



## BlackEconomics.org

### “*TNYT* and *TWP*: Persistent Enemies of Black Americans”

If former President Donald J. Trump can be impeached based on his use of the media to promulgate an insurrection, which was harmful to the political, social, and economic well-being of the nation, then why cannot Black Americans advance a legal protest to halt the media’s promulgation of adverse stereotypical images of Black Americans, which sabotage our efforts to function effectively politically, socially, and economically in America and in the world?

This **BlackEconomics.org** Report Brief builds on a similar February 2019 [report](#) that assesses adverse stereotypical images of Black Americans in *The New York Times* (*TNYT*) and *The Washington Post* (*TWP*) newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

Both newspapers play an incredibly important role in conveying news and other information to the nation and the world. When these newspapers publish harmful adverse stereotypical images of Black Americans, these images lodge in readers’ psyche and can ultimately stimulate the formation and/or reinforcement of prejudices and discriminatory behavior against Black Americans. This chain of events can be particularly pernicious economically. Who wants to transact with a pariah?

Readers are directed to the aforementioned 2019 report, which discusses the methods and parameters that are common to both the 2019 and the 2021 studies of adverse stereotypical images of Black Americans in *TNYT* and *TWP*.

	<i>TNYT</i>		<i>TWP</i>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total number of Black American images	363	100.0%	270	100.0%
Not adverse stereotypical/Neutral images	172	47.4%	127	47.0%
<b>Adverse stereotypical images</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>53.0%</b>
Male images	123	64.4%	103	72.0%
Female images	40	20.9%	33	23.1%
Both genders	28	14.7%	7	4.9%

Table 1 highlights key results from the current study.<sup>2</sup> It shows that of the 363 and 270 images of Black Americans that were presented on the front pages of the *TNYT* and *TWP*,

respectively, during the month of January 2021 on the Internet, 191 (52.6%) and 143 (53.0%) were adverse stereotypical. Of the adverse stereotypical images that were presented, 123 (64.4%) and

<sup>1</sup> Readers are advised to read this Report Brief in concert with the 2019 report.

<sup>2</sup> The dataset that was developed during the study is available upon request from **BlackEconomics.org**.

103 (72.0%) were of Black males; 40 (20.9%) and 33 (23.1%) were of Black females; and 28 (14.7%) and 7 (4.9%) featured both Black males and females.

Table 2 compares results from the 2021 and the 2019 studies. Notably, there is little-to-no change in the proportion of images of Black Americans that were assessed to be adverse stereotypical. Importantly, the proportion of such

	<i>TNYT</i> (Percentages)		<i>TWP</i> (Percentages)	
	2021	2019	2021	2019
Total number of Black American images	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Not adverse stereotypical/Neutral images	47.4%	47.8%	47.0%	50.0%
<b>Adverse stereotypical images</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>53.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
Male images	64.4%	56.5%	72.0%	52.1%
Female images	20.9%	26.2%	23.1%	33.3%
Both genders	14.7%	17.3%	4.9%	14.6%

adverse stereotypical images that were associated with Black males increases significantly in the 2021 study for both newspapers. The latter outcome is offset by a reduction in the proportion of adverse stereotypical images of Black females and of both genders. Accordingly, Black Americans should be cognizant of this increasing trend to portray Black males as inimical to society and to portray Black females more favorably. On a combined basis, these outcomes serve to drive a wedge between Black males and females, which is emblematic of a divide-and-conquer scheme.

As a statistical twist on the 2019 study, binary data were collected on the skin color (0=light skin; 1=brown/dark skin) of Black Americans featured in the newspapers during the final 17 days of the January 2021 study.<sup>3</sup> For those 17 days, *TNYT* and the *TWP*, respectively, produced the following outcomes for Black American images:

- Total number of Black American images: 208 and 165.
- Total number of dark-skinned Black Americans: 173 (83.2%) and 136 (82.4%).
- Total number of adverse and stereotypical images: 111 (53.4%) and 89 (53.9%).
- Total number of adverse and stereotypical images that were light-skinned: 9 (8.1%) and 11 (12.4%).

Based on these statistics, it is clear that *TNYT* and *TWP* present a preponderance of dark-skinned Black American images. Also, when Black American images are adverse stereotypical in nature, they are highly likely to feature dark-skinned Black Americans.<sup>4</sup>

These results and their adverse economic implications, in particular, should motivate Black Americans to continue exploring avenues for reducing the incidence and prevalence of adverse stereotypical images in the media—including newspapers such as *TNYT* and *TWP*.

Understandably, this is a tall order given free speech and free press provisions in the US Constitution. Nevertheless, all effective options should be leveraged to eradicate this adverse stereotypical image plague on Black America’s efforts to achieve equality with mankind on all fronts—nationally and internationally.

<sup>3</sup> Skin color statistics were collected during January 15-31, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> This dark skin bias might have been even more pronounced had January not included the inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, who appeared numerous times in the newspapers during January 2021.

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