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Examining Portrayals of Minority Groups in African American focused news media

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Previous research shows traditional news media often present African Americans in negative and stereotypic ways. However, representation of African Americans in African American-focused news media has rarely been studied. We argue that an examination of this content is important as previous research indicates that individuals—particularly those from marginalized groups—are particularly attune to representations of their group in media content and seek out group-affirming content (Abrams & Giles, 2010). In our study, we assessed the content of 600 articles from 4 different African American-focused media outlets (150 stories from each, *Black Voices*, *The Root*, *The Grio*, and *Blavity*) at both the story- and character-level to determine how African Americans were portrayed by news media created for and focused on them. We hypothesized, that African American-focused news media would overrepresent African Americans when compared to African Americans as a percentage of the population of the United States and the number of portrayals of African Americans by traditional news media. We also hypothesized that these news media will feature more positive portrayals of African Americans. Using a digital codebook created using the Qualtrics survey software, coders were trained on ~10% of the sample until they were deemed to be consistent across all relevant variables. Our results indicate preliminary support for our hypotheses. First, African American-focused news media overrepresents African Americans compared to traditional news media and US census data. Second, African American-focused news media portrays African Americans more favorably than traditional news media. Based on this research, we will now focus on assessing whether the more positive portrayals found on this site, can lead to positive effects (i.e., increased self and group esteem) on their target audience.