A SOCIAL IDENTITY ANALYSIS OF RACIAL MINORITY PROFESSIONALS
WORKING IN THE ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS INDUSTRIES

Maria Martinez
Dr. Cynthia Frisby, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine how racial minority professionals in the advertising and public relations industries construct their racial identities through the use of semi-structured interviews. Social identity theory serves as the theoretical framework for the study. The research questions include: How do racial minorities choose advertising and public relations as careers, and what are the factors that influence that choice?, Where do racial minorities learn to negotiate their identities, and do these tactics affect their identity formation in the advertising and public relations workplaces?, How do racial minority professionals construct and display their identities as racial minorities in the advertising and public relations industries? and more. This research seeks to fill a gap in existing literature about the racial identity formation of racial minority professionals in the advertising and public relations industries. This research is important in understanding the recruitment and retention of racial minorities in these industries, along with the broader element of the impact on the future shaping of these industries. By seeking out professionals who are racial minorities and are currently working or have had experience working in these fields, the research will better understand how these professionals construct their racial identities through the framework of social identity theory.