were selected, why certain guests were selected, and whether the audience can identify the *For My People* target audience as defined by the producer.

Part B of the questionnaire explores the uses and gratifications of *For My People* for the audience (see pages 156 through 160, questions 9 through 45). The goal here would be to test uses and gratifications with established typologies, reasons why one may not be able to *regularly* utilize the information in the program, and how the audience's use of *For My People* might be translated into a functional alternative for some other activity. The first grouping of *uses* items (see questions 9 through 20) incorporates the typology developed in Greenberg (1974) including: learning, habit, arousal, relaxation, and escape. The first grouping of *uses* items also incorporates social and psychological functions into *uses* rationale statements, specifically: cognitive needs (acquiring information, knowledge, and understanding); affective needs (emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience); personal integrative needs (strengthening credibility, confidence, stability, and status); social integrative needs (strengthening contacts with family, friends, etc.); and tension release needs (escape and diversion) (McGuire, 1974, pp. 166-167).

The second grouping of *uses* items (see questions 20 through 32) explores reasons why one may not be able to *regularly* utilize the information in the program. The relative

regularity possible in the use of a particular media type can also yield valuable information. The items here are developed based on the McLeod and Becker (1974) reasons for avoiding political content in television. The reason statements in this portion of the questionnaire specifically deal with issues such as: relevancy, value, and focus of content; impact, accuracy, and presentation of subject matter; and schedule conflict. This section also uses questions that explore the functionality of *For My People* regarding viewer motivation (see questions 33 through 39), and whether the show facilitates companionship, the level of relevancy of the show as a source of news and public affairs information, and any functional alternatives to viewing *For My People*. The last set of questions in the uses and gratifications portion of the questionnaire further explores the arousal component of possible gratifications realized in viewing *For My People* (see questions 40 through 45). However, unlike the Greenberg (1974) typology's use of the term arousal, the use of the term here focuses on action orientation. This is a functional perspective in terms of the emphasis on casual explanation, and translating viewing *For My People* from motivation to action.

Part C of the questionnaire explores the possible agenda setting effects of the show (see pages 160 through 163, questions 46 through 106). Here the focus is on how the show affects the audience's concerning; general interest in news and public affairs information concerning African-Americans specifically, and people of African descent in general; and the importance that audience members might place on specific issues. The questionnaire structure presented here includes issues from the Black Agenda Issues Category Structure. However, *true* issue items would be included upon the completion of the content analysis of the *For My People* programs.

Part D of the questionnaire explores the possible Afrocentric cultural orientation of the audience (see pages 163 through 165, questions 107 through 121). Based upon the Afrocentricity components, the questions are developed to determine the audience's orientation toward Afrocentric public affairs programming. This section uses ranking

questions primarily to explore the relative levels of importance that audience members might place on types of information. These questions are structured in such a way that the Afrocentricity components would be reflected in the answer. The oral tradition component of Afrocentricity concerns the assertion that oral communication is a fundamental medium for Afrocentric communication. The oral tradition component is explored in questions that focus on: the most relevant form of communication for the respondents; the desire for expressive discussion style; and the language style acceptability. The subjective analytical base component of Afrocentricity concerns the method of deriving matters of reality, truth, and argument as emanating from the African experience. This perspective is explored in questions that focus on: the importance of news and public affairs communication concerning African-Americans as emanating from an African-American source; the visual framing mechanisms that demonstrate a connection with an African culture; and the importance of any news and pubic affairs information as focusing on the particular impacts upon African-American people specifically, or people of African descent in general.

Finally, the collectivist socio-political orientation component of Afrocentricity concerns the conflictual nature of life in an individualistic society, and the Afrocentric cultural orientation. As previously discussed, it is one that requires individuals to adhere to a collectivist attitude (and therefore forgo individual goals) for the collective good of the people of African descent. The collectivist socio-political orientation is explored in questions that focus on: the importance of regarding people of African descent as sharing a common heritage in terms of their relationship to the continent of Africa; and the importance of regarding activities necessary to improve the quality of life of African-American people specifically, or people of African descent in general as possible primarily through collective action. Lastly, the Afrocentricity portion also includes some open-ended questions which essentially ask the respondent to define Afrocentricity.

Part E is the final set of items of the questionnaire, and covers demographic information (see pages 165 through 167, questions 122 through 131). This section requests information concerning political affiliation, place of residence, education, race, and gender of the audience member. Ideally, the audience questionnaire can be administered to a reasonably large (and if possible, a statistically significant) sample of the *For My People* audience. The questionnaire has been structured so that it could be distributed to individuals, or if necessary it could serve as a guide in audience interviews. This recommended methodology for a quantitative approach would translate the information collected, statistically analyze the data collected, and seek emerging patterns from the results to answer the research questions posed.

The fully developed and enumerated audience questionnaire follows this text. Text describing the public affairs show's staff/crew questionnaire items follows the pages that include the audience questionnaire. This text continues to use a discussion of the exemplar show *For My People* to describe questionnaire items.

QUESTIONNAIRE - Audience

Part A: Comprehension of *For My People* Goals and Objectives in Programming Perspective

1. What is the programming philosophy of *For My People* as you understand it in terms of:

   the guests it selects?_____

   _____

   the hosts/interviewers that appear?_____

   _____

   the audience it targets?_____

   _____

   the focal point of its content?_____

   _____

   the format or design of the program?_____

   _____

2. What purpose do you think is served by the format and philosophy that *For My People* utilizes?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Give an example of a topic you recall being discussed on *For My People*, and explain why you think that particular topic was chosen for discussion?

4. Concerning the previous question, please recall the particular guest (or guests) that appeared on the episode of *For My People* referred to, and explain why you think that particular guest (or guests) was selected to discuss that topic?

5. Have you ever written, called or otherwise made contact with the producers of *For My People* to contribute content ideas? If so please indicate the type of contact and the content idea.

6. What problems have you observed with the program's presentation?

7. How would you describe the program's effectiveness?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. What are your feelings about the future of the program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part B: The Uses and Gratifications of Viewing *For My People*

Following are reason-statements which one may generally give **for watching *For My People***. Please indicate those statements which apply to your reasons for viewing *For My People.*

1. YES = this statement applies to you
2. NO = this statement does not apply to you
3. NO OP. = you have no opinion on the statement
4. DISAG. = you disagree with this statement based on your point of view of the show's value

I watch *For My People* because:

	YES	NO	NO OP.	DISAG.
9. I want to learn about community concerns and issues	1 (__)	2 (__)	3 (__)	4 (__)
10. I can maintain an awareness of concerns and issues in my community	1 (__)	2 (__)	3 (__)	4 (__)
11. Because I normally watch television at that time of day	1 (__)	2 (__)	3 (__)	4 (__)
12. Because watching the show is relaxing	1 (__)	2 (__)	3 (__)	4 (__)

13. I am entertained by watching the show 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

14. I need to maintain awareness of the information in the show for discussion with people I know 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

15. Watching the show takes my mind off of things, by changing my state of mind 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

16. I get information I can use to become active in my community 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

17. I am generally curious about the topics being discussed 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

18. The programming philosophy, as reflected in the way that the producers present the content, agrees with my own perspectives on the issues discussed, and validates my point of view 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

19. I use the content in the show to supplement information from other media 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

20. I watch for specific issues that are covered because of the timeliness of that issue in my community and the personal importance it has for me 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

Following are reason-statements which one may give **for not watching *For My People* regularly**. Please indicate those statements which apply to your reasons for not regularly viewing *For My People.*

1. YES = this statement applies to you
2. NO = this statement does not apply to you
3. NO OP. = you have no opinion on the statement
4. DISAG. = you disagree with this statement based on your point of view of the show's value

I* do not watch *For My People regularly because:

	YES	NO	NO OP.	DISAG.
21. **The content** of the show is often irrelevant	1 (__)	2 (__)	3 (__)	4 (__)
22. **The information** presented in the show is **occasionally** of limited value	1 (__)	2 (__)	3 (__)	4 (__)

23. Their perspective as focusing exclusively on the African-American community is not always relevant **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

24. The degree of importance that my community places on the show is relatively low **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

25. I am not sure that the show has any impact on public policy **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

26. I am not sure of the impact that the the show has on the quality of life for the African-American community in the Detroit area or any other place **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

27. I am not sure of the accuracy of the commentary and analysis offered in the show **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

28. I often disagree with the commentary and analysis offered in the show **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

29. The show is often too controversial **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

30. Does not take a strong enough stance on issues **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

31. The broadcast schedule of *For My People* is inconvenient for me **1** (__) **2** (__) **3** (__) **4** (__)

32. With what regularity do you watch *For My People*?

Every broadcast **1** (___) 1 or 2 broadcasts per month **2** (___)

Less than 1 broadcast per month **3** (___)

33. When did you first begin to watch *For My People*?

Between 1970-1972 **1** (___) Between 1973-1975 **2** (___)

Between 1976-1979 **3** (___) Between 1980-1982 **4** (___)

Between 1983-1985 **5** (___) Between 1986-1989 **6** (___)

Between 1990-1992 **7** (___) Between 1993-1994 **8** (___)

34. **Do you** watch alone normally, or with someone?
Alone 1 (____) With someone **2** (____)

35. **Is *For My People*** a:
Primary source of news and public affairs information? **1** (___)
Secondary source of news and public affairs information? **2** (___)
Supplementary source of news and public affairs information? **3** (___)

36. **Do you** think that mainstream media provides adequate news and public affairs **programming** for African-American audiences?
Yes 1 (____) No **2** (____)

37. **Is there** any other show, mainstream or otherwise, that could serve as an **alternative** choice and still serve your purpose for viewing *For My People*? If yes, please fill in the name of the show.

Yes 1 (____) No **2** (____)

38. If yes, name of the show is: **3**_____
None **9** (___)

39. Is the show indicated in item number 38 a:
A. local show **1** (___)
B. public broadcasting show **2** (___)
C. network distributed show **3** (___)
D. not answered **9** (___)

Please read the following statements and indicate the response that applies to your experience in viewing *For My People*, all of the time, most of the time, or never.

1. ALL = you have this experience all of the time while watching the show
2. MOST = you have this experience most of the time while watching the show
3. NEVER = you have never had this experience while watching the show
4. NO OP. = you have no opinion on the statement

Viewing *For My People*:

	ALL	MOST	NEVER	NO OP.
40. Encourages me to have discussion on important issues with others	**1** (__)	**2** (__)	**3** (__)	**4** (__)
41. Urges me to seek out additional information to supplement information presented in the show	**1** (__)	**2** (__)	**3** (__)	**4** (__)

42. **Encourages** me to become involved in **activities** 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

43. **Influences** my opinions on people, **ideas, issues**, or topics 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

44. **Encourages** me to form opinions on **people, ideas**, issues, or topics that I had **not considered** prior to viewing 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

45. **Encourages** me to initiate contact and to **communicate** with people or organizations **that appeared** on the show 1 (__) 2 (__) 3 (__) 4 (__)

Part C: The Agenda Setting Effects of Viewing *For My People*

46. Upon consideration of all the issues and problems now facing the immediate community, the state, and the country, how important would you say it is to view issues in terms of a perspective which emanates from one's own cultural experience? Please check the appropriate response below.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

47. Where do you get most of your news and public affairs information?

_____ TV (1)
_____ Newspapers (2)
_____ Radio (3)
_____ Magazines (4)
_____ Other People (5)
_____ OTHER (explain) (6)
_____ DON'T KNOW/REFUSED ANSWER (9)

48. How interested would you say you are in news and public affairs information concerning African-Americans in your **local area** if you live in Detroit or its surrounding areas, or in your local area if you live outside of Detroit?

VERY INTERESTED	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED	NOT VERY INTERESTED	NOT AT ALL INTERESTED	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

49. How interested would you say you are in news and public affairs information concerning African-Americans on the **state** level?

VERY INTERESTED	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED	NOT VERY INTERESTED	NOT AT ALL INTERESTED	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

50. How interested would you say you are in news and public affairs information concerning people of African-Americans specifically and people of African descent in general **on the national level**?

VERY INTERESTED	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED	NOT VERY INTERESTED	NOT AT ALL INTERESTED	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

51. How interested would you say you are in the news and public affairs information concerning African-Americans specifically, and/or people of African decent in general on an **international level**?

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

In terms of specific types of issues that may concern African-Americans, those issues that you feel are ***personally*** **important to you** on a scale of zero to 10. Circle zero to indicate that it is not important at all, and to 10 mean that it is very important.
D.K.R(99) = Don't Know/Refused answer

52. African Diaspora	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
53. Business Development	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
54. Maintenance of Culture	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
55. Education	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
56. Family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
57. Housing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
58. Media Access and Coverage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
59. Sports and Recreation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
60. Social Welfare Programs/Services	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
61. Economic Concerns and Conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
62. Community Involvement and Develop.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
63. Employment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
64. Equality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
65. Health	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
66. Crime and Law Enforcement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
67. Politics	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
68. Disadvantaged Groups/Conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
69. Transportation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)

How much **importance do you think mainstream news and public affairs media** places on these issues where they concern African-Americans. Circle zero to indicate that it is not important at all, and to 10 mean that it is very important.
D.K.R(99) = Don't Know/Refused answer

70. African Diaspora	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
71. Business Development	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
72. Maintenance of Culture	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
73. Education	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
74. Family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
75. Housing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
76. Media Access and Coverage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
77. Sports and Recreation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
78. Social Welfare Programs/Services	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
79. Economic Concerns and Conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
80. Community Involvement and Develop.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
81. Employment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
82. Equality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
83. Health	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
84. Crime and Law Enforcement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
85. Politics	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
86. Disadvantaged Groups/Conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
87. Transportation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)

How much **importance do people in your community** place on these issues where they concern African-Americans. Circle zero to indicate that it is not important at all, and to 10 mean that it is very important.
D.K.R(99) = Don't Know/Refused answer

88. African Diaspora	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
89. Business Development	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
90. Maintenance of Culture	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
91. Education	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
92. Family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
93. Housing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
94. Media Access and Coverage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
95. Sports and Recreation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
96. Social Welfare Programs/Services	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
97. Economic Concerns and Conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
98. Community Involvement and Develop.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
99. Employment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
100. Equality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
101. Health	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
102. Crime and Law Enforcement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
103. Politics	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
104. Disadvantaged Groups/Conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)
105. Transportation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	D.K.R(99)

106. Which form of media would you say does the better job of providing information about African-Americans specifically and people of African descent in general?

_____ TV (1)
_____ Newspapers (2)
_____ Radio (3)
_____ Magazines (4)
_____ Other People (5)
_____ OTHER (explain) (6)
_____ DON'T KNOW/REFUSED ANSWER (9)

Part D: Afrocentric Cultural Orientation

In the following statements please indicate the response that applies to you.

107. In obtaining information about African-Americans and/or their communities, is important that the information come from an African-American source.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____	5. _____

108. It is important that the individual disseminating information about African-Americans and/or their communities uses a visual device (for example hairstyle, dress, or setting on television) to demonstrate a connection with an African culture.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____	5. _____

109. When I receive news and public affairs discussions, the most important form of that communication for me is oral or spoken communication.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____	5. _____

110. It is important in news and public affairs communication concerning African-Americans that participants be expressive so as to seek a connection with the audience to heighten involvement.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____	5. _____

111. When people communicate on news and public affairs programming, it is important to accept that they use *Ebonic* or *Black English* and not *only* that they use standard English.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

112. It is important to me for news and public affairs information to focus upon issues with respect the particular impacts on African-Americans specifically and/or people of African descent in general.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

113. When news and public affairs programming covers African-Americans specifically and/or people of African descent in general, I desire discussion which focus upon specific goal directed activities and/or efforts to assist and develop such activities

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

114. When I participate in discussions, I make an effort to focus on how the subject of concern impacts African-Americans specifically, and/or people of African descent in general (subjects for example might include, economics, politics, crime etc.)

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

115. I regard people of African descent as sharing a collective heritage in terms of their relationship to the continent of Africa, and the cultures and ethnicities therein.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

116. My concerns of the African-American community specifically, and/or of people of African decent in general, causes me to regard activities necessary to improve their quality of life as possible primarily through collective action.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1.____	2.____	3.____	4.____	5.____

117. Are you familiar with the term Afrocentricity? If so how would you define Afrocentricity?

Yes **1** (____) No **2** (____)

118. **3** Afrocentricity is defined as: _____

_____

_____

_____

None **9** (_____)

119. Some people refer to themselves as Afrocentric, would you refer to yourself as Afrocentric?

Yes **1** (____) No **2** (____)

120. Do you participate in activities that you consider to be Afrocentric?

Yes **1** (____) No **2** (____)

121. Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

_____

Part E: Demographic Information

122. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, or Independent? Circle correct response:

DEMOCRAT	1	
REPUBLICAN	2	
INDEPENDENT	3	
OTHER (Specify)	4	_____
DK/REFUSED	9	

123. How would you describe your usual stand on political issues? Would you say that your are conservative, middle-of-the road, or liberal? Circle correct response:

CONSERVATIVE	1
MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	2
LIBERAL	3
OTHER (Specify)	4 _____
DK/REFUSED	9

124. Do you live in a city or town, a suburban area, or do you live in a rural area? Circle correct response:

CITY OR TOWN	1
SUBURBAN AREA	2
RURAL AREA	3
DK/REFUSED	9

125. In what city or town do you reside?

_____ DK/REF (99)

126. How long have you resided in the community in which you are living?

LESS THAN ONE YEAR	1
ONE OR TWO YEARS	2
THREE TO FIVE YEARS	3
SIX TO NINE YEARS	4
TEN OR MORE YEARS	5
DK/REFUSED	9

127. Do you own your own home, rent a home or apartment, live in a mobile home, or live with others? Circle correct response:

OWN	1
RENT	2
MOBILE HOME	3
LIVE WITH OTHERS	4
DK/REFUSED	9

128. What is your age?_____ (please fill in the number that corresponds to the correct response)

15—19	01	41—45	06	No response 99
20—25	02	46—50	07	
26—30	03	51—55	08	
31—35	04	56—60	09	
36—40	05	60+	10	

129. How much education have you completed? Circle correct response:

LESS THAN 8TH	1
8TH THRU 12TH	2
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	3
SOME COLLEGE	4
COLLEGE DEGREE	5
SOME GRADUATE WORK	6
GRADUATE DEGREE	7
DK/REFUSED	9

130. What is your race? Circle correct response:

WHITE	1
BLACK	2
HISPANIC	3
OTHER	4
DK/REFUSED	9

131. Record sex: MALE (1)____ FEMALE (2)_____

Respondent: Please do not mark in this space

132. Subject number (consecutively number the responses collected): _____

133. Interviewer/questionnaire administrator number: _____

Public Affairs Show's Staff/Crew Questionnaire

The overall goal of the questionnaires for the crew members of Project BAIT would be to interview members that were a part of the production team in the past and in the present to assess their goals within the organization, their impressions of the production of *For My People*, and if they were affected by the Afrocentric focus. The Project BAIT membership training manual of 1982 (this information is also reproduced earlier in the paper) states a clear purpose for the orientation of the members of Project BAIT:

> We don't push [Black Nationalist or/and Pan-Africanist] ideology on members but it should be clear to everyone that this is our position. Most folk enter without any kind of conscious position. Within the group we ask people to do certain tasks that if they possessed a nationalist philosophy they would do automatically. This is perhaps best since people generally don't [want] ideology, they want skills, jobs, etc. The leadership merely gives them assignments or tasks that fulfill a nationalist's ideology and ordinarily folk will be along simply because it is in their own best interest anyway. ...[W]hen there are differences of position on a particular question we don't make our decision on an arbitrary basis we attempt to make our decisions in congruence with our philosophy of life and that is Black nationalism (BAIT Notes On Practice, 1982, p. 7).

It would be necessary to determine the degree to which the programming goals were carried through, as mediated by the philosophy of Project BAIT, imposed on members in the form of covert rule, and reflected in the individual members' goals within the group.

Questions on part A of the staff/crew questionnaire (see pages 170 through 171, questions 1 through 11) include open-ended questions concerning the individual's goals as they carry out their duties in assisting with the production of the show. Part B of the questionnaire (see pages 171 through 173, questions 12 through 20) includes another set of open-ended questions designed to assess the individual's impressions and opinions of the show regarding problems they may have observed in producing the show, impressions of the relationship with WKBD, the effectiveness of *For My People* in achieving its goals, and the future of the program. Part C of the questionnaire (see pages 173 through

175, pages 21 through 34) is a duplication of Part D of the audience questionnaire which assess the Afrocentric cultural orientation. The description provided in the audience questionnaire section on Afrocentricity applies here as well.

The fully developed and enumerated public affairs show's staff/crew questionnaire follows this text. Text describing the public affairs show's producer/ director questionnaire items follows the pages that include the public affairs show's staff/crew questionnaire. This text continues to use the exemplar show *For My People* to describe questionnaire items.

QUESTIONNAIRE - Public Affairs Show's Staff/Crew

Part A: Questions about the Individual Crew Member

1. What is the programming philosophy of *For My People* (also referred to as the program)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What were the specific broadcasting goals of *For My People* as you understood them to be?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you share this philosophy at some level in your life, if so how, at what level?

(_____) Yes (_____) No

How?_____

_____

4. Why did you become a member of the organization that produces the program (explain how you heard about it, if you were recommended, and the application process)?

_____

_____

_____

5. What is your title, and what are your duties? Title: _____

_____

Duties:_____

_____

_____

6. What goals have you set for yourself as a member of this organization? _____

_____

_____

_____

7. Are staff members welcome to contribute content ideas? (___) Yes (___) No

8. What is your impression of the acceptance and use of content ideas offered by staff members?

_____

_____

10. How are programming decisions made as you understand and participate in this process?

_____

_____

11. How long were you, or have you been actively associated with *For My People*? What dates?

From _____ — Till ("present", if still a member) _____

Part B: Question Concerning their impressions of the program

12. Who is the target audience for the show? _____

13. What problems have you observed with production of the program?

For example:

A. fiscal problems or lack of funding_____

B. lack of studio facilities _____

C. lack of studio personnel _____

D. lack of studio creative personnel (writers, artists, performers, etc.)

_____

_____

E. lack of program research _____

F. lack of audience research _____

G. lack of promotion _____

14. What degree of commitment do you feel WKBD demonstrates toward the program?

High (_____) Medium (_____) Low (_____)

15. How does WKBD demonstrate that level of commitment? _____

_____

16. How would you describe the program's effectiveness? _____

_____

_____

17. Do you feel the program is successful in fulfilling its goals? _____

_____

_____

18. If the program is less successful than it should be, please describe any changes for improvement?

_____

_____

19. What characteristics about *For My People* do you think will insure its future success?

_____

_____

20. What characteristics about *For My People* do you think may jeopardize its future?

_____

_____

Part C: Afrocentric Cultural Orientation

In the following statements please indicate the response that applies to you.

21. In obtaining information about African-Americans and/or their communities, it is important to have that information come from an African-American source.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. ____	2. ____	3. ____	4. ____	5. ____

22. It is important that the individual disseminating information about African-Americans and/or their communities uses a visual device (for example hairstyle, dress, or setting on television) to demonstrate a connection with an African culture.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. ____	2. ____	3. ____	4. ____	5. ____

23. When I receive news and public affairs communication, the most important form of that communication for me is oral or spoken communication.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. ____	2. ____	3. ____	4. ____	5. ____

24. It is important in news and public affairs communication concerning African-Americans that participants be expressive to seek a connection with the audience to heighten involvement.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. ____	2. ____	3. ____	4. ____	5. ____

25. When people communicate on news and public affairs programming, it is important to accept that they use *Ebonic* or *Black English* and not *only* that they use standard English.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1. ____	2. ____	3. ____	4. ____	5. ____

26. It is important to me for news and public affairs information to focus upon issues with respect to the particular impacts on African-Americans specifically and/or people of African descent in general.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1._____	2._____	3._____	4._____	5._____

27. When news and public affairs programming covers African-Americans specifically and/or people of African descent in general, I desire discussion which focuses upon specific goal directed activities and/or efforts to assist and develop such activities

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1._____	2._____	3._____	4._____	5._____

28. When I participate in discussions, I make an effort to focus on how the subject of concern impacts African-Americans specifically and/or people of African descent in general (subjects for example might include, economics, politics, crime etc.)

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1._____	2._____	3._____	4._____	5._____

29. I regard people of African descent as sharing a collective heritage in terms of their relationship to the continent of Africa, and the cultures and ethnicities therein.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1._____	2._____	3._____	4._____	5._____

30. My concerns of the African-American community, or of people of African decent in general, causes me to regard activities necessary to improve their quality of life as possible primarily through collective action.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED ANSWER
1._____	2._____	3._____	4._____	5._____

31. Are you familiar with the term Afrocentricity? If so how would you define Afrocentricity?

Yes (____) No (____)

Afrocentricity is defined as:_____

_____

_____

32. Some people refer to themselves as Afrocentric, would you refer to yourself as Afrocentric?

Yes (____) No (____)

33. Do you participate in activities that you consider be Afrocentric?

Yes (____) No (____)

34. Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

Respondent: Please do not mark in this space

35. Subject number (consecutively number the responses collected):

_____

36. Interviewer/questionnaire administrator number: _____

Public Affairs Show's Producer/Director Questionnaire

Preliminary interviewing, and review of any relevant records and files of the producers of a public affairs show should already have taken place as has been done with *For My People* producer David Rambeau. This information has been included for the descriptive information of *For My People* included in chapter two of this paper. The following questionnaire (see pages 177 through 180) is developed to systematically collect information from any individuals that are in leadership positions in Project BAIT, and have significant influence on the content and format of *For My People*. Part A of the questionnaire (see page 177, questions 1 through 6) concerns any policies, and the philosophy of *For My People* as the individual has observed. Part B (see page 177, questions 7 through 10) concerns the relationship of *For My People* with WKBD. Part C (see pages 177 through 178, questions 11 through 16) focuses on how *For My People* program content is determined. Part D (see page 178, questions 17 through 24) concerns the role that the individual understands *For My People* to play in the public affairs programming goals and objectives of WKBD. Finally, part E (see pages 178 through 180, questions 15 through 39) concerns production duties, and primarily focuses on any problems that may have arisen in the production of *For My People*.

The fully developed and enumerated public affairs show's producer/director questionnaire follows this text. Text, describing the television station's public affairs programming producer/director questionnaire items, follows the pages that include the public affairs show's producer/director questionnaire. This text continues to use a discussion of the exemplar show *For My People* to describe questionnaire items.

QUESTIONNAIRE - Public Affairs Show's Producer/Director

Part A: Public Affairs Programming Policy

1. Who produces *For My People* (also referred to as "the program")

2. What is the programming philosophy of *For My People*?

3. Describe the format or design of the program?

4. Why have you chosen this format or design?

5. How are topics selected?

6. How are guests selected?

Part B: WKBD Influence on, and/or Contributions to *For My People*

7. What kinds of support is provided by WKBD for your programming efforts, and (if you can answer) other groups such as yours?

8. What is your impression of how WKBD prioritizes the scheduling for public affairs programming in general and *For My People* specifically?

9. Did WKBD provide training for your group, and (if you can answer) other groups such as yours, seeking to produce public affairs programming via public access?

10. What station production facilities are made available to your group for producing programming?

Part C: Factors in the Determination of Need for Programming

11. What types of research does your organization do to determine community needs in terms of public affairs programming?

12. Does your group receive, request, collect, or analyze viewer responses to any or all *For My People* broadcasts?

13. Does your organization receive, request, collect, or analyze responses from any other media organization to any *For My People* broadcast?

14. If so what has been the general nature of these responses from other organizations, and what has been your organization's reaction to them?

16. Does WKBD make suggestions for programming content to your group for producing specific types of public affairs programming content as a result of viewer response?

Part D: The Role of *For My People* In Public Affairs Programming at WKBD

17. On what level does the program air on WKBD: as a regularly scheduled program; as a part of the programming philosophy of WKBD in terms of its commitment to viewers; or as an outside entity?

18. How do WKBD programming policies affect the goals of *For My People*?

19. Have there been any differences in programming philosophies between the producers of *For My People* and WKBD, if so what have those differences been?

20. Have there been any changes in schedule for times that the program has aired since its first regular broadcasting schedule on WKBD, if so why?

21. What types of data are collected on the program by WKBD?

23. To the best of your knowledge, how is this data used?

24. What is the overall significance of the program for WKBD?

    A. in terms of the time it presently airs?

    B. in terms of its content?

    C. in terms of the data collected on the show?

Part E: Production Duties and Issues

25. How long have you been actively involved with the production of the program, what dates?

26. What is your title and what are your duties?

27. What are your goals in producing the program?

28. Did you train your guests before television appearances?

29. What kinds of problems have you had, or might you experience with your guests?

30. Did your staff offer program ideas if so, how are they developed and implemented?

31. Were there any weeks the program did not air, if so what were common reasons?

32. Who owns the show? Does ownership infringe upon the show's content?

31. What influenced the creation of the program;

A. community activities?

B. legal issues or actions?

C. FCC regulations?

32. Who controls the content of the program?

33. How is the program promoted?

A. newspapers?

B. radio?

C. television?

D. other?

34. What elements are necessary for the production of *For My People*?

A. technical - licensing such as frequency allocation, tower height, signal strength, radial coverage

- facilities such as studio, crew, staff, equipment

B. fiscal - budgetary resources such as tax-supported university, state, federal, private agency funding, gifts, etc.

C. political - policy and procedural issues determined by WKBD

- policy and procedural issues determined by community needs and/or pressures

D. creative - content resources for the program, including individuals necessary for conceptualization that might utilize researchers, writers, etc.

- outside programming resources, including professional, educational or commercial assistance

- public relations activities including, advertising, community relations, informational brochures or flyers, or program support materials

- evaluation including, community contact, or feedback links with community

35. What problems have you observed in producing the program?

For example:

A. fiscal problems

B. lack of studio facilities

C. lack of studio personnel

D. lack of studio creative personnel (writers, artists, performers, etc.)

E. lack of program research

F. lack of audience research

G. lack of promotion

36. What degree of commitment did you feel the station felt toward the program? High, medium, low.

37. How did WKBD demonstrate that level of commitment?

38. How would you describe the program effectiveness?

39. Do you feel the program is successful in fulfilling its goals?

Respondent: Please do not mark in this space

40. Subject number (consecutively number the responses collected): _____

41. Interviewer/questionnaire administrator number: _____

Television Station's Public Affairs Programming Producer/Staff Questionnaire

Television stations must demonstrate some measure of commitment to community public affairs programming due to FCC regulations. The FCC requires television stations to make special efforts to serve the public affairs programming needs of its immediate community. With ascertainment as an FCC regulation requirement, a television station the opportunity to uncover community issues and needs for public affairs programming. Ascertainment involves finding out what community leaders and the general public consider to be community issues. Television stations should attempt to coordinate topics of public concern uncovered in ascertainment surveys with guests for public affairs programs (Keirstead 1979, p. 39). Allowing community groups such as Project BAIT to produce programming provides WKBD with a good vehicle to promote two-way communication. The station can serve individuals and groups in the community by giving them a chance to air their ideas, promote civic projects, overcome community problems, resolve crises and promote the general well-being of the community (Keirstead 1979, p. 14).

Part A (see page 183, questions 1 through 7) of the WKBD producers/staff questionnaire concerns public affairs programming policy including any specific regulations, and policies directed toward public affairs programming. Part B (see page 183, questions 8 through 12) concerns the relationship of WKBD to outside producers of public affairs programming and focuses on issues of support and scheduling. Part C (see page 184, questions 13 through 17) concerns the methods by which WKBD determines the need for programming, and if that determination is based upon research, audience response, or interaction with community organizations. Part D (see page 184, questions 18 through 24) concerns the role of *For My People* specifically and the goals and objectives of the WKBD public affairs programming objectives where it is concerned.

The fully developed and enumerated television station's public affairs programming producer/staff questionnaire follows this text. Text which introduces and describes the coding forms follows the questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE - Television Station's Public Affairs Producer/Staff

Part A: Public Affairs Programming Policy

1. What are the WKBD public affairs programming policies?

2. Are there any differences in policies for public access programming produced by outside groups and programming produced by WKBD?

3. On what basis are public affairs programs created by WKBD?

4. What kinds of problems do you experience with groups who produce programming, with group members, in content produced or audience response?

5. How does WKBD define its primary publics for public affairs programming (e.g., by demographics, by area, by community)? Who are the publics identified, are there specific names for distinct groups?

6. What types of written documentation are required by WKBD for groups' production of public affairs programming (e.g., statement of purpose, submission of guest lists and topics, etc.)?

7. Does WKBD provide financial support for all public affairs programming that it transmits, including programming produced by outside groups? If so how is that determined?

Part B: WKBD Influence on, and Contributions to Programming Produced by Outside Groups

8. On what basis are public affairs programs selected and accepted among those proposed by outside groups?

9. What kind of technical and professional support is provided by WKBD to programming produced by WKBD?

10. What kind of technical and professional support is provided by WKBD to programming produced by community groups via public access (for example in training or other activities)?

11. How does WKBD prioritize scheduling for public affairs programming?

12. What station production facilities are made available to outside groups producing programming?

Part C: Determination of Need for Programming

13. What types of research does WKBD do to determine community needs in terms of public affairs programming?

14. Does WKBD seek out or invite community groups or others to produce programming?

15. Does WKBD receive, request, collect, or analyze viewer responses to any public affairs program it transmits?

16. Does WKBD make suggestions for programming content to groups producing public affairs programming generally, or produce programming content as a result of viewer response?

17. Does WKBD have regular contact with advisory members of the community regarding community needs? If so what groups, and what is the nature of the contact?

Part D: The Role of *For My People* In Public Affairs Programming at WKBD

18. What role does *For My People* (also referred to as "the program") play in the public affairs programming philosophy/polices for WKBD?

19. Have there been any differences in programming philosophies between the producers of *For My People* and WKBD, if so what have those differences been?

20. Have there been any changes in schedule for times that the program has aired since its first regular broadcasting schedule on WKBD, if so why?

21. What types of data are collected on the program?

22. How is this data used, for suggestions or guidance on programming content, for general record keeping for WKBD, etc.?

23. Does WKBD finance all or part of the production of *For My People*? If so what percentage of the station's budget goes toward producing the program?

24. What is the overall significance of *For My People* for WKBD?

    - in terms of the time it is broadcast presently?
    - in terms of its content?
    - in terms of its producers?
    - in terms of the data collected on the show?

Coding Forms

Content analysis embodies two critical functions: to provide a systematic and verifiable description of the manifest and latent content of narrative discourse, and to produce logical, valid, and replicative inferences about a narrative's context based on its descriptive content (Smith, 1988). Content analysis in the mass media often makes use of *medium variables*, i.e., the aspects of content that are unique to the medium under consideration (Wimmer & Dominick, 1983, p. 138). The proposed methodology utilizes two content analysis techniques. The first technique, utilized on the first coding form, involves describing communication content wherein content analysis is used in the traditional descriptive manner to identify what exists (Wimmer & Dominick, 1983). The general coding form uses this content analysis method as primarily a device to record issue items which would be used in the agenda setting audience questionnaire, and to record information which would be used to determine any trends or patterns which might exist in the categories identified.

The second technique involves testing hypotheses of message characteristics. This technique attempts to relate certain characteristics of the source of a given body of message content, to characteristics of the messages that are produced (Wimmer & Dominick, 1983, p. 159). As Holsti (1969) pointed out, this category of content analysis has been used in many studies that test hypothesis of form: "If the source has characteristic *A*, then messages containing elements *x* and *y* will be produced; if the source has characteristic *B*, then messages with elements *w* and *z* will be produced" (cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 1983, p. 159).

General Coding Form

As stated previously, the general coding form (see pages 187 through 189) is designed to describe communication content. Part A of the general coding form (see

page 187, items 1 through 9) is designed to simply record specific items concerning the program to keep track of the consecutive order, and date of the show. Part B of the coding form (see page 187, items 10 through 14) concerns information about the guest or guests that appear on *For My People*. It includes a coding scheme developed for the type of organization (Tait, 1985) of which the guest is a member, and represents on the show. Part C of the coding form (see pages 188 through 189, items 15 through 16) is where the issues discussed on the show would be listed and coded. The issues as discussed in the show would be coupled with the corresponding *issues category items* from the Black Agenda Issues Category Structure. Recording the issues discussed in the show would make it possible to observe any trends, as well as provide the issues for the agenda setting portion of the audience questionnaire discussed earlier.

The fully developed and enumerated general coding form follows this text. Text describing the public affairs discussion coding form items follows and uses the exemplar show *For My People* to describe the items of the coding form sections.

GENERAL CODING FORM

PART A: PROGRAM INFORMATION

1 - 3. Program Number (three digit): _____

4 - 9. Show Date (6 digit = Day/Month/Year):_____

PART B: GUEST INFORMATION - Guest 1

10 - 12. Guest Organization Code : _____

01. Agricultural
02. Associations/Societies
03. Athletic
04. Business
05. Chamber of Commerce
06. Cultural
07. Educational
08. Environmental
09. Foreign Interest
10. Fraternal Organization
11. Governmental
12. Health Care
13. Labor Union, Federation, or Association
14. Law Firm
15. Media
16. Military
17. Non Profit
18. Public Administration
19. Recreation
20. Religious
21. Social Welfare
22. Other _____

PART B: GUEST INFORMATION - Guest 2

13 - 14. Guest Organization Code : _____

01. Agricultural
02. Associations/Societies
03. Athletic
04. Business
05. Chamber of Commerce
06. Cultural
07. Educational
08. Environmental
09. Foreign Interest
10. Fraternal Organization
11. Governmental
12. Health Care
13. Labor Union, Federation, or Association
14. Law Firm
15. Media
16. Military
17. Non Profit
18. Public Administration
19. Recreation
20. Religious
21. Social Welfare
22. Other _____

PART C: ISSUES INFORMATION

15 - 16. Issue Category _____

01. African Diaspora

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

02. Business Development

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

03. Maintenance of Culture

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

04. Education

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

05. Family

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

06. Housing

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

11. Economic Concerns and Conditions

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

12. Community Involvement and Development

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

13. Employment

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

14. Equality

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

15. Health

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

16. Crime and Law Enforcement

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

07. Media Access and Coverage

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

08. Sports and Recreation

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

09. Social Welfare Programs/Services

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

10. Youth

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

17. Politics

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

18. Socially disadvantaged Groups/Conditions

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

19. Transportation

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

20. Other_____

Specific issue discussed

_____

_____

17. Coder number:_____

Public Affairs Discussion Coding Form

The second coding form attempts to relate Afrocentricity with the ways in which programming content is framed, and with the types of messages produced. As stated previously, Holsti (1969) pointed out that this category of content analysis has been used in many studies that test hypotheses of form: "If the source has characteristic *A*, then messages containing elements *x* and *y* will be produced; if the source has characteristic *B*, then messages with elements *w* and *z* will be produced" (cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 1983, p. 159). With that understanding, Afrocentricity has been operationalized and developed into a coding form that conceptualizes Afrocentricity in public affairs discussion-format programming as contextual interaction.

This coding form has three distinct sections, and those are: 1. Afrocentric Framing Mechanisms in Public Affairs Programming; 2. Interviewer Focus: Afrocentric Exploration of Issues in Public Affairs Programming; and 3. Guest Focus: Afrocentric Exploration of Issues in Public Affairs Programming. Each of the parts explores Afrocentricity as it should be reflected in *For My People*. The first section, Afrocentric framing mechanisms, is divided into three components. Part A explores communicative framing, part B explores interviewer and guest modeling, and part C explores visual framing.

The general communicative framing features of news and public affairs programming were addressed briefly in chapter two of this paper. To reiterate those features, they are as follows:

1. Introduction to the people that contribute to producing and creating the public affairs information for the show, including an exploration of how they contribute to the appeal that the show has, and an exploration of their unique modus operandi, and goals as a part of the production team;

2. Exploration of the unique public affairs information presentation style that the show has developed;

3. The unique agenda-setting effects of the show, or the remarkable impact that the show has had on peoples lives, and/or on public policy.

These general framing features become framing mechanisms in Afrocentric public affairs programming due to the; (1) systematic inclusion of Afrocentricity components, (2) that operate as a process by which Afrocentric framing is done or comes into being, (3) to communicate the Afrocentric cultural orientation.

Part A of the Afrocentric framing mechanisms section of the public affairs discussion coding form (see pages 195 through 196, items 1 through 8) explores the communicative framing mechanisms of Afrocentricity. The "*Greeting*" portion in part A explores the ways that opening comments can be used as communicative framing mechanisms. The goal here is to code the use of communicative framing devices used to communicate a link with continental African culture, welcome viewers to the show, and introduce the Afrocentric focus. The "*Introduction to production team*" portion in part A codes the point at which members of the production team are introduced. The goal here is to record whether the introduction takes place, and if it is done so to communicate what production team members contribute to the production of the show, and what their goals are as members of the production team. The "*Exploration of the unique agenda setting effects of the show*" portion provides a coding spot for references made during the show in either the discussion, or opening closing comments, to explore the impact that the show's broadcasts have had on people and/or public policy. The "*Farewell*" portion explores the ways that closing comments can be used as communicative framing mechanisms. The goal here is to code the use of communicative framing devices that serve to; reaffirm a link with continental African culture, show appreciation to the viewers for watching, and invite viewers to watch future broadcasts.

Part B of the framing mechanisms section of the public affairs discussion coding form (see pages 196 through 197, items 9 through 22) explores the possible ways in which the guest and interviewer are used as models in terms of Afrocentric behavior or appearance. The modeling perspective is coded according to; work, race, gender,

hairstyle and wardrobe. These elements are included to assess the relative Afrocentric, culturally relevant modeling.

Part C of the framing mechanisms section (see pages 197 through 198, items 23 through 25) codes the manner in which an Afrocentric environment is created. The "*Imagery*" portion of part C codes the ways that the set design incorporates photography, or painted (or otherwise artistically reproduced) images into the set design. The "*Design*" elements portion codes ways in which symbolic motifs and functional artifacts are incorporated into the set design of the show. The coding form specifies the observable visual elements to be coded.

Sections two and three of the coding form (Interviewer Focus: Afrocentric Exploration of Issues in Public Affairs Programming, and Guest Focus: Afrocentric Exploration of Issues in Public Affairs Programming) both explore the Afrocentric elements in the public affairs programming discussion as the moderator/interviewer and guest interact (see pages 199 through 206). The moderator/interviewer is coded in terms of how he or she directs the discussion. The guest is coded in terms of how he or she responds to the moderator/interviewer. Although both sections two and three differ in subject matter, they can be discussed together due to the repetition of coded Afrocentric components.

Part A of sections two and three (see pages 199 through 200, items 1 through 20, section two; also see pages 203 through 204, items 1 through 20, section three) explores the oral tradition of Afrocentricity as reflected in public affairs discussion in purpose, process, language, and style. Within part A of sections two and three, the purposes within the discussion should address activism, liberation, and unification of people of African descent. The process of the discussion would be coded according to elements that demonstrate the relative engaging and relational aspects therein. The type of language used in the discussion would be coded according to the *way* that language is used, with particular attention paid to the *stylized* use of English, and the avoidance of

particular terminology (discussed in chapter two of this paper as pejorative language). The style in which the moderator/interviewer and guest interact is coded according to various methods that they would use to involve one another in the discussion.

Part B of sections two and three (see page 201 , items 21 through 29, section two; also see pages 205, items 21 through 29, section three) explores the subjective analytical base of Afrocentricity as reflected in a public affairs discussion in terms of perspective, discussion framing mechanisms, and standards. The perspective is coded according to the reflection of an Afrocentric world view (i.e., focuses explicitly and exclusively on subject matter that involves people of African descent). The discussion framing mechanisms are coded according to evidence of an overt verbal rejection of other perspectives, and their ability to address the needs of people of African descent. Standards are coded according to the reflection of an evaluation of issues according to their particular impacts on people of African descent.

Part C of sections two and three (see page 202, items 30 through 38, section two; also see page 206, items 30 through 38, section three) explores the collectivist socio-political orientation in terms of ingroups, ideology/attitude, and cultural constraints. The ingroups component is coded according to the means by which the interactants actively define the groups to which they refer in the discussion, and whom they address as the audience, as being all individuals that recognize themselves as people of African descent. Ideology/attitude is coded according to the means by which the interactants advocate collective action to address any issues that may arise during the discussion. Cultural constraints are coded according to the means by which the interactants explore any cultural constraints that may inhibit the adoption of a collectivist attitude.

The fully developed and enumerated coding forms for analysis of Afrocentricity in public affairs programming follow this text. The public affairs discussion coding form is divided into three sections as follows:

- Afrocentric Framing Mechanisms in Public Affairs Programming (Section One)
- Afrocentric Exploration of Issues in Public Affairs Programming: Interview/Discussion Format Coding Form—Focus Moderator in Terms of How He/She Directs the Discussion (Section Two)
- Afrocentric Exploration of Issues in Public Affairs Programming: Interview/Discussion Format Coding Form—Focus Guests in Terms of How He/She Responds to the Moderator (Section Three)

Afrocentric Framing Mechanisms in Public Affairs Programming
Section One

Part A: Communicative Framing

Greeting

1.____Communicates a link with continental African culture with one or both of the following:
   - Use of a proverb that is attributed to an African source
   - Spoken African language

2.____Welcomes viewers to show as a general feature of public affairs programming by doing one or more of the following:
   - Reinforce the title of the show
   - Invite viewers to stay tuned and actively ingest the information presented
   - Suggests the relevance of the information that will follow

3.____Introduces the Afrocentric focus by demonstrating one or both of the following:
   - Establishment of kinship of people of African decent wherein this defined ingroup will benefit from the forthcoming information
   - Recognizes the imperative for sociability as demonstrated via directly addressing the audience

Introduction of production team

4.____Introduction of production team should demonstrate one or more of the following:
   - An exploration of his/her unique personality and modus operandi in terms of contributions to the show
   - Focus on elements of collectivism as key to his/her modus operandi
   - Discuss the production member's goals in terms of his/her involvement with the show

Exploration of the unique agenda setting effects of the show

5.____Exploration of the unique agenda setting effects of the show should demonstrate one or more of the following:
   - Viewer mail
   - Follow-up communication on public policy upon which the show is considered to have had significant impact
   - Demonstration of tape or visual library for presentation during the show to document early broadcasts in terms of viewer and public policy impact

Farewell

6._____Reiterates a link with continental African culture with one or both of the following:

- Use of a proverb that is attributed to an African source
- Spoken African language

7._____Shows appreciation for the viewers of that particular program by doing one or more of the following:

- Reinforce the title of the show
- Invite viewers to tune in again and suggest whatever new information will be presented on the next broadcast
- Suggests the relevance of the information will be presented on the next broadcast

8._____Invites viewers to the next broadcast and reinforces the Afrocentric focus by demonstrating one or both of the following:

- Re-establishment of racial and cultural kinship
- Reinforce the imperative for sociability

Part B-1: Interviewer Modeling

9._____ Work: Determine if the interviewer's work is introduced as an issue in the discussion of the main topic.

10.____ Race: Determine if the interviewer's race is introduced as an issue in the discussion of the main topic.

11.____ Gender: Determine if the interviewer's gender is introduced as an issue in the discussion of the main topic.

12.____ Hairstyle: Determine if the hairstyle is of Afrocentric origin; i.e., afro, dreadlocks, braids; (or) determine if the headdress of the interviewer is of Afrocentric origin, i.e., hat, cloth wrap.

13.____ Wardrobe: Traditional African dress, e.g., loose fitting clothing as in the dashiki, or the use of Kente cloth or batiks as accents or as cloth for total outfit.

14.____ African and Pan-Africanist colors: Including colors combined as black, yellow, red and green.

15.____ African motif accessories: Including those replicating artifacts, e.g., carvings, worn as necklaces, earrings, etc.

Part B-2: Guest Modeling

16.____ Work: Determine if the guest's work is introduced as an issue in the discussion of the main topic.

17.____ Race: Determine if the guest's race is introduced as an issue in the discussion of the main topic.

18.____ Gender: Determine if the guest's gender is introduced as an issue in the discussion of the main topic.

19.____ Hairstyle: Determine if the hairstyle is of Afrocentric origin; i.e., afro, dreadlocks, braids; (or) determine if the headdress of the interviewer is of Afrocentric origin, i.e., hat, cloth head-wrap.

20.____ Wardrobe: Traditional African dress, e.g., loose fitting clothing as in the dashiki; focus is on the print and cut of the garment.

21.____ African and Pan-Africanist colors: Including primary and secondary colors, and earth tones; especially colors combined as black, yellow, red and green.

22.____ African motif accessories: Including those replicating artifacts, e.g., carvings, worn as necklaces, earrings, etc.

Part C: Environmental/Set Design Visual Framing

Imagery

23.___ Imagery, as photography, or as painted likenesses of people or art objects as reproduced on stage flats or as or placed in a conspicuous location, imagery including one or more of the following:

- pictures/paintings of people of African descent active in the political and/or physical liberation of other people of African descent
- picture/painting of a map of Africa or its silhouette
- positive representations of everyday lives of people of African descent
- pictures/paintings of people of African descent participating in activities which promote the liberation and socioeconomic improvement of people of African descent
- noted political activists commonly recognized for his/her social or political contributions to quality of life of people of African descent (e.g. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Harriet Tubman, etc.)

Design Elements

24.___Includes symbolic motifs integrated with the overall scheme of the environment which may incorporate one or more of the following:

- furniture carvings integrating such symbols as the clinched fist symbolizing power
- African mask symbolizing an artistic abstraction of African beauty
- the use of African cloth, e.g., as used on flats or the stage as symbolic of a functional (i.e., in terms of the overall functionality of cloth) connection with the content of Africa
- the overall color scheme of the set in the Pan-African combined colors of:
  - red - symbolizing bloodshed in war and social struggle
  - green - symbolizing lands lost
  - yellow - symbolizing minerals and natural resources mined from the African continent
  - black - symbolizing the color of the people
- introduces a logo that incorporates Afrocentricity as a design element which serves as a symbol by which the show can be identified

25.___Functional Artifacts: genuine or reproduced: As decorative elements or props including one or more of the following:

- ceramics
- basketry
- earthenware
- woodcarvings
- weavings
- sculpture

Afrocentric Exploration of Issues in Public Affairs Programming:
Interview/Discussion Format Coding Form—
Focus on Moderator in Terms of How He/She Directs the Discussion
Section Two

Part A: Oral Tradition

1-4. Purpose: Activism

Directs the discussion toward activities that promote or equate activism/empowerment at the:

1_____ Community level
2_____ City/Municipality level
3_____ National level
4_____ International level

5-7. Purpose: Liberation

Directs the discussion toward activities that contribute to the liberation of people of African descent from:

5_____ Depressed economic conditions
6_____ Racism and racist policies and institutions
7_____ Socio-cultural oppression

8-10. Purpose: Unification

Directs the discussion of issues toward efforts that promote unification in terms of:

8_____ Cohesiveness among socio-economic classes
9_____ Remove obstacles such as tribal, religious, and ethnic affiliations
10_____ Based on the denouncement of non-Afrocentric divisive moral and social codes

11-13. Process: Engaging and Relational

In directing this discussion, moderator's style is in engaging and relational, the purpose of which is to guide guest toward accepting accountability in terms of:

11_____ Emphasis on responsibility of the guest's/guest's organization to the community of people of African descent

12_____ Demonstrating knowledge of the guest's/guest's organization's contribution to the quality of life for people of African descent

13_____ Demonstrating knowledge of the guest's/guest's organization's derogations to the quality of life for people of African descent

14_____ Follow-up questions to address the discussion to any issues which were not discussed Afrocentrically

15-17. Language: Inverse and Ebonic

Guides the expressive style of the discussion in terms of inverse and Ebonic language, with emphasis on correctness by:

15_____ Correcting, and/or acknowledgment of the guest in his/her use of inappropriate, or pejorative terminology or language

16_____ Use of Ebonics

17_____ Use of inversion

18-20. Style: Verbally expressive

Guides the discussion in a verbally expressive style that calls on the guest to participate in terms of:

18_____ Call and response pattern

19_____ Voice and speech inflections (especially when making an important point)

20_____ Communicates personal feelings and beliefs

Part B: Subjective Analytical Base

21-23. Perspective: Afrocentric world view

Directs the discussion towards an Afrocentric world view in terms of:

21_____ Discussion of and methods for self determination and self definition

22_____ Discussion of goal directed activities within any field (i.e., business, education, psychology, etc.) from a perspective which places Africans in the center

23_____ Discussion of issues in terms of the "special" needs of people of African descent (i.e., needs are regarded separately from what is considered status quo)

24-26. Framing Mechanisms: As focused on diaspora and continental Africans

Directs the discussion contextually as focusing on diasporan and continental Africans in terms of:

24_____ Focus on the impact of political processes on people of African descent

25_____ Emphasis on the turning inward and explicit rejection of the legitimacy of white institutions to address the needs of people of African descent

26_____ Display of African motifs through customs of language, dress, and behavior, and/or games

27-29. Standards: Resists objectifying methods

Guides the discussion towards an evaluation of issues in terms of impacts on cultures particular to people of African descent via:

27_____ Discussion of issues and topics with particular bases in the African world

28_____ Issues discussed in terms of integration with, and impacts on cultural orientation

29_____ Providing qualitative and interpretive analysis of current news and issues based on the interests of people of African descent

Part C: Collectivist Socio-political Orientation

30-32. Ingroups: Common heritage of people of African descent

Directs discussion of issues based on an understanding that people of African descent share a common heritage in terms of:

30_____ Defining ingroup in terms of any and all individuals who recognize themselves as sharing a heritage based on African oriented cultural customs

31_____ Defining ingroup in terms of the specific area in a locality in which people of African descent are concentrated

32_____ Focusing on activities which are practiced by people of African descent

33-35. Ideology/Attitude: Advocate collective action

Directs the discussion towards the downplay of individualistic goals while advocating collective action in terms of:

33_____ Advocating collective action at the community, city, state etc. levels

34_____ Discussion of issues in terms of intracultural responsibility

35_____ Discussion of issues in terms of the "common fate" concept, e.g., in terms of how the situation of Africans in South Africa affects the quality of life for African-Americans

36-38. Cultural Constraints: Hindrance to the adoption of Afrocentric ideology

Focus the discussion toward the relative constraints present in the U.S. culture that may hinder the adoption of an Afrocentric ideological stance through:

36_____ Discussion of the difficulty that people of African descent may have in subordinating individualistic goals

37_____ Acknowledgment of the overall individualistic socio-cultural orientation evident in the United States

38_____ Focus on the destructive nature of individualism on the quality of life for people of African descent

**Afrocentric Exploration of Issues in Public Affairs Programming:
Interview/Discussion Format Coding Form—
Focus on Guest in Terms of How He/She Responds to the Moderator
Section Three**

Part A: Oral Tradition

1-4. Purpose: Activism

Responses based on the guest's/guest's organization's activities that promote or equate activism/empowerment at the:

1_____ Community level
2_____ City/Municipality level
3_____ National level
4_____ International level

5-7. Purpose: Liberation

Responses based on guest's/guest's organization's efforts to alleviate people of African descent from:

5_____ Depressed economic conditions
6_____ Racism and racist policies and institutions
7_____ Socio-cultural oppression

8-10. Purpose: Unification

Responses that address troublesome issues by promoting unification of people of African descent in terms of:

8_____ Cohesiveness among socio-economic classes
9_____ Removing obstacles such as tribal, religious, and ethnic affiliations
10_____ Denouncing non-Afrocentric divisive moral and social codes

11-14. Process: Engaging and Relational

Responses based on the acceptance of the guest's/guest's organization's accountability to people of African descent as expressed via:

11_____ Acceptance of responsibility to the community of people of African descent

12_____ Acknowledgment of the guest's/guest's organization's contributions to the quality of life for people of African descent.

13_____ Acknowledgment of the guest's/guest's organization's derogations to the quality of life for people of African descent

14_____ Clarification of Afrocentric orientation and position on issues in terms of interviewer's inquiry

15-17. Language: Inverse and Ebonic

Responses reflective of:

15_____ The avoidance of pejorative terminology and/or acknowledgment of pejorative terminology as it may occur in the conversation

16_____ The use of Ebonic oriented language

17_____ The use of inverted language

18-20. Style: Verbally expressive

Participatory responses in which the guest is called on to engage in:

18_____ Responding to, or initiating a call and response pattern

19_____ Voice and speech inflections (especially when making an important point)

20_____ Communication of personal feelings and beliefs concerning the issue at hand

Part B: Subjective Analytical Base

21-23. Perspective: Afrocentric world view

Responses expressive of an imperative call to action and/or descriptive of activities which detail:

21_____ Methods for self determination and self definition

22_____ Goal directed activities within any field (primarily those in which the guest's/guest's organization's is in some way involved) from a perspective which places Africans in the center

23_____ Responsiveness to activity that addresses issues regarding the "special" needs of people of African descent (i.e., needs are regarded separately from what is considered status quo)

24-26. Framing Mechanisms: As focused on diasporan and continental Africans

Responses to issues in terms of their impacts on diasporan and continental Africans which:

24_____ Focus on the impact of political processes on people of African descent

25_____ Emphasizes the turning inward and explicit rejection of the legitimacy of white institutions to address the needs of people of African descent

26_____ The guest's/guest's organization's actively displays African motifs through customs of language, dress, and behavior, and/or games

27-29. Standards: Resists objectifying methods

Responses reflective of the guest's analysis or explanations in terms of the focus on:

27_____ Issues and topics with particular bases in the African world

28_____ Issues discussed in terms of integration with, and impacts on cultural orientation

29_____ Qualitative and interpretive analysis of current news and issues based on the interests of people of African descent

Part C: Collectivist Socio-Political Orientation

30-32. Ingroups: Common heritage of people of African descent

Responses which place people of African descent as the primary group affected by the issues discussed in terms of:

30_____ Definition of ingroup in terms of any and all individuals who recognize themselves as sharing a heritage based on African oriented cultural customs

31_____ Defining ingroup in terms of the specific area in a locality/ localities in which people of African descent are concentrated

32_____ Making the activities practiced by and for people of African descent the primary focus

33-35. Ideology/Attitude: Advocate collective action

Responses reflective of the guest's individual or organizational call for and/or activity that contributes to:

33_____ Advocating collective action at the community, city, state etc. levels

34_____ Addressing issues in terms of intracultural responsibility

35_____ Consideration of issues in terms of the "common fate" concept, e.g., in terms of how the situation of Africans in South Africa affects the quality of life for African-Americans

36-38. Cultural Constraints: Hindrance to the adoption of Afrocentric ideology

Responses that relate the cultural constraints present in the U.S. culture that serve to hinder the guest's/guest's organization's practicing Afrocentric oriented activities in terms of:

36_____ Discussion of the difficulty people of African descent may have in subordinating individualistic goals

37_____ Acknowledgment of the overall individualistic socio-cultural orientation evident in the United States

38_____ Focus on the destructive nature of individualism on the quality of life for people of African descent

The preceding instruments were created based upon the literature reviews and conceptualizations developed in the pervious chapters. It is based on observations of the fluidity between the components of Afrocentricity, the formal features and framing aspects of public affairs programming, and contextual interaction in the public affairs programming discussion format that the coding forms were developed to assess Afrocentricity in *For My People*. The author requests that the use of any of these instruments, in original or altered form, be fully acknowledged. In particular, any usage or alteration of the coding forms should be acknowledged, and referred to as "The Afrocentricity Scale" of which sections one, two, and three are comprised.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Public affairs programming is important because its potential impact on public opinion. The public affairs show *60 Minutes* was discussed previously as a vital force in setting both political, and public agendas. In 1970, the "access rule" handed down by the FCC made television stations in the top fifty markets give up a half hour of prime time programming on weekdays and one hour on Sundays (Madsen, 1984). In the beginning *60 Minutes* had problems gaining support from sponsors, had tenuous viewership support, and was preempted several times by CBS. The access rule however gave *60 Minutes* a new, more defined place on television, as well as other public affairs programming shows. Stories of government indiscretion, and individuals imprisoned unjustly made its style of investigative reporting an indispensable part of the Sunday evenings in many American homes.

The point of the discussion about *60 Minutes* is that public affairs programming has a marked impact upon the public agenda, and is a significant part of mass media. News programming gives raw information from a "non biased" standpoint, based upon the journalistic standards for objectivity within mainstream media. Public affairs programming however coalesces this raw information into an aggregate creation based upon related attributes to form an issue. When properly done, public affairs programming provides its audience with thoughtful analysis of the day's issues, appropriately framing them based upon the audience it serves.

In terms of Afrocentricity as a cultural orientation with which to frame public issues in public affairs programming, this study has lain out very clearly defined concepts and principles with which to determine the framing mechanisms utilized in Afrocentric programming. Afrocentricity offers specific means by which to assess the framing process. As a cultural orientation in general, Afrocentricity has both good and bad points. In terms of the way that it can promote understanding of the history of African-

Americans, as well as an understanding of some of the commonalties shared by people of African-descent in various cultures, it can be especially valuable.

The precepts and principles in Afrocentricity also can serve as a basis of comparison with other cultural orientations, for example collectivism has used for analysis of Asian cultures. Because Afrocentricity determines that the collectivist element of traditional African cultures is a valuable orientation to adopt in cultures outside Africa, collectivism as a cultural artifact is at least one way in which a comparison can be made between Asian cultures and African-centric cultures. Afrocentricity as a cultural mandate for all people of African decent however, would be a matter of personal choice. Advocates of Afrocentricity support the adoption of Afrocentric principals at every step in one's life, including education, holiday celebrations, the clothing one wears, and media consumption. Opponents of Afrocentricity contend that some precepts of Afrocentricity are groundless, and in many ways harmful.

The recommended quantitative approach developed in this paper would be especially useful if conducted as a comparative study that includes analysis of several shows, at different levels. One could compare two or more shows with an identifiable Afrocentric orientation in different cities on the local level. It is also possible to do a comparative analysis of national shows with an identifiable Afrocentric orientation. Such examples are available on BET—Black Entertainment Television with shows such as *Our Voices*, a general public affairs show, and *For Black Men Only*, a public affairs show which focuses on issues and concerns of African-American men. Another national show is *Tony Brown's Journal*, which aired on PBS for over a decade. To carry out the future research direction as conceptualized here, video taped broadcasts of public affairs shows for content analysis would be necessary as well as audience data. The most available type of information would be the video taped broadcasts because if the show's producers do not maintain a tape library (as was the case with *For My People*) it is conceivable that

one could create one's own for research purposes, the audience is another matter however. Identifying the audience might prove an expensive and time consuming task. With community based shows, there may not be a full commitment on the part of the television station to maintain data necessary for identifying the audience, and with a national show contacting the audience may be especially difficult.

Whatever the stance one takes on Afrocentricity itself, it is my sincere hope that this study has shed light on its application in public affairs programming. Because there seems to be a great deal of energy surrounding the application of Afrocentricity in many areas, including politics, education, and mass communication, the explication of Afrocentricity as a cultural phenomenon is worthy of effort and analysis.

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