Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. University of California, Los Angeles
Shanto Iyengar Stanford University

Local television news is the public's primary source of public affairs information. News stories about crime dominate local news programming because they meet the demand for "action news." The prevalence of this type of reporting has led to a crime narrative or "script" that includes two core elements: crime is violent and perpetrators of crime are non-white males. We show that this script has become an ingrained heuristic for understanding crime and race. Using a multi-method design, we assess the impact of the crime script on the viewing public. Our central finding is that exposure to the racial element of the crime script increases support for punitive approaches to crime and heightens negative attitudes about African-Americans among white, but not black, viewers. In closing, we consider the implications of our results for intergroup relations, electoral politics, and the practice of journalism.

Local television news is America's principal window on the world. Surveys of television viewing (e.g., Roper-Starch 1994), hours of daily programming (Papper and Gerhard 1999) and the actual share of the viewing audience captured by local newscasts (Hess 1991), all demonstrate the dominance of local news. In fact, people can watch live local news almost anytime—mornings, afternoons, evenings, prime time, and late night. As the amount of news time has increased, so too has competition between stations. The drive for audience ratings pushes local news organizations to favor an "action news" format.

Stories about crime provide several necessary ingredients for the successful marketing of news—concrete events with powerful impact on ordinary people, drama and emotion, and, above all, attention-getting visuals. The special attraction of television to crime is reflected in the content of local television news. In a recent study of fifty-six different cities, crime was the most prominently featured subject in the local news (Klite, Bardwell, and Salzman 1997). In some cities, crime accounted for more than 75 percent of all news coverage.

We argue that local news coverage of crime follows a standard script that features two distinct elements. First, crime is violent. Armed bank robberies, homicides, "home invasions," carjackings, and gang-related activities are now staples of local news. The second element of the crime script is the presence of a particular suspect. Episodic reporting requires a regular "cast" of characters the most prominent of which is the suspect. Given the visual nature of the medium, the importance of the suspect to the script means that crime news is often accompanied by racial imagery (Campbell,

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. is Professor of Political Science and Director, Center for Communications and Community, University of California, Los Angeles, 1015 Gayley Ave. Suite #105, Los Angeles, CA 90024 (fgilliam@ucla.edu). Shanto Iyengar is Professor of Communication and Political Science, McClatchy Hall, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-2050 (siyengar@leland.stanford.edu).

This research was supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We would like to thank John Petrocik, David Sears, Mark Peffley, and anonymous reviewers for commenting on various drafts of the paper. We would also like to thank Nicholas Valentino, Adam Simon, Vince Hutchings, Sharmaine Cheleden, and especially Pam Singh for their work with the experiments. Finally, we would like to thank David Willis for producing and editing the video treatments.

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 44, No. 3, July 2000, Pp. 560–573

©2000 by the Midwest Political Science Association

1995; Entman 1990, 1992; Entman et al. 1998; Gilliam et al. 1996; Gilliam and Iyengar 1997; Graber 1976; Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Peffley, Shields, and Williams 1996; Romer, Jamieson, and de Coteau 1998; Worthy, Hagan, and MacMillan 1997).

Our objective in this article is to evaluate the relative contribution of each element of the crime news script—the focus on violent crime and the inclusion of racial imagery—on public opinion. In general, we find that the latter is more influential. Viewers exposed to the "racialized" element of the script become more supportive of capital punishment, mandatory sentencing, and other deterrent measures. Not unexpectedly, exposure to this version of the script also serves to substantiate negative attitudes about racial minorities. In closing we consider the implications of these results for intergroup relations, electoral politics, and the practice of journalism.

The Crime Story as a Narrative Script

The theoretical basis for our expectations concerning the effects of crime news on the viewing audience derives from the concept of "scripts." As developed by cognitive psychologists, a script is "a coherent sequence of events expected by the individual, involving him either as a participant or as an observer" (Abelson 1976, 33; also see Abelson 1981; Schank 1990; Schank and Abelson 1977; Mandler 1984). In their pioneering work, Schank and Abelson (1977) described "behavioral" scripts such as going to a restaurant: people "know" that they eat first and pay later. Other researchers have expanded the concept to embrace "narrative" or text-based scripts which appear in fiction, humor, advertising and, of particular interest to us, television news reports (see Sulin and Dooling 1974; Black, Galambos, and Read 1984; Graesser et al. 1980). Indeed, scripts are characteristic of all forms of story telling. In the case of mystery novels, for example, the "Agatha Christie" script leads readers to expect (in order) a murder, the appearance of assorted suspects and clues, and the final denouement (orchestrated by Monsieur Poirot or Miss Marple) in which all is explained.

All scripts, either behavioral or narrative, facilitate comprehension by distilling experience and knowledge. Because they provide an orderly and quite predictable set of scenarios and roles, scripts allow the "reader," quite effortlessly, to make inferences about events, issues, or behaviors. Because the "target" actions are marked by sequence, there is a clear sense of what is to come. We do not need to see the customer paying the bill or ordering the food to know that this follows the reading of the menu. We do not need to see police officers at the crime scene to be aware of their presence. In many cases script-based expectations are so well developed that when people encounter incomplete versions of the script, they actually "fill in" the missing information and make appropriate (that is, script-based) inferences about what must have happened. In the case of the restaurant script, for instance, the sight of an individual seated at a table reading a text leads observers to understand that this is a customer attempting to decide what to eat. Our evidence indicates that for viewers in Los Angeles and across the country, the expectations prompted by the crime script have achieved the status of common knowledge. Just as we know full well what happens in a restaurant, we also know—or at least think we know—what happens when crime occurs.

As told by television news, the crime news script unfolds in three ordered segments. It usually begins with the anchorperson's terse announcement that a crime has occurred. The viewer is then transported to the scene of the crime for a first-hand look supported by accounts from bystanders, relatives of the victim, or other interested parties. Finally, the focus shifts to the identity and apprehension of the perpetrator and the related efforts of law enforcement officials.

The following example, taken from a recent report aired by Los Angeles Channel 9 (KCAL) is typical:

Anchor's introduction: "A man was shot this afternoon in broad daylight while sitting in his jeep."

Crime Scene Coverage: pictures of jeep and cordoned-off street; concerned neighbor comments ("Imagine something like this happening just in front of your house; I mean, it's really scary.")

Apprehension of suspect: "Police are looking for this man last seen driving away in a blue Honda Accord (picture of suspect on screen). Police believe the suspect may have argued with the victim before he was shot."

Within this brief presentation (the entire story runs for 90 seconds) there are several underlying regularities. First, as seen in the news, crime is violent (Elias 1994; Crispin-Miller 1998). Second, coverage is episodic in the sense that the news focuses on discrete events rather than collective outcomes or general context (Iyengar 1991). Third, crime episodes require a central causal agent, namely, a "prime suspect." Typically, what viewers learn about suspects is limited to visual attributes, most notably their race or ethnicity. As depicted in the local news, crime is violent, and criminal behavior is associated with race/ethnicity.

In the next section we present a detailed content analysis that examines the prevalence of the crime news

script in the Los Angeles television news market. We then report the results of several experiments in which viewers encountered different versions of the crime script. Finally, we corroborate the experimental results using a survey of Los Angeles County residents.

Crime Coverage in Los Angeles Local News, 1996–1997

The centrality of violent crime to local news programs was readily apparent in our study that encompassed all English-language commercial television stations operating in the LA market.[1] These stations aired a total of 3014 news stories on crime during 1996 and 1997 (when we administered our studies) of which 2492 (83 percent) were about violent crime.[2] The crime of murder, which accounts for less than 1 percent of all crime in Los Angeles County, was the focus of 17 percent of crime stories in the newscasts sampled. In fact, the number of murder stories (510) is equivalent to the *total* number of nonviolent crime stories (522) during the period sampled. While brutal acts of violence are understandably newsworthy, they represent but a small portion of the actual crime rate. This is important because most people get their information about crime from the media, not from personal experience.

As shown in Table 1, the racial element of the crime script is clearly less prominent than the violence element. Nevertheless, over one-half of all crime reports made *explicit* reference to the race or ethnicity of the suspect.[3] Minorities accounted for 56 percent of all suspects and 59 percent of suspects in violent crime cases. The comparable figures for white suspects were 44 percent and 41 percent, respectively. Thus minorities are more likely to be depicted in the role of the suspect. Regardless of the type of crime, African-Americans comprised the largest group of *minority* suspects.[4] In short, the content analysis documents the scripted nature of crime news; crime is invariably violent and more often than not, stories make reference to the race/ethnicity of a particular suspect(s).

Table 1 Content of Television Crime Coverage (Los Angeles, 1996–1997)
(Total crime stories = 3014)

	Number of Violent Stories	Murder Stories	Non-violent Stories
Total	2492	510	522
Total No. of Perpetrators	52% (1297)	56% (287)	53% (276)
White Perpetrators	41% (529)	33% (96)	61% (169)
Black Perpetrators	29% (370)	36% (104)	21% (58)
Hispanic Perpetrators	22% (291)	22% (64)	16% (43)
Asian Perpetrators	8% (107)	8% (23)	2% (6)

Obviously, the particular racial cues present in television crime coverage are partly a reflection of the disproportionate representation of particular racial groups in criminal activity. The prominence of blacks in crime news, for example, is not that much out of line with the actual black arrest rate in Los Angeles County—although blacks do not account for the largest number of murders (California Department of Justice 1997). However, the media's near exclusive focus on violent crime distorts the real world in the following way: when viewers encounter a suspect in the news he is invariably a violent perpetrator, when in reality the greatest number of felony arrests are for *property* crimes (Gilliam 1998). To the extent that people do see nonviolent crime stories, the perpetrator is most typically white (recall the data in Table 1). In the real world, however, minorities actually account for the largest share of nonviolent (property) felonies (Gilliam 1998). Clearly, the news is not an accurate reflection of the real world of crime.

In the next section we appraise the impact of the violent crime and race of the perpetrator elements of the crime script on attitudes about crime and race, respec-

[1] We selected newscasts aired during the evening, prime time, and late-night time periods from the three major network affiliates in Los Angeles (KCBS, KABC, and KNBC), the Fox (KTTV), and Warner Brothers (KTLA) stations, in addition to two independent stations KCAL and KCOP.

[2] We also found that violent crime was no more or less visible in the offerings of the six television stations studied. Moreover, violent crime was just as newsworthy in the late afternoon, early evening, prime time, and late-night newscasts. The prominence of violent crime is a systematic phenomenon.

[3] Suspects were identified either visually (in the form of a composite sketch or actual photograph) or verbally (in the form of a spoken reference).

[4] African-Americans, do not, however, comprise the largest (absolute) number of murder suspects (California Department of Justice 1997).

tively. We begin this section with a description of our experimental design. We move on to discuss the measurement of our dependent variables. We end the section by developing three competing hypotheses about the effect of the crime news script on the viewing public.

Assessing the Impact of the Crime Script on Viewers' Attitudes

Design

We rely primarily on experimental methods to assess the effects of the crime news script. Experiments have the well-known advantage of greater precision in estimating causal effects. We designed the experiments in this study so that the only differences between any two groups of viewers concerned the relevant aspects of the crime news script—the presence or absence of violent crime and the race of the alleged perpetrator. Since all other properties of the news presentation were identical we can attribute the observed differences between conditions, if any, to the cues conveyed by the crime script.

Of course, experiments are not without their limitations. Most experiments are administered upon "captive" populations—college students who must participate in order to gain course credit. Experiments also require a somewhat sterile, laboratory-like environment which bears little resemblance to the cacophony of the real world. Our own research was designed to overcome the artificial nature of the experimental method. As described below, our participants represented a fair cross-section of Los Angeles metropolitan area residents, our experimental manipulation consisted of an actual (and typical) news report on crime, and the experimental setting closely emulated the typical citizen's encounter with local news.

The principal objective of our manipulation was to manipulate the main elements of the crime news script. Four levels of the manipulation were established. First, some participants watched a story in which the alleged perpetrator of a murder was an African-American male. Second, other subjects were given the same news report, but this time featuring a white male as the murder suspect. A third set of participants watched the news report edited to exclude information concerning the identity of the perpetrator. Finally, a control group saw no crime news story at all.

The most innovative aspect of this design concerns our ability to vary the race of a "target" face (in this case, the alleged perpetrator) while maintaining all other visual characteristics. The original "input" was a local news report which included a close-up "mug shot" of the suspected perpetrator of the crime in question. The picture was digitized, then "painted" to alter the perpetrator's skin color, and then reedited into the news report. Beginning with two different perpetrators (a white male and a black male), we were able to produce altered versions of each individual in which their race was reversed, but all other features remained identical.[5] Thus, the perpetrator featured in the "white" and "black" versions of the story was equivalent in all respects but race.[6] Using this method, any differences in the responses of the subjects exposed to the white or black perpetrators can only be attributed to the perpetrator's race.

Participants watched a fifteen-minute videotaped local newscast (including commercials) described as having been selected at random from news programs broadcast during the past week. The objective of the study was said to be "selective perception" of news reports. Depending upon the condition to which they were assigned (at random), they watched a news story on crime that somtimes included a close-up photo of the suspect. Using the method described above, the photo either depicted an African-American or white male. The report on crime was inserted into the middle position of the newscast following the first commercial break. Except for the news story on crime, the newscast was identical in all other respects. None of the remaining stories on the tape concerned crime or matters of race.

[5] The validity of this inference, of course, depends on the assumption that experimental participants recognized the racial manipulations. We tested the ability of participants to recognize the race of the original and transformed versions of the two different male suspects (one white, one black) in a pilot study. UCLA students (N = 90) were shown the four pictures (on a computer screen) along with a series of other pictures. As part of a "facial memory" test, the students were asked to indicate the ethnicity of each individual presented. In addition to accuracy of racial identification, we measured response latency on the assumption that lower latency would indicate greater confidence in the "target" individual's race. The results of this pretest revealed that in both cases the level of accuracy for the original and painted versions of the target were equivalent (.93 versus .87 and .84 versus .83 respectively). Response latency was also uniform across the original and altered faces. Latency was slightly higher in the case of the altered photos, but in neither case was the difference significant. In short, the manipulations "worked."

[6] This represents a significant methodological advance over previous work in which researchers have manipulated racial cues using different stimulus individuals. For example, Iyengar (1991) showed his participants news reports of an unemployed black man and unemployed white man and news stories about crime featuring either a white or black perpetrator. Since the individuals featured in these stories differed in several respects other than race or ethnicity, Iyengar's studies provided only weak tests of the effects of race.

On their arrival, participants were given their instructions and then completed a short pretest questionnaire concerning their social background, party identification, and political ideology, level of interest in political affairs, and media habits. They then watched the videotaped newscasts. The viewing room was furnished casually, and participants were free to browse through newspapers and magazines, snack on cookies, or chat with fellow participants. At the end of the videotape, participants completed a lengthy questionnaire that included questions about their evaluations of various news programs and prominent journalists, their opinions concerning various issues in the news, their reactions to particular news stories and, depending on the study, questions tapping their beliefs about the attributes of particular racial/ethnic groups. After completing the questionnaire, subjects were debriefed in full and were paid the sum of fifteen dollars.

Using this basic design, we have administered five separate studies between April 1995 and November 1997. Study 1 was administered at the UCLA Media Research Laboratory (which consists of a two-room suite on campus). Studies 2 and 3 were conducted at a major shopping mall in the city of Los Angeles. Studies 4 and 5 were conducted at a smaller mall in an outlying section of the metropolitan area known as Simi Valley which is located in Ventura County. Each study was designed (in part) to evaluate different attitudes about crime and race. Studies 1, 2, and 4 addressed attitudes towards the criminal justice process in general. Study 3 focused on questions of juvenile crime. While Studies 2 and 3 focused on traditional racial stereotypes, Studies 4 and 5 were designed to investigate the effects of the crime news script on more subtle racial attitudes. Finally, participants in Studies 1, 3, and 4 completed measures of "free recall" of the crime news story that enables us to validate the experimental manipulation and assess viewer's reconstruction of the news story. To maximize the reliability of the analysis, we pooled all five experiments. However, because some indicators were not common to all five studies, the number of cases varies across analyses.

The experimental "sample" consisted of 2331 residents of the Los Angeles metropolitan area who were recruited through flyers and announcements in newsletters offering $15 for participation in "media research." The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 74. Fifty-three percent were white, 22 percent were black, 10 percent were Asian, and 8 percent were Latinos.[7] Fifty-two percent were women. The participants were relatively well educated (49 percent had graduated from college) and, in keeping with the local area, more Democratic than Republican (45 percent versus 25 percent) in their partisan loyalty.

In order to assess the validity of our manipulation, we began by examining participants' ability to recall the details of the news story. As noted above, a subset of subjects were asked to recall the content of the crime report. At the end of the questionnaire subjects completed a section which began with the following instructions: "Now we want to know what you remember and how you felt about some of the stories you just saw. On the next page, some of the stories are briefly described." Subjects were asked to recall what the story was about, their thoughts and reactions to the story, and to identify the race, age, and gender of the "suspect in the story." The question about the race of the suspect was used to construct a test of accuracy in recall by comparing across the three experimental conditions.

Table 2 presents the results of these comparisons. While subjects were generally accurate in their recall of the presence of a perpetrator (an average of about 67 percent), they responded more accurately in the black perpetrator condition (70 percent) than in the white perpetrator condition (64 percent). This difference is statistically significant at the .05 level. Similarly, subjects in the white perpetrator condition were about 50 percent less likely to recall having seen a suspect than subjects in the black perpetrator condition ($p < .10$). This pattern is in keeping with the extensive literature in social and cognitive psychology indicating that people are more likely to attend to information that confirms their prior beliefs (see, for example, Graesser, Singer, and Trabasso 1994; Roediger and McDermott 1995).

Turning to the especially interesting case of the condition that did not feature a perpetrator, Table 2 shows that over 60 percent of the respondents who watched the story with no reference to a perpetrator falsely recalled having seen a perpetrator. Even more striking, in 70 percent of these cases, the perpetrator was identified as African-American. Taken together, these data reveal that the crime script generates strong expectations about crime, allowing viewers to fill in gaps in the script. Lacking concrete evidence about the perpetrator, viewers infer what must have happened. Overall, the recall data validate the notion that the crime script is no mere journalistic device; instead, it is a powerful filter for observing daily events.

[7]Because our interest in this set of studies was on black/white differences, we oversampled black subjects. The downside of this strategy is that we "undersampled" other minority groups. Our sample, therefore, does not fully match the general demographics for the Los Angeles metropolitan area. On the other hand, this approach does allow for a more refined analysis of our black subjects, which, as we will see shortly, is important in evaluating competing hypotheses.

TABLE 2 Manipulation Check: Recall of Suspect by Experimental Condition

	Black Suspect	No Suspect	White Suspect
Percent recalling suspect as black	70 (182)	44 (56	10 (21)
Percent recalling suspect as white	13 (34)	19 (24)	64 (137)
Percent unable to recall suspect	17 (45)	37 (46)	26 (56)

Measurement

Crime-Related Attitudes. General trends in American public opinion suggest that the public increasingly fears crime, attributes crime to individual failings, and expresses support for punitive remedies. A preliminary analysis revealed that exposure to local news coverage of crime exerted no effects on fear of crime. Instead, fear was determined primarily by personal vulnerability to crime (as measured by gender, previous criminal victimization, socio-economic status, and place of residence). For this reason, we dropped fear of crime from the analysis.

Dispositional explanations of crime were measured with the following question: "Now, here is a list of potential reasons that, according to some people, help explain why there is so much crime in this country. For each, tell us if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the proposed remedy." We constructed an index based on responses to the following reasons: "failure of some groups in society to instill proper morals and values in their children," "breakdown of the family structure," and "people are just born criminals." Subjects who "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with each of the reasons were assigned a score of one; all other responses were given the value of zero. We created the index by summing the responses and dividing by three.[8] The support for punitive criminal justice policy index also consisted of three items. Subjects were provided with a list of potential remedies for crime and asked to agree or disagree with each. We constructed an index reflecting agreement with three potential remedies: "enforcement of the death penalty for people convicted of murder," "three strikes and you're out legislation," and "putting more police on the streets." Subjects who "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with each of the remedies were coded as one; all other responses were given the value of zero. We then summed the responses and divided by three.[9]

Racial Attitudes. Classic models of prejudice ultimately turn on one's attitude about blacks as a group. Thus the acceptance of negative racial stereotypes is taken as evidence of racial prejudice (Allport 1954). In what is typically referred to as "old-fashioned" racism, minorities are characterized by traits suggesting either genetic inferiority (e.g., lesser intelligence) or cultural deprivation. (e.g., failings of character) (McConahay 1986; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995; Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996).[10]

We measured old-fashioned racism by asking participants to rate African-Americans in terms of the applicability of the following traits—"law abiding," "unintelligent," "disciplined," and "lazy." The stereotype battery was worded as follows. "In this section we want you to rate various groups in terms of particular attributes that may or may not characterize them. Please consider the group named at the top of the list of attributes and then rate how well each attribute applies to that group in general. A score of 1 would mean that you think that the trait applies very well, while a score of 4 would mean that the attribute does not apply to the group at all. If you have no opinion about how well a particular attributes applies to the group, you may choose 'don't know.'" Each rating was dichotomized (depending on the item, we collapsed the "very well" and "quite well" or "not so well" and "not well at all" ratings) and then summed. Coefficient Alpha for this scale was .57. The index score, therefore,

[8] Mean =. 57, S.D.=. 22, Cronbach's alpha = .57.

[9] Mean =. 53, S.D.=. 33, Cronbach's alpha = .58.

[10] The central idea was the blacks came from an inferior race incapable of full human development. They were depicted as violent, immoral, and shiftless dependents unworthy of full inclusion into the society. As such, they were to be governed by a different set of codes adapted to their inherent (dis)abilities. Prior to the turn of the century, these sentiments were based on basic prejudices and pseudo-scientific theories. The onset of the "age of science," however, provided Jim Crow ideology with an aura of respectability. Newby observes that, "[T[he achievement of scientific racism was to strengthen this popular prejudice by clothing it in a mantle of academic and scholarly authority" (1970, 20). The result was the most systematic body of anti-black scholarship ever produced in this country.

Biological racism was confronted with several serious challenges in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Studies from biology and anthropology revealed two critical findings: it is unlikely that there are separate and distinct races and that differences in human achievement can be explained by differences in culture and customs. Thus the traits of American blacks are more conditioned by an environment of poverty, segregation, and discrimination, than by a set of characteristics inherent to the race. Nonetheless, derogatory stereotypes remain (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). They are thought to be acquired early in life and persist intact, for the most part, through the life cycle (Campbell et al. 1960).

measures the probability that any given participant rated African-Americans negatively.

For various reasons (see McAdam 1982; Morris 1984), old-fashioned racism no longer captures the essence of American racial attitudes. It is now common knowledge that open expression of racial animus is unacceptable and a majority of white Americans support the principle of racial equality while publicly rejecting negative stereotypes of minorities (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; but see, Jackman and Muha 1984). Nonetheless, whites continue to oppose many civil rights reforms and express negative attitudes toward racial minorities (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). To accommodate this cultural shift, scholars have introduced the concept of "new racism."

The new racism is thought to be "symbolic," "subtle," "covert," "hidden," or "underground." [11] Although the meaning and measurement of the new racism has varied widely from study to study and has been the basis of much controversy, there is general agreement that racial attitudes have become increasingly tied to support for traditional American values. Kinder and Sanders offer what we believe is a sensible measure. They identify four central elements of the new racism: (1) a denial that discrimination against African-Americans continues; (2) a sense that blacks have violated traditional American values of hard work and self-reliance; (3) a perception that blacks make illegitimate demands; and (4) the belief that blacks receive undeserved benefits from government. These attitudes are captured in a battery of questions, originally designed for the 1986 National Election Study, and reproduced in our experiments.[12]

[11] These include symbolic racism (Sears 1988); racial resentment (Kinder and Sanders 1996); aversive racism (Dovidio and Gaertner 1986); subtle racism (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995) and modern racism (McConahay 1986).

[12] The new racism battery reads, "Now we would like to ask you about the status of blacks in America. For the following set of questions, please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the following statements: (1) Irish, Italians, Jewish, and other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up; blacks should do the same without special favors. (2) It's really a matter of some people just not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites. (3) Generations of slavery have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class. (4) Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve. (5) Most blacks who receive money from welfare programs could get along without it if they tried. (6) Government officials usually pay less attention to a request or complaint from a black person than from a white person.

Each response was dichotomized (depending on the item, we collapsed the "strongly agree" and "agree" or "disagree" and "strongly disagree" response). The resulting new racism index gives the percentage of participants who have negative attitudes about African-Americans. The Alpha coefficient of reliability was .72.

We are now in a position to offer a few simple propositions concerning the impact of the crime news script on public opinion. As operationalized in our experiments, the effects of the crime script can be represented by the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Public opinion} &= b_0 \text{ no crime news}\\ &+ b_1 \text{ crime news/no perpetrator}\\ &+ b_2 \text{ crime news/white perpetrator}\\ &+ b_3 \text{crime news/black perpetrator}\end{aligned}$$

where b_0 is the null condition and b_1 to b_3 represent the experimental conditions; public opinion designates attitudes about crime (dispositional causal attributions, support for punitive crime policies) and race (old-fashioned racism, new racism).

Hypothesis #1: $b_0 < b_1 = b_2 = b_3$
This model predicts that exposure to violent crime, regardless of the presence or absence of a perpetrator of a particular race, will heighten the tendency to attribute crime to individual failings, increase support for punitive crime policies, and increase negative attitudes toward African-Americans. The underlying logic of this prediction is that exposure to news coverage of violent crime, in and of itself, stimulates support for punitive and racist attitudes.

Hypothesis #2: $b_0 < b_2 < b_1 \leq b_3$
On this line of reasoning, race takes precedence over violence in determining viewer attitudes. Exposure to the black perpetrator in the news is expected to elicit higher levels of support for dispositional attributions, punitive remedies, and racist attitudes. Given the findings from our recall analysis, we also anticipate that the effect of the no perpetrator condition will be similar to the effect of the black perpetrator condition. In any event, the core prediction is that the black perpetrator version of the script will be different from the null and white perpetrator conditions.

Hypothesis #3: $b_0 < b_1 < b_2 = b_3$
Standing between hypotheses 1 and 2 is the view that the simple presence of any perpetrator is enough to influence crime and race attitudes. The race of the perpetrator, then, is of little consequence. Seeing a face personalizes crime and in this way leads viewers to harsher attitudes about crime. The one modification here is that exposure to either a white perpetrator or black perpetrator should lead people to cite dispositional attributions for crime and support a punitive crime policy agenda. In the case of racial attitudes, however, the expectation is that exposure to the black perpetrator should heighten

anti-black sentiment; exposure to the white perpetrator, on the other hand, should weaken racial prejudice (i.e., the presence of a white perpetrator is evidence against the dominant stereotype).

Finally, we consider the question of differential effects of exposure to the crime script among white and black viewers. The case for race-specific effects is based on the vast racial differences in social and political beliefs and experiences (see, Kinder and Sanders 1996). For example, African-Americans hold more nuanced views of blacks as a group (see, for example, Smith 1996; Dyson 1996); have greater interaction with one another (Oliver 1988; Bienenstock, Bonacich, and Oliver 1990), and have access to alternative media outlets which are less prone to rely on the crime script (Hunt 1997). Thus, we expect blacks to reject the racial implications of the crime script because it is an attack on their in-group (Tajfel 1978). On the other hand, it is possible that blacks, because of their vulnerability to crime, find the violent crime script just as compelling as whites. If so, the effects of the violence cue on crime-related attitudes should be uniform for both groups.

In summary, if the violent crime element of the script is dominant, we expect exposure to any crime story to influence crime and race attitudes equally for black and white subjects. If the racial element is more powerful, we expect that exposure to the black perpetrator version of the script will influence attitudes above and beyond exposure to the other conditions for white, but not black participants. Finally, if the simple presence of a perpetrator is the most notable element of the crime script, we expect exposure to any perpetrator in the news (regardless of race) to have a measurable impact on crime and race attitudes for both black and white subjects. The following analysis assesses each of these possibilities.

Analysis and Results

The Pooled Local News Experiment

We model the impact of the experimental manipulation by specifying separate dummy variable terms for each script element. Violent crime is expressed as a value of one for subjects who watched a violent crime story that did not depict a perpetrator and zero for all remaining conditions. The race of the suspect is measured by two dichotomous variables set equal to one when the suspect is either African-American or white and zero for all remaining conditions. For all equations, then, the null condition is expressed as the constant.

Although random assignment makes the need for statistical controls less necessary, we have taken into account standard political and demographic variables thought to influence public opinion on crime and race (social class, education, gender, age, ideology, partisanship, place of residence, and self-reported exposure to local television news).[13] Lastly, given our interest in race-specific effects, we report separate results for white and black subjects.

The basic logic of our approach is to estimate the independent contributions of each script element to attitudes concerning crime and race after taking into account the effects of other relevant predispositions. We should remind readers that our manipulation is extremely subtle. The racial cue, for example, is operationalized as a five-second exposure to a mug shot in a ten-minute local news presentation. Consequently we have rather modest expectations about the impact of any given coefficient. Instead, we are looking for a pattern of results that is consistent with a particular hypothesis.

Table 3 documents the impact of the crime news script on crime-related attitudes.[14] The coefficients for the treatment conditions represent the percentage of people endorsing the respective position (i.e., dispositional attributions and punitive solutions for crime) above and beyond the null condition (i.e., the constant term). The results in the first two columns of the table provide mild support for the "race" hypothesis. For example, among white subjects, exposure to the black perpetrator significantly raised support for the view that crime is caused by dispositional factors when compared to the null condition (+4 percent). Similarly, exposure to the no perpetrator condition significantly heightened support for dispositional attributions by 6 percent compared to the null condition. As predicted by Hypothesis 2 (race > violence), exposure to the no face and black face conditions both exerted significant effects on whites' causal attributions, while exposure to the white perpetrator had no measurable impact. Also in keeping with the race hypothesis, the attributions of African-American participants were unaffected by exposure to any element of the crime news script.

The third and fourth columns in Table 3 provide even stronger support for the race hypothesis. In the first instance, the pattern of coefficients among white subjects is directly in line with a priori expectations. Exposure to

[13] We constructed dummy variables for each of the relevant controls. Women, liberals, Democrats, people with a family income greater than $50,000, people who own their home, people who are working full time, people with at least some college education, people over 45 years of age, people who watch local television news every day, and people who took the study in Simi Valley are given a value of one.

[14] Recall that all variables are coded on a zero-to-one scale. We prefer this technique as it makes it easier to interpret the coefficients.

TABLE 3 The Impact of the Crime Script on Crime Attitudes (unstandardized regression coefficients)

	Dispositional Attributions		Punitive Remedies	
	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks
Elements of the Crime Script				
No Perpetrator (b_1)	.06**	.06	.04	–.14**
	(.03)	(.05)	(.04)	(.07)
White Perpetrator (b_2)	.02	.01	.01	–.08
	(.03)	(.05)	(.03)	(.06)
Black Perpetrator (b_3)	.04*	.02	.06**	–.04
	(.02)	(.05)	(.03)	(.05)
Controls				
Some College	.04**	.02	–.04*	–.02
	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.04)
Over 50K	–.02	.02	.08**	.00
	(.02)	(.04)	(.02)	(.05)
Employed	.01	.01	.03	.05
	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.04)
Own Home	.03	–.03	.06**	.04
	(.02)	(.04)	(.02)	(.05)
Women	.02	.01	–.01	.04
	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.04)
Over 45	–.01	.01	–.01	.00
	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)
Liberals	.05**	.01	–.11**	–.05
	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.04)
Democrats	–.00	–.00	–.01	–.02
	(.01)	(.02)	(.01)	(.02)
Freq. Viewer	.03*	–.02	.04*	–.01
	(.02)	(.04)	(.02)	(.05)
Simi Valley	.01	.04	.00	–.04
	(.02)	(.05)	(.03)	(.08)
CONSTANT	.55	.45	.46	.41
	(.08)	(.06)	(.04)	(.09)
R^2	.04	.02	.07	.03
N	759	255	1002	255

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; standard errors in parentheses.

the black perpetrator had the greatest impact on support for punitive policies (+6 percent, p < .01) followed by the no perpetrator and white perpetrator conditions, respectively. Once again, the results from our black subsample provided support for the race hypothesis: as shown in the last column, exposure to any element of the crime script, if anything, served to *reduce* their support for punitive crime policies.

We next turn to the implications of the crime script for racial attitudes. Table 4 displays the results. The first column indicates that, generally speaking, the crime script had no effect on old-fashioned racism among white subjects. However, in line with the race hypothesis, the coefficient for the black perpetrator condition had the correct sign and was larger than the coefficients for both the white perpetrator and no perpetrator conditions (although all these coefficients were statistically insignificant).

The race hypothesis fared better when we examined the views of African-Americans. Exposure to any element of the crime script reduced negative stereotyping, and the effect was significant for both the white and black perpetrator conditions. In other words, the violence cue,

TABLE 4 The Impact of the Crime Script on Racial Attitudes (unstandardized regression coefficients)

	Old Fashioned Racism		New Racism
	Whites	Blacks	Whites
Elements of the Crime Script			
No Perpetrator (b_1)	–.02	–.02	.14**
	(.04)	(.06)	(.05)
White Perpetrator (b_2)	–.01	–.10**	.09**
	(.04)	(.05)	(.04)
Black Perpetrator (b_3)	.03	–.09**	.12**
	(.03)	(.05)	(.04)
Controls			
Some College	–.01	.02	–.03
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)
Over 50K	–.00	–.06*	–.01
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Employed	–.01	.02	.05
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Own Home	–.02	–.05	.07**
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)
Women	–.06**	.01	–.08**
	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)
Over 45	–.00	–.02	.02
	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)
Liberals	–.05**	–.06*	–.07**
	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)
Democrats	–.01	.00	–.02
	(.09)	(.01)	(.01)
Freq. Viewer	.03	–.02	.03
	(.02)	(.04)	(.03)
Simi Valley	.03	.07	.06*
	(.03)	(.07)	(.03)
CONSTANT	.50	.43	.41
	(.06)	(.07)	(.05)
R^2	.04	.02	.07
N	759	255	661

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; standard errors in parentheses.

in and of itself, had virtually no impact on blacks' stereotypes of themselves. When the race of the perpetrator was known, however, black subjects wholeheartedly rejected the racial implications of the crime script. Seeing either a white or a black perpetrator in the news reduced the percentage of blacks with negative stereotypes by about 10 percent.

The last column of Table 4 shows the influence of the crime script on the "new racism."[15] Exposure to any element of the crime script served to strengthen new racism among white subjects, suggesting that more subtle racial attitudes can be triggered by mere exposure to violent crime. Note, however, that the black perpetrator

[15] As we mentioned earlier, all items were not common across the five studies. The new racism items were asked primarily of our Simi Valley participants. We did this because we were concerned that Simi Valley residents might be sensitive to overt racial questions given the events surrounding the first Rodney King trial. We decided, therefore, to include the new racism questions because they are *prima facie* more covert than the stereotype traits. The drawback is that the Simi Valley subsample has very few African-Americans. As a result, we do not have enough African-Americans and thus have omitted them from this portion of the analysis.

continued to be the dominant cue (in the sense that this condition had the largest coefficient to standard error ratio); seeing a black perpetrator in the news raised the percentage of whites who endorsed new racism from about 40 percent to well over one-half.

In sum, the local news experiment demonstrates that exposure to the crime script significantly influences attitudes about both crime and race. Our results show that it is the *racial* element of the crime script, however, that is the dominant cue. This conclusion is supported by two pieces of evidence. First, among white subjects, the coefficients for the black perpetrator conditions are generally larger than the coefficients for both the null and the white perpetrator conditions. The black perpetrator coefficients are significantly different from the null condition in three of the four comparisons. Moreover, the two significant coefficients associated with the "no perpetrator" condition can be attributed, in part, to the tendency of white subjects to misreport the presence of the nonwhite perpetrator in this condition. The weakest effects were associated with exposure to the white perpetrator (only one out of four coefficients were significant). Second, the African-American subsample generally rejects the crime script. Six of the nine relevant coefficients have negative signs. In particular, exposure to the crime script leads blacks to lower their support for punitive criminal justice policies and reduce their willingness to accept negative characterizations of their group. This pattern is in stark opposition to the findings for our white study participants.

While the experimental results are revealing, we are sensitive to the argument that controlled experiments have certain limitations. The most common concern has to do with external validity. Experimental samples, for instance, are typically not drawn with the rigor of probability samples common to most public opinion surveys. To take account of this possibility, we undertook a survey replication that generally corroborated the findings reported above.

Survey Replication

Each year, the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of California, Los Angeles surveys the social and political attitudes of Los Angeles County.[16] From our perspective, this survey is advantageous because the sample frame includes the areas from which we recruited a significant portion of our experimental subjects. Moreover, the survey was administered at approximately the same time as our news experiments. Thus we have the ability to match the experimental and survey findings.

The survey questions tapped a wide range of political issues. We reconstruct the experimental results using questions concerning respondents' exposure to broadcast media. Specifically, people were asked about their local television news viewing habits ("How often do you watch local news like 'Eyewitness News' or 'Action News'? Every day, three or four times a week, once or twice a week, or hardly ever?") We assign a score of 1 to those viewers who report watching "hardly ever," a score of 2 to viewers who watch "once or twice a week," a score of 3 for people watching "three or four times a week," and a score of 4 for daily viewers of local television news. Our assumption is that frequent television news viewers are more likely to be exposed to the crime news script. In turn, we assume that this group of viewers is also more likely to be exposed to the racial element of the script. Thus, for the findings reported above to be sustained, we believe, the local news exposure measure should have a significant effect on white attitudes concerning *both* crime and race. In other words, while we might expect higher levels of exposure to impact crime attitudes as a simple function of the violence element of the script, it would take some exposure to the racial element of the script to move *racial* attitudes.

Respondents were also asked their views about crime and race. As in the experiment, we included survey indicators of causal attributions, support for punitive crime policies, racial stereotypes, and new racism.[17] The results are presented in Table 5 (white correspondents only).

There were several parallels between the experimental and survey data. In all four cases, the sign for the local news exposure measure was in the anticipated direction, and in three of the four comparisons, the effect was statistically significant. For instance, compared to those who

[16] The 1997 LACSS was based on 647 completed interviews. Forty-eight percent of the respondents were white, 32 percent were Hispanic, 10 percent were African-American, and 9 percent were Asian-American. Fifty-six percent were female, and 44 percent were male. The interviews were administered in early 1997 and achieved a response rate of approximately fifty percent.

[17] The measure for dispositional attributions and the new racism scale were exactly the same as those used in the experiments. In the case of support for punitive measures, the survey index included two of the three items used in the experiment—the death penalty and "three strikes." Finally, the survey measure of stereotyping was limited to a single item worded as follows: "Despite changes in social and economic policy, people in certain groups such as African- and Hispanic-Americans, still suffer much lower living standards than other groups. Several explanations have been suggested for this poverty. Using the scale below, indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of these explanations: People in these groups are less intellectually able than other groups. Do you strongly agree with this, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? Participants who either strongly agreed or agreed were assigned a value of one. All others were coded as zero.

TABLE 5 Survey Replicaton: LA County Social Survey (1997) (unstandardized regression coefficients)

	Dispositional Attributions	Punitive Remedies	Old-Fashioned Racism	New Racism
Frequent Viewer	.02	.04**	.04**	.07**
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Some College	–.08	–.13**	–.05	–.10**
	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.03)
Over 50K	–.01	.06	.01	–.02
	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.03)
Own Home	.03	.04	.07	.04
	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.04)
Women	.01	–.05	–.11**	–.03
	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.03)
Over 45	.05	.01	–.08	.02
	(.05)	(.06)	(.05)	(.03)
Liberals	–.09*	–.09**	–.09*	–.13**
	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.04)
Democrats	–.08	–.08*	.08	–.14**
	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.04)
Crime Victim	.07	–.03	.08	.01
	(.06)	(.05)	(.06)	(.04)
CONSTANT	.50	.62	.21	.37
R^2	.05	.10	.06	.22
N	277	277	277	277

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; standard errors in parentheses.

hardly ever watch the news, participants who report watching every day were 16 percent more likely to support punitive remedies and endorse the view that blacks are less intellectually able. This difference was even more dramatic (28 percent) in the case of the new racism index. Thus, the survey and experimental results match quite closely.

In conclusion, our experimental and survey evidence both suggest that exposure to local news coverage of crime conditions attitudes toward crime and race. In particular, the racial element of the crime script (as opposed to the violence element) has the most demonstrable impact. Our experiments show that for white viewers, a brief five-second exposure to a black perpetrator in the news is sufficient to stimulate small increases in the percentage of people who believe crime is caused by individual failings and who support punitive crime policies. In addition exposure to a black perpetrator fosters the view that African-Americans are out of step with the cultural mainstream. On the other hand, the crime script has generally the opposite effect on African-American viewers. This pattern is supported by our survey replication. Using self-reported exposure to local news as a proxy for the experimental manipulation, we find that white frequent viewers are more likely to endorse punitive crime policies and express negative beliefs about African-Americans.

Discussion

What appears in the news on a regular basis—the association of violent crime and racial imagery—does not go unnoticed. Our confidence in the generalizability of the observed effects is boosted not only by the range of attitudes surveyed, the multiplicity of experimental locales, and our reliance on adult samples instead of college sophomores, but also by the convergence of the experimental and survey results. Across both methods and a variety of measures, the crime script influenced viewers' attitudes.

Although our results indicate that the race of the suspect, in and of itself, is a meaningful cue, the scale of effects is quite modest. After all, our manipulation is minute (one minute in the case of violence, and five seconds in the case of the racial cue) when compared with a lifetime's worth of socialization. Moreover, our studies are divorced from the "cluttered" context of everyday news coverage in which viewers encounter multiple visual cues about criminal suspects. Our studies, while isolating the effects of race, provide no evidence about the suspect's body weight, age, facial expression, or other such visual attributes. For instance, do youthful suspects (of any race) elicit more punitive responses than nonwhite suspects in general? Future research will need to address how race interacts with (or is counteracted by) competing visual cues.

The commercial realities of our time dictate that local news will continue to cultivate misperceptions and prejudice. Local television stations reach huge audiences, but face intense economic pressures. Crime dominates other news because its emphasis on vivid pictures and emotional personal accounts is believed to attract viewers. As we noted earlier, the news rarely presents nonracial attributes of criminal suspects—educational attainment, age, employment status, family background, and so on. Information about race is conveyed automatically, due to the visual nature of the medium; other individuating characteristics are seemingly not newsworthy. While reporters cannot be expected to compile detailed bibliographies of suspects (who are frequently not apprehended when the story airs), they can consider other ways of reporting on crime (see Guensburg 1999).

Despite the limitations of our evidence, we believe that journalists need to rethink their reliance on the crime script. The civic and commercial objectives of news organizations are not necessarily zero-sum in nature. Stations could deemphasize reporting on particular episodes of violent crime while providing more substantive, thematic coverage of local communities. Stations like KVUE (in Austin, Texas) and KTVU (in San Francisco) have developed important initiatives in which crime coverage is allocated in accordance with a set of guidelines based on "community impact." Initial results indicate that the omission of graphic accounts of violence has not diminished ratings (see Holley 1996). Further, the goal of achieving more balanced reporting about crime might be facilitated by hiring reporters with better knowledge of the communities they cover and by increasing the ethnic diversity of the newsroom.

In closing, we note that the effects of the crime script extend well beyond the views of ordinary citizens. Our evidence shows that local news programming "racializes" political discourse by making policy opinions increasingly intertwined with questions of race. The audience's heightened sensitivity to matters of race, as history amply attests, is grist for vote-seeking politicians. Racial appeals—explicit or coded—are now common in political campaigns. In short, the emergence of local news has made race an even more central component of American life.

Manuscript submitted March 24, 1999.
Final manuscript received January 28, 2000.

References

Abelson, R.P. 1976. "Script Processing in Attitude Formation and Decision Making." *In Cognition and Social Behavior*, ed. J.S. Carroll and J.W. Payne. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Abelson, R.P. 1981. "The Psychological Status of the Script Concept." *American Psychologist* 36:715–729.

Allport, G.W. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice.* Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday.

Belden, M., and J. Russonello. 1997. *Reporting of Existing Public Opinion Data on Juvenile Justice Issues.* Washington, D.C.: Belden and Russonello.

Bienenstock, E.J., P. Bonacich, and M. Oliver. 1990. "The Effect of Network Density and Homogeneity on Attitude Polarization." *Social Networks* 12:153–172.

Black, J.B., J.A. Galambos, and S.J. Read. 1984. "Comprehending Stories and Social Situations." In *Handbook of Social Cognition.* Vol. 3, ed. R. S. Wyer Jr. and T. K. Skrull. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

California Department of Justice. 1997. *Crime 1997 in Selected California Jurisdictions.* Sacramento: Division of Criminal Justice Information Services.

Campbell, A., P.E. Converse, W.E. Miller, and D.E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Campbell, C. 1995. *Race, Myth and the News.* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Russell Sage.

Crispin-Miller M. 1998. *Crime News in Baltimore: The Economic Cost of Local TV's Bodybag Journalism.* New York: Project on Media Ownership.

Dovidio, J.F., and S.L. Gaertner. 1986. *Prejudice, Discrimination, Racism: Theory and Research.* New York: Academic Press.

Dyson, M.E. 1996. *Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line.* Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Elias, R. 1994. "Official Stories: Media Coverage of American Crime Policy." *Humanist* 54:3–8.

Entman, R.M. 1990. "Modern Racism and The Images Of Blacks in Local Television News." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 7:332–346.

Entman, R.M. 1992. "Blacks in the News: Television, Modern Racism, and Cultural Change," *Journalism Quarterly* 69:341–362.

Entman R.M., B.H. Langford, D. Burns-Melican, I. Munoz, S. Boayue, C. Groce, A. Raman, B. Kenner, and C. Merrit. 1998. *Mass Media and Reconciliation.* Cambridge: John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Gilliam, F D., Jr. 1998. "Race and Crime in California." In *Racial and Ethnic Politics in California,* ed. M. B. Preston, B. A. Cain, and S. Bass. Berkeley: University of California.

Gilliam, F.D., Jr., and S. Iyengar. 1997. "Prime Suspects: The Effects of Local News on the Viewing Public." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Portland.

Gilliam, F.D. Jr., 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.

Graber, D. 1976. *Verbal Behavior and Politics.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Graesser, A.C., S.B. Woll, D.J. Kowalski, and D.A. Smith. 1980. "Memory for Typical and Atypical Actions in Scripted Activities." *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 18:319–332.

Graesser, A.C., M. Singer, and T. Trabasso. 1994. "Constructing Inferences during Narrative Text Comprehension." *Psychological Review* 101:371–395.

Guensburg, C. 1999. "Taming the Beast." *American Journalism Review.* 21:1–10.

Hess, S. 1991. *Live from Capital Hill: Studies of Congress and the Media.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute.

Holley, J. 1996. "Should the Coverage Fit the Crime?" *Columbia Journalism Review* May/June:27–32.

Hunt, D. 1997. *Screening the Los Angeles "Riots": Race, Seeing, and Resistance.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hurwitz, J., and M. Peffley. 1997. "Public Perceptions of Crime and Race: The Role of Racial Stereotypes." *American Journal of Political Science* 41:375–401.

Iyengar, S. 1991. *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jackman, M., and M. Muha. 1984. "Education and Intergroup Attitudes: Moral Enlightenment, Superficial Democratic Commitment, or Ideological Refinement?" *American Sociological Review* 49:751–769.

Kinder, D. R., and L. M. Sanders. 1996. *Divided By Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Klite, P., R.A. Bardwell, and J. Salzman. 1997. "Local TV News: Getting Away with Murder." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 2:102–112.

Mandler, J.M. 1984. *Stories, Scripts, and Scenes: Aspects of Schema Theory.* Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

McAdam, D. 1982. *Political Process and The Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McConahay, J. B. 1986. "Modern Racism, Ambivalence, and the Modern Racism Scale." In *Prejudice, Discrimination, Racism: Theory and Research,* ed. J. F. Dovidio and S.L. Gaertner. New York: Academic Press.

Morris, A. M. 1984. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing For Change.* New York: Free Press.

Newby, I. A. 1965. *Jim Crow's Defense.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Neuman, W., M. Just, and A. Crigler. 1992. *Common Knowledge: News and The Construction of Political Meaning.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Oliver, M. L. 1988. "The Urban Black Community as A Network: Toward a Social Network Perspective." *Sociological Quarterly.* 29:623–645.

Papper, R., and M. Gerhard. 1999. *Issues and Trends: 1999 Newsroom Workforce Survey.* Washington D.C.: Radio and Television News Directors Association.

Peffley, M., T. Shields, and B. Williams. 1996. "The Intersection of Race and Crime in Television News Stories: An Experimental Study." *Political Communication* 13:309–328.

Pettigrew, T.F., and R.W. Meertens. 1995. "Subtle and Blatant Prejudice in Western Europe." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 25:57–75.

Roediger, H. L. III, and K. B. McDermott. 1995. "Creating False Memory: Remembering Words Not Presented In Lists." *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 21:803–814.

Romer, D., K. H. Jamieson, and N. J. de Coteau. 1998. "The Treatment of Persons of Color in Local Television News—Ethnic Blame Discourse or Realistic Group Conflict?" *Communication Research* 25:286–305.

Roper Starch Worldwide. 1994. *Roper Reports.* 93:22–23.

Schank, R.C. 1990. *Tell Me A Story: A New Look At Real And Artificial Memory.* New York: Scribners.

Schank, R.C., and R. P. Abelson. 1977. *Scripts Plans, Goals, and Understanding.* Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schuman, H., C. Steeh, and L. Bobo. 1985. *Racial Trends In America: Trends and Interpretations.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sears, D.O. 1988. "Symbolic Racism." In *Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy,* ed. P.A. Katz and D. A. Taylor. New York: Plenum.

Sidanius, J., F. Pratto, and L. D. Bobo. 1996. "Racism, Conservatism, Affirmative Action, And Intellectual Sophistication: A Matter of Principled Conservatism or Group Dominance?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70:1–15.

Smith, R.C. 1996. *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sniderman, P., and T. Piazza. 1993. *The Scar of Race.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sulin, R.A., and Dooling, D.J. 1974. "Intrusion of a Thematic Idea in Retention of Prose." *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 103:255–262

Tajfel, H. 1978. *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in Intergroup Relations.* London: Academic Press.

Worthy, S., J. Hagan, and R. Macmillan. 1997. "Just Des(s)erts? The Racial Polarization of Perceptions of Criminal Injustice." *Law and Society Review* 31:637–676.