REPRESENTATION AND REALITY IN THE PORTRAYAL OF BLACKS ON NETWORK TELEVISION NEWS

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This paper probes the images of African Americans in a thirty-day sample of videotaped news programs on ABC, CBS, and NBC, and in a computer analysis of verbatim transcripts of ABC's nightly news program for one year. Network news appears to convey more stereo-typed impressions – a narrower range of positive roles – for blacks than for whites. Representations of whites in network news are more varied and more positive than of blacks, not because of conscious bias, but because of the way conventional journalistic norms and practices interact with political and social reality. The findings raise theoretical and normative questions about journalists' ability to "represent" the "reality" of black America while adhering to the professional practices that currently shape network news.

Research on television portrayals of blacks[1] suggests that while overtly demeaning stereotypes of the "Amos and Andy" variety no longer populate the airwaves, more subtle forms of anti-black imagery persist. This paper explores whether network television news conveys negative stereo-types of African Americans. A previous study[2] suggested that such images permeate *local* TV news at least in Chicago and probably elsewhere.[3] This study finds a somewhat different pattern of images, in large part because of generic differences between local and network news. On balance, how-ever, the network news also appears to stereotype African Americans.

The findings raise important questions about the ability and respon-sibilities of television news to *represent* the *reality* of black America. The terms are placed in italics to indicate their problematic nature. *Representa-tion* is problematic in a race-conscious culture. However implicitly, news messages over time construct comparisons of whites and blacks. So, when covering stories about black individuals, journalists may not merely be "re-presenting" a single newsworthy event in which a black happens to be involved. Journalists may also be selecting exemplars that will represent the category of "black Americans" and be compared to whites' images of themselves. *Reality* is problematic not only because news stories inevitably select only some aspects of reality and leave out others. More important, over time, the specific realities depicted in single stories may accumulate to form a summary message that distorts social reality. Each in a series of news stories may be accurate, yet the combination may yield false cognitions within audiences.

Modern Racism and Network News

Previous work suggested local TV news may reinforce a complex of anti-black feelings labeled by some social scientists as "modern racism."[4] Messages appearing to promote perceptions that exacerbate whites' racial antagonism arise from the way local TV habitually covers crime and politics and, ironically, from the stations' non-discriminatory employment practices. In crime stories, local news tends to depict blacks as more dangerous than whites accused of similar crimes. In political stories, local news makes blacks appear more demanding of special government favoritism than whites. And the employment of highly visible black anchors and reporters paradoxically presents white audiences with daily images of black success, messages suggesting that racial discrimination no longer impedes African Americans – thereby raising questions as to why crime and demands on the political system persist.[5]

Although the initial intention was to replicate the local news study, a number of significant distinctions between the formats of network and local news forced modifications. Perhaps the key difference involves the substantive focus of network news: foreign and domestic politics and policy comprise the bulk of the report. While crime is one of *the* major topics for local TV news, it enjoys much less prominence on the networks; images of threatening, violent blacks occupy a much smaller proportion of the networks' reports. The kinds of stories in which blacks appear differ, and that has significant impacts on the pattern of images. Because the networks, unlike local news, concentrate heavily on political stories, it would be a herculean task to compare every soundbite uttered by white and black political actors, as was done in the local news study; there would be thousands of quotes from white politicians and officials to compare with a few from blacks. Instead, the analysis focuses exclusively on what prominent black leaders say on the ABC news program to see if, as in local news, African Americans consistently appear highly demanding or critical of government.

Finally, the networks employ no regular black anchors (except, at the time of the study, Carole Simpson on ABC's "World News Saturday"), and proportionately fewer black than white reporters. Because of the relative paucity of black network news figures, national TV news does not convey the same implication as the locals, that discrimination no longer stymies black progress. Despite these differences, a study of network news illuminates an important source of whites' impressions of blacks while advancing theoretical insights into journalism's representational practices.

The Data

The study relies on two data sets: a sample of three ten-day periods of the ABC, CBS, and NBC nightly news programs taped during January, February, and March, 1990, and a set of full verbatim transcripts of the ABC nightly news for an entire year (January 1990-June 1990; July 1991-December 1991).[6] The first is the basis for an analysis that focuses on the *visual* representation of blacks. The ABC transcripts allow an in-depth examination of precisely how blacks are portrayed when the word "black," or code words that connote blacks, are mentioned explicitly on the highest-rated network news show. The analysis also determines which black leaders are mentioned and the context in which they made the news.

The data for the videotape analysis included all stories in which blacks caused or clearly helped cause the newsworthy event, or where blacks were centrally involved in the story. Central involvement meant that blacks (not including anchors or reporters) appeared at least three times in medium

or close-up shots and spoke on camera twice or more. Stories about blacks in other countries were *not* counted, on the assumption that their activities are not directly relevant to attitudes and issues in the United States; for the most part, this meant excluding coverage of South Africa. The selection process produced a sample of 138 stories involving blacks, lasting a total of 267.5 minutes. As a proportion of the total newshole (1,980 minutes) in the sample, this represented approximately 13.5 percent, not an insignificant amount.

In addition, to facilitate the comparison of blacks and whites, all crime stories were coded. Among crime stories during the sample period in which the race of the accused was clear, twenty-two involved blacks, forty-five non-Hispanic whites.

Blacks as Sources or Victims of Trouble. The 138 stories centrally involving blacks for the three-network sample fell into the categories depicted in Table 1. (Coding information can be found in Appendix 1.) The most frequent classifications were crime (blacks committing and/or victims of violent, drug, and non-violent crime) and politics (activities of black politicians and community leaders), as was true of local news. The third most common topic was blacks as victims of social misfortunes other than crime, such as fires, poverty, bad schools, and racial discrimination. The crime plus the victim categories account for 46.4% of the stories; thus nearly half the coverage depicted blacks as threats to or non-contributing victims of American society.

The "statistics" category included stories on such unpleasant and usually crime-related facts as the decrease in black and Hispanic college enrollment, the high number of drug-related murders in Washington, D.C., and the high death rates of men in Harlem (higher than in Bangladesh). These items averaged under 30 seconds and provided little explanation or context. The government policies category included stories on civil rights, discrimination, or other racial policy issues. Adding these two categories, which also documented victimized blacks, to the crime and victim story classifications, yields nearly 60% of stories centered on non-positive news about blacks. Further, the political news, the second largest category, is far from brimming with positive messages as we shall see.

Human Interest and Expertise. There are at least two respects in which network news can portray blacks as making positive contributions to society, short of overtly preaching brotherhood and good will. One of these is showing blacks in upbeat stories where their racial identity is irrelevant or linked to positive conditions. The "human interest" category in Table 1 shows blacks in roles that do not relate to their race, where their racial identities are incidental. Such stories reveal that blacks ("They") can in some cases be just like whites ("Us"). Only about 15 of the 1,980 total minutes in the sample depicted blacks in this racially-neutral, human guise.

A second source of positive messages is the use of black experts. Blacks do sometimes appear as knowledgeable persons with newsworthy, insightful things to say. Such people, by the very act of being consulted, show themselves to have positive social utility. This is particularly true when blacks are not ghettoized as experts only on "black" issues; therefore, the analysis categorized issues as "black-related" or not. The former covered racial discrimination, unemployment, homelessness, inadequate health care, welfare, crime and drugs, housing, gangs, and Martin Luther King (considered "black" issues because television news discourse, visual and verbal, makes them so.)[7]

In stories concerning black issues, 33 black experts appeared versus

TABLE 1
Distribution of Stories on Blacks, Network News Visual Sample,
January-March 1990

Story Categories	Number of Stories	Percent (Stories)	Time (Seconds)
Crime	38	27.6	4197
Politics	27	19.6	2969
Victims	26	18.8	3639
Human interest	9	6.5	924
Statistics	9	6.5	226
Govt. policies	5	3.6	372
Other	24	17.4	3714
Total	138	100.0	16,041

27 whites. In stories about non-black issues in which blacks appeared, white experts markedly outnumbered blacks – 94 to 15. While having 13% (15 of 109) of the experts on non-"black" issues roughly coincides with the proportion of blacks in the population, recall that the data are skewed, because the sample consists of only those stories prominently featuring blacks. Since most appearances of black experts during the period were therefore detected (the only exceptions would be stories in which one black expert was quoted once) it appears likely that in the total newshole of 1,980 minutes, blacks were quoted as experts outside the realm of "black-related" issues little more than 15 times, whereas whites were of course quoted hundreds of times (94 times in just the 13.5% of the newshole included in this sample).

Crime News. Crime, the single most frequent category in the video sample, depicts people who allegedly represent serious threats to the stability and safety of society. Thus it appears to be an area of the news where stereotyping could be especially potent. The small number of cases precludes anything but a tentative analysis.

The first significant difference in portrayal of blacks and whites is that 77% of network stories (17 of 22) in which a black was accused concerned a violent or drug crime, versus 42% of crime stories for whites (19 of 45). In other words, the overwhelming majority of black crime stories concerned violence or drugs, while these especially threatening forms of crime comprised a minority of stories about white alleged criminals.

This disparity could reflect a real racial difference in the focus of criminal activity. But "reality" remains elusive. While blacks are more likely to commit violent crimes than whites, the difference appears to have declined since 1970 and the general trend in black-committed violence has been downward since the early 1970s.[8] Further, some evidence[9] suggests that blacks are more likely to be arrested than whites committing similar crimes, in which case the media might be accurately representing blacks' higher *arrest* rate but exaggerating the comparative rate of *committing* violent or drug crimes. Also, controlling for social class, there is no difference in crime rates: middle-class blacks are as law abiding as middle-class whites, a message obscured by the typical representations in television news.[10] None of this is to deny that poor blacks, especially males, engage in unlawful activity at a very high rate.[11] But the these same law-breakers are subject to

512

a very high rate of discrimination, unemployment, ineffective schooling, single-parent upbringing, and other experiences that tend not to be reported within the narrative of the crime. Stories that narrate just the crimes themselves represent only a portion of the reality of black crime in the aggregate, and of the reality of individual defendants.

The local news study showed several important differences in depictions of blacks and whites within violent/drug stories. One of the most striking was that blacks were twice as likely as whites to be shown in the physical grasp of a police officer. Hence, it was speculated, images of accused blacks suggested they are more threatening than white defendants. In the network coverage, blacks were physically grasped in 5 of the 17 violent/drug crime stories, whites in 2 of 19 (29.4% vs. 10.5%) – a difference consistent with the local news finding.

A second important racial difference in the local news study was that stories about blacks were significantly less likely to offer pro-defense sound bites. In this study, stories on whites contained a decided pro-defendant tilt in sound bites (17 to 10), while the stories about blacks were evenly divided between defense and prosecution (16 to 16). Other aspects of the visual imagery in crime stories, again based on very small numbers, suggested different ways in which news might reinforce negative stereotypes. For example, the image of police breaking into a house to arrest accused criminals was shown 7 times during the period. In 6 cases, the occupants were black. Stories on the drug problem sometimes showed people using or selling drugs. During the sample period, 6 of the 10 such images were of blacks. Many stories on urban problems showed groups of people hanging out on the streets, in no apparent purposeful activity. Of the 38 times these images appeared, 24 (63%) showed only blacks.

Verbal Representations of Blacks. More information about portrayals of blacks can be gleaned by going beyond the visually-coded sample just discussed. A year's worth of full-text transcripts of the nightly ABC "World News" programs were searched by computer for every story containing the words "black" or "blacks," or code words that connote African Americans: inner city, racism or racist, racial or race, minority, underclass, and ghetto. ("African American" was not mentioned at all.) A total of 300 stories was extracted – 234 mentioning "black" or "blacks" and 66 one of the connotative words (checked to ensure they did apparently refer to blacks).

Table 2 classifies the 300 stories. News of South Africa is the largest group by far: 34% of the stories concerned South Africa. If we eliminate the 102 South Africa stories and two on other African countries, 196 covered blacks in the United States. Of these, 76, well over one-third, treated blacks as victims. Blacks acting in politics comprised the third largest category in Table 2, and blacks involved in crime stories, the fourth. These findings follow those of the visual sample: there is a dearth of blacks in stories that have as their central theme either blacks as positive contributors to American society, or blacks as human beings whose racial identity is incidental. Twenty of the 234 usages of "black" involved a non-racial symbolic rather than racial meaning, such as "black market," or "black death." Whether the frequent negative metaphoric associations of the word "black" unconsciously spills over to whites' thinking about black persons is unknowable.

The analysis also determined the specific newsworthy problems mentioned in all 214 stories that explicitly used the word "black" in terms of race. Table 3 reveals again the emphasis on victimization and violence. It also suggests that ABC devoted nearly as much explicit attention to blacks

TABLE 2

Distribution of Stories about Blacks, ABC News Transcripts,
January-June 1990 and July-December 1991

Story categories	Number of stories	Percent (stories)
Crime	22	7.3
Politics	37	12.3
Victims	76	25.3
Human interest	8	2.7
Statistics	0	0.0
South Africa	102	34.0
Sports	6	2.0
Non-racial use	20	6.7
Africa	2	0.7
Govt. policies	16	5.3
Other	11	3.7
Total	300	100.0

as a racial group in a nation 8,000 miles away as to blacks in the U.S.[12]

Black Leaders. The transcript data provided an opportunity to see how often black leaders are quoted or cited on the ABC news program. A pilot study first searched the ABC transcripts for approximately twenty-two weeks in 1990 and 1991, for all names on *Ebony* magazine's 1990 and 1991 lists of 100 Most Influential Blacks in America. Twenty of these people were in fact quoted on ABC (see Appendix 2). The final analysis searched for all appearances of these twenty names in the year-long ABC sample. The 300 ABC stories that mentioned the word "black" or its synonyms were also searched for these twenty names, and for any other identifiably black leader.[13] Table 4 lists the names of all black leaders who were identified by this procedure and were mentioned by ABC news in at least three different stories. Leaders mentioned only one or two times are grouped together in the table under the "Other" category.[14]

Supreme Court nominee and Justice Clarence Thomas was mentioned in the most stories, followed by former Washington, D.C., mayor, Marion Barry. These two men also accounted for a large portion of the soundbites. Barry appeared in the news because of drug charges against him, and Thomas because of his Supreme Court nomination and the ensuing controversy over sexual harassment. The two black leaders who received the most attention were the ones who generated the most negative controversy. On the other hand, the news did cover General Colin Powell and Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan with some frequency. They appeared as important government leaders, their race irrelevant.

The analysis also explored the subjects commonly discussed in the stories that mentioned black leaders. As Table 5 reveals, among the 186 stories mentioning a black leader, more than one-third (68) included an accusation that the leader committed a crime (including sexual harassment). These totals are inflated by the travails of Thomas and Barry; nonetheless, they suggest a side effect of standard news values. By granting high priority

514

TABLE 3
Problems in 214 ABC Stories Explicitly Mentioning Blacks*

Problem categories	Number Stories explicitly mentioning blacks in U.S.	Number Stories explicitly mentioning blacks in South Africa
Poor living cond.	30	15
Drug abuse	8	0
Discrimination	57	29
Civil Rts. activities	16	1
Violence among blacks	7	29
Violence vs. blacks	14	17
Crime	8	4
Black politics	4	0
Ameliorate discrim.	4	45
Reverse discrim.	3	0
Other	8	0
Total	159	140

*The "South Africa" category actually includes two stories about African countries other than South Africa. In addition, up to three newsworthy problems per story were coded, so the number of problems adds up to greater than the number of stories.

to dramatic controversy among the powerful and lower priority to ordinary processes of policymaking, the networks ensure that aside from a few automatically newsworthy officials, any leader who receives concentrated attention is quite likely in some kind of trouble. Since high officialdom and automatic newsworthiness characterizes hardly any blacks (during the study period, only Colin Powell, Louis Sullivan, and House Democratic Whip William Gray), network news tends to show white leaders in a positive light vastly more – both proportionally and absolutely. Here again, network news reflects some aspects of reality – there are few blacks in top federal leadership positions – but distorts other aspects, for the representative black official is not accused of malfeasance.

Table 5 indicates the network implicitly constructed an unfavorable contrast in black-white leadership behavior. Black leaders frequently complained of racial discrimination and often criticized government policy; yet not once in this sample was a black leader quoted praising the government. This finding suggests white audiences are exposed to a stream of images in which black leaders frequently attack government and rarely support it. The norm of balance ensures that most stories that show white leaders criticizing policies will portray other white leaders voicing support. The composite image is of nearly unrelieved carping by black leaders as compared with a balance of praise and reproach arising from powerful whites. On one level, this implicit comparison may accurately reflect a much greater incidence of complaint among black political actors than whites. But without explanation that the status quo may build in advantages for whites who have much less reason to complain, the pattern in representations of black political actors over time may support unwarranted comparative impressions of black leaders as a social category.

TABLE 4

ABC Stories Mentioning and Quoting Black Leaders

Leaders Mentioned	Number of Stories	Number of Soundbites
Colin Powell	7	3
Louis Sullivan	14	14
Marion Barry	23	10
Jesse Jackson	14	6
Clarence Thomas	89	32
David Dinkins	6	7
Douglas Wilder	5	5
Benjamin Hooks	6	7
William Gray	3	3
All Others	19	16
Total	186	103

Conclusion

Network news differs as a genre from local TV news. The networks' dominant focus and themes – especially their relatively infrequent attention to crime news – yield less overtly negative stereotyping than do local stations. Yet the network news does produce images of blacks that may, in more subtle ways than is true of the locals, reinforce whites' antagonism toward blacks, especially among audience members already predisposed toward hostility and resentment.

Is the pattern of images merely an unfortunate by-product of the networks' more or less accurate representation of the reality of black America? Yes and no. There is a voluminous literature documenting the impossibility of the media's achieving the goal of comprehensive accuracy in portraying "reality."[15] This literature shows how professional culture, economic incentives, political pressure, and cognitive limitations among journalists and their audiences ensure that the news offer only partial, selective representations.

Here seems to lie the crux of the representation problem: Is the journalist's responsibility limited to creating an accurate verbal and visual record in the news text, or does it encompass stimulating an accurate mental representation in the audience's mind? The first goal is problematic enough: there are always dimensions of reality that might legitimately merit coverage yet fail to survive the filter of the newsmaking process. But beyond is the even trickier task of encouraging accurate cognitions among audience members. Presumably creating audience understanding of truth is what justifies professional news standards and practices. Textual accuracy for its own sake seems an unlikely candidate for journalism's ultimate goal.

Consider the reporting on Marion Barry. The Barry coverage accurately reflected one level of reality: the experience of an unusually scurrilous politician who happened to be black. But there are effective, conscientious black mayors toiling all over the country who together attained only a fraction of the network visibility that Barry received. That the Barry stories comprised a high proportion of all ABC images of black politicians during the sample year is due to network standards that emphasize unusual controversy and drama, not to a reality that the typical black mayor is, like Barry,

TABLE 5
Matters Discussed in ABC Stories Mentioning Black Leaders

Matters Discussed	Number of Stories
Racial discrimination	28*
Claim of innocence of crime	26
Accusation of crime	68
Criticism of govt. policy	24*
Criticism of non-govt. institutions	11
Praise government	0
Demand govt. help for blacks	4**
Demand improved govt. generally	2
Leader voices opinion as a black person	56
Demand new govt. policy	6
Total	225

* Includes two stories about South Africa.

** Includes one story about South Africa.

a corrupt drug user. So even when they correctly reported the reality of Barry's indictment and conviction, the networks might have promoted inaccurate cognitions among white audiences who took Barry as representing a larger category.

For the majority group, blacks in the news may represent or symbolize all blacks in a way singular whites do not stand for all whites. Since the news presents itself as a kind of sample survey of the world's events, white audience members, especially those having limited personal contact or hostile predispositions toward blacks, may assume those blacks who appear in TV news are representative and thus generalize from them. The essence of racial prejudice is homogenizing and generalizing about the disliked outgroup: a tendency to lump most individual members of the outgroup together as sharing similar undesirable traits, while seeing one's own group as a diverse collection of clearly differentiated individuals.[16] Separate research has established that TV news encourages such generalization in at least one area, by using images of blacks as visual codes indicating a story concerns poverty.[17] The human tendency toward prejudiced stereotyping is of course not the media's responsibility. But this mental disposition means many white audience members may over time combine news images of blacks that are individually accurate into a stereotyped cognition. If the ultimate goal of journalism is establishing truthful audience cognitions, news organizations might bear in mind this tendency toward prejudiced stereotyping when assessing and refining their newsmaking practices.

It could be legitimate for journalists to consider reshaping news practices to make images of blacks more complicated. Innovations might build on a recognition that single stories involving individual black persons might be truthful on any given day, yet accumulate over time to construct within viewers a distorted impression of blacks as a social category. Current practices may tend to obscure larger truths about the diversity and the many positive contributions of the black community. A deliberate choice to introduce more complexity and variety in images of African Americans could, on balance, make TV news more positive, less likely to arouse white

antagonism, and more representative of the reality of black America.

Finally, we must acknowledge a normative conundrum: actions taken to ameliorate one misimpression could heighten another. For example, reducing images of black crime and victimization could instill among whites an unwarranted sense of black progress. Similarly, TV's deliberate use of black experts on non-"black" issues, while conveying the positive diversity of the black community, could simultaneously feed the complacency of whites who insist racial discrimination has ceased. And correcting the implication that blacks are more demanding of government responsiveness than whites could lead networks to broadcast sound bites from spurious, unrepresentative black "leaders."

While there is no easy way out of such dilemmas, they point to the familiar need for context. By routinely providing context, TV news could reveal the continued prevalence of discrimination, illuminate the structural forces that make crime attractive in the ghetto, and explain why so many black political leaders adopt a confrontational style. But complex, nuanced context is difficult for daily TV news to convey. Perhaps the first step toward improving accuracy and social responsibility in the portrayal of blacks on the network news would be honestly to acknowledge all of these difficulties.

APPENDIX 1

Code Categories

1. Violent Crime.
2. Drug Crime.
3. Non-violent crime (including political graft, corruption).
4. Black politicians running for political office, black judges being considered for nomination, or black officials acting out official duties.
5. Black leaders/activists/groups (not running for or holding office) petitioning, marching, protesting, making political demands, or accusations of racism.
6. Blacks as victims
-of natural or social misfortune such as fire, bad government programs, poverty, bad schools, bad health care, etc.
-of racial tensions.

Also includes implication of being victims:
-non-governmental social programs for poor, inner cities, minorities, etc.
-blacks doing things to improve their lives.
-Black History Month.
7. Feature stories, human interest with blacks as central characters. These are stories in which blacks are not criminals or victims or making political commentary.
8. Statistics about conditions of blacks or comparing blacks to whites.
9. Government policies or court rulings (also statements, speeches, and opinions) on civil rights, discrimination, or other racial issues.
10. Story does not fit any category, but blacks appear.
11. Stories related to South Africa.
99. Other, cannot tell, mixture.

APPENDIX 2

20 Black Leaders from Ebony's List of 100 Most Influential Black Americans Who Were Quoted on ABC's "World News Tonight"

Name	Number of Sound Bites
Colin Powell	47
Louis Sullivan	23
Marion Barry	22
David Dinkins	12
Jesse Jackson	12
Tom Bradley	9
Sharon Pratt-Dixon	6
Joseph Lowery	6
William Gray	4
Eleanor Holmes-Norton	4
Ron Brown	3
John Conyers	3
Ronald Dellums	3
Charles Rangel	3
Julian Dixon	2
Maynard Jackson	2
Coleman Young	2
Cardiss Collins	1
John Lewis	1
Doug Wilder	1

NOTES

1. Churchill Roberts, "The Presentation of Blacks in Network Television Newscasts," *Journalism Quarterly* 52 (Spring 1975): 50-55; Anju G. Chaudhary, "Press Portrayal of Black Officials," *Journalism Quarterly* 57 (Autumn 1980): 636-41; Robert M. Entman, "Modern Racism and the Images of Blacks in Local Television News," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 7 (December 1990): 332-45; Robert M. Entman, "Blacks in the News: Television, Modern Racism, and Cultural Change," *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (June 1992): 341-361; Herman Gray, "Television, Black Americans, and the American Dream," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (December 1989): 376-386; Bradley S. Greenberg and Jeffrey E. Brand, "U.S. Minorities and the News," (Paper prepared for a Conference on Television News Coverage of Minorities, The Aspen Institute, Wye, MD, 1992); Kathleen H. Jamieson, *Dirty Politics* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1992); Raymond E. Rainville and Edward McCormick, "Extent of Covert Racial Prejudice in Pro Football Announcers' Speech," *Journalism Quarterly* 54 (Spring 1977): 20-26.

2. Entman, "Blacks in the News."

3. Entman, "Modern Racism and the Images of Blacks," 341-342; also Jamieson, *Dirty Politics*, 133-134; Phyllis Kaniss, *Making Local News* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

4. David O. Sears, "Symbolic Racism," in *Eliminating Racism*, eds. Phyllis Katz and Dalmas Taylor (NY: Plenum Press, 1988); John B. McConahay,

"Modern Racism, Ambivalence, and the Modern Racism Scale," in *Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism: Theory and Research*, eds. John Dovidio and Samuel Gaertner (NY: Academic Press, 1986).

5. On the similarity in function of the *Cosby Show*, see Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis, *Enlightened Racism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992); cf. Michael Budd and Clay Steinman, "White Racism and the Cosby Show," *Jump Cut 37* (1992): 5-14.

6. The dates are staggered in order to obtain a full year period that excludes the highly unusual news event that dominated television between August 1990 and March 1991, the war against Iraq.

7. Cf. Robert M. Entman, *Television, Democratic Theory, and the Visual Construction of Poverty* (Evanston, IL: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1992).

8. Christopher Jencks, *Rethinking Social Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 185-89.

9. Norval Morris, "Race, Drugs, and Imprisonment," *Chicago Tribune,* 30 March 1993, sec. 1, p. 13.

10. N. Morris, "Race, Drugs and Imprisonment."

11. See, e.g., "29% of young black men jailed in '89, study says," *Chicago Tribune,* 23 Sept. 1990, pp. 1, 18.

12. See for a detailed study, Jo Ellen Fair and Roberta J. Astroff, "Constructing Race and Violence: U.S. News Coverage and the Signifying Practices of Apartheid," *Journal of Communication* 41 (Autumn 1991): 58-74. The authors demonstrate that network news on South Africa tends to derogate blacks by allocating blame for violent conflict disproportionately to "tribal" rivalries rather than emphasizing its roots in the apartheid policies of the white government. In this way, then, the South Africa news might tend to further stereotypes of disorderly black people.

13. This means that only those 20 black leaders found in the pilot sample could be coded in the final sample, unless leaders appeared in one of the 300 stories mentioning the word "black" or synonyms. The study may therefore miss some mentions of black leaders. However, random checking suggests that few mentions of black leaders were overlooked because their appearances (with the exception of Colin Powell and Louis Sullivan) were generally linked to their race, and because the pilot did select most of the nation's prominent black leaders.

14. These leaders are: Tom Bradley, Sharon Pratt-Dixon, Joseph Lowery, Ron Brown, John Conyers, Ronald Dellums, Charles Rangel, Craig Washington, Coretta Scott King, Nelson Rivers, Sidney Barthelemy, and Harvey Gantt.

15. Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News* (NY: Pantheon, 1979); W. Lance Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion* (NY: Longman,1988); Robert M. Entman, *Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics* (NY: Oxford, 1989).

16. See Katz and Taylor, *Eliminating Racism*, and Dovidio and Gaertner, *Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism*.

17. On how television news uses blacks as visual cues for poverty and its multitude of sorry symptoms, see Entman, "Poverty"; also Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), chap. 5.