

2010

The blame is in the frame: inter-reality comparisons of crime reports and local news crime coverage on the internet

Dana Marie Tumblin

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses



Part of the [Mass Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tumblin, Dana Marie, "The blame is in the frame: inter-reality comparisons of crime reports and local news crime coverage on the internet" (2010). *LSU Master's Theses*. 3958.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/3958

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Master's Theses by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

THE BLAME IS IN THE FRAME:
INTER-REALITY COMPARISONS OF CRIME REPORTS AND
LOCAL NEWS CRIME COVERAGE ON THE INTERNET

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Mass Communication

in

The Manship School of Mass Communication

By
Dana Marie Tumblin
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2008
December 2010

Dedication

To my brother Oliver and my nephews Bernard, Benjamin, Bailey and Bernell, whose faces I trust will never accompany a crime story, but whose self esteem and self image I pray will never be compromised by the steady stream of the all too familiar faces that have before.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my mother, Ingrid Green Adams, for believing I was the smartest kid in the classroom—even when I was not. To my sister, Dr. Ashaunta Tumblin, who attempted to make me one of the smartest kids in the class. To my sister, Diondra Tumblin Reynaud, who battled—and tamed—years of defiant curls in an attempt to make me one of the prettiest kids in the class.

To Dr. Sanders, who has walked me through every step of this project. To Dr. Lawrence and Dr. Shipka for their invaluable assistance in this venture.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Tables.....	v
List of Graphs.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	8
Method.....	30
Results.....	35
Discussion.....	46
Conclusion.....	57
References.....	59
Appendix A: Coder Instruction Manual.....	63
Appendix B: Code Sheet.....	67
Appendix C: Baton Rouge Police Department Districts.....	71
Vita.....	73

List of Tables

Table 1, Descriptive table.....	35
Table 2, Baton Rouge Uniform Crime Report for the year 2008.....	37
Table 3, Racial representation compared by type of crime committed.....	40
Table 4, Racial representation in Internet news compared to BRPD crime reports.....	41
Table 5, Racial representation in counteractive stories.....	42
Table 6, Race and perpetrator's photograph included in news story.....	42
Table 7, Race and perpetrator's name included in story.....	43
Table 8, Perpetrator race and criminal history.....	44
Table 9, Perpetrator race and average word count of the story.....	45
Table 10, Comparison of the 2008 Uniform Crime Reports of Baton Rouge, LA and Jackson, MS.....	49

List of Figures

Figure 1, Racial representation during Internet news coverage versus racial breakdown in crime reports.....	38
---	----

Abstract

Research of crime news suggests that Blacks are over represented as criminals when compared to crime reports; study of race and crime judgments reveals that viewers with heavy amounts of television news viewing associate Blacks with crime more often than viewers who watch lower amounts of television news. Further complicating the perception of Blacks is their lack of diversified coverage in the news. Most coverage of Blacks frames them as liabilities to their communities, while offering few positive depictions to counter the Black criminality frame. The Internet may aid in exacerbating stereotypes of Blacks by allowing users to selectively expose themselves to more crime news than they would receive from traditional media. Prior studies of race and crime coverage have analyzed Chicago, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia news. The current study seeks to reveal if Baton Rouge, Louisiana's local news websites present an accurate reflection of the crime committed in Baton Rouge and endeavors to reveal the amount of positive, counteractive depictions of Blacks present on such websites.

Introduction

Americans' perceptions of crime reveal broader opinions about society in general. Media scholars contend that television news crime coverage has been racialized to such an extent that it colors our attitudes about race (Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Dixon, 2006; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Oliver, 2003). When most Americans are prompted to think about crime, images of Blacks often come to mind (Gilliam & Iyengar, 1998).

These perceptions are largely shaped by crime coverage on the local news. Studies of news coverage in Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia reveal that Black criminals are shown on the evening news in greater proportions than they are documented in police reports. White criminals appear on the evening news in lower percentages when compared to police reports (Dixon, 2006; Gilliam et al., 1996; Romer et al., 1998). While suggesting who is more likely to commit crime in terms of race, the news also implies what race is more likely to fall victim to such crimes: Whites.

When analyzing those most likely to be shown as victims on local television news, the results reflect similar inconsistencies. Whites are portrayed as victims on the news in proportions that are much greater than police records document. Black victims, on the other hand, are broadcast on the news in proportions that are lower than the number of Blacks who have been victimized as reported in police documents (Romer et al., 1998). These depictions help establish the stereotype of Blacks as criminals in viewers' minds.

To aid in further stereotyping of Blacks as criminals, the news tends to suggest that Black criminals are more dangerous and guiltier than White criminals. Entman and Rojecki (2000) found that Black criminals are shown in handcuffs, shackles or various other forms of restraint

more often than White criminals are. This implies that Black criminals are dangerous people who cannot exercise restraint the way White criminals can. Furthermore, Black criminals' mug shots are shown more often than those of White criminals. Mug shots connote guiltiness. When people are shown the image of a mug shot, they tend to believe that the suspect committed the crime more easily than when there is no mug shot presented (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Production values and costs help to perpetuate these stereotypes. When news coverage is created at television stations, the cost and time of production is taken into great consideration (Gilliam et al., 2002). News producers prefer violent crime coverage because it can be produced quickly and with little cost; crime also garners more attention, and as a result, crime coverage is considered good for ratings (Gilliam et al., 2002; Zillman et al., 2004). Due to socio-economic factors, Blacks are prone to committing more violent crime than White people are (Rojecki & Entman, 2000). White collar crimes, which are largely committed by Whites, are not presented on local television news as often as violent crimes are (Rojecki & Entman, 2000). White collar crimes are not as easily or efficiently told because they tend to be more complex in nature than violent offenses are. As a result, the local news saturates its audience with violent crime that is generally committed by Blacks (Gilliam et al., 2002).

This type of reporting is beneficial for news stations that are interested in keeping operating costs low; however, it can be detrimental to audience members—and the perpetrators of the alleged crimes being covered. The audience is usually not presented with the context behind the crime to help them understand why it was committed, and the perpetrators may be evaluated more harshly because of this lack of context. Framing theorists contend that the way a story is presented, or framed, to an audience is very important to their evaluation of the issue. Entman (1993) found that when a story is framed, particular aspects of an issue may be

highlighted while others are omitted. When certain issues are discussed, they can cause viewers to evaluate the issue on those terms exclusively, or cause them to give more weight to the aspects presented in the story than other aspects that are left out.

Because news stations receive very event-specific details about the crime from police departments, their reporting of the crime tends to regurgitate many of the details they received directly from the police. With specific details of a crime, as the time, date, location and offense being reported from the local police department, the story will likely be presented in an episodic frame (Iyengar, 1999). Episodic frames generally present single occurrences that take place with great detail, but generally lack the broader context behind the occurrence that could help explain why it may have occurred, as would a story presented with a thematic frame.

A story presented in a thematic frame, on the other hand, might explain that the individual had been unemployed for months and lived in an economically depressed neighborhood where employment was scarce and thus felt compelled to steal as a last resort. Both frames presented the same crime; however, the episodic frame presented the crime as a single event that was independent of contributing factors. The thematic frame provided a broader context to help the audience understand why the crime was committed.

Framing researchers have found that episodic frames and thematic frames have significantly different influences on an individual's evaluation of an issue. Iyengar found that stories written with episodic frames cause viewers to attribute individual responsibility to the perpetrators. Thematic framing prompts viewers to consider why the crime may have occurred, and they are more likely to recognize society's failures and attribute societal responsibility for the crime. The framing of a crime story can also influence the punitive action taken against a

perpetrator, as viewers exposed to episodic frames are more susceptible to recommend harsher punishment for crime than viewers who have been exposed to thematic frames.

Further complicating Blacks' depiction on the news is its lack of diversified coverage of Blacks. Most news stories feature Whites; therefore, Whites are associated with numerous topics of discussion, both negative and positive (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). When a story features a Black person, however, he or she is usually a perpetrator, victim or dependent of society in some way (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Exemplars are personal descriptions of people who help convey an issue at hand (Brosius, 2003). Exemplars use individuals to explain a story or personify an abstract issue. They are employed in journalism often and tend to be remembered more vividly than the actual details of the story are remembered. Zillman (1999) found that when an exemplar belonging to a minority group is used, people form judgments about all other members of that group based on the presented exemplar. As exemplification theory suggests, when Blacks are framed as violent offenders on the news, Whites as well as the rest of society may associate such behavior with the majority of the Black race.

There is reason to believe, however, that the media can help salvage the negative perceptions of Blacks they have helped create. Positive images of Blacks on television may help do so. Entman and Rojecki (2000) found that the majority of White Americans are not racists; many Whites have few positive examples to draw upon when evaluating Black people. If more positive examples of Blacks were shown on television, more positive perceptions of them may result.

Research into the degree of contact Whites have with Blacks helps corroborate this argument. Gilliam et al. (2002) found that White respondents who live in racially integrated neighborhoods were less likely to associate Black people with crime than White people who lived in racially homogenous neighborhoods. Gilliam et al. (2002) concluded that respondents living in integrated neighborhoods experienced more personal interaction with Blacks, and as a result, did not rely solely on mediated messages to derive opinions about Black people.

Gilliam et al.'s findings implicitly suggest a way to stabilize Americans' association between Blacks and crime (2002). If people with positive examples of every day Blacks are less susceptible to believing the media's stereotypical depiction of Blacks as criminals, it seems that positive portrayals of Blacks in non-criminal stories can counteract negative opinions those with less interaction with Blacks may have.

Positive exemplars of Blacks may help achieve this goal. Entman and Rojecki (2000) found that Black characters on prime-time television programs were deemed acceptable by White audience members when they possessed "White traits." These traits were identified as disciplined, competent, and industrious. If more television newscasts showcased Blacks who displayed these traits, Whites with little interaction with Blacks would be able to form judgments about Blacks in a more balanced manner.

While much attention has been given to local television news and crime, their Internet counterparts' depiction of crime has not been studied as much. This medium should not be overlooked, however. Internet news coverage is unique because it allows users to selectively expose themselves to stories that interest them most (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). Literature on viewer preferences reveals that crime coverage is one of the most popular types of news coverage (Graber, 1998). Viewers' desire for crime news coupled with the ability to select any

story one desires to read, may overexpose an Internet news user to more crime news than he would have received had he used a traditional news source.

The selective exposure the Internet provides may lead to an increased consumption of crime news that already tends to over represent Blacks as criminals. This exacerbates an already harmful situation because as a result, any negative feelings one may harbor toward Blacks could be heightened if there are no examples of positive Black community members present on local news websites. This study, in part, seeks to determine how often positive, non-criminal Black exemplars are presented on local news websites.

Moreover, previous studies of race and crime news have analyzed non-Southern media. Research on the overrepresentation of Blacks on local news has been conducted in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. Southern media's discriminating past warrants study of its media. WLBT of Jackson, Mississippi, was the first television station in the United States to have its license revoked for not serving its Black community fairly (Fuller, 2005). Like other stations in the South, the station refused to cover or publicize many of the Civil Rights Movement's protests and demonstrations. Forty years later, Fuller (2005) found that WLBT, like many other news stations, contributed in representing Blacks as criminals and dangerous to society. Because southern media have been guilty of under serving their Black citizens in the past, analysis of such a racially-charged issue such as crime is important to conduct in this region.

The current study will analyze Baton Rouge, Louisiana's local news websites' coverage of crime. Baton Rouge's racial characteristics make it a unique city to explore crime news because the city has an almost equal population of Black and White citizens. Blacks make up 50.0% of Baton Rouge's population, whereas Whites comprise 45.7% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Because Blacks are not a minority in Baton Rouge, the relatively equal

amount of Blacks and Whites may cause news producers to be racially sensitive toward their racially balanced audiences, therefore influencing them to cover race more accurately than other cities that have studied crime news.

This study will analyze Baton Rouge's local news websites' representation of Black and White perpetrators to determine if their representations are consistent with Baton Rouge Police Department Crime Reports. This study will also assess how many positive depictions of Blacks are present on Baton Rouge's local news websites. To put any positive depictions of Blacks that may be found in perspective, this study will assess how many positive depictions of Whites are present on those websites as well.

Literature Review

Framing theory stems from a long line of media effects research (Scheufele, 2006). Magic Bullet theory, one of the earliest theories on media effects, proposed that the media exercised heavy influence on the audience. It posited that the audience's perception of reality is formed through media messages. Magic Bullet theory proposed that media influence audience members in a uniformed, direct, and immediate manner (Scheufele, 2006).

Magic Bullet originated during World War I, which can help put the currently defunct theory into context. Propaganda for the war effort was spreading wildly. Because Americans responded with emphatic support for the war effort, media researchers concluded that the media have the ability to form public opinion (Scheufele, 2006). However, mounting evidence against such an extreme theory that did not offer room for the public's interpretation, critical thinking skills, or other unmediated influences. This caused media researchers to reconsider Magic Bullet theory (Scheufele, 2006). Eventually, the theory was refuted, and weaker media effects were considered.

The next major phase in media effects research was selected and limited effects, which sprang up in the 1940s and 1950s. These findings supported the notion that media are influential, but the media were stripped of the reality-creating power they were once given with Magic Bullet theory (Scheufele, 2006). The selected and limited effects phase gave way to a new dawn of media effects research—one that recognized audience members' cognitive processes. This was during the 1970s, and this phase presupposed strong effects from the media.

The fourth phase of media effects research began in the 1980s. Framing theory was heavily researched during this phase and has maintained its credibility as a media effects theory

(Scheufele, 2006). Framing theory is now a widely accepted theory in mass communication research and is given considerable weight when assessing its practical implications (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1996; Scheufele, 2006). Framing theory is a highly influential tool in the mass communication field, as most scholars agree that framing creates the way an issue is presented and perceived (Entman, 1993; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Iyengar, 1996; Scheufele, 2006).

Framing has been used in various areas of mass communication, including journalism, public relations, and political communication. Frames can be subtle and are often unacknowledged, but they employ a consistent pattern when presenting an issue that has the power to affect interpretation. Entman wrote that when one frames an issue, he “select[s] some aspects of a perceived reality and make[s] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (1993, 52).

It is important to note the four aspects of frames that Entman described. When a frame promotes a “problem definition,” it identifies what an acting agent is doing, as well as the consequences of those actions (Entman, 1993). The issue identified as a problem is generally an issue that defies the mainstream culture’s moral system. The second aspect of a frame is its causal interpretation; this aspect of the frame identifies what sources created the problem that was previously identified (Entman, 1993). Next, the frame may make a moral evaluation of the problem and the sources that contributed to its existence. The moral evaluation usually appeals to at least one of society’s moral codes (Entman, 1993). Finally, as a frame concludes its identification of a problem, its catalysts, and a moral judgment of the issue, a frame may provide a resolution; again this resolution will likely align itself with the cultural values of the society it is created within (Entman, 1993).

Kahneman and Tversky (1984) illustrate one of the most powerful and frequently cited examples of how framing causes people to react to the same message differently when it is presented to them in two different ways. Kahneman and Tversky provided the following scenarios to respondents:

Imagine that the U.S. is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientist estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows: If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved. If Program B is adopted, there is a one-third probability that 600 people will be saved and a two-thirds probability that no people will be saved. Which of the two programs do you favor? (1984, p. 343).

Seventy-two percent of the respondents chose Program A, while 28 percent chose Program B. In another related experiment, identical proposals were presented to treat the above situation, but they were framed in terms of possible deaths instead of possible lives saved. The researchers asked: “If Program C is adopted, 400 people will die. If Program D is adopted, there is a one-third probability that nobody will die and a two-thirds probability that 600 people will die” (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984, p. 343). The respondents’ preferences were reversed with the latter scenarios (Programs C and D); Program C was chosen by 22 percent of the respondents though its matching scenario, Program A, was chosen by 72 percent. Program D was chosen by 78 percent though its matching scenario, Program B, was chosen by a mere 28 percent.

Kahneman and Tversky’s work illustrates how people interpreted the solutions to the hypothetical health threat and chose the frame that best aligned itself with their moral compasses when evaluating the proposed dilemma. Frames “define problems”—conclude what causal

agents are doing; “diagnose causes”—identify the causal agents responsible for problem; “make moral judgments”—evaluate causal agents or their effects; and “suggest remedies”—provide and explain resolutions for the problems (Entman, 1993, 52). By definition, then, it seems that the framing of a social problem would inherently ascribe responsibility for the problem to some form of causal agent. This ascription may be implied or blatantly stated, however, as Entman’s definition of framing predicts, the framing of social dilemmas will likely identify something—or someone—as the cause of the problem.

Framing Crime on Local Television News

Most Americans find it difficult to muddle through political issues by themselves. They often rely on the media to help inform and explain political issues to them (Iyengar, 1991). Iyengar writes that political issues tend to be complex and they usually take more time to explain than news casts have to allot to any one story. Iyengar (1991) writes that because the public depends on the media for political knowledge, the way the media frame political issues is of particular importance.

Crime is one of the most prevalent political issues on television news (Iyengar, 1991). This is because crime is an issue that resonates with most Americans because it can have a personal impact on their lives. The majority of Americans report that they receive information about crime in their communities from local television news (Klite et al., 1997). This is not surprising because crime reporting is great content for news programmers facing competitive commercial pressures (Gilliam et al. 2002). Local television news tends to display violent crime each night because the dramatic, visual effect it has on viewers is considered to be good for ratings (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). As a result, it has the ability to shape the way people think about who commits crime.

Blacks are more likely to commit violent crime because of high poverty levels, high unemployment, discrimination, and many other social factors (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Because of these circumstances, Blacks are the most frequently shown criminals on local news shows, but there is little explanation about why violent crime is a largely Black phenomenon (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). This causes viewers to think about crime in terms of Blackness, but it does not equip them with much of the information they need to make such evaluations because the framing of crime lacks much of the contextual background to help viewers make rational judgments (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Episodic Framing vs. Thematic Framing

Framing is largely responsible for the story's failure to mention the context of the story. Due to its tendency to highlight certain aspects of an issue and omit other aspects, the news can heighten viewers' fear of crime because they are only given one side of the story (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Episodic framing is used when journalists describe specific occurrences instead of broader social or political implications influencing the story (Iyengar, 1996). The episodic news frame can be illustrated through a case study or an event-oriented report (Iyengar, 1991). The nature of episodic framing is beneficial for television news because it provides anecdotes, which can provide the drama that television news typically shows (Iyengar, 1991). Episodic framing is also easier to understand and is attractive to television news producers because it provides great pictures to accompany the story (Iyengar, 1996).

Episodic framing's contrast, thematic framing, will take a political issue and expound upon it in a more general or abstract format. It takes more time to develop stories using thematic framing. Thematic framing delves into the historical, political, geographical, or social

background of the issue being discussed (Iyengar, 1996). It explains the circumstances that lead to episodic events.

Episodic framing of a Black man accused of committing a robbery would identify the location, time, date and perpetrator of the crime. Thematic framing of the same story might explain, for example, how Blacks are disproportionately unemployed when compared to Whites and focus on racial discrimination in employment. This additional context could help explain why the man may have committed the robbery. It is important to note that individual responsibility is inherent in episodic framing, and thematic framing suggests societal responsibility (Iyengar, 1996). When presented with both types of framing, news viewers perceive subjects accordingly (Iyengar, 1996). Crime and race studies reveal that when crime is framed in episodic terms, viewers are more likely to attribute crime to individual responsibility (Iyengar, 1996). Thematic framing causes viewers to more readily recognize society's failures, and they are less likely to be critical of the subjects in the story and attribute societal responsibility for the crime (Iyengar, 1996).

New stories do not use one type of frame exclusively. Some news stories can combine characteristics of both episodic and thematic frames (Iyengar, 1991). However, Iyengar (1991) found that there is typically one frame that dominates the other. As episodic frames are more prevalent in the news media, they are also the type of frame that prevails over thematic frames (Iyengar, 1991).

Cultivation Theory and Crime

Before the advent of mass mediated communication, humans relied on face-to-face communication (Gerbner, 1998). They did not have televisions, radios, or Internet news to

inform them of the latest news, yet, with the emergence of the printing press, news papers were available for the poorest citizens to purchase (Gerbner, 1998). This revolutionized a world that once depended on close family or friends to update each other on news events; with the printing press, news editors were capable of informing mass populations of the latest news events (Gerbner, 1998). This caused people to decrease their dependence on friends or family for public information and allowed them to trust people they did not even know, such as journalists, about the happenings in the world (Gerbner, 1998).

The age of televised news, created an even larger dependency on news organizations for the information. It also allowed a larger population of people to trust in the media for information about their world. The television is the world's most popular medium; as a result, it is one of the most popular forms of news dissemination (Gerbner, 1998). It has become the "primary common source of socialization and everyday information" (Gerbner, 1998, p. 4). It transmits a unified set of images and messages that are routinely, and ritualistically, used by television viewers (Gerbner, 1998).

Television is largely produced for commercial purposes; therefore, the dominant culture's norms and values are transmitted in messages because they are the majority of consumers that television programs are marketed to. Analyses of television's presentations reveal a recurrent, overarching pattern of messages that are shown to mass publics (Gerbner, 1998). Cultivation theorists have found that television's consistent presentation of such messages forms television viewers' perceptions of the world. Cultivation theory contends that "repetitive, long-range, and consistent exposure to patterns common to most programming, such as casting, social typing, and the 'fate' of different social types, cultivates stable and widely-shared images of life and society" (Gerbner, 1998, p. 7).

Cultivation theory has been found to influence public opinion of crime. Gerbner (1998) writes that news stations' reporting of crime causes viewers to think about crime in their community in like terms. Mean World Syndrome, a derivative of cultivation theory, posits that viewers who watch television news more frequently will believe that the world is a much more dangerous place than it really is; low frequency news viewers are less fearful of crime and the world in general (Gerbner, 1998). When polled about how dangerous the world is, high frequency viewers of television news agree that "most people cannot be trusted" and most people are "just looking out for themselves" (Gerbner, 1998, p. 11). Low frequency viewers of television have much more positive opinions about humanity and the world in general, as they are less likely to agree with those statements (Gerbner, 1998). Gerbner (1998) also found that although crime was on the decrease at the time of his study, high frequency news viewers rated crime in their community as a large problem, whereas light news viewers were less likely to do so.

Just as local television news molds the amount of crime that people think is committed in their communities, it also shapes the way people think about who commits violent crime. Local television news frames crime in terms of race, as study of crime coverage has shown that it consistently associates Blacks with criminality in an unbalanced manner (Dixon, 2005; Dixon 2006a; Dixon, 2007; Entman, 2000; Gilliam et al., 1996; Oliver, 1999). Entman (2000) found that racial representation on Chicago's local television news, for example, was not consistent with Chicago's crime reports. He found that the news overrepresented Black perpetrators, underrepresented Black victims, and overrepresented White victims.

Intergroup, interrole, and interreality comparisons of California's news coverage also reveal that Blacks are associated with crime in greater rates than their White counterparts are.

Dixon & Linz (2000a) studied a random sample of local television news in Los Angeles and Orange counties to analyze the representations of Blacks, Latinos, and Whites as lawbreakers. Intergroup comparisons—comparisons between groups of people—revealed that Blacks and Latinos were more likely to be shown as criminals on the news than Whites were. Interrole comparisons—which analyzed how often Blacks, Latinos, and Whites were shown as law breakers or law defenders—revealed that Blacks and Latinos were more likely to be shown as law breakers while Whites were shown as defenders of the law more often than any other group analyzed.

Furthermore, interreality comparisons—presentation on news versus California Department of Justice crime reports—revealed that Blacks were presented on the news as criminals more often than crime reports documented their arrests; Latinos and Whites were underrepresented as lawbreakers on television news when compared to their arrests documented in crime reports (Dixon & Linz, 2000a). Similarly, Gilliam et al. (1996) found that local television news in Los Angeles exaggerated Black crime rates through its preoccupation with violent crime. Violent crime was the most reported type of crime on Los Angeles's local news (Gilliam et al., 1996). As a result, these persistent violent crime reports caused Los Angeles residents to perceive crime in terms of Blackness.

Not only does local news establish what race the criminals are, it also promotes who is likely to be victimized: Whites. Romer et al. (1998) found that local news in Philadelphia generally portrays Whites as victims of violent crime, while Blacks are generally portrayed as the perpetrators of that crime. In Los Angeles's local news, Dixon and Linz (2000b) found that Whites are more likely to be portrayed as victims in local television news than in actual police

reports. While Whites were overrepresented as victims, Blacks and Latinos were underrepresented as victims of violent crime (Dixon & Linz, 2000b).

Moreover, in addition to framing Blacks as criminals through over representation, the news also frames Blacks as more dangerous criminals in more subtle ways. Crime stories that featured Black perpetrators lacked information that would cause viewers to identify them as individuals. While 47 percent of White perpetrators had their names displayed on screen to help viewers identify them on an individual level, only 26 percent of Black perpetrators' names were displayed on screen. Omitting the Black perpetrators' name on screen can cause viewers to categorize all Blacks as criminals, instead of highlighting individual characteristics about the perpetrators themselves (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Oliver (2003) recognized that a large amount of innocent Black men were gunned down by police officers who assumed they were dangerous criminals. Wondering why these tragedies were becoming a trend, she researched the media's representation of Black men to uncover why they were generally perceived as threatening individuals. Oliver analyzed the news in Philadelphia to determine how Black men were portrayed. Her analyses illustrated that violent crime was more likely to be associated with Blacks than Whites. She also discovered that news portrayals of Black men consistently depicted them as threatening and dangerous more often than any other race.

Additional research corroborates the finding that Black perpetrators are framed as more violent or dangerous than non-Black perpetrators are. Blacks are shown in the physical custody of police more often than Whites are. Being shackled by the hands and/or feet implies that the suspect is a dangerous person whose every move cannot be trusted. Blacks were shown in some

form of binding apparatus in 38 percent of Chicago's local news, whereas Whites were shown in handcuffs 15 percent of the time (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Furthermore, not only are Blacks framed as more threatening individuals than their White counterparts, they are also framed as guiltier suspects. Mug shots of Blacks are four times more likely to be shown on television news than those of Whites (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). The compositions of mug shots, with their obvious grid lines in the background, tend to convey a presumption of a suspect's guilt more readily than a normal picture of a suspect or no picture at all does.

These representations help the news frame crime in terms of Blackness, and people begin to associate crime with Blacks (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Dixon 2008). Oliver et al. (2004) found that people more readily select Afrocentric physical features for criminals than they do Eurocentric characteristics. Participants of the study were presented with various news stories. After viewing the stories, the participants were asked to reconstruct the subject's face. Participants were more likely to select Afrocentric nose, mouth, and skin types when creating the face for the subject of the crime story than Eurocentric features (Oliver et al., 2004).

Additionally, Oliver (1999) found that people mistakenly identify Blacks as perpetrators of crimes even though they were originally told that a White person committed the crime. Oliver conducted an experiment to examine White viewers' identification memory of Black and White violent crime offenders in newscasts. Participants viewed a news story about a murder that displayed a wanted poster of a Black suspect or a White suspect. After viewing the news cast, the participants were immediately shown a series of photographs. They were asked to identify the suspect in the photographs. After three months, the participants were asked to identify the

suspects they saw again. Over time, participants who had originally seen the White suspects were more likely to mistakenly identify Blacks as the suspect.

Peffley et al. (1996) found that television news has caused viewers to associate violent crime with Blacks, as well. Peffley et al. conducted an experiment where participants viewed an actual newscast of a story on violent crime. There was no explicit reference to race in the audio component of the story. The only reference to race was the picture of the offender. When participants were exposed to a Black criminal, they perceived him as more guilty, more deserving of punishment, more likely to commit future crimes, and displayed greater contempt for the offender than participants who were exposed to White offenders.

Hurwitz and Peffley (2005) found that crime has become so associated as a Black issue that visual representations of race can be supplanted by words. They found that racial language such as “inner city” can impact attitudes toward race and crime. Hurwitz and Peffley surveyed attitudes about punitive crime policies. They used two surveys to determine if “inner city” primed racial attitudes. One survey contained the words “violent criminals,” while the other survey added “violent inner city criminals.” When respondents were exposed to the stimulus “violent inner city criminals,” Hurwitz and Peffley found that racial attitudes were primed. Respondents recommended harsher punitive action when presented with the words “inner city.” These results suggest that “inner city” connotes Black; as Dixon (2008a) found, harsher punitive action is recommended when Blacks are the alleged offenders.

The way people feel about race helps predict the judgments they will make on related “racialized” issues (Valentino et al., 2002). Because crime is closely tied to Blacks, people report greater fear and anxiety about crime when a non-White offender is involved. Gilliam and Iyengar (1998) found that local news promotes a “superpredator” script when covering crime news. The

“superpredator,” who is a young Black or Hispanic male, was featured in an experimental crime story. Another experimental crime story featured a White or Asian male. The information on the crime was exactly the same for both stories; the only difference in the crime story was the race of the offender. Viewers who were exposed to the Black or Hispanic male expressed greater fear of crime than those who saw the White or Asian offender. Additionally, viewers who watched the Black or Hispanic male in a crime story recommended harsher punitive action than those who saw the White or Asian crime story.

Dixon (2006a) found similar evidence that people are more likely to promote the death penalty or tougher crime laws when they are exposed to Black crime. When respondents were presented with crime news that depicted Black perpetrators, they favored tougher punitive measures such as the death penalty and three-strikes legislation; however, endorsements for punishments of White perpetrators of the same crime were less severe (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000).

Schema Theory and Race

Schema theory can be very helpful when trying to understand how people process information from the mass media. Severin and Tankard define schema theory as a “cognitive structure consisting of organized knowledge about situations and individuals that has been abstracted from prior experiences” (2001, p. 82). When viewers receive messages from the media, they store that information in mental compartments. These messages help them navigate social situations that involve other groups in society.

Relying on racial cues through stereotypes, television news often supplements or introduces elements into the audience’s schemas about Blacks. People frequently refer to their

schema set when making evaluations about minorities, especially when they do not have personal relationships with members of the group (Armstrong & Nelson, 2005). Through consistent exposure to the same stereotypical portrayals in television, viewers unknowingly start to accumulate bits and pieces of information about racial minorities (Ramasubramanian, 2005).

When viewers receive the same messages about Blacks, their schema on that particular group in society is coded in their brain and can be referred to when making evaluations about that group (Dixon, 2006b). This information is part of the nodes that represent the schema set for perceptions of that group. If a stereotype is activated, such as a Black criminal frame, it can potentially activate a node that may bias the rest of the information being conveyed by the story (Dixon, 2006). For example, if one receives frequent stereotypical messages that relate Blacks to crime, over time his schema set will begin to associate Blacks with crime. When he is presented with a crime story, his “crime node” may be connected to a “black node.” As a result, he may assume that the perpetrator of the crime was Black because his schema set associates crime with Blacks.

The presentation of stereotypes creates the schema in which people process information about Blacks (Dixon, 2008). Respondents who are heavy local television news viewers are more likely to assume that a perpetrator is Black when making race and crime judgments than light television news viewers are (Dixon & Azocar, 2007). Furthermore, when viewers are presented with news that does not identify the race of the suspect, they refer to a Black criminal schema to process the message and assume that the perpetrator was Black (Dixon & Azocar, 2007).

However, the unbalanced percentage of Black criminality on local television news and episodic framing are not the only contributors to negative schema—and evaluations—of Blacks (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). The lack of diversified news coverage serves to worsen evaluations

of Blacks (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). The majority of news stories feature Whites; therefore perceptions of Whites can be derived from many different contexts. Just as there are White criminals shown on local television news, there are also White experts, politicians, teachers, etc. (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

The issue that exacerbates the Black criminal stereotype is that—outside of sports and entertainment—there are few positive portrayals of Blacks in the news. If Blacks are not depicted as the victims or perpetrators of a crime, they are shown as dependent on the government—and the audience member’s tax dollars—in some form (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Moreover, most news stories associate Blacks with issues that are usually controversial (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Often times, when Blacks are featured in news stories, they are associated with “Black issues” such as unemployment, racial discrimination, gangs, drugs, and welfare (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Furthermore, Blacks who defy the criminal stereotype and are not professionally employed still fall victim to negative coverage. Research has found that Black politicians garner little positive news coverage. When Black politicians are reported on, the story generally includes a scandal or some type of wrong doing (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). In the absence of a scandal, Black politicians who are working to improve their communities have been framed as self-seeking individuals who do not desire to improve the average Americans’ lives, but only Blacks’. Black politicians have been framed as individuals who use their political clout to benefit Blacks exclusively (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

From the literature on Black portrayals in the media, it seems that there are many factors that contribute to associating Blacks with a frame fraught with blame for the ills of society. These portrayals of Blacks influence audience members’ perception of them in two ways: the

persistent “Black” news reinforces a norm of what being Black is supposed to mean and increases the distance between Blacks and the majority of society (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). The consistent portrayals of Blacks as parasites to the communities in which they live offer no counteractive depictions of positive, contributing Black members of society, and this lack of a balanced portrayal causes Blacks to be framed—and blamed—as liabilities to American society (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Exemplar Effects on the Blame Frame

Exemplars are personal descriptions of people who are interested in an issue; they are often very vivid in their conveyance of the information, but they are generally not representative of public opinion (Brosius, 2003). Exemplars may be used in man-on-the-street interviews or in feature stories (Brosius, 2003). Exemplars are often employed in journalism to help illustrate a story or emphasize the urgency of a particular problem (Brosius, 2003). The text or script of a message may actually be valid, but audiences do not remember verbose information that may provide facts and statistics as easily as they remember exemplars. Though summary-type information, information that explains the issue but provides no personal examples, is valid, exemplars are much more vivid; the use of an exemplar may remain in the audience’s mind long after the message is received (Brosius, 2003). As a result, exemplars help people form evaluations on issues more than the actual script of the message can (Zillman, 1999).

Exemplars have this effect because recipients of a message give less attention to concrete information when there is a vividly displayed event that engages their emotions (Zillman, 1999). Exemplars have a powerful effect in crime coverage because this attention can become exaggerated when it aligns itself with the schemas that are present in viewers’ minds. Exemplars that relate to ones’ schema set can exert heavy influence on judgment due to frequent exposure

(Zillman, 1999). When exemplars of certain groups in society are employed, Zillman found that people use them as reliable information about all other people in that group or the group itself (1999). Therefore, according to exemplification theory, when Blacks are framed as violent criminals on local news, Whites may form judgments about the entire Black race.

Steps toward Rewriting the Blame Frame

The literature on Whites' attitudes toward Blacks may paint a terribly critical picture about White sentiment. One may conclude that White hostility toward Blacks is racially motivated, but Entman and Rojecki (2000) found that many Whites are not racists. Racial isolation from Blacks, however, can incite negative feelings when the images of Blacks that Whites are exposed to are primarily negative.

Entman and Rojecki created a spectrum of White feelings toward Blacks that ranges from racial comity, to ambivalence, to animosity, and then outright racism (2000). Whites may express ambivalence or animosity toward Blacks because they simply do not see many positive depictions of them and therefore have conflicted feelings about them. They suggest that more positive depictions of Blacks could balance Whites' feelings about Blacks and allow them to evaluate them more accurately.

Literature on the effects of positive depictions of minorities, or counter-stereotypical exemplars, has found conflicting results, however. Some studies have shown that positive depictions of minorities have helped decrease prejudice toward minority groups, yet other studies show a reinforcement of hostility toward minorities when positive depictions of them are presented. Ramasubramanian & Oliver (2007) presented Asians as passive and traditional in stereotypical messages. They used danger and crime to present stereotypical messages of Blacks.

In contrast, counter-stereotypical messages of Asians presented them as modern and wealthy, whereas counter-stereotypical messages of Blacks presented them as gentle and entrepreneurs.

Ramasubramanian and Oliver (2007) found that when respondents were presented with the counter-stereotypical stories that referenced Asians as modern and wealthy, their positive schema set on Asians was activated; thus, prejudice against Asians decreased. Counter-stereotypical messages of Blacks as gentle and entrepreneurs, however, were found to reinforce hostility toward Blacks as a group. When respondents were presented with stereotypical messages of Asians and Blacks, they evaluated both minorities less positively, revealing that a negative schema set of Asians and Blacks had been activated (Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2007).

Casas and Dixon (2003) found no difference in respondents' evaluations of minorities when they were presented with stereotypical or counter-stereotypical messages of such groups. Casas and Dixon used stereotypical exemplars that likened Blacks to criminals. Their counter-stereotypical exemplars showcased successful Blacks in business. Casas and Dixon (2003) found that stereotypical exemplars increased fear of victimization from Black and Hispanics. They also found that the counter-stereotypical exemplars reinforced prejudice, while also causing respondents to hold Blacks responsible for their own success or failure.

The literature seems to suggest that counter-stereotypical messages of Blacks have no positive effects on respondents' evaluations of Blacks, yet there is reason to believe that counter-stereotypical exemplars may yield positive evaluations of Blacks after all. Ramasubramanian and Oliver's study, as well as Casas's and Dixon's study, both used counter-stereotypical messages of Blacks that showed them as entrepreneurs. This presentation may have caused many respondents to feel that societal factors no longer restrict Blacks from success, which in turn

could have prompted them to feel greater contempt against the stereotypical messages of Blacks as criminals. It seems that the *type* of counter-stereotypical message that was presented was actually counterproductive; however, if counter-stereotypical messages of Blacks represent a wider range of typical, every day Blacks in the community and not only as successful entrepreneurs, there could be a greater acceptance of every day Blacks as positive members of the community.

Gilliam et al. (2002) corroborate the argument that exposure to normal, law-abiding, common, but positive Blacks yields greater acceptance of them. Gilliam and colleagues studied White attitudes about black criminal schemas in relation to how close they lived to Blacks. They reasoned that interracial neighborhood contact could lessen the negative feelings Whites may have toward Blacks because they have greater contact with regular, working, law-abiding Blacks, and as a result, they hypothesized that people living in interracial neighborhoods would be less susceptible to the negative effects of stereotypical crime news.

Gilliam and his colleagues may have found a possible solution to the damaging effects of crime news: positive examples of every day Blacks. Gilliam et al. (2002) found that White respondents living in mainly White neighborhoods were more likely to support harsh punitive crime policies, express negative feelings toward Blacks, and felt more distant from Blacks as a group when they were exposed to stereotypical crime coverage. However, Whites who lived in racially heterogeneous neighborhoods were either unaffected by negative crime stories or less likely to support punitive crime policies, expressed more positive feelings toward Blacks, and felt closer to Blacks as a group.

More favorable exemplars of Blacks can be used to offset the negative ones that are frequently depicted on local news. Entman and Rojecki (2000) analyzed the Black characters

featured in prime-television programs that were deemed acceptable by White audience members. They found that those characters exhibited the following “White traits”: discipline, restraint, quiet competence, and industry (Entman & Rojecki, 2000, p. 159). Following similar logic, if local television news portrayed exemplars of Blacks who were disciplined, restrained, competent yet humble, and industrious, the black criminal frame could possibly be lessened, and White people would be able to evaluate Blacks on terms that represent the diverse nature of the race.

The Blame Frame on the Internet

Previous studies of race and crime news have focused on local television news coverage; less attention has been given to local television news’ website coverage of crime, yet increasing numbers of Americans rely on the Internet as their news source. Sixty-one percent of Americans report that they receive their news from the Internet, rather than newspapers or radio (Pew Internet, 2010). Though most traditional news websites contain the same information as their broadcast news counterparts, the unique attributes that the Internet provides warrants study of this particular medium’s coverage of crime and race (Melican & Dixon, 2008).

Unlike print and television news, the Internet allows users to select the stories they are interested in learning more about (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). Traditional news sources imply a hierarchy of importance through the order of their presentation (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). The Internet does not prioritize its news to such an extent and encourages readers to be selective about the stories they want to read; thus, Internet users have the ability to create their own hierarchy of story importance by choosing to read whatever stories they please (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002).

“Soft” news categories, such as crime and sports, incite greater interest among newsreaders (Bennett, 2001). Crime stories have been reported to be among the most popular topics people actively select to read¹. In traditional newspapers, people gravitate to the local crime section before choosing to read national or international news (Graber, 1988). Study of the types of coverage Internet readers select yields the same results. Zillmann et al. (2004) found that users exercised greater selective exposure to Internet articles that use a conflict and agony frame than misfortune and economic frames and factual frames. Zillmann et al. (2001) also observed that readers spend more time reading conflict and agony-framed stories than they do reading misfortune and economic-framed stories or factual stories. Crime stories are typically written with conflict and agony frames (Zillman et al., 2001).

In effect, the Internet may exacerbate the unbalanced, out of context notions of crime and race by allowing users to selectively expose themselves to more crime news than ever before. Increased exposure to Internet news’ overrepresentation of Black people as criminals, may worsen negative stereotypes of Blacks especially when there is no positive news to counteract the crime stories.

Previous studies of race and crime news have analyzed local news coverage in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Chicago. The researcher has not found similar studies of Southern media; therefore, the current study will analyze Baton Rouge, Louisiana’s local news coverage of crime. The current study attempts to uncover if Baton Rouge’s television news websites accurately report crime in terms that are racially proportionate to Baton Rouge crime statistics.

¹ WAFB Web Manager, Cheryl Craig, stated that the most popular news stories on wafb.com are crime stories. She stated that the most viewed stories feature crimes or Baton Rouge’s most wanted. WBRZ Sales Manager, Jared Broussard, stated that the most popular stories on wbrz.com are sports stories. The second most popular stories are the “Breaking News” stories. Neither station separates its crime stories from the general category of “Local News” or “Breaking News;” as a result, neither could give an accurate estimate of the percentage of crime stories that are read. The researcher was unable to contact anyone at WVLA about wvla.com’s website traffic.

The study also seeks to find out if these websites provide positive portrayals of Black people to balance any negative stereotypes of Blacks that viewers may receive during crime coverage.

As a result, the current study attempts to answer the following questions:

RQ 1) Do local Baton Rouge news websites present Black and White perpetrators in numbers that reflect actual crime rates, as reported in Baton Rouge area police reports?

RQ 2) Do local Baton Rouge news websites present White individuals as positive, contributing members to their communities?

RQ 3) Do local Baton Rouge news websites present Black individuals as positive, contributing members to their communities?

Method

The researcher analyzed the websites of three local Baton Rouge news stations: the ABC affiliate, WBRZ; the CBS affiliate, WAFB; and the NBC affiliate, WVLA.² The daily content on the home page of each website and the content on the following pages were analyzed:

Continuous News (WBRZ), News (WAFB), and Local Headlines (WVLA). Data were analyzed from March 8 to April 8, 2010. The researcher selected this time period because it was not a sweeps period, a period where news stations clamor for high ratings (Shidler & Lowry, 1995). Furthermore, while the summer months experience an increase in violent crime, early spring is a time of year that experiences relatively normal levels of violent crime (Anderson, 2001). A census of all crime stories and all human interest stories reported on the three websites during the period of data collection were used as the data for this study. The unit of analysis was the story.

A total of 123 stories were collected during the data collection phase. There were 105 crime stories and 18 counteractive stories collected. The average word length for crime stories was 116.23 words; the average word length for counteractive stories was 140.39 words. WBRZ's and WAFB's reporters and anchors are racially identical. Both stations have 13.64% Black reporters; the majority of the news room is White. The researcher could not find the racial demographics of WVLA's news room.

Local stories were defined as stories that occurred within the boundaries patrolled by BRPD. As depicted in Appendix C, the police department segments the city into four districts. The boundaries of each district were found on the BRPD website. District one serves North Baton Rouge. It is bordered by Evangeline (north), Florida Blvd. (south), the Mississippi River

² There are four local Baton Rouge news stations. The researcher excluded the Fox affiliate, WGMB, from the sample because many of its stories were identical to those found on WVLA; including them in the sample may have skewed the data set.

(west) and Airline Highway (east). District two serves South Baton Rouge. It is bordered by Florida Blvd. (north), the city limits (south), the Mississippi River (west) and Essen and Lobdell (east). District three serves the eastern part of Baton Rouge. It is bordered roughly by Jefferson Highway and Airline Highway (west), Greenwell Springs Road (north), and stretches to the city limits (east and south). District four serves the extreme northern part of Baton Rouge, including the area traditionally known as Scotlandville. It is bordered by Thomas Road (north), Evangeline (south), the Mississippi River (west) and city limits (east). Crime stories were selected for analysis if the alleged perpetrator resided in or committed the alleged offense within such boundaries. Counteractive stories were selected for analysis if the counteractive exemplar resided in or engaged in positive action within the aforementioned boundaries. When the article mentioned the street or area of Baton Rouge where the event occurred, the researcher used Google Map to determine if it was within the above BRPD boundaries.

Crime Stories

Crime stories were defined as stories that present illegal acts in which an arrest was made or when a person was questioned about an illegal act or wanted on suspicion of committing an illegal act. Crime included the following acts that are reported in Baton Rouge crime reports: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor theft, arson, and negligent homicide (Baton Rouge Police Department, 2009). Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD) Uniform Crime Reports³ were used in this analysis. The crime reports listed each of the previously mentioned crimes by the race and gender of the offenders.

³ The most current crime reports available to the researcher were 2008 crime reports. BRPD crime reports were obtained through the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Human Interest Stories

Human interest stories were defined as non-crime related stories that present soft-news; for the purposes of this study, soft news was defined as a non-crime story that is “more sensational, more personality-centered, less time-bound, more practical, and more incident-based than other news” (Patterson, 2000, p.4).

The human interest stories selected for analysis were those that featured individuals who live within the BRPD-patrolled boundaries or executed the act that is the central topic of the story within those Baton Rouge city boundaries. Human interest stories were selected in this way because the researcher sought to determine how many counteractive examples of Blacks in the Baton Rouge community are used as exemplars to possibly offset the depictions of Black criminals shown in the community. The human interest stories selected for analysis featured individuals or groups who exemplify positive portrayals of community members who reside within those boundaries.

As previously stated, Entman and Rojecki (2000) found that Blacks who represent positive traits such as discipline, competence, and diligence were perceived as positive and reassuring to Whites. Human interest stories that feature Black exemplars who represent what Entman and Rojecki found as comforting to Whites were selected. Because these human interest stories selected seek to balance the negative portrayals of Blacks that crime coverage tends to depict, for the purposes of this study, they will be called counteractive examples. Counteractive exemplars were divided into two categories: community-oriented or individually-focused.

Community-oriented Counteractive Exemplars

Community-oriented counteractive exemplars were defined as individuals who engage in positive actions that improved the community. Their actions had consequences that directly intended to influence individuals other than themselves. Community-oriented counteractive exemplars included but were not limited to: individuals who engage in community service, community organizing, or community improvement; individuals involved in volunteerism, mentoring, rebuilding homes, or eradicating negative influences in their community in some fashion; acts of heroism; individuals who put their life/wellbeing on the line to help another person/people in distress; a person who sacrifices his time, energy, or money to maintain harmony or goodwill in his community.

Individually-focused Counteractive Exemplars

Individually-focused counteractive exemplars were defined as individuals who engage in positive actions that improved their lives personally. Their actions may have had unintended consequences that affected others' lives, however, there was no direct mention or indication of how such actions could benefit others. Individually-focused counteractive exemplars included but were not limited to: displaying an individual's expertise on an issue; a hard-working student or professional; an individual who is interviewed for a positive, non-crime related issue. Individually-focused counteractive examples include people who attempt to better themselves spiritually, financially, educationally, physically, or emotionally; he may demonstrate discipline of some sort in working toward his goal.

Coding

The researcher was the sole coder for this study. The researcher identified the race of the individuals featured in the counteractive stories and crime stories. Articles were printed in color therefore when photographs accompanied the article, the race of the perpetrator was inferred from skin tone. When the race of the perpetrator was not mentioned or not easily identifiable, the perpetrator's race was coded as "not mentioned" or "hard to identify" as seen in Section XV of the code book. The percentage of Black perpetrators in online news content was compared to the percentage of Black perpetrators in BRPD crime reports. The percentage of White perpetrators in online news content was compared to the percentage of White perpetrators in BRPD crime reports. Stories that coded race as "race not mentioned" were excluded from analysis because the crime reports did not have a "race not mentioned" category. Because the representation of race in news stories was compared to the race of offenders reported in crime reports, the researcher concluded that only news stories that directly identified race should be used in the analysis for RQ1.

In addition to the race of the perpetrator being coded, as seen in Sections VII-XI, the following features of the article were also coded: the type of crime committed; any mention of past criminal history; whether the perpetrator was arrested, jailed and/or questioned; if the name of the perpetrator was included in the article.

Results

Table 1 lists the results for each variable analyzed.

Table 1

Descriptive table

	Percentage	N	Word Count
Website			
WAFB	48.78%	60	
WBRZ	44.72%	55	
WVLA	6.50%	8	
Average Length			119.76
Criminal History			
Yes	5.71%	6	
No	94.29%	99	
Perpetrator Status			
Arrested	54.29%	57	
Questioned	.95%	1	
Wanted	31.43%	33	
No Mention	13.33%	14	
Perpetrator Name			
Yes	60.00%	63	
No	40.00%	42	
Victim Name			
Yes	25.71%	27	
No	46.67%	49	
No Mention	27.62%	29	
Perpetrator Photo			
Yes	49.52%	52	
No	50.78%	53	
Victim Photo			
Yes	2.86%	3	
No	71.43%	75	
No Mention	25.71%	27	
Crime Type			
Homicide	37.14%	39	
Rape	5.71%	6	
Robbery	16.20%	17	
Aggravated Assault	15.24%	16	
Burglary	2.86%	3	
Larceny	.0%	0	
Motor Theft	.0%	0	
Arson	.95%	1	
Negligent Homicide	.95%	1	
Other	19.05%	20	
Not stated	1.90%	2	
Perpetrator Race			
Black	40.00%	42	
White	6.67%	7	
Hispanic	.0%	0	
Other	.95%	1	

Table (continued)

	Percentage	N	Word Count
Perpetrator Race			
Hard to Identify	2.86%	3	
Not Mentioned	49.52%	52	
Victim Race			
Black	.95%	1	
White	.0%	0	
Hispanic	.0%	0	
Other	.0%	0	
Hard to Identify	.95%	1	
Not Mentioned	71.43%	75	
Victim Not Mentioned	26.67%	28	
Quote			
Yes	27.78%	5	
No	72.22%	13	
Not Sure	.0%	0	
Counteractive Race			
Black	44.44%	8	
White	33.33%	6	
Hispanic	.0%	0	
Other	.0%	0	
Not Mentioned	.0%	0	

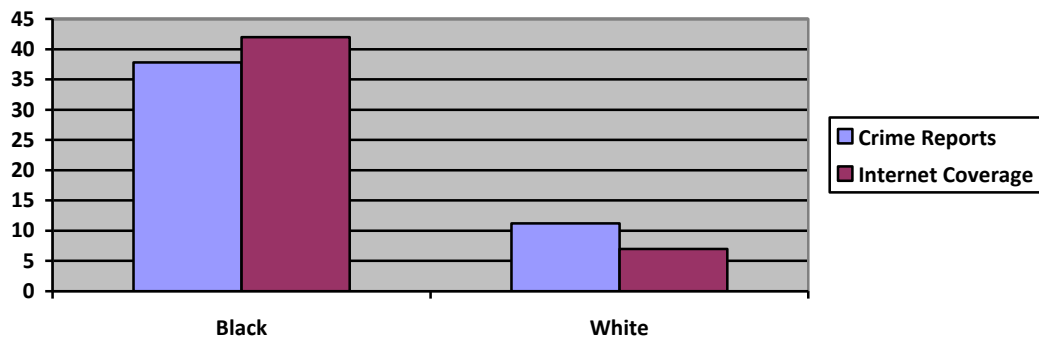
Website presentation of race in crime coverage was about as likely to be unreported as it was to be reported. As shown in Table 3, 49.52% of stories did not mention the race of the perpetrator. As stated in Methods, stories that did not directly identify the race of the perpetrator were excluded from analysis.

To assess whether Baton Rouge websites present Black and White perpetrators in numbers that are reflective of Baton Rouge area crime reports (RQ1), a chi-square test was conducted where the frequency of Black and White perpetrators shown on the websites (observed frequency) was compared to the frequency of Black and White arrests documented in BRPD Police Reports (expected frequency). Due to uncertainty of the race of the perpetrator in the crime story or the race having been omitted from the article, a total of 49 stories, where race was overtly mentioned in some way, were analyzed in the chi-square test. Under the guidelines of $p < .05$, the results were not statistically significant; however, they trend toward the results that previous studies of race and crime news have found (Dixon, 2006).

Table 2

Baton Rouge Uniform Crime Reports for the year 2008

	Black	White	Other
Homicide	100%	0%	0%
Rape	83.33%	12.5%	4.17%
Robbery	91.72%	8.28%	0%
Aggravated Assault	84.19%	14.88%	.93%
Burglary	81.16%	17.84%	1%
Larceny	77.5%	22%	1.54%
Motor Theft	86.67%	11.79%	0%
Arson	88.24%	11.76%	0%
Negligent Homicide	100%	0%	0%
Other	79.61%	19.31%	1%



$$x^2 (1, N=49) = 2.072, p > .05, v^* = .042$$

Figure 1

Racial representation during Internet news coverage versus racial breakdown in crime reports

As shown in Figure 1, when compared to BRPD documents, the websites do over represent Black offenders and under represent White offenders. Black presence in Internet crime stories was 85% (N=42), whereas the police reports document 76.2% of crime committed by Blacks. White presentation during internet crime stories was 16% (N=7), yet BRPD reports state that 22.6% of crime is committed by Whites. Because the results were not statistically significant, however, a conclusive statement cannot be made about the over and under representation of race in Baton Rouge local news website crime coverage; however, it is important to note that the trend is in accordance with previous studies of race and crime news that have found that Blacks are over represented as criminals and Whites are underrepresented as criminals (Dixon, 2006).

Further analysis by the type of crime committed suggests that Baton Rouge news websites under represent Blacks in the types of crime they commit. As shown in Table 4, the percentages of each crime committed by Blacks on the Internet are less than the percentages reported in police documents. The websites under represent White crime also, however, they under represented Whites in every crime category analyzed, except for one. When analyzed for White crime, the websites did not present one single homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault,

burglary, arson, or negligent homicide committed by a White person although crime reports state that Whites have committed all of those crimes. The only White crime that the websites reported was the category classified as “Other.” The “Other” category is the only crime where Whites are over represented, as police records report 19.31% of crime, but the website presented 100% of White crime coded as “Other.”

Research questions 2 and 3 asked if local Baton Rouge news websites present White and Black individuals, respectively, as positive, contributing members to their communities. There were few counteractive stories to analyze with chi-square tests; as a result, the researcher concluded that better analyses of the data could be conducted through running frequencies with a cross-tab analysis. Blacks were the subjects of a total of 8 counteractive stories and Whites were the subjects of 6 counteractive stories. These results show very little difference between the Black or White race in counteractive stories. As shown in Table 5, there were a total of 18 counteractive stories across all three websites: WAFB (N=5); WBRZ (N=10); WVLA (N=3). Although there was no large difference in the depiction of Blacks and Whites as positive exemplars, further analyses of crime stories suggest that one race is implied as less guilty than the other in news coverage.

When the perpetrator of the story was Black, his photograph was shown significantly more often than when perpetrators were identified as White. As shown in Table 6, Black perpetrators’ photographs were shown in 42 stories and White perpetrators’ photographs were shown in 7 stories. Furthermore, Black perpetrators’ names were excluded during crime coverage in significantly higher numbers than were Whites’ names. As shown in Table 7, Black perpetrators’ names were excluded from 8 stories and White perpetrators’ names were excluded

from 0. The results for photograph and name inclusions suggest that Blacks are framed as criminals more often.

Table 3

Racial representation compared by type of crime committed

	Black	White	Other
Homicide	40.5%	0%	0%
Rape	9.5%	0%	0%
Robbery	21.4%	0%	0%
Aggravated Assault	16.7%	0%	0%
Burglary	2.4%	0%	0%
Larceny	0%	0%	0%
Motor Theft	0%	0%	0%
Arson	0%	0%	0%
Negligent Homicide	2.4%	0%	0%
Other	4.8%	100%	0%

$$\chi^2 (32, N= 105) = 62.765, p < .05, v^* = .387$$

Row percentages do not total 100% because stories for the race categories “race not mentioned” and “race hard to identify” were excluded from analysis.

Table 4

Racial representation in Internet news compared to BRPD crime reports

	Black		White		Other	
	Web	Crime Report	Web	Crime Report	Web	Crime Report
Homicide	40.5%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Rape	9.5%	83.33%	0%	12.5%	0%	4.17%
Robbery	21.4%	91.72%	0%	8.28%	0%	0%
Aggravated Assault	16.7%	84.19%	0%	14.88%	0%	.93%
Burglary	2.4%	81.16%	0%	17.84%	0%	1%
Larceny	0%	77.5%	0%	22%	0%	1.54%
Motor Theft	0%	86.67%	0%	11.79%	0%	0%
Arson	0%	88.24%	0%	11.76%	0%	0%
Negligent Homicide	2.4%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	4.8%	79.61%	100%	19.31%	0%	1%

Row percentages do not total 100% because stories for the race categories “race not mentioned” and “race hard to identify” were excluded from analysis.

Table 5

Racial representation in counteractive stories

	Black	White	Other	Race not mentioned	Total
Frequency	44.44% (8)	33.33% (6)	.0% (0)	22.23% (4)	100% (18)
WAFB	37.5% (3)	16.7% (1)	.0% (0)	25.0% (1)	27.8% (5)
WBRZ	50.0% (4)	66.7% (4)	.0% (0)	50.0% (2)	55.6% (10)
WVLA	12.5% (1)	16.7% (1)	.0% (0)	25.0% (1)	16.7% (1)
Total	100% (8)	100.0% (6)	.0% (0)	100.0% (4)	100.0% (18)

Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of occurrence for each category.

Table 6

Race and perpetrator's photograph included in news story

Perpetrator Race						
	Black	White	Other	Race Hard to Identify	Race Not Mentioned	Total
Photo	42	7	0	3	0	52
Included						

$\chi^2 (4, N= 52) = 105.00, p < .01, v^* = 1.00$

Table 7

Race and perpetrator's name included in story

Perpetrator Race						
	Black	White	Other	Race Hard to Identify	Race Not Mentioned	Total
Name Included	81.0% (34)	100.0% (7)	.0% (0)	.0% (0)	42.3% (22)	60.0% (63)
Name Excluded	19.0% (8)	.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	100.0% (3)	57.7% (30)	40.0% (42)
Total	100.0% (42)	100.0% (7)	100.0% (1)	100.0% (3)	100.0% (52)	100.0%(105)

 $\chi^2(4, N=105) = 25.131, p < .01, v^* = .489$

Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of occurrence for each category.

Moreover, the criminal history of Black perpetrators is mentioned at a significantly higher rate than the criminal history of non-Black perpetrators. As shown in Table 8, when stories involved a Black perpetrator, 14.3% (6) of them mentioned past offenses. None of the White stories included prior criminal offenses. This frames Blacks as more dangerous and guilty suspects (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Just as prior tests did, the final analysis, an ANOVA, presented results that suggest that websites' coverage of crime frames Blacks as guiltier perpetrators than Whites. There was a significant difference in the length of Black stories versus White stories. As shown in Table 9, when race was identifiable White perpetrators had the shortest stories with an average of 76.00

words. Black perpetrators had the most words in their stories, with an average of 145.43 words. Longer stories signify that Black crimes are more worthy of time and attention.

Table 8

Perpetrator race and criminal history

		Race			
		Black	White	Other	Race Hard to Identify
Criminal History Mentioned	Yes	14.3% (6)	.0% (0)	.0% (0)	.0% (0)
	No	85.7% (36)	100.0% (7)	100.0% (1)	100.0% (3)
Total		100.0% (42)	100.0% (7)	100.0% (1)	100.0% (3)

$\chi^2 (4, N= 105) = 9.545, p < .05, v^* = .302$

Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of occurrence for each category.

Table 9

Perpetrator race and average word count of the story

Perpetrator Race	Word Count
Black	145.429 (9.985)
White	76.000 (24.459)
Other	121.000 (64.713)
Race Hard to Identify	71.000 (37.362)
Race Not Mentioned	100.577 (8.974)
Total	116.233 (68.277)

$F(4, 100) = 3.942, p < .01$, partial eta squared = .136

The numbers in parenthesis represent the standard error.

Discussion

Previous study of race and crime news has found that Black perpetrators appear on television news stations in higher proportions than they do in crime reports (Dixon, 2006). Such literature also reveals that White perpetrators are shown on the news in proportions that are lower than those recorded in crime reports (Dixon, 2006). The first part of this study assessed if Baton Rouge's local news websites present Black and White perpetrators in numbers that reflect the crime documented in BRPD records (RQ1.) The results suggest that Baton Rouge websites generally over represent Black perpetrators and also suggest that White perpetrators are underrepresented; however, the tests rendered non-significant results. Therefore, the researcher could not make a conclusive statement about racial representation on Baton Rouge websites. However, the credibility of the crime reports has the potential to corroborate the argument that Baton Rouge news websites actually do report crime in racially unbalanced manners.

As the researcher conducted the month-long collection of news articles to analyze, she serendipitously collected two articles announcing that the Baton Rouge Police Department was under investigation for discriminating against and harassing its Black citizens in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Found on the WBRZ and WVLA websites, the articles reported that New Mexico State Police and Michigan State Police came to the city to help restore law and order in the days following Hurricane Katrina. Officers from both out of state police departments claim to have witnessed BRPD officers exercise unwarranted brutality and illegal searches of Black citizens. The New Mexico and Michigan officers also state that they were encouraged to engage in the same type of discrimination against Blacks.

The accusations that New Mexico and Michigan police officers made against BRPD officers are not the only reason BRPD's police reports should be met with skepticism. Literature

on police behavior and crime statistics reveals that crime reports rarely report crime accurately. Skogan (2003) writes that considerable amounts of crime go unreported, and police departments lack the resources to record every crime committed. Often times, scholars will refer to crimes, not as the amount of crime committed, but the “acts which come to the attention of the authorities” (Skogan, 2003, p.1). Moreover, Tonry (1996) found that crime statistics often report arrests in manners that inflate Black crimes because predominantly Black neighborhoods are patrolled more than non-Black areas. Because of the heavier rate of patrol in Black areas, Blacks are arrested at much higher rates (Tonry, 1996).

The researcher compared Baton Rouge’s crime reports to Jackson, Mississippi’s to test her suspicions. Jackson is a city that shares many characteristics with Baton Rouge. Jackson is the capitol city of Mississippi, just as Baton Rouge is the capitol city of Louisiana. It shares about the same racial demographics that Baton Rouge does: 60% of the city is White; 40% of the population is Black (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Jackson has also shared a similar past of racial discrimination that many southern cities like Baton Rouge have; as a result, one would expect both cities to have similar crime rates.

As seen in Table 10, the crime reports of Baton Rouge and Jackson seem consistent across most of the crimes reported. An analysis of Baton Rouge’s and Jackson’s crime reports reveals that Baton Rouge’s Whites commit slightly higher percentages of crime than Jackson’s Whites do, but there is not a great difference. Although it is a possibility that both city’s police departments may have recorded crime in biased manners because both have histories of discriminatory practices against Blacks, the researcher must use the data that are present to base findings. The comparison of Jackson’s crime reports to Baton Rouge’s suggests that the latter city’s crime reports may be credible.

If the BRPD crime reports are not accurate, however, they may actually strengthen the claim that Baton Rouge websites present crime in a biased manner. If BRPD does discriminate against Black citizens and/or inflates Black crime records, when such reports are compared to website representations, the crime report numbers pale in comparison to website numbers. To illustrate this argument, let us assume that the crime reports do skew Baton Rouge's crime to the detriment of Blacks. When such crime report numbers were compared to the racial representations in crime coverage on local websites, the websites were still found to over represent Blacks and under represent Whites as perpetrators. In effect, the websites managed to criminalize Blacks at a higher rate than crime reports may have already done. If the allegations are truthful, the racial representations shown on Baton Rouge's local news websites appear even worse.

When the types of offenses Blacks and Whites committed were analyzed for both website presentation and BRPD crime reports, statistically significant results were rendered. These results also supported the argument that Blacks are framed as violent criminals. The websites did show lower amounts of crime committed by Blacks than BRPD crime reports indicate when each offense reported on the websites was compared to individual offenses listed in the crime reports. As shown in Table1, though crime reports indicate that Blacks committed 100% of all homicides, the websites only showed 40.5% of homicide stories featuring Black perpetrators. The crimes that Blacks committed in website stories follow a similar pattern; all crime categories analyzed report lower percentages on the websites than the BRPD crime reports lists.

As hopeful as that seems, however, the results were significantly different when compared to White crime. The website reported the following offenses committed by Blacks: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, negligent homicide and other. The only

Table 10

Comparison of the 2008 Uniform Crime Reports of Baton Rouge, LA and Jackson, MS

	Baton Rouge			Jackson		
Offense	Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Homicide	100%	0%	0%	90.24%	7.32%	2.44%
Rape	83.33%	12.5%	4.17%	93.10 %	6.90%	0%
Robbery	91.72%	8.28%	0%	90%	10%	0%
Aggravated Assault	84.19%	14.88%	.93%	94.80%	5.20%	0%
Burglary	81.16%	17.84%	1%	92.89%	7.11%	0%
Larceny	77.5%	22%	1.54%	83.77%	16.23%	0%
Motor Theft	86.67%	11.79%	0%	89.47%	10.53%	0%
Arson	88.24%	11.76%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Negligent Homicide	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other	79.61%	19.31%	1%	90.01%	9.86%	.13%

type of White crime reported on the websites was classified as “other,” yet BRPD crime reports indicate that Whites committed rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor theft, and arson. The White crime stories on the websites that were labeled as “Other” involved fraud,

obscurity, wildlife violation and pornography charges. All such offenses are not classified as violent crimes.

As framing theory contends, the presentation of an issue influences the way audience members perceive crime (Entman, 1993). The frame may present select elements to an audience member's schema, and therefore influence evaluation of the issue, or it may omit an element that could have provided a broader context to help the audience form opinions (Entman, 1993). The website stories seem to frame crime using both methods. They presented Blacks as violent criminals by showing Black violent crimes in larger proportions than those recorded in BRPD crime reports. They also failed to acknowledge that Whites committed many of the same violent crimes that Blacks were reported to commit. If one only looked at Baton Rouge's local news websites, he could infer that violent crime is solely committed by Blacks; yet, as shown in Table 1, BRPD reports state that Whites have been arrested for many of the same violent crimes. The websites excluded stories that reported the rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor theft, or arson that Whites committed yet the crime report states that Whites committed all of the aforementioned crimes. All of this helps to create the frame that violent crime is solely committed by Blacks.

Moreover, Iyengar writes that the news often uses episodic frames that strip complex issues of their context and do not provide a holistic view of the issue (1991). In effect, episodic frames cause audience members to form opinions with mere fractions of the story. This issue is heavily present in crime coverage. Every crime story analyzed used an episodic frame. With an average of 116 words in each story, none of the terse stories presented any form of background information that was broader than the specific crime committed. This can cause Baton Rouge citizens to think about crime in ways that elicit harsher evaluations, such as individual

responsibility that engenders strict punitive recommendations. Audience members are not forced to think about how societal factors could have influenced the perpetrator to commit the crime because such contributing factors were never presented.

It is important to note that the intention of this study was not to compare episodic frames to thematic frames. This study noted the importance of each frame's characteristics on the interpretation of a story because evaluations of crime stories are heavily influenced by episodic or thematic frames. Future studies should collect counteractive stories and crime stories and analyze how episodic and thematic framing of both types of stories influences interpretation of negative and positive exemplars.

Research questions 2 and 3 asked if local websites presented Whites and Blacks as positive, contributing members to their communities. The results did not yield conclusive differences between the races; therefore, neither race was represented as positive members of the community more than the other. There were still important findings within the counteractive individual assessment of this study, however. These findings suggest that there is room for improvement in positive reporting of Baton Rouge citizens, especially its positive Black citizens.

Entman and Rojecki (2000) found that when positive exemplars of Blacks are presented, they are usually within the sports or entertainment industries. Such limited positive exemplars of Blacks make it difficult to be appreciative of the positive story because they help establish stereotypes. When the same types of positive Blacks consistently appear in the media, White audience members begin to think of positive Black people along similar lines (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). In essence, this creates a schema set that restricts Blacks to three realms: criminals, athletes, or entertainers. Such thinking is problematic because no race of people is a monolith.

The counteractive exemplars of this study seem to defy the literature. Of the 8 counteractive stories that presented positive Black individuals, only 3 of them featured athletes. Two out of 6 White counteractive stories featured athletes. There were no entertainment features in the data collected. A percentage of 37.5% Black sports features indicates that the majority of positive Black stories did not stereotype positive Blacks as members of the sports or entertainment businesses. These results seem to be promising; however, so few positive counteractive positive stories were collected for study, thus making it difficult to form any generalizable conclusions about counteractive exemplars. Future research should be conducted on counteractive exemplars of minorities and their effects on crime story evaluations of such marginalized populations.

Additionally, the sparse counteractive stories found on Baton Rouge websites should serve as a catalyst for more positive reporting in the city. Throughout the month-long, daily collection of stories, only 18 classified as positive, counteractive stories. The researcher believes that there was such a small number of counteractive stories because it takes more money and time to write them. Information from the police department is inexpensive and can be transformed into a story quickly, whereas counteractive stories require journalists to research potential subjects, interview them, and write the article. While the bottom line is a valid concern for all news organizations, the lack of uplifting, pleasant stories paints a dismal picture of life in Baton Rouge. In the future, Baton Rouge news outlets should strive to give their audience more favorable stories about their communities.

While few conclusions could be drawn about the presentation of positive, contributing Black and White community members in Baton Rouge, there were significant differences when assessing what race is presented more positively during crime coverage. Entman and Rojecki

(2000) found that when photographs accompany crime stories, audience members perceive the perpetrator as guilty more readily than they do when no photograph accompanies the story. The results show that the website featured photographs of Black perpetrators more often. This could cause audience members to perceive Black perpetrators as guiltier than White perpetrators as a result.

The study yields more results that could cause White perpetrators to be perceived as more positive than Black perpetrators. When perpetrators' names are omitted from the story, the perpetrator loses his individuality and may be evaluated in a less positive manner (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). As shown in Table 7, White perpetrators' names were excluded in .0% (0) of White stories. Black perpetrators' names were excluded from 21.05% (8) of Black crime stories. When one story featured another non-White individual, the perpetrator's name was not mentioned; in similar fashion, when the race was hard to identify or when race was not specifically mentioned, the perpetrator's name was excluded in more stories than it was included. The results reveal that when there was a non-White perpetrator involved, the story was significantly less likely to include the perpetrator's name. Because minorities were less likely to have their names featured in a story, they will likely be perceived as more guilty than White perpetrators, and as the literature suggests, they are perceived less positively than White perpetrators as a result.

Another analysis strengthens the argument that Whites are presented more positively than non-Whites on Baton Rouge news websites. The only stories that mentioned any past criminal history were Black crime stories. A percentage of 14.3% (6) Black crime stories mentioned past criminal history. For stories featuring Whites or races identified as "Other," as well as when race was hard to identify, there was not one single mention of a past criminal history. The results

yielded significant differences. Because Black stories were the only ones to mention previous criminal history, Black perpetrators could have been perceived as more dangerous than non-Black perpetrators.

One last analysis also maintained evidence of the Black criminal frame. The average word count of Black stories was significantly higher than every other race's stories. Black stories had an average of 145.3 words, far more than any other race. This suggests that journalists tend to write more when Black perpetrators commit crimes. Shorter stories accompanied non-Black crime stories. A longer story suggests that Black crimes are more newsworthy because they receive more time and attention; this may cause an audience member to perceive Black criminals as more dangerous perpetrators than White perpetrators.

In conclusion, although the study's results suggest that WBRZ, WAFB, and WVLA do frame Blacks as criminals, an unexpected finding suggests that these websites may not do so intentionally. When race was analyzed by the type of crime committed, almost half of the stories failed to mention the perpetrator's race. A total of 49.52% of all stories analyzed, or 52 stories, did not provide details on the racial identity of the perpetrator. The fact that such a large amount of stories did not include the perpetrator's race is a worthy finding. The exclusion of race could be an attempt to offset the larger proportion of Blacks who commit crime, or perhaps the news stations simply do not want to appear racist.

The researcher cannot determine why the news stations' exclusion of race occurred. However, if the stations' hoped to mitigate the presentation of Blacks as criminals, their efforts were likely made in vain. Peffley (2005) found that respondents assumed the perpetrator of a crime was Black when the race of the perpetrator was not included in the story. Although the three websites did not mention race in 49.52% of the stories analyzed, the literature predicts that

Internet users would have assumed that the perpetrator was Black. Moreover, the location of the crime may have also caused viewers to assume that the perpetrator was Black. North Baton Rouge is predominantly Black (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). About 30 of the 52 stories that did not directly mention the race, or 57.70%, were located in North Baton Rouge. This could cause viewers conclude that the perpetrators were Black as well.

Limitations

The data collection time period may have skewed the selection of counteractive stories that were reported. Because Black History Month is in February, the month before data collection began, there may have been a reduction in Black counteractive stories for the timeframe during which the analyzed stories were published. There may have been an increased amount of positive Black news features during February due to the observation of Black History Month. As a result, the following months could have experienced a withdrawal from Black counteractive stories because so many had been presented during the month of February.

Moreover, the lack of Black counteractive stories may have been the result of the limited Black presence in Baton Rouge newsrooms. Both WBRZ and WAFB have newsrooms that are 13.64% Black. Out of a total of 22 news anchors or reporters, there are 3 Blacks who are writing or reporting stories for WBRZ and WAFB; the majority of Whites who write the news stories may unconsciously include a bias against Blacks. This may also be an explanation for the more positive coverage of Whites during crime coverage. The racial demographics for WVLA could not be concluded.

Furthermore, there were methodological limitations in this study. The researcher, who also wrote and implemented the coding instructions, was the sole coder in this study. This could

have limited the way the coding was conducted because one person may overlook a coding flaw; however, if there is another person to consider the coding procedure and its outcomes, he may notice a potential problem in the coding scheme. Also, because there was one coder, there was no means assessing the reliability of the coding. While the coder attempted to objectively analyze the stories, there is no way of accounting for possible biases that could have influenced the coding process.

The type of medium being analyzed presented yet another limitation. With Internet news, journalists are able to update stories at any moment of the day. Although the researcher collected data around the same time of the day each day during the data collection phase, she could have printed a story from a website that was updated at a later point during the day. This could have influenced results because updated stories may have been longer or could have included more information than the previously printed stories did.

Conclusion

This study sought to assess if Baton Rouge, Louisiana's news websites presented crime coverage in numbers that reflected Baton Rouge Police Department crime reports. As the literature on race and crime news predicted, local websites trend toward over representing Blacks as perpetrators and under representing Whites as perpetrators when compared to crime reports. They also tended to show Black perpetrators as more dangerous criminals than White perpetrators. Subsequent analyses of the presentation of race during crime coverage revealed that White perpetrators were presented in more flattering manners than Black and non-Black perpetrators were.

The researcher hoped that news stations would use positive Black community members to counteract any negative images shown during crime coverage, yet analysis of counteractive exemplars of Blacks were disappointing. Overall, all three news websites lacked positive, contributing exemplars for both Blacks and Whites. There were so few stories collected in the counteractive category of data collection that little conclusions could be made. However, the fact that so few positive stories were found is a worthwhile finding in itself, and it can enact a positive change. The lack of positive community member profiles should encourage Baton Rouge news organizations to offer more uplifting stories for its audience in the future.

The characteristics of the Internet exacerbate the situation. Previous race and crime literature studied television news. This study analyzed Internet crime stories. Because the Internet encourages users to expose themselves to many more stories than traditional media do, the Internet audience is more susceptible to consuming the Black criminal frame. In the future, Baton Rouge's news websites should work toward presenting crime coverage that is more representative of the actual crime that is committed in the city. Furthermore, future research

should research compare crime coverage on broadcast news versus Internet news. Researchers should seek to understand if one medium tends to over represent Black criminals more than the other.

In conclusion, this study's implications for practicing journalists should concentrate on advancing the quality of journalism. Journalists should work to find news that edifies their audience members and allows them to think critically about the world. They should provide the audience with the information necessary to evaluate social issues objectively. Furthermore, this study's implications for news consumers center on demanding quality journalism. News consumers have the right to remain informed about positive issues in their communities as well as negative issues. They should demand that their city is reported in its entirety, which includes heinous and terrifying incidents, as well as the miraculous and inspirational incidents.

References

- Althaus, S. L. & D. Tewksbury. (2002). Agenda setting and the “new” news: Patterns of issue importance among readers of the paper and online versions of the *New York Times*. *Communication Research*, 29, 180-207.
- Anderson, C. (2001). Heat and violence. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10, 33-38.
- Baton Rouge Police Department. (2009). Baton Rouge crime statistics. *Baton Rouge Police Department*. Retrieved March 8, 2010 from <http://brgov.com/DEPT/BRPD/csr/>.
- Bennett, L. W. (2001). *News: The politics of illusion* (4th ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Brooks, B., Kennedy, G., Moen, D., & D. Ranly. (2010). *Telling the story: The convergence of print, broadcast and online media* (4th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Brosius, H. (2003). Exemplars in the news: A theory of the effects of political communication. *Communication and Emotion: Essays in Honor of Dolf Zillman*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Casas, M. & T. Dixon. (2003). The impact of stereotypical and counter-stereotypical news on viewer perceptions of blacks and latinos. *A Companion to Media Studies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Dixon, T. (2006a). Psychological reactions to crime news portrayals of black criminals: Understanding the moderating roles of prior news viewing and stereotype endorsement. *Communication Monographs*, 73(2), 162-187.
- Dixon, T. (2006b). Schemas as average conceptions: Skin tone, television news exposure, and culpability judgments. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 83(1), 131-149.
- Dixon, T. (2008a). Network news and racial beliefs: Exploring the connection between national television news exposure and stereotypical perceptions of Blacks. *Journal of Communication*, 58, 321-337.
- Dixon, T. (2008b). Who is the victim here?: The psychological effects of overrepresenting White victims and Black perpetrators on television news. *Journalism*, 9 (5), 582-605.
- Dixon, T. & C. Azocar. (2007). Priming crime and activating blackness: Understanding the psychological impact of the overrepresentation of blacks as lawbreakers on television news. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 229-253.
- Dixon, T. & D. Linz. (2000a). Overrepresentation and underrepresentation of Blacks and Latinos as lawbreakers on television news. *Journal of Communication*, Spring 2000, 131-154.
- Dixon, T. & D. Linz. (2000b). Race and the misrepresentation of victimization on local television news. *Communication Research*, 26, 570-607.

- Dunne, J. (2010, March 26). Justice department investigating BRPD. *WBRZ News 2 Louisiana*. Retrived March 26, 2010 from <http://www.wbrz.com/news/justice-dept-investigating-brpd>.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43 (4), 51-58.
- Entman, R. M. & A. Rojecki. (2000). *The black image in the white mind*: Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fuller, L. (2005). WLBT news in the deregulation era: Modern racism or representative picture? *Journal of Black Studies*, 35(4), 262-292.
- Gerbner, G. (1998). Cultivation analysis: An overview. *Mass Communication and Society*, 1(3/4), 175-194.
- Gilliam, F. D. & S. Iyengar. (1998). The superpredator script. *Nieman Reports*, 4, 45-46.
- Gilliam, F. D. & S. Iyengar. (2000). Prime suspects: The influence of local television news on the viewing public. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(3), 560-573.
- Gilliam, F. D. & S. Iyengar, A. Simon, and O. Wright. (1996). Crime in black and white: The violent, scary world of local news. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 1, 6-23.
- Gilliam, F. D., N. Valentino, and M. Beckmann. (2002). Where you live and what you watch: The impact of racial proximity and local television news on attitudes about race and crime. *Political Research Quarterly*, 55(4), 755-780.
- Graber, D. A. (1988). *Processing the news: How people tame the information tide* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Heider, D. (2000). *White news*: New Jersey: Lawrence, Erlbaum Associates.
- Hurwitz, J. & Peffley, M. (2005). Playing the race card in the post-Willie Horton era. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69(1), 99-112.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible?*: Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Iyengar, S. (1996). Framing responsibility for political news. *American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 546, 59-70.
- Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1984). Choice, values, and frames. *American Psychologist*, 39, 341-350.
- Klite, P., R. A. Bardwell, & J. Salzman. (1997). Local TV news: Getting away with murder. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2, 102-112.
- Melican, D. & T. Dixon. (2008). News on the net: Credibility, selective, exposure, and racial prejudice. *Communication Research*, 35, 151-168.

- Oliver, M. B. (1999). Caucasian viewers' memory of black and white criminal suspects in the news. *Journal of Communication*, 49(3), 46-60.
- Oliver, M. B. (2003). Black men as "criminal and dangerous": implications of media portrayals of crime on the "criminalization" of Black men. *Journal of Black Studies*, 7(2), 3-18.
- Oliver, M. B., R. L. Jackson, N. N. Moses, C. L. Dangerfield. (2004). The face of crime: Viewers' memory of race-related facial features of individuals pictured in the news. *Journal of Communication*, March 2004, 88-104.
- Patterson, T. E. (2000). *Doing well and doing good: How soft news and critical journalism are shrinking the new audience and weakening democracy—And what news outlets can do about it* (Faculty Research Working Paper Series, RWP01-001). Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.
- Peffley, M., Shields, T. & B. Williams. (1996). The intersection of race and crime in television news stories: An experimental study. *Political Communication*, 13, 309-327.
- Purcell, K., Rainie, L., Mitchell, A., Rosenstiel, T. & K. Olmstead. (2010, March 1). Understanding the participatory news consumer. *Pew Internet and American Life Project*. Retrieved March 8, 2010 from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Online-News.aspx>.
- Price, V., Tewksbury, D., & Powers, E. (1995, November). *Switching trains of thought: The impact of news frames on readers' cognitive responses*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Mid-west Association for Public Opinion Research, Chicago, IL.
- Ramasubramanian, S. & M. B. Oliver. (2007). Activating and suppressing hostile and benevolent racism: Evidence for comparative media stereotyping.
- Romer, D., K. H. Jamieson, & N. J. de Coteau. (1998). The treatment of persons of color in local television news- ethnic blame discourse or realistic group conflict? *Communication Research*, 25(3), 286-305.
- Russell, K. K. (1998). *The color of crime: Racial hoaxes, white fear, black protectionism, police harassment and other macroaggressions*. New York: New York University.
- Scheufele, D. A. (2006). Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of Communication*, 49, 103-122.
- Severin, W. & J. Tankard. (2001). *Communication Theories* (5th ed). Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Shidler, J. & D. Lowry. (1995). Network TV sex as a counterprogramming strategy during a sweeps period: An analysis of content and ratings. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 72(1), 147-157.
- Skogan, W. (2003). The validity of official crime statistics: An empirical investigation. *Social Science Quarterly*, 1-14.

- Tonry, M. (1996). *Malign neglect*: New York: Oxford University Press.
- Turner, E. (2010, March 26). U.S. Department of Justice investigating BRPD. *NBC33TV*. Retrieved March 26, 2010 from <http://www.nbc33tv.com/news/us-department-justice-investigating-brpd>.
- Valentino, N. A., Traugott, M. & V. Hutchings. (2002). Group cues and ideological constraint: A replication of political advertising effects studies in the lab and in the field. *Political Communication*, 19, 29-48.
- Zillman, D. (1999). Exemplification theory: Judging the whole by some of its parts. *Media Psychology*, 1, 69-94.
- Zillmann, D., Knobloch, S., & Yu, H. (2001). Effects of photographs on the selective reading of news reports. *Media Psychology*, 3, 301-324.
- Zillmann, D., Chen, L., Knobloch, S. & C. Callison. (2004). Effects of lead framing on selective exposure to internet news reports. *Communication Research*, 31, 58-81.
- Zillman, D., Perkins, J. W., & S. Sundar. (1992). Impression-formation effects of printed news varying in descriptive precision and exemplifications. *Medienpsychologie: Zeitschrift für Individual- und Massenkommunikation*, 4, 168-185, 239-240.

Appendix A: Coder Instruction Manual

- I. Stories reported on Baton Rouge's CBS, ABC, and NBC affiliate websites will be coded as WAFB, WBRZ, and WVLA, respectively.
- II. The date that the article was initially posted on the website will be noted. It will be at the top of the article and is typically listed under or next to the headline of the article.
- III. The headline of the article is usually at the top of the story and is generally in bigger, bolder letters than the rest of the story.
- IV. The location where the featured event/issue occurred should be noted. It will generally be noted at the top of the article or within the body of the article. If the coder is not sure what the location is, he should write the "location cannot be clearly identified."
- V. Count every word of the body of the news article. Do not count the headline, date, news organization, source of article, or author's name. Counting should begin with the first word of the actual article.
- VI. Story Section
 - a. The section of the website that the story was located will be identified as homepage, continuous news, local news or news. The homepage is the first page one sees when he initially accesses the website.
 - b. Continuous News is another page on the WBRZ site that may contain crime and counteractive news. It can be accessed by clicking the "News" tab and then selecting the "Continuous News" tab.
 - c. The Local Headlines pages can be found on the WVLA website. This page can be accessed by clicking on the "Local Headlines" tab from the homepage.
 - d. The News page can be accessed on the WAFB website as well by selecting the "News" tab at the top of the homepage.
- VII. Story Category
 - a. Crime: A crime is any act that is considered illegal in the United States. The acts that constitute crime will be defined as those that are reported in the annual Baton Rouge crime reports. Baton Rouge crime statistics for 2009 reported the following crimes: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor theft, arson, negligent homicide. The definitions provided in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program will be used to define crime in news stories. The following crimes will be defined according to UCR definitions:
 - i. Homicide: a.) Murder and non-negligent manslaughter: the willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another. Deaths caused by negligence, attempts to kill, assaults to kill, suicides, and accidental deaths are excluded. The program classifies justifiable homicides separately and limits the definition to: (1) the killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty; or (2) the killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen.
 - ii. Rape: The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Rapes by force and attempts or assaults to rape, regardless of the age of the victim, are included. Statutory offenses (no force used—victim under age of consent) are excluded.
 - iii. Robbery: The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

- iv. Aggravated assault: An unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Simple assaults are excluded.
- v. Burglary: The unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft. Attempted forcible entry is included.
- vi. Larceny: theft (except motor vehicle theft)—The unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another. Examples are thefts of bicycles, motor vehicle parts and accessories, shoplifting, pocket-picking, or the stealing of any property or article that is not taken by force and violence or by fraud. Attempted larcenies are included. Embezzlement, confidence games, forgery, check fraud, etc., are excluded.
- vii. Motor Theft: The theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle. A motor vehicle is self-propelled and runs on land surface and not on rails. Motorboats, construction equipment, airplanes, and farming equipment are specifically excluded from this category.
- viii. Arson: Any willful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a dwelling house, public building, motor vehicle or aircraft, personal property of another, etc.
- ix. Negligent homicide: the killing of another person through gross negligence. Deaths of persons due to their own negligence, accidental deaths not resulting from gross negligence, and traffic fatalities are not included in the category Manslaughter by Negligence.
- x. If the article does not blatantly what crime has been committed, the coder should select “Not sure.”
- b. Counteractive: Only one of the categories should be selected. Pick the category that best describes the subject of the article.
 - i. Community-Oriented: Articles that feature individuals who engage in community service, community organizing, or community improvement will be coded as such. This will involve mention of volunteerism, mentoring, rebuilding homes, eradicating negative influences in community. An act of heroism may also be coded as such. Articles that feature an individual who put his life/wellbeing on the line to help another person in distress. The article may also depict a person who sacrifices his time, energy, or money to maintain harmony or goodwill in his community.
 - ii. Individually-Focused: An example of this attribute is seen through the hard-working individual prototype; the individual is framed as industrious. Articles that feature individuals as honest, integrity-driven, diligent individuals will be coded as such. The article will focus on a person’s employment and discuss positive aspects about a person’s professional life. The article may include the individual’s expertise on an issue or other relevant issues that provide positive context toward the story’s main focus, the individual and his profession. The emphasis is on the individual, not the issue. This can be seen through a person engaging in personal

development; the article will feature an individual who is working to better himself spiritually, financially, educationally, physically, or emotionally. The individual will be working toward a future goal. He will demonstrate discipline of some sort in working toward his goal.

- VIII. If the article being coded is a crime story, does the article list the perpetrator's past criminal history? If so, select "yes." If not, select "no." If you are unsure, select "not sure."
- IX. If the article being coded is a crime story, does the article list the current status of the perpetrator? If the perpetrator has been taken into police custody and jailed, select "perpetrator arrested." If the perpetrator has been questioned by police but allowed to leave police custody, select "perpetrator questioned." If the perpetrator has not spoken with police about the alleged crime/investigation, select "perpetrator wanted for questioning." If the article does not mention the perpetrator's status, select "no mention."
- X. If the article being coded is a crime story, does the article contain the perpetrator's name? If so, select "yes." If not, select "no."
- XI. If the article being coded is a crime story, does the article contain the victim's name? If so, select "yes." If not, select "no."
- XII. If the article being coded is a crime story, does the article contain a photograph of the perpetrator? If so, select "yes." If not, select "no."
- XIII. If the article being coded is a crime story, does the article contain a photograph of the victim? If so, select "yes." If not, select "no."
- XIV. If the article being coded is a crime story, what type of crime did the perpetrator commit? Select one of the following crimes, if the article blatantly states it was committed: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor theft, arson, negligent homicide. If the article lists another crime, select "other." If the article does not blatantly state the crime, select "not blatantly stated."
- XV. Perpetrator's Race
- Black will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of the African race. He may have one or more of the following features: light to dark brown skin, broader nose indicative of African heritage, coarse, tightly curled hair.
 - White will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of the European race. He may have one or more of the following features: white skin, slender nose indicative of European heritage, straight hair.
 - Hispanic will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of any Spanish-language speaking peoples of the world. He may have brown or white skin, a broad or thin nose, or tight to loosely curled hair or straight hair. His name can also help identify his race, as it may be a name that has been derived from the Spanish language.
 - If the race of the perpetrator is not Black, White, or Hispanic, he should select "Other."
 - If the coder cannot easily discern the perpetrator's race, he should select "race hard to identify."
 - If the race is not mentioned, he should select "race not mentioned."

XVI. Victim's Race

- a. Black will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of the African race. He may have one or more of the following features: light to dark brown skin, broader nose indicative of African heritage, coarse, tightly curled hair.
- b. White will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of the European race. He may have one or more of the following features: white skin, slender nose indicative of European heritage, straight hair.
- c. Hispanic will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of any Spanish-language speaking peoples of the world. He may have brown or white skin, a broad or thin nose, or tight to loosely curled hair or straight hair. His name can also help identify his race, as it may be a name that has been derived from the Spanish language.
- d. If the race of the victim is not Black, White, or Hispanic, he should select "Other."
- e. If the coder cannot easily discern the victim's race, he should select "race hard to identify."
- f. If the race is not mentioned, he should select "race not mentioned."

XVII. If the article being coded is counteractive, does the article contain any quoted statements by the featured individual? A quoted statement can be something the individual said himself and is always denoted with quotation marks. If there are quoted statements present, select "yes." If not, select "no." If you are not sure, select "not sure."

XVIII. If the article being coded is counteractive, does the article contain the race of the featured individual(s)?

- a. Black will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of the African race. He may have one or more of the following features: light to dark brown skin, broader nose indicative of African heritage, coarse, tightly curled hair.
- b. White will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of the European race. He may have one or more of the following features: white skin, slender nose indicative of European heritage, straight hair.
- c. Hispanic will be defined as a person whose physical features are representative of any Spanish-language speaking peoples of the world. He may have brown or white skin, a broad or thin nose, or tight to loosely curled hair or straight hair. His name can also help identify his race, as it may be a name that has been derived from the Spanish language.
- d. If the race of the individual is not Black, White, or Hispanic, he should select "Other."
- e. If the coder cannot easily discern the individual's race, he should select "race hard to identify."
- f. If the race is not mentioned, he should select "race not mentioned."

Appendix B: Code Sheet

I. Website

- a) WAFB _____
- b) WBRZ _____
- c) WVLA _____

II. Story Date _____

III. Story Headline _____

IV. Location of story _____

V. Word Count _____

VI. Story Section

- a. Homepage _____
- b. Continuous News (WBRZ) _____
- c. Local Headlines (WVLA) _____
- d. News (WAFB) _____

VII. Story Category

- a. Crime _____
- b. Counteractive _____
 - i. Community-Oriented _____
 - ii. Individually-Focused _____
 - iii. Not sure _____
 - iv. Other _____

VIII. If crime, mention of criminal history? (If not crime, skip to XVII.)

- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____

- c. Not sure _____
- IX. If crime, perpetrator status?
- a. Perpetrator arrested _____
- b. Perpetrator questioned _____
- c. Perpetrator wanted for questioning _____
- d. No mention _____
- X. If crime, perpetrator's name given?
- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____
- XI. If crime, victim's name given?
- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____
- c. No victim mentioned _____
- XII. If crime, is perpetrator's photo included?
- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____
- XIII. If crime, is victim's photo included?
- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____
- c. No victim mentioned _____
- XIV. If crime, what type of crime?
- a. Homicide _____
- b. Rape _____
- c. Robbery _____

- d. Aggravated assault _____
 - e. Burglary _____
 - f. Larceny _____
 - g. Motor theft _____
 - h. Arson _____
 - i. Negligent homicide _____
 - j. Other _____
 - k. Not blatantly stated _____
- XV. If crime, perpetrator's race
- a) Black _____
 - b) White _____
 - c) Hispanic _____
 - d) Other _____
 - e) Race hard to identify _____
 - f) Race not mentioned _____
- XVI. If crime, victim's race
- a. Black _____
 - b. White _____
 - c. Hispanic _____
 - d. Other _____
 - e. Race hard to identify _____
 - f. Race not mentioned _____
 - g. Victim not mentioned _____
- XVII. If counteractive, does the featured individual(s) make any quoted statements?

- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____
- c. Not sure _____

XVIII. If counteractive, the race of the featured individual(s)?

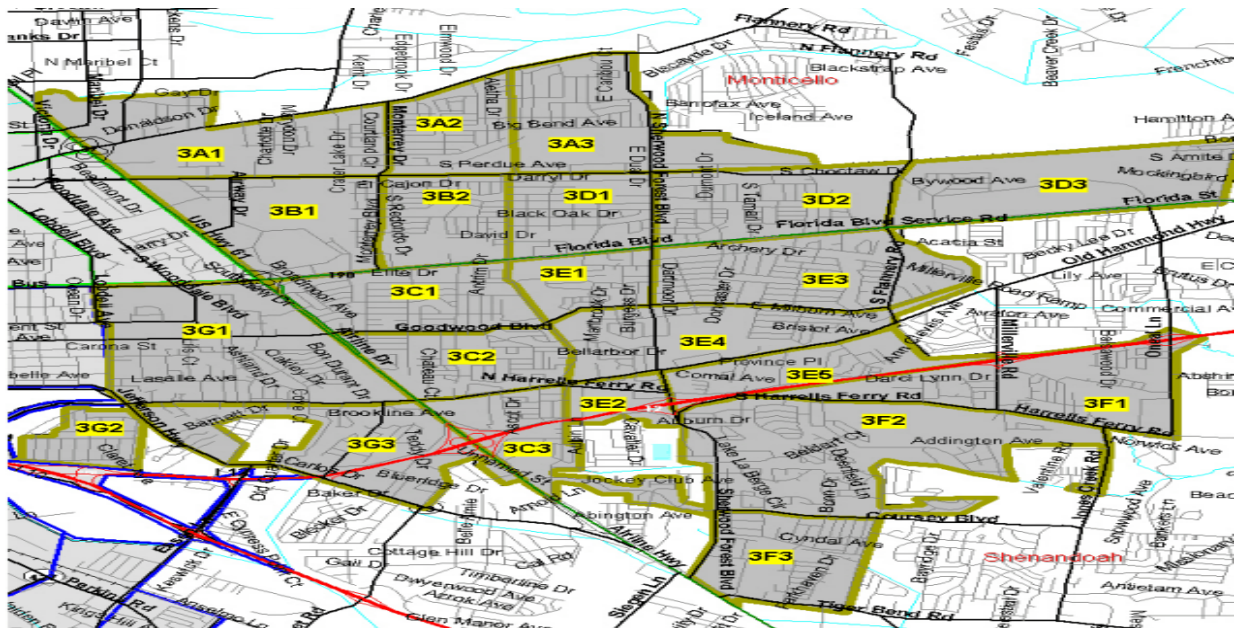
- a. Black _____
- b. White _____
- c. Hispanic _____
- d. Other _____
- e. Race hard to identify _____
- f. Race not mentioned _____

District 1



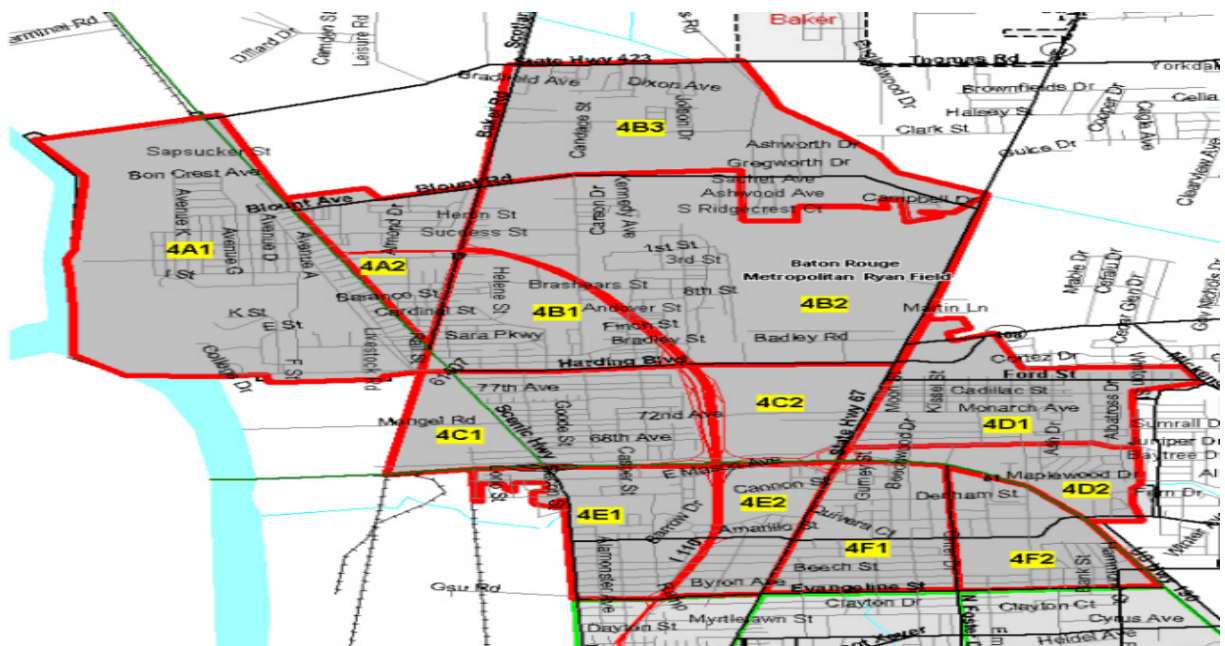
The 2nd District precinct is located at 2265 Highland Road. 2nd District serves what is traditionally known as South Baton Rouge. It is bordered roughly by Florida Blvd. (north), the city limits (south), the Mississippi River (west) and Essen and Lobdell (east).

District 3



The 3rd District precinct is located at 11010 Coursey Blvd. 3rd District serves the eastern part of the city. It is bordered roughly by Jefferson Hwy. and Airline Hwy. (west), Greenwell Springs Road (north), and stretches to the city limits (east and south).

District 4



The 4th District precinct is located at 8827 Scenic Hwy. 4th District serves the extreme northern part of the city, including the area traditionally known as Scotlandville. It is bordered roughly by Thomas Road (north), Evangeline (south), the Mississippi River (west) and city limits (east).

Vita

Dana Marie Tumblin is from St. Rose, Louisiana. She began her college career at Loyola University New Orleans and completed her freshman year of college there. As Dana was preparing for her sophomore year at Loyola, Hurricane Katrina stormed New Orleans. Dana transferred to Louisiana State University for the fall 2005 semester and went on to graduate from LSU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in public relations in May 2008.

Dana began law school at Southern University Law Center in August 2008 but was not satisfied with her current academic pursuit. She felt that her heart was in mass communication and decided to return to her journalistic roots. She withdrew from SULC after a month and decided to work toward a Master of Mass Communication Degree.

Dana began the graduate program at LSU in January 2009. She received an assistantship with the Manship School of Mass Communication and worked as a teaching assistant for MC 2525, Media Persuasion. As a teaching assistant, Dana was responsible for grading assignments, recording grades and lecturing on the principles of media ethics. She hopes to own a public relations firm in the future.