

By Bob Papper, Michael Gerhard and Andrew Sharma

MORE WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN BROADCAST NEWS

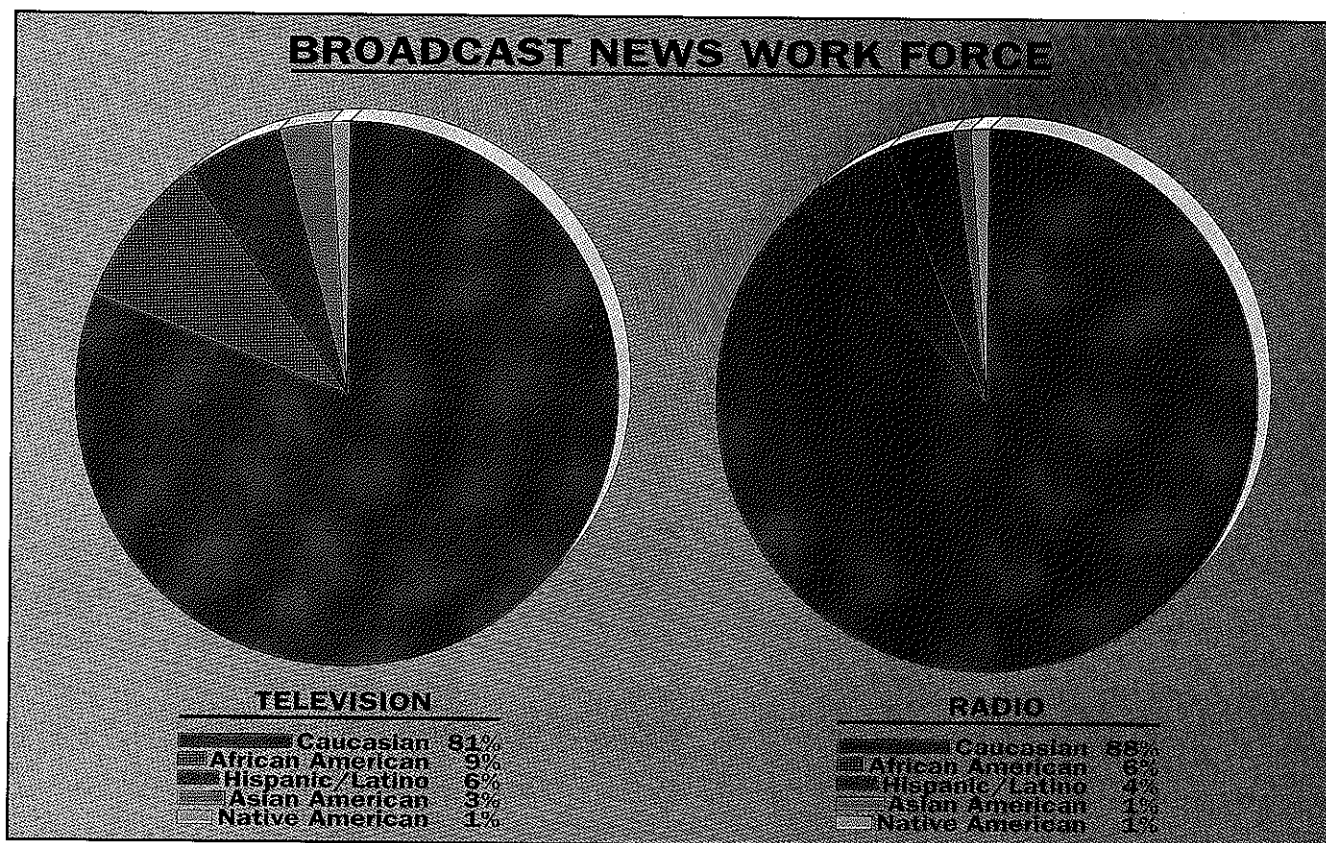
The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey showed small gains for minorities in broadcast news, bigger gains for women and even bigger changes on the horizon. The new research found that women make up 41 percent of all middle management and two-thirds of all producers, which suggests a large number of women are poised to move into the top positions in the broadcast news industry.

Six years ago, Steve Majors was a hustling intern in Columbus, OH. Six stations later, he's the new news director at WFTS-TV, the ABC affiliate in Tampa, FL. "First, great mentors along the way helped," Majors says. "Second, it's a function of the industry.

Things move fast if you've got some talent and work hard. And third, people are looking for people from diverse backgrounds—to reflect the community we serve, to influence the stories we cover, the issues we deal with, the people we hire, the attitudes we reflect. I can't

claim I've ever been discriminated against," Majors says, "although some may patronize you because you're a minority or pander to you. Once, maybe I got a position in part because I was a minority. But I knew I could do the job."

Last year, the minority work force in



In both radio and television, Caucasians dominate the work force. The minority population in television grew—primarily because of an increase in Hispanics in the business. In contrast, fewer Hispanics in radio led to a slight drop in the minority population there.

Women & Minorities in Local Broadcast News (Full Time)

	News Staff with Women	Women News Directors	Women % in Work Force	Average No. of Women	News Staff with Minorities	Minority News Directors	Minority % in Work Force	Average No. of Minorities
TELEVISION	96%	17%	37%	10.5	81%	9%	19%	5.4
Network Affiliates	99%	14%	37%	11.3	84%	5%	16%	5.4
Independent	86%	25%	39%	8	64%	30%	34%	5.5
ADI 1-25	100%	22%	37%	17.4	90%	16%	23%	10.2
ADI 26-50	100%	24%	36%	15.3	81%	8%	16%	6.3
ADI 51-100	94%	8%	36%	10.2	83%	4%	20%	5.8
ADI 101-150	98%	21%	37%	8.3	85%	3%	16%	3.7
ADI 151+	91%	13%	40%	6.2	67%	13%	17%	2.6
Staff 51+	100%	23%	37%	25.7	94%	10%	22%	13.7
Staff 31-50	99%	8%	36%	13.7	90%	4%	19%	7.1
Staff 21-30	100%	12%	36%	9.1	87%	4%	17%	4.1
Staff 11-20	100%	18%	40%	6.4	78%	11%	18%	2.8
Staff 1-10	94%	33%	42%	2.4	59%	16%	26%	1.7
ALL RADIO	31%	26%	31%	1.3	13%	9%	12%	1.1

Overall, both women and minorities gained in television news in 1995. Women news directors moved up especially well in larger markets and larger stations, although they still are disproportionately found at independent stations and stations with the smallest staffs. Minority news directors edged up in some large markets and appear to be moving into news director roles in small markets and small departments. Radio was mixed, with women generally up slightly and minorities unchanged as news directors but down slightly as a percent of staff.

About the Survey:
The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 1995 among all 1,196 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 922 radio stations. Valid responses came from 679 television stations (56.8 percent) and 449 radio stations (48.7 percent).

television rose from 17 to 19 percent. The percentage of minority news directors edged up from 8 to 9 percent—and with several new minority news directors this year, the figure could rise again. Eighty-one percent of all television news departments have minority staff members.

As a percent of the full-time work force, women in television news continued to move up—now at 37 percent. Women news directors rose from 14 to 17 percent. Radio changed little for both women and minorities.

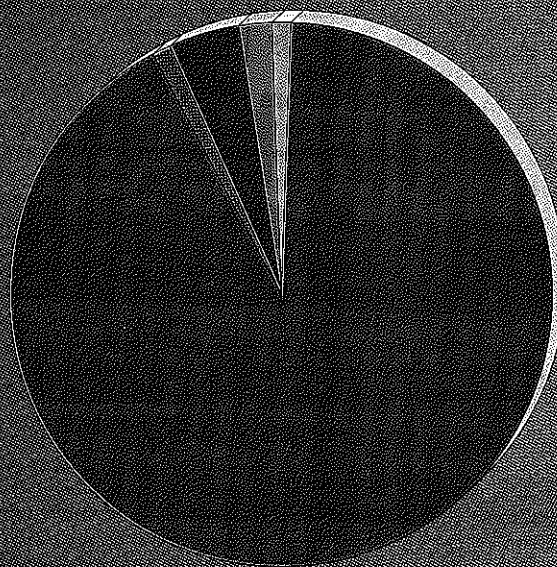
Keitha Mashaw places news managers for Don Fitzpatrick Associates in San Francisco, and she says placing women news directors is different. She finds that general managers take more care before hiring a woman and check things out more, including the newsroom reaction. It's harder for general man-

agers, she says, because they have to make more calls and call people they don't know. Mashaw sees big changes coming. "The next generation is going to be women. It's getting more and more lopsided (with more women producers). We're just seeing the trickle-up effect at long last."

The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey says that Mashaw is right on the money. This past year, for the first time, we collected data by race and gender for virtually all television newsroom positions. For women, the results are clear. While women make up 17 percent of TV news directors, they make up 41 percent of middle management (assistant news director, executive producer, managing editor), 43 percent of the assignment edi-

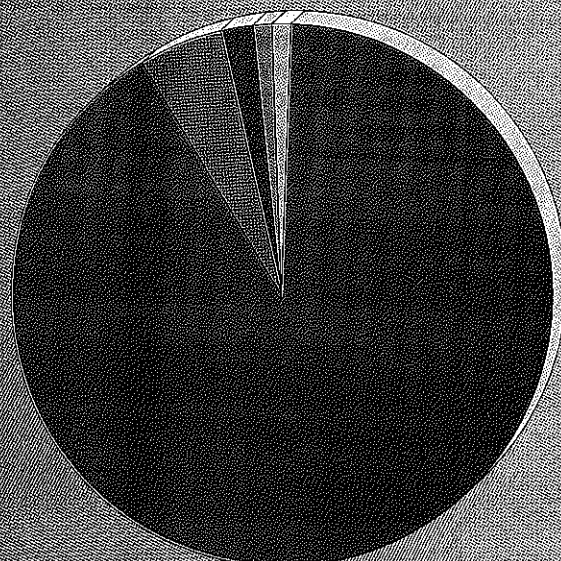
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BROADCAST NEWS DIRECTORS



TELEVISION

Caucasian	91%
African American	1%
Hispanic/Latino	4%
Asian American	2%
Native American	2%



RADIO

Caucasian	91%
African American	5%
Hispanic/Latino	2%
Asian American	1%
Native American	1%

Both television and radio showed slight increases in the number of minority news directors, but minority news directors in both radio and television were disproportionately likely to run news departments at ethnically oriented stations. Thirty-one percent of minority TV news directors were at stations geared toward a specific ethnic audience, as were 35 percent of minority radio news directors.

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tors and almost two-thirds (64 percent) of television producers. Women already make up a majority of news reporters and anchors.

Juli Buehler remembers back to 1984: "The general manager told me I needed more curls on the top of my head. And the bow ties! They were trying to make a 24-year-old youngster look like a 30-year-old bank teller, and I thought, 'There's got to be more to it than this.'" Buehler says she decided she "just wasn't anchor material, and the on-camera stuff was not as cool as everybody thought. But producing—that's where the power was, [the] influence and control." After eight years as executive producer, under four news directors, Buehler moved up to news director a year ago at WLUK-TV in Green Bay, WI.

"It never occurred to me that I couldn't accomplish something because I was a female or an African American," notes Paula Walker, vice president and news director at WNBC-TV in New York. "I never wondered whether I'd get to this point [in my career]," she says, "just when." Walker spent seven years in the

newspaper business before moving to TV in 1982. "I always felt that I could go as far as I was able to go—given the opportunity," says Walker. Her mentors were "overwhelmingly white males" at Belo Broadcasting and WNBC.

African Americans are far more likely to be photographers (14 percent), news reporters (13 percent) and news anchors (11 percent) than any other job.

The crystal ball is murkier when it comes to minorities in management. Percentages vary little by position for Hispanics, Asian Americans and Native Americans. Only African Americans show significant variation. African Americans are far more likely to be photographers (14 percent), news reporters (13 percent) and news anchors (11 percent) than any other

job. On the other hand, while only 1 percent of news directors are African American now, all other management levels are considerably higher—from 3 percent for executive producers to 5 percent for assistant news directors and managing editors to 7 percent for assignment editors and producers.

"I have never personally experienced a glass-ceiling type situation," says Will Wright, news director at WWOR-TV in Secaucus, NJ, "but I've chosen very carefully where to work." Wright, who is African American, says he thinks that for whatever shortcomings this business may have, "There's a lot more fairness and compassion than any other industry I would think to be in," and he's encouraged by a growing number of minorities in the middle management ranks.

When Rick Diaz entered the business in 1967, he was the only Hispanic at KRGV-TV in Weslaco, TX, and the station had one part-time woman reporter. "That was the way it was," Diaz says. But the most frustrating comment he remembers actually came from his own

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TV News Positions by Race

	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian American	Native American
All TV News	81%	9%	6%	3%	1%
News Director	91%	1%	4%	2%	2%
Assistant News Director	90%	5%	4%	1%	—
Executive Producer	93%	3%	2%	2%	—
Managing Editor	85%	5%	6%	2%	2%
Assignment Editor	84%	7%	6%	3%	—
Producer	86%	7%	4%	3%	—
News Anchor	81%	11%	4%	3%	1%
Sports Anchor	89%	5%	4%	2%	—
Weather	92%	5%	3%	—	—
News Reporter	76%	13%	7%	4%	—
Sports Reporter	90%	5%	2%	2%	1%
Photographer	76%	14%	7%	2%	1%

Overall, minorities grew from 17 percent of the television work force in 1994 to 19 percent in 1995. Minorities are most likely to be photographers, news reporters or anchors—and least likely to be executive producers, weathercasters or news directors. The most hopeful sign is an increasing number of minority middle and lower managers—especially among African Americans.

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Hispanic attorney. "He asked me, 'What are you doing in this business? That's the white man's job.' That hurt. [It] cut me," Diaz says. Today, Diaz is news director, and he says three-quarters of his staff are Hispanic, all anchor teams have at least one Hispanic and three of five producers are women. "We're a good representation of our population," notes Diaz.

Maria Barrs wants to be a news director again, "when it's the time and place for it." She gave it up two years ago to get more major-market experience—as managing editor at KDFW-TV in Dallas. An Asian American, Barrs grew up the eldest daughter of 12 kids. "That teaches you a lot," she says. "I never felt being a woman was a problem," Barrs says. "Other people have had a problem having a female boss, but I haven't had a problem [being one]. And it's not so unusual any more. Most

have adapted to it, and those who haven't will have to."

Caroline Wood, news director at KFBC-AM (news/talk) in Cheyenne, WY, says that being a woman has helped her in her two-year career. Radio stations like male-female combinations, says Wood, and most hosts are men. Wood spent a year in television before moving over to radio. "Radio is less shallow," she says, "and you don't have to worry about cosmetics in radio."

But the female side of the male-female combination frequently gets paid less money, according to Tracy Cassidy, news director and morning co-host at KRBB-FM (adult contemporary) in Wichita, KS. Cassidy started in the business at 15 in 1974—but left five years later. "I had a spouse who did not like what I did and the hours I worked." Three kids later, she returned to radio in 1989. "I loved radio so much that I decided either my husband

or radio would have to go—and it wouldn't be radio."

Nancy Popkin remembers when she became the first woman to produce a main TV news show in Denver. "It was 1988, and other women came up and said it was so wonderful that they hired a woman. I was shocked that something like that was such a big deal," she says.

Popkin, now assistant news director, has been the number two person at WRAL-TV in Raleigh, NC, for four and a half years (and two news directors). "I'm one of those people who's always had the idealistic view that you advanced based on your abilities and that it was a level playing field," says Popkin. "Obviously, it's not. But times have changed. I get a lot of calls for news director jobs in other markets. There's a big push to get more women news directors, mostly from big corporations that want strong, competent women who can move up in the company."

She hasn't moved yet, she says, because she loves her station's commitment to news and she likes her news director. And, she's pregnant. "A bad time to move," Popkin says. Is her pregnancy an issue in the newsroom? "People in the newsroom worry, 'Is she going to come back?' That's not an issue with a man." But it was a clumsy attempt at a compliment by a man in the newsroom that really got to Popkin. "He said that I have not done anything differently than a man, and he really admired that. That would never be an issue with a male manager."

Joan Barrett wonders about a similar situation. Barrett is news director at KPNX-TV in Phoenix, and her assistant news director and executive producer are also women. "Someone asked me about that—that the three of us were women," says Barrett. "But I just don't think the question was asked when it was three men." Barrett says she's been in the business—in one way or another—since the

ninth grade, and she loves it because it's a business where she feels she can make a difference. She thinks the company makes a big difference, too. "Gannett has a lot of women in news director and general manager positions," Barrett says. "I feel that I am a product of Gannett. I think they intensely believe in promoting from within."

Keitha Mashaw says there's a real demand for women managers, generally. "I'll hear, 'I want to see the best available candidates, but I'd like to see women because of the working environment,'" says Mashaw. "It's the interpersonal relationships; it's counterproductive for all the managers to be men. So many women are producing, you can't be blind to the vast numbers."

"The key," says WNBC-TV's Paula Walker, "is you have to find if your style and personality match the style and personality of the company. It's a culture, and if they're in synch, it's okay." Walker says she had a producer

Minorities in Broadcast and Print

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) doesn't track women in newspapers, and it doesn't track minorities the same as RTNDE/Ball State University, but some comparisons can be made. ASNE reports that minorities in daily newspaper newsrooms edged up to 11 percent in 1995—compared to 19 percent in television newsrooms. Fifty-six percent of daily newspapers employ minorities—compared to 81 percent for television news. ASNE reports that 8.4 percent of "supervisors" are minorities—compared to 9.3 percent of the top four positions in television news.

who was thinking about leaving to take care of a child at home. "I put my 20-year-old daughter on the phone to talk to her," Walker says. "My daughter told the producer it wasn't a problem for her. I also have a 12-year-old niece at home, and it's fine." Walker says the kids know they can always get through if it's important, and the secretaries know to get her or take care of the problem so that she doesn't have to worry.

Walker says the key to balancing personal and professional lives is having the support to do it. "A few years ago, we had a huge rainstorm and the subways shut down," Walker says. She was assistant news director, operating as acting news director. "The GM came in and asked me how things were going. I said fine, but the kids were stuck at school, and I can't get them. He sent a car to pick them up." Walker says she tries to be that understanding and conscious of people's personal needs.

Faye DeHoff is executive producer and acting news director at KOLD-TV in Tucson, AZ. She has 21 years in the business. "If you choose to be in this business, you make certain decisions: You don't work a 9-to-5 job, you don't have holidays. You have to have people committed to that, [who] have chosen that," she says. "You know what the demands are. It means no personal life. I have no life. I have suffered quite a bit by being in this business, but I've chosen to be here;

TV News Positions by Gender

	Men	Women
All TV News	62%	38%
News Director	83%	17%
Assistant News Director	67%	33%
Executive Producer	52%	48%
Managing Editor	61%	39%
Assignment Editor	57%	43%
News Producer	36%	64%
News Anchor	46%	54%
Sports Anchor	97%	3%
Weathercaster	81%	19%
News Reporter	49%	51%
Sports Reporter	93%	7%
Photographer	90%	10%
All Full Time	63%	37%
All Part Time	56%	44%

Women have been steadily increasing in TV news—to 37 percent of full-time employees. While women are only 17 percent of the news directors, they're 41 percent of middle managers and almost two-thirds of all producers. Women are already a majority of news anchors and reporters.

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While women make up 17 percent of TV news directors, they make up 41 percent of middle management (assistant news director, executive producer, managing editor), 43 percent of the assignment editors and almost two-thirds (64 percent) of television producers.

that's what I do. It's a tough, stressful business, and you need to make the sacrifice. I know that sounds insensitive, but that's the bottom line." DeHoff says she loves the business and the people she works with, but it hasn't been easy. "When I took over

here as acting news director, a radio talk show host started blasting me, saying women have no business doing this job, they don't have the stamina, hormones, whatever."

Juli Buehler at WLUK-TV thinks younger managers create a different type

of atmosphere. "They're more open to support and congratulate people. It helps people listen." She says station management understands that there's a world outside news. "Sure, we work 12 hours a day, that's the business. But they understand there are times when you have obligations. There's a life outside." Buehler says she and her husband have taken turns on who got the job and who followed.

"I see husbands with wives who don't work," says Nancy Popkin at WRAL-TV, "[who] come home and say, 'Honey, we're moving to Toledo.' As a woman with a husband who works, I can't do that. We've talked about it. Sometimes when he's ready to go, I'm happy; sometimes the reverse." Popkin notes that all her family's moves have been because of her jobs. "We're an extremely family-sensitive company, and it's just as likely for a male photographer to call in to take a sick day because a kid is sick. But TV news 'is not conducive to getting home at 5 o'clock or getting a kid out of day care on time.'"

Tracy Cassidy says the "personal

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toll can be high—limited family time, exhaustion, getting up at three in the morning.” She’s now remarried, and she says she takes her kids along when she can, and as they’ve gotten older (three, ages 10 through 14), having a mom on the radio has become a bigger deal. “Unless I divulge some personal information. Then they get mad it me, but it’s short-lived.” What bothers Cassidy is leading a double life. “I still have to balance the check-book, put the food away in the cabinets, put the socks in the drawer,” she says. “When the kids are sick at school, I get the call. When they need to go to the doctor or dentist, I have to do it. I wish we were making more progress in this area.”

Ingrid Johansen, news director at WTQV-TV in Lexington, KY, has worked at five stations in her eight and a half years in the business. She says she’s seen very few women in high management positions. Johansen says she—and others—question how family-sensitive the business is. Johansen says she has no kids yet. “You can fit a marriage in pretty easily,” says Johansen. “It’s the kids I’m not sure about.”

Maria Barrs at KDFW-TV thinks the businesses is getting more family-

friendly, and she thinks that has to do with the fact that there are more women managers in the business. “The influence of women has altered somewhat the priorities.” Barrs added “Almost 12 years ago I was pregnant with my first baby, and it was not a supportive environment. I thought I had something to prove, and probably worked way too hard to prove that it was not a problem. I got sick and ended up in worse shape. Early in my career, I didn’t have the gumption to speak up [when confronted with some form of prejudice]. I didn’t feel secure enough to speak up. I think about that, and it bothers me.”

Steve Majors has never been shy about speaking up. He’s biracial (his mother is African American) and has light skin. People don’t always know he’s a minority and “sometimes people say things in my presence. “Every once in a while, a joke [involving race is told], and it’s always someone you least expect, and they lose a lot of standing in my eyes. Most of the time, I’ll confront them, not saying that I’m African American, just saying that it’s offensive.”

Rick Diaz, at KRGV-TV, says things have gotten a lot better, “but I

talk to Hispanics [around the country] and some tell me they just get Hispanic assignments but not others. I tell them to keep hanging in there and don’t wait to be asked. Keep bringing up story ideas, keep punching. You can’t wait for it to come to you, you’ve got to go after it.”

“Never think that you have arrived,” Majors warns, “because this business is about change. There are always new experiences and new opportunities. People who think they’ve arrived are dead.” ■

Bob Papper is associate professor of telecommunications at Ball State University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. Andrew Sharma, Ph.D., and Michael Gerhard, Ph.D., are both assistant professors of telecommunications at Ball State University with extensive industry and research experience. This research was supported by the Department of Telecommunications at Ball State University and the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation.

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