Media and Images of Color

Latinos

• 1995 survey by University of Chicago Carnevale and Stone found that 3 of 4 white respondents believe that black and Latino people are more likely to be lazy, less intelligent, less patriotic, and more prone to violence

• The film industry has portrayed the Latino man as the hot-blooded killer and the Latina as the sexy and submissive woman

• Three distinct periods in film
  – 1898-1931: bandits who robbed, plundered, cheated, lied and raped. There was also the Latin lover, the faithful Mexican. Always dark skinned and speaking with broken English
  – 1932-1955: added the stereotype of the happy fun-loving musician
  – 1956-present: the urban gang – more gory violence

  – Bias in media supported by focus on poor Latinos

Asians

• In film, Men viewed as asexual; Women as erotic, exotic, submissive

• More recently we see martial arts films

• The model minority: harder working and smarter, don’t need welfare; undercuts other minorities

• Asian Americans viewed as Asians or as model Americans

• Whites don’t distinguish among Asian groups or cultures

• Street crime uncommon, but organized crime associated with Asian Americans
Politics of Race

MOBILE, Alabama (CNN) -- A contrite and apologetic Senate Republican Leader Trent Lott, appearing on a black-oriented cable channel Monday, denounced his recent comments about the 1948 segregationist presidential campaign of Strom Thurmond, calling them "insensitive," "repugnant" and "inexcusable."

Law and Race

WASHINGTON (CNN) – Supreme Court divided over whether a burning cross is a protected form of free speech spoke out Wednesday about the long history the object has as a symbol of racial hatred.
Off Balance: Youth, Race, Crime and the News

Major Findings

1. The news media report crime, especially violent crime, out of proportion to its actual occurrence.

• A recent poll in California found that 60% of respondents believed that juveniles are responsible for most violent crime, when youths are responsible for only 13% of violent crime.

• Violent crime dominates crime coverage. Although homicides made up one to two-tenths of one percent of all arrests, homicides made up more than a quarter (27%-29%) of all the crimes on the evening news.

• The more unusual the crime or violence, the more likely it is be covered. Eighty-six percent of White homicide victims are killed by other Whites, and most homicide victims know their killer. But the least frequent killings-homicides between strangers, and interracial homicides-received the most coverage.

• Crime coverage has increased while real crime rates have fallen. While homicide coverage was increasing on the network news by 473% from 1990 to 1998 homicide arrests dropped 32.9% from 1990 to 1998.
2. The news media, particularly television news, unduly connect race and crime, especially violent crime.

- African Americans are underrepresented in reporting as victims, and overrepresented in the news as perpetrators. Articles about White homicide victims tend to be longer, and more frequent than the articles that cover African American victims.

- African Americans were 22% more likely to be shown on local TV news in Los Angeles committing violent crime than nonviolent crime. Actual crime statistics reveal African American's were equally likely to be arrested for violent and nonviolent crimes. Another series of studies showed that Whites committed more violent crimes than were represented in television crime stories of violent crime.

- Studies of the news showed that interracial crime was substantially more likely to be reported than actual crime statistics would predict.
Off Balance: Youth, Race, Crime and the News

A Report for the Building Blocks for Youth initiative
by Lori Dorfman, Berkeley Media Studies Group
and Vincent Schiraldi, Justice Policy Institute

A note on Methodology: "Off Balance: Youth, Race and Crime in the News" began with a comprehensive, computerized search of criminal justice and communications data bases on content analyses of crime news. The search yielded 146 research articles that were reviewed, abstracted, and categorized. The report focuses on the 77 studies that directly assessed the content of crime, race and/or youth in the news. The studies surveyed covered a range of media - local and network television, newspapers, and broadcast and print newsmagazines - from 1910 through 2000.

Reactions to this report:
“It is also not surprising that twice as many white Americans believe they are more likely to be criminally victimized by racial and ethnic minorities than by other whites, although national crime statistics clearly reveal that, indeed, white Americans are 3 times more likely to be criminally victimized by other whites than by racial minorities.”

Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau, NAACP

“Perhaps most damaging of all is that many minority youths have come to internalize these negative public images, which has a domino effect of impeding their ability to achieve socially, academically and, as adults, economically.”

Hugh B. Price, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Urban League

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