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Framing in crime news

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FRAMING IN CRIME NEWS

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my mother, Donna G. Ward.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Dr. Roberta Dihoff for being such a reliable and supportive professor throughout this research.

Abstract

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FRAMING IN CRIME NEWS
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The purpose of this study was to investigate if televised news programs overrepresent or underrepresent certain races as perpetrators or victims. Three weeks of crime news programming were surveyed. The races of perpetrators and victims were identified and coded. Those findings were then compared to 2014 crime statistics obtained from the Philadelphia Police Department. It was hypothesized that (a) Blacks would be overrepresented as perpetrators, (b) Blacks would be underrepresented s victims, (c) Whites would be overrepresented as victims, (d) Whites would be underrepresented as perpetrators, (e) Hispanics neither be underrepresented or overrepresented as perpetrators, and (f) Hispanics neither be underrepresented or overrepresented as victims. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed to determine if any races were underrepresented or overrepresented as perpetrators or victims. The only two hypotheses supported were that Blacks were underrepresented as victims while Whites were overrepresented as victims.

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Introduction

Need for Study

It is common today for people to be highly influenced by media. Whether it be newspapers, advertisements, or television programs, it is nearly impossible to escape the hold of the world's media. A popular way to inquire about recent events is through watching primetime television news reports. This is an easy way to identify important topics, gain knowledge on the subject, and form opinions. It is easy to trust these news sources as they are widely deemed credible and a valid representation of current events. However, such trust can cause one to fall victim to believing everything that is seen.

Forming opinions based on people, events, policies, and actions can easily be swayed by news reports. Since it is uncommon for one to question news reports, it is easy for one to watch a news program and come away feeling a way the network intended. A broadcast can frame reports by overrepresenting or underrepresenting people and situations, or by negative or positive wording surrounding a subject. The way a broadcast is framed can be the deciding factor for if one feels positively or negatively towards a subject, person, or situation. This is dangerous, because opinions are formed solely by broadcast's portrayal of a subject, which is so clearly demonstrated by how they represent a subject.

Purpose

The goal of this study was to identify the race of perpetrators and victims in primetime television crime news reports. News reports were examined over a three week

period. The races of perpetrators and victims were identified and coded, but only when race was readily apparent. After these data were gathered, the Office of Media Relations/Public Affairs for the Philadelphia Police Department was contacted and official crime reports were obtained broken down by race. Data was analyzed and compared to data acquired through surveying television crime news to deem if certain racial groups were overrepresented or underrepresented as perpetrators or victims.

Hypotheses

Blacks will be overrepresented as perpetrators.

Blacks will be underrepresented as victims

Whites will be overrepresented as victims.

Whites will be underrepresented as perpetrators.

Hispanics will neither be overrepresented nor underrepresented as perpetrators.

Hispanics will neither be overrepresented nor underrepresented as victims.

Operational Definitions

Perpetrator: the person who is identified as a crime committer.

Victim: the person who has the crime committed against them.

Limitations

      This study only examined current news programs of suspects in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. This means that the findings cannot be extrapolated to other cities in the United States with different demographics. This study only examines primetime crime news programs that are televised, so findings do not represent other modes of news. In addition, only one news network was surveyed. Because of this, it is possible that surveying different news sources, even during the same time period, could yield different results.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Current Research on Race Representation in the News

The representation of race in the news has been a popular subject for study. In the past years, the most common ways of acquiring news information was through printed or televised news sources. Fortunately, much research on televised and printed news mediums has been conducted, and a wealth of information has been found solely when inquiring about race representation and the framing of race.

Dixon, Azocar, and Casas (2003) conducted a content analysis on television news programs. Both week day and weekend programs were studied. The sampling period took place in three sets of 20 week periods from 1994-1997. The portrayal of race and criminal behavior was assessed. Their findings showed that Whites were overrepresented as victims of violent crimes while Blacks were underrepresented. In addition, Whites were overrepresented as police officers while Blacks were once again underrepresented.

In this study, over a year of news programming was surveyed. The two key findings are crucial to the study of race representation in the news. These periods of news demonstrate that Whites are the target of violent crime. Another expression of this period is that police officers are White. From this set of programming, a viewer would hold the beliefs that most victims of violent crime are White, and that most police officers are White as well. This overrepresentation can manifest feelings of anger towards other races which are not seen as victims or crime stoppers.

Dixon and Linz (2000a) analyzed a random sample of television news programs in California. Their aim was to evaluate the representations of Whites, Blacks, and

Hispanics as lawbreakers or defenders of the law. Blacks and Hispanics were compared against Whites. It was found that Blacks and Hispanics were more likely to be represented as lawbreakers than Whites. They were also less likely than Whites to be shown as law defenders. The reality of these findings was also analyzed by comparing news representation of these races with crime reports from the California Department of Justice. Similar to the findings, it was found that, when compared to crime rates, Blacks were overrepresented as lawbreakers on televised news programs and Hispanics and Whites were underrepresented.

Dixon and Linz were able to reveal another harsh reality about news programming. People of color, specifically Blacks and Hispanics, are represented as lawbreakers more than Whites. So, to an average news viewer, crimes are mostly committed by people of color. In addition, law defenders are White. So, people of color are assigned to negative, dangerous roles, while Whites are assigned to helpful, prideful roles. When compared to actual crime statistics, Blacks were overrepresented as lawbreakers, which instills the media's message that crime is committed by people of color. Whites were underrepresented as breakers of the law, which supports the previous notion.

Entman (1994) explored nightly, televised news programs for one year. Using transcripts of these programs, he was able to compare, verbatim, stereotypes in the news. It was found that stereotyped impressions and a much narrower range of positive roles were used when Blacks were the subject of the broadcast. In addition, the representations of Whites were more varied and more positive.

This is a very detailed account of framing in news programming. Stereotyped

impressions and an underrepresentation of positive roles when referring to one race can easily affect viewers' opinions. There was a pattern of variation and positive portrayals when Whites were the subject of broadcasting, which can cause the formation of dangerous worldviews about race. Blacks are portrayed stereotypically and negatively.

Noticing a pattern, Gilens (1996) chose to study the misperception of the proportions of Blacks among the poor, which is associated with an opposition to welfare. To do this, he focused on televised news portrayals of poverty and public images of poverty. Through his examinations, he concluded that both televised news and news magazines represented the poor as more Black than is realty. With this, he also found that inconsistencies between news magazine portrayals of poverty and the reality of poverty were greater for Blacks than other racial groups.

The overrepresentation of Blacks as the majority of those living in poverty is another inconsistency with reality. This leads viewers to form misconceptions about poverty. This also frames the assumption that the Black Community is riddled with poverty. Such views can cause negative feelings towards this race in a society where socioeconomic status decides one's class. A view of the Blacks Community as holding an overall lower class ranking than other races is racist and heavily influenced by stereotypes.

Dixon (2008b) studied racial attitudes and perceptions of Black by examining participants that had been exposed to network news. He found that, after watching network news, people held beliefs that Blacks received a lower income and were poor and intimidating. The participants' views were also positively associated with high racism scores.

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Dixon, like Gilens (1996), found that those watching news associated Blacks with poverty. Blacks were also seen as intimidating. With these findings, it is no surprise that participants' views associated highly with racism scores. Generalizing an entire race, in this instance Blacks, solely upon what has been seen on network news is the product of framing. However, as has been seen in a collection of research, it is not uncommon.

Owens (2008) conducted a quantitative content analysis of news programs. Owens revealed that Whites dominated news coverage and also held almost all anchor positions. People holding high positions such as company spokespeople, experts, and government officials were overwhelmingly White. Minorities were mostly represented as ordinary citizens.

These findings demonstrate that success and wealth are a White characteristic. When paired with previous findings of Blacks being more representative of the lower class, representations of careers and status held by Whites are more desirable. These findings coincide with other findings and also illustrate a whitewashing of news programming.

Ethnic blame was the subject of Romer, Jamieson, and De Coteau's (1998) research. The team analyzed 14 weeks of Philadelphia news on three separate news stations. It was found that people of color were heavily shown in stories of crime and as perpetrators rather than victims. To test if these representations reflected reality, an analysis of homicide rates in the city of Philadelphia was compared to their findings. With this analysis, they were able to conclude that Whites were overrepresented as victims rather than perpetrators, and people of color were overrepresented as perpetrators

of violence against Whites.

These findings are dangerous. These broadcastings lead viewers to form schemas, or models, about crime that are not accurate. These crime schemas hold that violence and crime is not White. Blacks are violent. Victims of crime are White. Blacks are committing crimes against Whites. These schemas are carried over into all facets of life, which is why the force news programming can have on schemas is dangerous, as it can change the way one views the world.

Dixon's (2009) research took a bit of a turn as he decided to inspect the relationship of the media, unidentified perpetrators, and support of the police. He found that participants exposed to Black perpetrators or race unidentified perpetrators reported an increased support for police. This sustains that being exposed to stories that portray a suspect as being Black increases the likelihood for viewers to hold stereotypes about the Black community because of perceived threat. The increase in feelings of threat leads to an increase of support for the police. Also, as previous research supports (Oliver & Fonash, 2002; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000), when a viewer was exposed to a race unidentified perpetrator, they were most likely to identify the perpetrator as Black. This supports the concept that criminals are non-White, which associated Blacks with criminality.

It is possible that those exposed to Black or race unidentified perpetrators report an increased support for police because of schemas. First, crime is seen as non-White, so a race unidentified perpetrator is most likely deemed Black. With this, as we have seen in previous research, Blacks are seen as violent and criminal. Therefore, a support for the police is called for. This is an act of stereotyping, a product of news framing, which will

also result in negative feelings towards the Black community.

Oliver and Fonash (2002) had White participants read some short news excerpts that involved violent and nonviolent crime stories. Each story was accompanied by a photograph of a White or Black perpetrator. After, participants picked photographs out of a larger group that they identified as being part of the crime news briefs. Misidentification of photographs of Black perpetrators was greater than misidentification of White perpetrators when it came to violent crime.

Oliver and Fonash's study helps support the idea that crime is non-White. Even if the race of a perpetrator is not identified, participants, specifically White participants, will assume that perpetrators are Black. This adds to negative repercussions when Blacks are more readily identified as perpetrators in a clinical setting because stereotypes will be carried over into real world situations.

Dixon (2006a) studied participants' views on the death penalty, crime danger, and culpability when exposed to a majority of Black or race unidentified perpetrators in a news program. He also examined prior news viewing and Black stereotype endorsement which could alter the effects of racialized news viewing. After the study, Dixon revealed that Black stereotype endorsers were more likely to support the death penalty. Heavy television watchers were more likely to identify the world as dangerous. They were also more likely to place blame on a race unidentified perpetrator.

It is probable that Black stereotype endorsers were more likely to support the death penalty because those holding these stereotypes believe Blacks are violent and intimidating. Thus, violence should be met in the most punishable way possible. Heavy television watchers, most likely those who believe in the stereotypes of crime being non-

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White and Blacks being dangerous, also view the world as a dangerous place. Blame is likely to be placed on race unidentified perpetrators because, although their race is not identified, they are most likely deemed Black or a person of color, as race is non-White.

Ford (1997) hypothesized that stereotypical portrayals of Blacks on television would increase the likelihood that Whites would form negative perceptions of a Black target person. He also hypothesized that this would not hold true if the target person was White. White participants were shown a comedy skit that featured stereotypical or neutral Black characters. Participants then read a story that involved a college student being assaulted by his roommate. In half of the stories the perpetrator was White, and in the other half, the perpetrator was Black. With this information, participants scored the likelihood that the perpetrator was guilty. Culpability ratings for the Black target perpetrator were highest after participants had watched the stereotypical comedy skit.

This study reveals that culpability ratings are highest for a Black perpetrator when the previous representation of a Black person is stereotypical.Although this stereotypical example was based on comedy, the overrepresentation of Blacks as perpetrators, crime as being non-White, and Blacks being dangerous is relatable. Neutral Black characters were not considered as blameworthy as stereotypical Black characters. This clearly outlines the racism that has formed in our society, and how one framing can decide future decisions.

Dixon and Azocar (2006) performed a content analysis of television news programs in the Los Angeles, California area. Their aim was to evaluate the representation of Black, Hispanic, and White juvenile perpetrators. The researchers found Hispanic and Black juvenile lawbreakers were more likely to be signified as perpetrators on television news than White juvenile lawbreakers. Hispanic juveniles were

underrepresented as lawbreakers while Black juveniles were overrepresented. White juveniles were sufficiently represented.

Dixon and Azocar's research, once again, shows that the representation of people of color as perpetrators is widespread. And, although Hispanic juveniles were underrepresented as perpetrators, Black juveniles were overrepresented, while Whites were realistically represented. The team brought new evidence to the race debate, showing, just like fellow researchers, that crime in the news is depicted as non-White.

Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) studied news programing in 56 cities, and discovered that crime news was most prominently featured. To the same effect, crime accounted for upwards of 75 percent of news coverage in some cities. In another study that looked at 3,014 crime news stories in Los Angeles from 1996-1997, there was a strong indication that persons of color were overrepresented as the perpetrator of a crime story, while Blacks were the largest group of minority suspects. Gilliam and Iyengar went further to compare these findings to arrest records, and found that the Black arrest rate for Los Angeles County is not far off from Black representation in the news stories examined. However, the focus on violent crime distorts viewer's perception of reality when it comes to crime, which can alter the way they think about crime or act towards certain races.

Gilliam and Iyengar's study first showed that most news programming aired was crime news. This means that any misrepresentation of race when it comes to crime is seen more often than other types of news. This study also revealed that perpetrators were mostly people of color, more specifically Blacks. In Los Angeles County, California, the news did not significantly overrepresent or underrepresent Blacks as perpetrators. However, such an inundation of crime news in a news program can alter how prominent

one thinks crime is in their region.

Dixon and Linz (2000b) prepared a content analysis of a random sample of news programs in Los Angeles, California. For this study, the team concentrated on victims. They compared Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. It was exposed that Whites were most likely to be depicted as victims. When assessing the roles of victim and perpetrator, it was revealed that Blacks and Hispanics are portrayed more as lawbreakers and Whites were represented as victims.

This study exposes similar findings to previous studies explored. Once again, crime is non-White. People of color are mostly seen as perpetrators. This can lead viewers to believe that perpetrators, in general, are not White. Also, Whites are more often represented as victims. So, just as in previous research, these programs can lead to harmful schemas. Such schemas will translate into other areas, and can even determine the way one relates to or thinks about another race.

Sorenson, Manz, and Berk (1998) compared 2,782 news stories about homicide to the 9,442 homicides that had occurred in Los Angeles County between 1990 and 1994. They studied how each victim, perpetrator, and event related to news coverage. Through this assessment, the researchers found that certain stories of homicide received more coverage. These instances included when the victim was a female, a stranger to the suspect, a child, an elderly person, or in a wealthy neighborhood. With this, stories received less coverage if victims were Black or Hispanic, had less than a high school education, if it was a homicide that did not include a firearm, or if the suspect knew the victim intimately.

This study shows more evidence that Blacks and Hispanics are less like to be

portrayed as victims of violent crime. This upholds the misrepresentation of victims being White. This leads viewers to believe that Whites are the target of violent crime, while other races are not. These misconceptions are solely established by framing news programming that does not accurately represent crime.

Dixon (2007) presented participants with a crime story with different races in various roles. Police officers and perpetrators were Black, White, or had an unidentified race. Participants were also asked to rank their news viewing as heavy or light. Participants were then asked the likelihood of the perpetrator or officer depicted being Black or White. Additionally, the participants were requested to report how positively they viewed the officer in the story. Analysis of the results showed that perpetrators with an unidentified race were rated as having a high probability of being Black. Participants that viewed news heavily were more likely to define the unidentified race officer as White, and were more likely to hold positive perceptions about race unidentified officers but not Black officers.

This study further validates the stereotype that crime is non-White. This is supported because, even when the race of a perpetrator was not reported, viewers assumed the perpetrator was Black. Also, participants who reported being heavy news watchers defined police officers as White. Furthermore, perceptions of officers without an identified race were viewed more positively than Black police officers. This shows that Blacks are thought of as more violent than helpful, and that not knowing someone's race makes them more pleasant than being Black.

Dixon (2006b) studied culpability judgments of race unidentified suspects and the influence race and skin tone of perpetrators in crime news has on these judgments.

Participants were ranked as light or heavy news program viewers. Dixon was able to find that heavy news viewers presented with a medium-skinned Black perpetrator were more likely than other heavy news viewers exposed to a White perpetrator to find a race unidentified perpetrator culpable. Heavy news viewers exposed to a Black perpetrator, regardless of skin tone, were more likely than other heavy news viewers exposed to a story with a White perpetrator to find race unidentified perpetrator culpable.

Culpability for crimes is heavily influenced by the skin tone of the perpetrator. Those participants who had viewed a news story with a Black perpetrator were more likely to find a race unidentified perpetrator blameworthy for their actions than those who had just viewed a story with a White perpetrator. This perpetuates the idea that crime is non-White, and introduces the idea that Black perpetrators are more blameworthy for their actions than White perpetrators.

Chiricos and Eschholz (2002) surveyed television stations in Orlando, Florida to distinguish if racial representations on the news were fair. Contrary to much past research, these researchers found that, when comparing news representations of race to the true population of those arrested in Orlando, the news stations did not overrepresented Blacks when it came to crime. Instead, Hispanics were overrepresented in relation to the actual population. However, it is noted that Blacks and Hispanics were depicted as perpetrators that were generally more threatening in demeanor than Whites.

This study did not show an overrepresentation of Blacks as perpetrators. However, Hispanics were overrepresented as perpetrators. This supports the notion that crime is non-White. In addition, when Blacks and Hispanics were depicted as perpetrators, they were more threatening than White perpetrators. With this, an addition

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to already existing schemas about crime can be made. Crime committers, who are people of color, are more threatening than White crime committers.

Dixon and Maddox (2005) studied the effects of race and skin tone of perpetrators and victims in news programs. More specifically, they examined viewers' uneasiness brought on by viewing crime news and the perceptions and importance of those portrayed in the report when it comes to race and skin tone. Viewers were placed in four conditions. In these conditions they viewed a crime news story with a White, light-skinned Black, medium-skinned Black, or dark-skinned Black perpetrator. In addition, viewers' completed a self-report of their individual news watching habits. It was revealed that heavy news viewers were more likely to feel uncomfortable when viewing a program with a dark-skinned Black perpetrator. Finally, no matter the viewers' news watching habits, viewers' reported the news stories with the dark-skinned Black perpetrator were more memorable.

This study is a perfect example of how racial schemas constructed by framing in the news can influence one's perception of the news. It is possible that these participants already had some schemas formed, such as crime is non-White and Blacks are dangerous. Thus, when seeing a dark-skinned Black perpetrator, which is most likely representative of other perpetrators they had seen on the news, they felt the most uncomfortable. This is most likely a product of their schemas for race and crime. Otherwise, why would the skin tone of the perpetrator determine one's feeling of comfort? Dixon and Maddox's finding that a dark-skinned Black perpetrator was the most memorable is also most likely characteristic of a previously schema.

Why it is Important to Study the Representation of Race in the News

The content one views while watching televised news programming changes the way one thinks about the world. Representations of race in the news are extrapolated to real life situations away from the television. Misrepresentations and framing can cause trouble behavior, beliefs, and inaccurate schemas. They can cause people to think about, and react to, people of different races in a way that parallels with representations that have been viewed during televised news programs.

Van Dijk (1986, 1993) noted the importance of the media in the formation of opinions. This supports the role the media plays in reproducing racial inequality. When children and adults were asked from where they acquire their ethnic opinions or beliefs, the media scored high. This maintains the fact that the media is capable of deciding the way one thinks. If race is misrepresented, then people's feelings about race will be askew and not based in fact.

Dixon (2008a) and Rada (2000) conducted studies to investigate the portrayal of Blacks in the news and subsequent behaviors or reactions. Dixon aimed to determine if exposure to the overrepresentations of Blacks as criminals in the news, attention grabbing crime news, along with a trust for news could predict opinions of Blacks in crime. It was found that attention to crime news was related to a one's concern about crime. With this, an interest in crime news was related to "harsher culpability ratings of a hypothetical race-unidentified suspect and a Black suspect but not a White suspect." It was also found that the overrepresentation of Blacks as criminals was related to the perception of Blacks being more violent. Rada's results did not show a strong relationship between representation of Blacks in the news and behaviors towards them. However, there was an

indication that viewers that watched a program which portrayed Blacks in an unfavorable way seemed less likely to offer help when a Black individual was in need.

This study exemplifies an astounding and prominent issue with racial misrepresentations in news programming. First, attention to crime news influences one's concern about crime overall. This means that any crime news coverage that one witnesses, attentively, will spark concern. Further, an interest in crime news, for these participants, meant higher culpability, or blame, when perpetrators were non-White. This demonstrates that, although crimes may be similar or identical, non-White perpetrators are more to blame for their actions than their White counterparts.

Dixon and Rada's study also explains that the overrepresentation of Blacks as perpetrators can have implied negative results. First, as has been seen in previous studies, the overrepresentation of Blacks leads to a schema of the Black Community being more violent. Possibly because of this, those who view the overrepresentation of Blacks as perpetrators in televised news may be less likely to offer help when Black individuals are in need. This is one frightening way that framing race represetations in the news can have implications in real world settings.

Gilliam Jr., Iyengar, Simon, and Wright (1996) decided to study crime rate, which is a matter of public debate and policy reform, in a time when the crime rate had declined. A content analysis of local news broadcasts concluded that two themes had emerged: crime is violent, and criminals are not White. They argued that, given the importance of news to the public, it influences the way one thinks about crime. The researchers pointed out that race and racial stereotypes influenced concern about crime and willingness to characterize criminal behavior to the Black Community.

This study supports one key finding that has been highlighted in a great deal of other research: crime is violent, and criminals are non-White. The researchers also agreed that these portrayals influence the way one thinks about crime, or one's crime schema. Such schemas can change the way one thinks about Blacks, in particular the Black Community. This can have countless negative repercussions for the Black Community, as it is deemed violent, which can provoke intimidation, and result in dangerous outcomes.

In an issue of the *Journal of African American Studies*, Oliver (2003) questioned police shootings of the innocent and why certain individuals were mistakenly assumed as violent. Although she cited age, dress, and gender as being possible markers, she included that the occurrence in which Black men have been mistakenly targeted points to the importance of race when it comes to false assumptions about danger and criminality. Oliver believed that news, which is presented as realistic, is a problematic type of programming when it comes to racially-biased portrayals. She also supported that Black males were shown more often as a criminal suspect than what public records show. This may be a reason why people perceive Blacks as threatening or violent.

Targeting Black men as criminals has been an issue in the United States since its inception. Although there have been various reasons for this over time, the news is a culprit today. Because Black men are represented as criminal, dangerous, and violent, there is an increased probability that they will be wrongfully targeted. Again, many tend to trust the news programming they view as it is generally accepted as credible, but this is not always true. The overrepresentation of Blacks as perpetrators causes the schema of Blacks being violent and threatening.

Mastro, Lapinski, Kopacz, and Morawitz (2009) and Bjornstrom, Kaufman,

Peterson, and Slater (2010) conducted studies to analyze race portrayals in the news and the affects they can have on real world situations. First, exposure to television news that associates Blacks with violent crime influenced viewers' racial judgments in the real world. It was found that the gender of the viewer and the race of the suspect portrayed on the program influenced consequent judgments. This also included judgment about the attributions of the victim or perpetrator. They also exposed that the race of the suspect in the program had a significant effect on the viewer's view of the Black Community.

Once again, the presentation of crime news can impact the way one views race. Judgments about a race can easily be formed based on news broadcasting. In addition, much like previous findings, the race in which the perpetrator is represented is held responsible for the actions of the one perpetrator. This is seen in cases where the perpetrator is a minority, but is not seen when a perpetrator is White. This can have dramatic negative repercussions for the Black Community.

Punyanunt-Carter (2008) ran a study in which she gave questionnaires to 412 undergraduate students in Texas. She sought to analyze perceptions such as occupational roles, negative personality characteristics, positive stereotypes, and low achieving status when it came to portrayals of Blacks in television. Her results indicated that viewers perceived the occupations and personality characteristics of Blacks in television programs to be true in real life. In addition, viewers did no distinguish the low-achieving roles or positive stereotypes associated with the Blacks in these television shows as being accurate. With this, Puntanunt-Carter was able to conclude that television can affect how viewers perceive Blacks in general.

Although this study did not have to do directly with news broadcasting, results

can easily be extrapolated. Viewers took the characteristics and personalities of the representations they saw, which we actors, and deemed them credible in real life. This is an example of how seemingly credible racial representations on television are deemed accurate. With this, it is safe to say misrepresentations of race in the news will be translated into real world situations. This is because it is widely believed that television, in general, in an accurate portrayal of the world; however, it is not.

Dixon (2008c) exposed participants to a White, Black, or race unidentified victim and a White, Black, or race unidentified perpetrator in a crime news program. He also examined each participant's stereotype endorsement; participants could be rated as high or low. After viewing the news story, participants were asked if they viewed the perpetrator as threatening, if they endorsed punitive crime policies, and if they believed the perpetrator viewed was blameworthy. Stereotype endorsers were more likely to find the perpetrator most threatening when they were Black or race unidentified. Stereotype endorsers were also more likely to support punitive crime policies. Participants, regardless of being stereotype endorsers or rejecters, were most likely to find a suspect culpable when viewing a news story with a Black perpetrator and White victim. The opposite was true when the story featured a Black perpetrator and Black victim.

Given what is known about race framing in the news, it is not far-fetched that stereotype endorsers were more likely to find Black perpetrator or a race unidentified perpetrator more threatening, because crime is viewed as non-White. Even though the perpetrator's race was not defined, they most likely thought of the perpetrator as non-White. Punitive crime policies were also endorsed because blame, when need be put on a person of color, is more probable. Also, if a perpetrator was Black and a victim was

White, the perpetrator was most blameworthy. However, if a perpetrator was to commit a crime against someone of the same race, they were not as blameworthy. This supports that crime is non-White and that, when crimes are committed against Whites, they are the most noteworthy and blameworthy.

Peffley, Shields, and Williams (1996) showed participants a television crime story. With this, they manipulated the race of the perpetrator between White and Black. The Black perpetrator was rated as more culpable, more deserving of punishment, more likely to continue on a violent path, and instilled more fear and loathing than the White perpetrator.

This study offers a summary of stereotypes that are held when Blacks are framed as perpetrators. First, Black perpetrators are most blameworthy. Because of this, they are most deserving of punishment. Also, because Blacks are viewed as violent, any indication that they have previously committed a crime instills the belief that they will continue with crime or on a violent path. As discussed before, Blacks are identified as more violent, which causes fear. Lastly, Blacks are subject to more loathing. This is the product of framing and all stereotypes.

Oliver et al. (2004) presented participants with multiple news stories in four conditions. In these conditions, participants viewed a non-stereotypical, a stereotypical non crime, a nonviolent crime, and a violent crime news story. Each story contained a picture of the described perpetrator. After examining the stories, participants were asked to reconstruct the image of the perpetrator by using facial features that were offered on a

computer screen. The facial features used by participants in the crime story conditions were more Afrocentric than Eurocentric, especially in the violent crime condition.

Oliver et al.'s findings support the notion that crime is non-White. Also, because those placed in the violent crime condition were most likely to pick Afrocentric facial features, the study also supports that Blacks are violent. This study is another example of stereotypes that can be produced by the framing of race by the media.

Oliver (1999) presented White participants with a news story about a murder that depicted the perpetrator as Black or White. Participants then picked photographs that they believed were of the identified perpetrator and reported the extent to which they believed they had chosen the correct photograph. They were also asked to carry out the same procedure three months later. After three months, participants that had watched a story with a White perpetrator were increasingly likely to identify a Black perpetrator as the one featured.

Oliver's study is another representation of how framing, stereotypes, and schemas can mold one's beliefs. Even if, directly after being presented with the news stories, participants identified that the perpetrator was White, they were increasingly likely to identify the perpetrator as Black after three months. There could have been many reasons for this. First, there is a good chance that the participants had forgotten details of the story after three months. This may mean that they were likely to use their existing schemas to identify the perpetrator as Black as soon as they thought about crime again. Another possibility is that, after being exposed to three months of Blacks being overrepresented as perpetrators on the news, they changed their minds.

Dixon (2004) decided to compare Black, Hispanic, and White roles as perpetrators, anchors, and reporters in crime news in the Los Angeles, California area. These comparisons aimed to examine positive imagery depicted by anchors and reporters, negative imagery, and the role of the perpetrator, when it comes to race. To compare the representation of race in these reports, Dixon also gathered arrest records and population statistics to see if any of the races examined were overrepresented or underrepresented. It was found that Whites were portrayed as anchors and reporters more than Hispanics and Blacks. Blacks were also represented as being perpetrators more than the other races. He also noted that Whites were overrepresented, Latinos are underrepresented, and Blacks are neither underrepresented nor overrepresented.

Once again, Whites are represented in positive, trustworthy roles. Crime is also presented as being non-White. Whites were also overrepresented when compared to the true population, while Latinos were underrepresented. This is an example of whitewashing, since Whites are so often portrayed, even though it does not represent the population.

Entman (1992) performed more research on the representation of Blacks in the news. To do so, he conducted a content analysis on news programs in the Chicago, Illinois area. He found that racism may have been encouraged by normal crime and the coverage of politics. This is because Blacks were depicted as more physically violent in news coverage, and more demanding in politics. Entman suggested a sort of façade that is put into effect because the employment of Black journalists is used to mask racism and convince viewers that discrimination is no longer a social issue. He argued that these two key findings encourage racism.

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Stereotypes of Blacks can be found all over news coverage, not just in crime news. The portrayal of Blacks as violent and more demanding merely adds more to negative, unnecessary schemas. In addition, those watching news programs may feel that a more diverse cast of anchors and journalists means a more trustworthy news team.. It is possible that Black journalists are employed to cover racism and discrimination rather than promote equality and truth.

Johnson (1991) warned against the danger of misrepresentations in the news on young people whose inexperience will not lead them to question or challenge what is seen by the media. Johnson cited popular myths, some being that news is objective, that the employment of Black reporters on White-owned news stations means racial fairness, and that young people can distinguish the difference between what is viewed on the media and reality.

Individuals who take what is seen in the news at face value will not question what is being portrayed. This indicates that any misrepresentations will be taken as true, and will only add to existing issues. Furthermore, the representation of Blacks on news teams seems to represent racial equality, when it is merely an attempt to mask the important issues of racial inequality at hand. Although there is a plethora of measures that could be taken to balance racial representation in the news, Johnson's ideas are a start. First, the employment of a racially diverse cast of news anchors is beneficial, but as has been explored, is not the answer. Writers, producers, editors, and even executives of color would give racial equality in the news a change. However, a quicker way to combat the misrepresentation of race would be to teach critical thinking. With critical thinking in mind nothing is taken at face value. Individuals must be taught to think for themselves,

question what they are told, and seek information out for themselves.

Casas and Dixon (2003) studied the impact of both stereotypical and counter-stereotypical examples of Hispanics and Blacks in the news. The investigators exposed White participants to stereotypical and counter-stereotypical representations of Blacks and Hispanics. Participants were then asked about their perceptions of crime and their beliefs surrounding the culpability of people of color. After analyzing the data, the experimenters uncovered that Whites exposed to stereotypical representations, counter-stereotypical representations, or a combination of both were more likely to place less blame on the actions of Hispanics and Blacks than Whites not exposed to any news program.

In this study, those who did not view stereotypical or counter-stereotypical representations of Blacks and Hispanics in the news were the control group. This group represented ordinary, news viewing people. They participated in the study without any intervention. They naturally placed more blame on Hispanics and Blacks. However, those participants who viewed stereotypical, counter-stereotypical, or a combination of the two placed less blame on Hispanics and Blacks. How could this be so? It is because those who saw these representations may have challenged their own schemas. They were not shown underhandedly racist programming. The change in representation caused them to rearrange their schemas, which was not necessary for the control condition. This is an example of what can be done to change schemas and hopefully promote racial equality in news.

Johnson and Dixon (2008) analyzed news in Boston, Massachusetts for 30 days in 1986 and then again in 2001.The researchers found Blacks were less depicted in crime

news in 2001; however, Blacks in crime news were still dominant over other races. On the other hand, the representation of Blacks in newspapers owned by Blacks changed significantly after the 15 year period.

This study shows hope for the future of race representation in news. Blacks were less depicted in crime news in the latter sample when samples were taken 15 years apart. However, not everything about the researchers' findings was positive. The team found that Blacks were still represented more in crime news than any other race. This has been a common theme in research conducted within this span of time. It was also reported that the representation of Blacks in Black-owned newspapers had changed significantly over the period. This supports the idea that racially diverse ownership of news reporting media outlets can be beneficial for race representation.

Van Dijk (2000) describes a kind of new racism, which is racism over time. In the past, he argues, racism was symbolized by slavery, feelings of white supremacy, segregation, apartheid, and more. Presently, we are confronted with a different phenomenon, New Racism. In this approach, minorities are no longer viewed as being biologically inferior as before; however, they are viewed as being different from the norm. Their culture is different and they are marked by deficiencies such as single-parent families, a lack of values, drug abuse, and dependence on welfare.

Current research on race portrayal in news programming represents just this. These stereotypes are being portrayed everyday by the news. Today, when we are so reliant on receiving information quickly and effortlessly on a daily basis, we are overlooking what is truly important; we are overlooking the way we are thinking about

each other based on someone else's words and representations of us. The media is powerful. The media, and more specifically the news, is viewed as a source of knowledge to shape our attitudes, and to support our ideologies. And, so far, we are not doing a good job with questioning it, even though we so easily let it shape our lifestyles.

Downing, Mohammadi, and Sreberny-Mohammadi (1990) discuss the misconception in the United States that racism ended in the 1950s and 19060s with the success of civil rights. Although for minorities it is apparent that this is not true, the team reports that this is a common misconception for Americans. They bring together their opinion by stating, "this claim lies somewhere between hypocrisy and willful blindness to everyday realities."

In the United States there seems to be the misconception that equality is present and easily attainable. Just because segregation has been abolished some believe racism is over. This is not true. Misrepresentation of race is just a small example of this. However, if one is not privy to this seemingly evident fact, one may be less likely to question apparently reliable sources of information, like the news.

Iyengar (1991) found that the news rarely addresses racial inequality. During a six year study of news programming, Iyengar concluded that only two stories a month report about racial inequality. This is astonishing. The media, including news reports, has a strong grasp on how one views the world. With this in mind, only two news stories a month highlighting racial inequality are not enough. Racial inequality is a significant issue, and it must be more openly discussed and explored.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Materials

Collection of data took place over a three week period in January though February 2014. Each day ABC Action News was surveyed between 4pm and 5pm on weeknights. In addition, 2014 crime statistics were obtained from the Philadelphia Police Department.

Design

A chi-square goodness of fit test was employed to determine if percentages obtained from the news were significantly different from actual crime statistics.

Procedure

For this study, three weeks of nightly ABC Action News crime news for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania were surveyed from January to February 2015. The time slot selected was 4pm to 5pm on weeknights.

For each crime news story the race of perpetrators and victims was identified and coded when race was readily apparent. Race was either coded as White, Black, or Hispanic.

Table 1

Black, White, and Hispanic perpetrators represented on the news.

Perpetrators	
Black	27
White	36
Hispanic	5
Totals	**68**

Table 2

Black, White, and Hispanic victims represented on the news.

Victims	
Black	3
White	9
Hispanic	2
Totals	**14**

A total of perpetrators and victims featured on the news was calculated, and percentages were computed.

Table 3

Black, White, and Hispanic perpetrators represented on the news using percentages.

Perpetrators	
Black	39.71%
White	52.94%
Hispanic	7.35%
Totals	**100.00%**

Table 4

Black, White, and Hispanic victims represented on the news using percentages.

Victims	
Black	21.43%
White	64.29%
Hispanic	14.28%
Totals	**100.00%**

Once all data from the news was collected, the Office of Media Relations/Public Affairs of the Philadelphia Police Department was contacted for 2014 crime statistics. These statistics obtained were broken down by race.

Table 5

Black, White, and Hispanic perpetrators as reported by 2014 crime statistics.

Perpetrators	
Black	10,621
White	4,825
Hispanic	1,764
Totals	**17,210**

Table 6

Black, White, and Hispanic victims as reported by 2014 crime statistics.

Victims	
Black	29,599
White	31,657
Hispanic	6,431
Totals	**67,687**

Then, once again, totals for Black, White, and Hispanic perpetrators and victims were calculated, and a percentage was computed.

Table 7

Black, White, and Hispanic perpetrators as reported by 2014 crime statistics in percentages.

Perpetrators	
Black	61.71%
White	28.04%
Hispanic	10.25%
Totals	**100.00%**

Table 8

Black, White, and Hispanic victims as reported by 2014 crime statistics in percentages.

Victims	
Black	43.73%
White	46.77%
Hispanic	9.50%
Totals	**100.00%**

Finally, the percentages of each race as perpetrators or victims in crime news was compared to percentages of each race as perpetrators or victims in 2014 crime statistics. Percentages were compared by race and position using a chi-square goodness of fit.

Chapter 4

Results

The current study explored racial framing in crime news. The news station surveyed was ABC Action News in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Crime stories featured on this station on week nights between 4pm and 5pm were reviewed. The races of perpetrators and victims were coded as White, Black, or Hispanic when race was readily apparent. Other races were not significantly reported. Percentages of each race in the position of perpetrator or victim were calculated.

2014 crime statistics were obtained by the Philadelphia Police Department's Office of Media Relations/Public affairs. Statistics were offered for both perpetrators and victims. White, Black, and Hispanic perpetrators and victim reports were then broken down into percentages calculated from totals.

A chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was performed to determine whether racial representations in the news were significantly different from actual crime statistics when examining perpetrators. When comparing news representations of Blacks as perpetrators in comparison to the roles of Blacks as perpetrators reflected by actual 2014 crime statistics, X^2 (2) = 30.78, p < .0001., with a deviation of -35.65%. When comparing news representations of Whites as perpetrators in comparison to the roles of Whites as perpetrators reflected by actual 2014 crime statistics, X^2 (2) = 30.78, p < .0001., with a deviation of 88.8%. When comparing news representations of Hispanics as perpetrators in comparison to the roles of Hispanics as perpetrators reflected by actual 2014 crime statistics, X^2 (2) = 30.78, p < .0001., with a deviation of -28.29%.

Table 9

Chi-square goodness-of-fit results for perpetrators when comparing news representations to actual 2014 crime statistics.

Perpetrators					
	Observed Freq (News)	**Expected Freq (Actual)**	**Expected Proportion**	**% Deviation**	**Standardized Residuals**
Black	39.71	61.71	0.6171	-35.65	-2.8
White	52.94	28.04	0.2804	88.8	4.7
Hispanic	7.35	10.25	0.1025	-28.29	-0.91

Table 10

Chi-square goodness-of-fit output results for perpetrators when comparing news representations to actual 2014 crime statistics.

Chi-square	30.78
Degrees of freedom	2
P	<.0001

A chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was performed to determine whether racial representations in the news were significantly different from actual crime statistics when examining victims. When comparing news representations of Blacks as victims in comparison to the roles of Blacks as victims reflected by actual 2014 crime statistics, X^2

(2) = 20.34, p < .0001., with a deviation of -50.99%. When comparing news

representations of Whites as victims in comparison to the roles of Whites as victims

reflected by actual 2014 crime statistics, X^2 (2) = 20.34, p < .0001., with a deviation of

37.46%. When comparing news representations of Hispanics as victims in comparison to

the roles of Hispanics as victims reflected by actual 2014 crime statistics, X^2 (2) = 20.34,

p < .0001., with a deviation of 50.32%.

Table 11

Chi-square goodness-of-fit results for victims when comparing news representations to actual 2014 crime statistics.

	Victims				
	Observed Freq (News)	Expected Freq (Actual)	Expected Proportion	% Deviation	Standardized Residuals
Black	21.43	43.73	0.4373	-50.99	-3.37
White	64.29	46.77	0.4677	37.46	2.56
Hispanic	14.28	9.5	0.095	50.32	1.55

Table 12

Chi-square goodness-of-fit output results for perpetrators when comparing news representations to actual 2014 crime statistics.

Chi-square	20.34
Degrees of freedom	2
P	<.0001

These results reveal six unique statistically significant findings. First, Blacks were underrepresented as perpetrators on the news. The news also significantly overrepresented Whites as perpetrators. Hispanics were significantly underrepresented as perpetrators. For the position of victim, Blacks were significantly underrepresented as victims by the news. The news significantly overrepresented Whites as victims. Hispanics were also significantly overrepresented as victims.
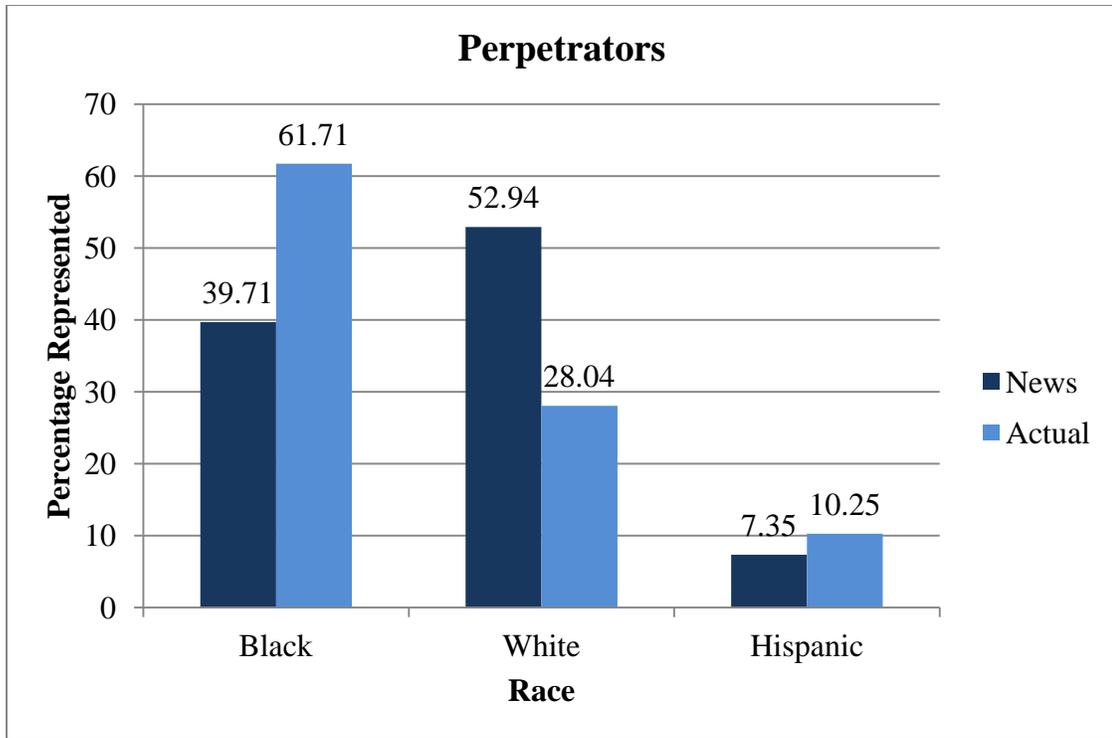
Figure 1. Black, White, and Hispanic perpetrators represented on the news versus what was reported in 2014 crime statistics.
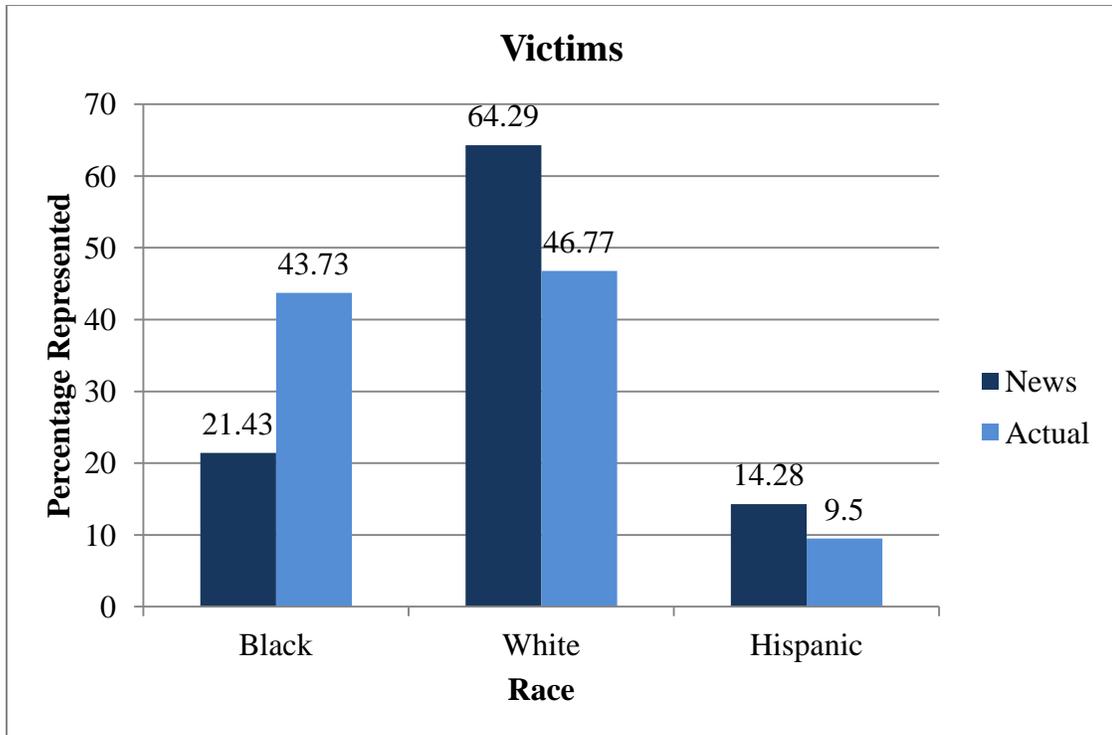
Figure 2. Black, White, and Hispanic victims represented on the news versus what was reported in 2014 crime statistics.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Conclusions Regarding Racial Framing in Crime News

The purpose of this study was to determine if certain races were misrepresented as perpetrators or victims on televised news programs. Specifically, one news provider was surveyed to see if Blacks, Whites, or Hispanics were misrepresented.

This study had six hypotheses. Three races were examined, so two hypotheses pertained to each race. Hypothesis predicted whether a race would be underrepresented, overrepresented, or neither when it came to roles of victims and perpetrators.

The first hypothesis was that Blacks would be overrepresented as perpetrators. This hypothesis was refuted. Instead, Blacks were significantly underrepresented as perpetrators. The deviation between news representation and reality was -35.65%. $P <$ .0001, which means the findings are extremely significant.

The second hypothesis stated that Blacks would be underrepresented as victims. This hypothesis was supported. There was a -50.99% deviation between news representation and reality according to 2014 crime statistics. Once again, $p < .0001$.

Hypothesis three states that whites would be overrepresented as victims when comparing news representations and reality. This hypothesis was also supported. The deviation between news representation of Whites as victims and reality was 37.46%. $P <$ .0001.

Hypothesis four was refuted. This hypothesis stated that Whites would be underrepresented as perpetrators. However, the news significantly overrepresented Whites in the role of perpetrator. The deviation for this hypothesis was 88.8% with p < .0001.

Hypothesis five stated that Hispanics would neither be underrepresented or overrepresented as perpetrators. This hypothesis was also refuted. It was found that the news significantly underrepresented Hispanics as perpetrators. This was with a deviation of -28.29% with p < .0001.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. A significant limitation was the amount of news coverage surveyed. For this study, only three weeks of one hour news segments were assessed. This is because watching a news program, identifying the races of perpetrators and victims, coding race and roles, and double checking work is time consuming.

Additionally, the news station evaluated was based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Because of this, results cannot be extrapolated to other parts of the United States. This is because many factors about Philadelphia may have had implications for this study. One of these factors is demographics.

There are many possibilities explaining why some hypotheses were refuted while others were supported. First, the news programs surveyed aired from four o'clock in the

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afternoon to five o'clock. Although this was an adequate timeslot for this study, other time slots may have yielded different results.

ABC Action News was the program chosen for the surveying of crime news for this study. It is possible that, even if the same time frame and time slot was reviewed, a different news network may have produced different results. Also, in the past, researchers have expanded their study to involve other news stations. With this, it is possible that using a different news station or multiple news stations would have yielded different results.

Another factor that may have influenced this study is the time period over which this study was conducted. This study took place from January to February 2015. This was a time span when the North Eastern United States saw heavy snow activity and record breaking low temperatures. Because of this, much of the one hour newscasts were dealing with incoming snow expectations, snow coverage during storms, and discussions surrounding low temperatures. Heavy weather coverage may have caused less crime news to be reported, and thus, less opportunity for data collection.

Although it is possible that severe weather may have had an implication for this study, winter itself may have also results. It is a widely known fact that crime rates drop in the colder seasons. Because of this, and because actual crime statistics examined were for one calendar year, there may have been a discrepancy.

Another limitation to this study is that only weekday news reports were studied. It is possible that if weekend nightly news reports were added results would change. This is

also feasible because crime statistics obtained from the Philadelphia Police Department covered every day of 2014, while this study did not include Saturday or Sunday.

The last, and possibly most important limitation to this study, again pertains the time period in which data was collected. This study was performed during a national, highly publicized call for action concerning racial equality. Before, during, and after data was collected widespread protests were being held to shed light on the targeting of Black men and excessive force used by police officers. Because this study is based on race, there is a possibility that such events may have had implications for results.

Future Research

Racial framing in the news will be a necessary subject for research until representation is characteristic of reality. Much research has been conducted on this subject to date, and it will continue.

Future research on this subject should include more review of crime news. Although one hour segments of news programming over three weeks yielded credible results, more coverage may prove to produce more representative results. Past research similar to this has called for the employment of a team of coders. This ensures more crime news stories can be watched and coded effectively. Also, because crime statistics generally cover a whole week, crime news stories should be examined for every day of the week, not just weeknights.

Further research may also examine a different time slot. It is possible that certain time slots reach more viewers than others. This should be taken into account when

picking what time news programs should be surveyed. However, if possible, more than one time slot would be more representative of news coverage.

When 2014 crime statistics were obtained from the Philadelphia Police Department, they were broken down by race and month. Because of this, it would be possible to diligently review one month of news coverage. This could then be compared to one month of crime statistics instead of a full year, as was seen with this study.

If possible, crime statistics attained should encompass the same time period in which crime news was covered. This study covered crime news in 2015 and used crime statistics from 2014. Crime rates did not drop or rise significantly between these two time periods, but crime statistics from the same period of news coverage would yield more reliable results.

Future research on this subject should also take into account the news station that is being surveyed. Past research similar to this has examined a different news station or multiple news stations that the same time. Performing either of these could produce different results.

If possible, this study should not be carried out during periods known for extreme weather. Weather coverage may have had implications for this study, as less crime news may have been reported. However, if future research is conducted during periods of extreme weather, using crime statistics for the same time period would be favorable.

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