ARTICLE

How Blacks Use Consumption to Shape their Collective Identity
Evidence from marketing specialists

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Abstract. This article develops a 'social identity' perspective to the study of consumption. It builds on Richard Jenkins' distinction between internal and external definitions of collective identity and explores the interplay of these definitions in the realm of consumption. Evidence is collected from interviews with marketing professionals who specialize in the African-American market segment to show that this theoretical approach complements and improves on existing approaches. Marketing professionals' interpretations of the black consumer's distinctiveness are used to map the twin processes of internal and external definitions of collective identity for African-Americans. The interviews suggest that marketing professionals (1) actively shape the meanings of the category of 'the black consumer' for the public at large; (2) promote powerful normative models of collective identity that equate social membership with conspicuous consumption; (3) believe that African-Americans use consumption to defy racism and share collective identities most valued in American society (e.g. middle-class membership); and (4) simultaneously enact a positive vision of their cultural distinctiveness.

Key words
advertising ● African-Americans ● consumption ● cultural boundaries and distinction
● race ● social identity

THIS EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS EXAMINES how a low-status group, black Americans, use consumption to express and transform their collective

identity and acquire social membership, i.e. to signify and claim that they are full and equal members in their society. More broadly, we study the twin processes by which this group uses consumption to affirm for themselves their full citizenship and have others recognize them as such (what the literature on collective identity calls 'group identification' and 'social categorization'). We document these processes by drawing on a small number of interviews conducted with black marketing experts specializing in the African–American market who provide us with distinctive readings of the meaning of consumption for blacks. We interviewed marketing specialists in black advertising agencies in New York and Chicago, where most of the agencies in this organizational niche are located.[1] These experts are viewed here as individual black consumers and as members of an occupational group organized around increasing the place of consumption in individual social identities.

In the first section of the article, we briefly sketch a 'social identity' perspective to the study of black consumption that complements and improves on available approaches. We discuss the place of group identification and social categorization in the creation of collective identity. We argue that for blacks the formation of collective identity is centered in part around defining their place in US society, i.e. finding various ways to demonstrate their social membership. The second part turns to evidence from seven marketing specialists. Our interviews suggest that marketing specialists: (1) shape the meanings of 'the black consumer' for the public at large and the advertising industry in particular; (2) promote normative models of collective identity for blacks that equate social membership with consumption; (3) believe blacks use consumption to be recognized as sharing the collective identities most valued in American society (middle-class membership in particular); and (4) transform the meaning attributed to the category 'black,' enact a positive vision of their distinct cultural identity (e.g. as fashionable or proud black people), and affirm their distinctiveness for themselves and others. We also argue that for most of these marketing specialists, mainstream society is equated with 'elite society', perhaps because the acquisition of expensive goods is taken to 'objectify' social membership by making it undeniable: these experts view 'buying power' as a true mark of personal worth and racial equality, and as a powerful rebuttal to racism. Hence, marketing specialists provide to most blacks a rather narrow vision of social membership.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND THE STUDY OF CONSUMPTION
In order to bring new insights into the consumption literature, it is useful to turn to recent writings on social identity offered by Richard Jenkins

(1996). This author describes collective social identity as constituted in a dialectical interplay of processes of internal and external definitions. On the one hand, individuals must be able to differentiate themselves from others by drawing on criteria of commonality and a sense of shared belonging within their subgroup. On the other hand, this internal identification process must be recognized by outsiders for an objectified collective identity to emerge. Jenkins draws an analytical distinction between groups and categories, i.e. 'a collectivity which identifies and defines itself (a group *for* itself) and a collectivity which is identified and defined by others (a category *in* itself)' (p. 23, original emphasis). He suggests that the internal–external dialectic can be mapped onto the interplay of processes of *group identification* and *social categorization*.[2]

The dynamic interplay of group identification and categorization can be investigated in a number of social contexts ranging from routine public interaction to official classification schemes (e.g. census categories, institutionalized marketing clusters). We explore this dynamic in the realm of consumption, a social activity where it is particularly salient. In doing so, we propose a 'social identity' approach to consumption which centers on the role played by consumption in internal and external definitions of collective identity. More specifically, we examine a range of social process including: (1) how cultural producers (here specifically, marketing specialists) identify and define categories of consumers, which categories become objectified and shape the cultural tools available for the formation of collective identities; (2) how such cultural producers offer cues and cultural models to people about ways to achieve full social membership; (3) how individuals use consumption to signal aspiration to membership in symbolic communities (as citizens, middle-class people, etc.); and (4) how consumers perform, affirm, and transform the social meaning attributed to specific collective categories (here, what is common to blacks, but also eventually, to women and other groups). The first two points address the social categorization process in the making, i.e. the production of external definitions, while the latter two points address the role of consumption in the group identification process, i.e. the production of internal definitions of collective identity.

Consumption is a particularly felicitous point of departure for examining the symbolic aspects of collective identity beyond our concern for the dynamic between internal and external processes. Indeed, its symbolic efficacy in 'identity work' (Snow and Anderson, 1987) does not require that individuals be connected through networks and engage in face-to-face contact: it can operate either at the level of bounded subcultures, or at the

level of widely shared cultural structures, of 'hidden codes that make individuals and groups predictable and dependable social actors' (Melucci, 1996: 8) and that exist beyond the enactment of specific interpersonal typifications or ties. Consumption thus constitutes a useful lens for understanding how membership is acquired in symbolic communities (see also Lamont, 2000a).

Elsewhere we review the literature on black consumption in the USA to show how it can be improved by focusing on processes of internal and external identification (Molnár and Lamont, forthcoming). We cannot revisit this discussion here due to space limitation. Suffice to note that our reading of available research on black consumption practices suggests that the latter is understood (a) as a source of alienation; (b) a means for expressing resistance to dominant society; and (c) a site for discrimination. We argue that the 'alienationist' perspective downplays the subjective meaning that consumers attach to their consumption practices. It predefines consumption as repressive while neglecting its role as a site for identity formation and in the transformation of the meaning attributed to blackness as a category. In contrast, the 'resistance' approach overemphasizes consumers' ability to shape the meaning of consumption against dominant consumption narratives produced by advertising. Simultaneously, it predefines the meaning of consumption as individual or collective resistance, and cannot account for instances where individuals use consumption to gain social membership. Finally, the 'discrimination' perspective offers a uni-dimensional view of the cultural impact of the marketing industry by downplaying or ignoring recent efforts of black and white firms to combat racial discrimination and transform racial stereotypes.

By proposing a 'social identity' perspective which focuses on the use of consumption in internal and external identification processes, we integrate these neglected, yet crucial, aspects of black consumption. Namely, we pay careful attention to the subjective meaning individuals attribute to their consumption practices, avoid predefining subjective meaning as counter-hegemonic, and examine the positive role played by corporations in shaping the collective identity of blacks. We also consider subjective understandings of consumption in relation to the dominant social narratives about consumption that are produced by marketing professionals and influence the external definitions (or social categorization) of black consumers. Hence, the 'social identity' perspective is a substantial addition to the three dominant perspectives by (1) focusing simultaneously on the congruence and interaction between individuals' self-understanding as consumers and the production of external definitions by marketers and society at large; and (2)

treating as complementary different aspects of black consumption that are either ignored by the available literature or described independently of, or in opposition to, one another.

MARKETING SPECIALISTS INTERPRET THE PROFILE OF THE BLACK CONSUMER

Ethnic or multicultural marketing became the marketing mantra of the 1980s in the USA. This new marketing paradigm views the market as divided into segments and aims at gathering information regarding the customs, traditions, rituals, relationships and identities of these segments of potential consumers. The three predominant segments are 'blacks', 'Hispanics', and the 'general market'. The black segment is pursued by top advertising agencies and by (often black-owned) black advertising agencies, which have been around since the 1960s. These black agencies have received considerable attention in the recent wake of 'ethnoconsumerism' (Venkatesh, 1995) as they engaged in a fierce struggle with top advertising agencies to control the black market (see Ayres-Williams, 1998; Lloyd and Hayes, 1995). Black as well as general market agencies have increasingly come to define black consumers as fundamentally distinct, and contribute to producing and reinforcing this distinctiveness.

The shift to segmented ethnic marketing has entailed a broadening of the technical tools used by marketing specialists, including the incorporation of interpretive approaches such as ethnographies and personal interviews to better capture ethnic cultural worlds. These new developments make specialists in black marketing a particularly suitable source of information on black consumers. Again, interviews with members of this professional group provide us with interpretations of the distinctiveness of black consumers both from the perspective of their expert knowledge of black consumption, and from that of their own personal experience as black consumers.

We structure our analytical description by tracing processes of external and internal identification in order to show how the social identity perspective sheds light on dimensions of black consumption that are neglected and/or not integrated by other perspectives. First, we focus on external categorization and describe how marketing specialists believe (1) blacks use consumption to transform objectified definitions of the category 'black' by providing evidence that they share the collective identities most valued in American society; and (2) corporations and marketing specialists themselves contribute to transforming the meaning attributed to the category 'the black consumer'. Second, we turn to internal identifications and show that

marketing specialists underscore how blacks use consumption to express their commonness and enact the most positive aspects of their collective self-identity.

How consumption shapes social categorization: achieving membership and changing the meaning of blackness

The marketing specialists we interviewed discussed at length the centrality of consumption as a way for blacks to affirm and gain recognition of their full membership in US society. This is framed by them both as an empirical observation, and implicitly as a central feature of the normative model of social membership they diffuse to black consumers. Marketing specialists believe that blacks use consumption to signify and acquire equality, respect, acceptance and status. Interviewees also consistently prioritize a market-driven notion of equality that equates social membership with high socioeconomic status.

Marketers interpret the buying habits of blacks as strongly guided by a desire to be recognized as equal and full participating members of society and to disprove the stereotype of blacks as belonging to an underclass deprived of buying power. This desire is manifested in distinct consumption patterns: in comparison to whites, blacks spend disproportionately more on items that they view as affirming their equal standing. Marketers cite familiar data that lower- and higher-income blacks alike purchase more premium brands and luxury products than whites. As the chairman and chief executive officer of one of the main national black marketing firms put it: 'We have more money, or disposable income, for attainable status symbols. It is how we acquire the American dream' (also Fisher, 1996: 15). A strategic marketing specialist from Chicago also emphasized this. According to her, black people consume voraciously because they want to be viewed as good and worthy:

> Whites will wear jeans, but have wallpaper and carpet at home. They do not have to worry about who they are and what they look like when they go out there. When blacks walk out the door they are affected by this . . . Whites gain more respect through purchases. Blacks with Rolexes are stereotyped as engaging in conspicuous consumption or showing off, instead of gaining prestige by it. They buy their way in, but money does not trump blackness.

For this respondent, however, money still remains a 'passport to acceptance':

> Acceptance is the first hurdle that blacks have to overcome. The problem is not 'not having the ability' but 'being accepted for having the ability'. Money is a universal door opener.

Blacks carry a stigmatized social identity on their body. This is why it is particularly important to them to display visible signals of high status (e.g. high-quality clothes), in order to counteract racism, to conspicuously distance themselves from the 'ghetto black' stereotype, and, as one respondent put it, to disconfirm the view that blacks are 'uninteresting', i.e. unlikely to bring benefits through networking. The need to signal worthiness through conspicuous consumption is potentially as powerful as the all-pervasive experience of racism that blacks face on a daily basis. Indeed, we were told that every time blacks interact with whites, they feel the need to refute racist beliefs. In the view of most of our respondents, this is accomplished by driving the best car, drinking the best scotch (especially in public settings), and being impeccably groomed. In contrast to other stigmatized groups (e.g. gays or, in earlier eras, the Jews or the Irish), gaining membership involves not only offering warranties that one personally belongs; it also involves transforming the meaning of the visible stigma, or of the category as a whole. Hence, for blacks, collective status is at stake, whereas for upwardly mobile whites, mobility is framed in more individualistic terms. To put it differently, for blacks as compared to whites, gaining membership through consumption constitutes a collective act.

In this context, it is interesting to note that data on consumption behavior confirms that 'dressing up' or 'getting clean' is more crucial to blacks than to whites. Indeed, black women spend 41 percent more on personal-care services than white women. Also, on average, black households spend four times as much on boys' suits and sports coats as their white counterparts. They also spend 46 percent more than white households on girls' skirts, 67 percent more on girls' accessories and 86 percent more on boys' footwear (*Sales and Marketing Management*, 1991; Schmeltzer, 1998). Moreover, despite their lower median household income and lower household expenditures in a lot of product categories, black households outperform white households in pouring money into status consumption.[3] They save 4 percent of what they earn, but are twice as likely as whites, when they purchase a car, to opt for an expensive foreign model such as an Audi, BMW or Mercedes (Reid, 1995). They are also significantly more likely than whites to shop at department and speciality stores (it is the case for 41% of blacks as compared to 32% of whites).

The normative model of social membership adopted and implicitly

promoted by respondents equates it narrowly with consumption and makes no reference to other bases of commonality such as common humanity, cosmic destiny, physiology, culture, territoriality, education, religion, nationality or citizenship (see Lamont, 2000b). For example, a black top executive working for one of the largest black advertising agencies in the USA believes that consumption is a more important means of signaling and acquiring status for blacks than education or membership in the black church. In his view, branded consumer goods, often referred to as 'portable status symbols', are obtained more easily than employment, housing or membership in certain groups and organizations. Also, when asked what images of blacks they try to convey, he and other marketing specialists often described black people shopping at Saks Fifth Avenue and engaging in consumption patterns that are characteristic not of the average American, but of the top 5 to 10 percent of the American population, black or white. Although some referred to marketing campaigns aimed at K-mart consumers, implicitly or explicitly, all stressed that consuming luxury items, and not ordinary items ('Rémy Martin, not Coors beer' as one of them puts it), provides social membership.

These findings raise concerns about the unintended consequences of these marketing messages: marketers offer to most blacks the contradictory idea that they cannot afford the social membership for which they strive. Moreover, when asked whether they have any reservations about targeting luxury goods to inner city poor blacks who cannot afford them, one interviewee replied that marketers should not judge consumers' decisions, blacks' or whites': in line with neo-classical economics, he believes it is the role and privilege of sovereign consumers to make choices after proper deliberation.[4] Therefore, 'some people may buy a Hilfiger coat, but buy only this one coat for two years and wear it every day.'

Marketing specialists believe that they also play a progressive social role, which consists largely of diffusing to clients and to the world at large a more positive image of blacks and a more accurate view of the diversity of the black population, particularly in terms of its purchasing power – what one called demonstrating 'positive realism'. By doing so, they explicitly shape meanings predominantly associated with blackness and transform the external identification of blacks. This is achieved by, for instance, encouraging corporations to be respectful to blacks, because 'blacks mostly want to consume products that treat them right'.[5] It also means publicizing the support of corporations for African–Americans (e.g. corporate sponsoring of African–American artistic or athletic events) and fighting the prejudices of conservative whites employed by marketing agencies that target the

general market, publicizing basic facts concerning the socioeconomic diversity and purchasing power of the black population, and *ipso facto* contradicting the racist assumption that most blacks fit the underclass stereotype.

The ability of marketing specialists to diffuse a definition of social membership as acquired through consumption and to reframe the meaning of 'the black consumer' (especially concerning class diversity among African–Americans) should not be underestimated: billions of dollars are invested to diffuse this message. Hence, it is extremely likely to influence the formation of collective identity of African–Americans, both for themselves and for the public at large.

Consumption and group identification: what 'black' means to 'blacks'

We now turn to marketers' descriptions of the meanings that blacks give to consumption, which we consider from the perspective of its impact on how blacks define themselves as a group (i.e. on internal identification processes). These descriptions have to do with how blacks define themselves to themselves through consumption, by using commodities to express a self-identity they all value as blacks. Consumption is described here as a means to perform and affirm collective distinctiveness (including racial pride), primarily for oneself. It is also a means to treat oneself well while rebutting stereotypes.

In the eyes of our interviewees, their distinctive expertise as black marketing specialists resides in their ability to tap the cultural identity and needs of blacks (i.e. going beyond 'just putting black people in ads'). They believe that this is a requirement for a successful marketing campaign aimed at blacks, and that black agencies have an advantage over their white counterparts in reaching this goal: not only do they have better insight into, and 'natural affinity' with, that black culture, but they also have more personal experience and invest more energy into understanding what makes blacks resonate with an ad or identify with a specific product. In particular, black marketers spend considerable time trying to understand how blacks differ, and believe they differ, from whites and what makes blacks relate to one another – what defines their collective identity. Whereas general market agencies often tend to underplay the black/white distinctiveness, black marketing agencies capitalize on it by using what they believe to be authentically black frames of reference. Their work also consists of making blacks believe that consuming is the most adequate way of expressing cultural distinctiveness and gaining acceptance to mainstream society simultaneously by displaying formidable purchasing power.

Marketers discuss the intrinsic rewards blacks attach to consumption, which has implications for developing a positive collective identity as blacks. They affirm that self-expression is a source of personal pride for all human beings, and consumption is a means to achieving this for whites and blacks alike. For instance, a female executive explains:

> Consumption brings in the pride: 'I want to look good. I want to be seen. Make it green or yellow', i.e. visible . . . Blacks try to put on the dog, they like to 'get clean'. It makes them feel better . . . and they do it for themselves.

However, according to some respondents, for blacks this has both an individual and a collective dimension, to the extent that they use consumption to signify who they are collectively as blacks. In particular, an interviewee indicated that blacks use fashion differently from whites, as it is a dimension of black expressive culture that is superior to 'bland, low-key and not particularly stylish' white culture. Moreover, several marketers view blacks as taste-makers and trendsetters in mainstream society, not only in fashion but also in urban lifestyles and music.

Other interviewees underline the importance of consumption in the positive internal identification of blacks by pointing to the use of distinctively black practices to affirm cultural commonness and belonging. Paraphrasing James Brown, one interviewee in particular explains that African–Americans use consumption to 'say it out loud that I am black and proud':

> Now black pride is the recognition of the motherland, Africa. It becomes a personal statement about what 'black' and 'African–American' mean to you. This often leads to purchasing black artifacts to affirm who you are even if you live in [white upper-middle class] Westport, Conn.

Another example of this collective affirmation by means of distinctively black practices is adopting a hairstyle that affirms one's racial pride (e.g. being able to 'work for IBM without straightening my hair'). As one respondent puts it, a growing number of African–Americans use consumption to express that 'I can get in and out of corporate America, but I remain this proud black person.'

Respondents also discuss the importance of consumption in signaling blacks' sense of a good life and general wellbeing, and in simultaneously affirming one's worth and status for oneself in the face of pervasive discrimination – which we also consider as part of the internal racial identification

process. In the eyes of a respondent who defines herself as 'very material-ist', a top-brand car communicates that:

> . . . you can afford it and you are worth it, i.e. you are worth the best. When your history tells you that you are less than, and only worthy of the worst, it feels terrific to be able to say 'I don't care what you might think, I know I am worth it.' It feels very good. When you don't see yourself represented with relevance and respect, if you can get it for yourself, it's important.

She suggests that the ability to consume is integral to affirming her self-worth and racial (group) identity simultaneously. It helps counterbalance negative external categorization: consuming rebuts racism not only for others, but also to oneself, by providing material support to one's self-worth – positing of course that self-worth is correlated with buying power.

That consumption is used to facilitate the expression of a positive racial identity is also demonstrated by the insistence of marketing executives that blacks consume for their own satisfaction above all, as opposed to 'pleasing whites'. This is illustrated by the president of one of the advertising agencies who described the situation thus:

> We are not trying to impress white people any more. We are not begging for acceptance. We just consume what we like. The attitude is, 'I don't care if you don't like me. But through consuming I want to let you know that "I know". This is who I am. I want to be perceived as being "in the know".'

This interviewee is implicitly pointing to the role of consumption in leading one to acquire a self-image as being 'on the ball', i.e. as someone who knows how the (status) game is played and therefore as someone who needs to be contended with. A positive group identity is closely linked with consumption, social membership and the demonstration of purchasing power. In this context, the expression of cultural distinctiveness and racial identity is often framed primarily in terms of tastes slightly different from those of whites or in the use of different brands but of equal status within a product category (Cadillac vs Mercedes, Hilfiger vs Calvin Klein, Kool Aid vs Coke, etc.). Or else, it simply means using the same goods differ-ently. As one senior marketing executive who exclusively shops for clothes at Brooks Brothers puts it 'I walk out of there and I have my own style, my own way of putting things together. I really don't look like the other white guy who shops there.' For these marketing specialists, their shared identity as blacks is largely defined and performed in the sphere of the market,

through commodities, perhaps in lieu of the affirmation of a cultural distinctiveness in aesthetic/expressive culture, through a shared religious culture, a shared history, or common patterns of social interaction. More interviews are needed before assessing how these various conceptions of racial commonness are articulated. Our data do suggest that marketing specialists conceptualize their own racial belonging as well as social membership through consumption, just as they do for African–Americans in general.

CONCLUSION

Unlike some of the available approaches, the social identity perspective advanced here analyzes how black marketing executives transform the images of blacks that are available to blacks and to US society at large. It also stresses the power of dominant social narratives produced by marketing executives and focuses on how blacks use consumption to gain social membership. Moreover, it gives due emphasis to the subjective understanding of black consumption practices without prejudging the consumer's ability to transform the meaning of consumer goods. It also refines the analysis of the social categorization process by showing that the 'categorizing work' of marketers can have a positive impact in transforming the meaning of the category of 'blackness' (away from the underclass stereotype) and improve the symbolic status of blacks. Thereby, it offers a more balanced and integrated reading of social mechanisms that underlie blacks' use of consumption in defining their place in contemporary US society.

The interviews suggest that consumption is uniquely important for blacks in gaining social membership. Their experience with racism makes the issue of membership particularly salient, and consuming is a democratically available way of affirming insertion in mainstream society. This is facilitated by the prevalence of a market-driven notion of equality, and an equation of social membership with purchasing power, found in US society at large, and promoted by marketing specialists in particular, both for consumers and for themselves. Marketing specialists play a central role in producing some of the dominant narratives associated with the category 'black'. In their view, by providing images of blacks as valuable consumers, they contribute to improving the collective social standing of blacks in the mainstream status hierarchy and counterbalance negative stereotypes of blacks as a marginal, low-status and criminal element of US society. Yet, we noted that equating social membership with buying power makes it largely unreachable for a large number of whites and blacks alike.

At the level of the group identification process, our interviewees underscore the importance of consumption for the expression of collective

cultural distinctiveness by displaying commonness, i.e. tastes that are characteristically black. Hence, consumption plays a central role in internal identification processes as well as in social categorization, in how a collectivity defines itself for itself through commonalties and a sense of shared belonging, and how outsiders recognize it as distinct. At the same time, the interviews also suggest that marketers promote the equation of social membership with conspicuous consumption. Consumption thus becomes a simple and effective way of expressing both black cultural distinctiveness and membership in mainstream society by virtue of demonstrating equal purchasing power with whites. And through the dynamic interaction of internal and external definitions of social identity we witness the construction of the 'black consumer' and the transformation of the meaning of 'blackness'. Of course, at this point our study of the group identification dimension suffers from a clear middle-class bias. Our interviewees are members of the upper middle-class and are representatives of a profession that devotes all its energies to increasing the role of consumption in social life. Therefore the broadening of our group of interviewees should be the logical next step for our project. The incorporation of a wide range of black and white consumers that vary across class, gender, age and occupation will clearly shed new light on the interaction of internal and external definitions of collective identity. Thereby we also hope to sharpen the comparative focus of our analysis to (1) reveal how varying conceptions of social membership correspond to the views of marketing specialists and middle-class consumers; (2) explore more closely black and white differences; (3) extend the analysis to the study of the construction of race specific tastes; and (4) explore whether other stigmatized groups (e.g. women or gays) understand consumption as an important tool for gaining membership.

Notes

1. Our interviewees are all black and work at agencies that map the full spectrum of the field ranging from moderate Afrocentric to mainstream oriented marketers. Drawing on a list of the top national firms specializing in marketing to the black population, we sent letters to the chief executives of these firms asking for their collaboration. The letters were followed by phone conversations where we provided more information on our objectives and set up a face-to-face or phone interview with a marketing specialist employed by this firm. Of the nine firms we contacted, all but two were willing to collaborate. Respondents included senior executives of large firms as well as self-employed strategic planners. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 2 hours.

2. A group is rooted in processes of internal definitions, while a category is externally defined. Mann (1983) defines 'category' as follows:

A class whose nature and composition is decided by the person who defines the category; for example, persons earning wages in a certain range may be counted as a category for income tax purposes. A category is therefore to be contrasted with a group, defined by the nature of the relations between the members. (p. 83)

3. The median money income of households in 1996 was US$37,161 for whites and US$23,482 for blacks (United States Bureau of Census of the Population, l996: 468, Table 739).
4. Inner-city markets are aggressively pursued by marketing agencies. As *Chisholm-Mingo Matters* (1998) suggests, inner-city residents strongly prefer brand products and are willing to pay more for them.
5. Sixty-one percent of blacks decide where to shop on the basis of whether they are 'treated the same as other people' (Reynolds, 1993: 43).

Acknowledgements

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