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Race & Crime on the Evening News: New Orleans in the Days after Hurricane Katrina

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Race & Crime on the Evening News: New Orleans in the Days after Hurricane Katrina

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Sociology

By

Kristin Ashby Schwartz

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how residents of New Orleans, Louisiana were depicted on a variety of evening news programs in the days after hurricane Katrina. A qualitative content analysis of television news transcripts and select audio-visual footage reveals how the media framed crime, the perpetrators of crime and “looting.” Media perpetuation of myths such as residents shooting at helicopters and the focus on “looting” and crime had on initial rescue and recovery efforts are also discussed. Results illustrate that the focus on crime, criminals, and looting was more pronounced in cable than network news. Looting was framed as a criminal endeavor and residents were labeled as criminals without evidence. Violent crime was the most frequently-referred to type of crime. The media as a constructor of moral panics, colorblind racism in the form of a coded racist script, and cultural fear of crime support these results.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I examine the ways in which New Orleans residents who experienced what has been referred to as the “greatest disaster in United States history,” were represented by the media. On the morning of August the 29th of 2005, hurricane Katrina made second landfall near the Mississippi/Louisiana border, east of New Orleans, Louisiana. The resulting storm surge breached the city’s levees in multiple areas, eventually filling 80 percent of the city and surrounding areas with floodwaters. Both before the storm hit the area and after the storm hit the area, thousands of residents made their way to the Superdome, which was to be used as a shelter of “last resort.” As floodwaters continued to rise, residents remaining in the city were in need of rescue, shelter, food, water, and medical supplies. Lacking basic necessities, amidst filthy and stagnant floodwaters, conditions in the city began to rapidly deteriorate. The media played a major role in how these events were depicted over the eight days immediately after the storm and in the months to follow. In this study I describe, analyze, and interpret how crime was framed by the media in the immediate aftermath of hurricane Katrina. I also discuss how the media depictions affected initial aid and recovery efforts.

Significance of Study

Most importantly, this study sheds light on the content of the media representations of New Orleans in the days after hurricane Katrina and the ways in which these reports *may* have affected the aid that residents received. However, there are also cultural implications of the post-hurricane Katrina media representations; the extensive Katrina-related mélange of television images contributes to our larger understandings of race, crime, social groups and essentially, our social world. Also, on a practical or applied level, this study is significant for rescue workers, policy-makers, purveyors of mass media, and the television-viewing public.

The media disseminated important and time-sensitive information to the public regarding the disaster. Also, since the lives of many residents depicted by the media may have been at stake as a result of deteriorating conditions, it is crucial to understand how they were represented. After all, media

representations may affect the way in which Katrina victims were perceived and hence, treated. Consequently, this study examines whether or not remaining residents were framed as criminals or victims in need of aid. While these portrayals or the actual events may not have been clear-cut, it takes only a few claims of residents shooting at rescue workers to confirm the audience's deeply-entrenched stereotypes of the "dangerous black criminal" (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Dixon and Maddox 2005). Since the media representations after hurricane Katrina had human rights implications, hopefully this study will create a dialogue which addresses the effects of media on social and government action.

In addition to the immediate post-storm rescue and aid implications of the media representations, there are also long-term practical implications of the media reports. The way individuals in other areas of the country, including government officials who make decisions regarding long-term recovery and rebuilding efforts, perceive New Orleans may be partially attributable to media representations of New Orleans residents. Disparaging media depictions of residents in the days immediately after the storm reflect on the credibility of the city. In addition to impacting outside audiences, the reports may also affect the residents of New Orleans. As residents rebuild their property and lives, their hope and morale may, in part, be affected by self-image and the ways in which others have come to perceive their city and neighbors.

Also, this study is significant for rescue workers, government or FEMA officials, bureaucrats, and others who make decisions during disasters regarding aid, recovery, and rescue. In the days following the storm, individuals from FEMA and rescue-workers often referred to media reports when asked about the speed or quality of recovery as if the television reports of the disaster were their *only* source of "official" information. It is useful for officials to understand the content of reports which they rely on to make decisions. For instance, although several officials on television may have attributed poor or prematurely-halted rescue efforts to the violent behavior of residents, "separate investigations by the Air Force, Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security and Louisiana Air National Guard had been unable, as of the first week in October, to confirm a single case of airborne rescue teams taking fire from

the ground” (*TIME*, 2005:55). Thus, understanding the content of media reports will enable officials to understand that media representations may not describe or reflect objective conditions, consequently contributing to a more informed response in future disasters.

Although researchers have studied the content and accuracy of media reports of different social groups (the poor, African Americans) they have yet to study content of media portrayals of largely African American residents in a disaster. Also, there are currently very few studies which examine post-disaster deviance and criminality and the way in which the news media frames this behavior.

Documenting the content of the media reports not only opens a dialogue regarding the relationship between mass media and society, but also sheds light on the way in which people interpret race in American society. This study provides an example of the way in which race is framed in America. The views of Caucasian citizens towards people of color range on a continuum of racial comity to ambivalence and animosity (Entman and Rojecki 2000). Moreover, the “bulk of Whites exhibit ambivalence that may be tipped toward comity or hostility depending on the interaction of political climate, personal experience, and mediated communication” (Entman and Rojecki 2000:16). Thus, it is likely that the much-watched television reports of the largely African American and impoverished residents remaining in the city after hurricane Katrina, contributed to larger cultural interpretations of African Americans and on a smaller scale, New Orleans residents.

Definitions

The following are some definitions of the concepts and terms which are used throughout this paper.

- *Media*- A means of communication such as television, internet, radio, or print. For this study, television news shows and reports detailing the situation between the 29th of August and the 5th of September in 2005 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

- *Media representations*- The ways in which individuals and social groups are depicted or represented by the media through the use of words, pictures, or symbols. These representations may not always accurately convey objective social conditions.
- *Criminal acts*- Actions or behaviors defined as illegal by local, state, or federal laws. Some examples include homicide, robbery, and looting.
- *Violent crime*- Crimes in which residents, police, or other city officials engaged that inflict physical harm or pain onto other residents. Some examples are rape or homicide.
- *Behavioral characterizations*- The way in which reporters or officials interviewed by the media describe or frame criminal activity. For instance, the criminal act of looting may be characterized as “an attempt at survival,” or “ransacking others’ property.” As a result of ascribed status, two individuals committing the same act may be described with qualitatively different terminology.
- *Residents*- Individuals depicted in media reports detailing the situation in New Orleans, Louisiana. Excluding individuals such as tourists or others from outside of the city, those in the media reports of New Orleans are regarded as city residents.
- *Race*- Media references to residents’ race or pictures of people in which race can be discerned. For the purposes of this study, individuals are coded as either Caucasian or African American, thereby enabling a comparison of how these groups were depicted. Individuals of these groups are the only individuals pictured in the audio-visual footage and the only groups discussed or described in the transcripts.
- *Public sphere*- Refers to non-residential areas of the city of New Orleans. This includes areas like the Superdome, Convention center, public hospitals and city streets.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study is delimited to reports detailing the situation in New Orleans from August 29th, 2005 through September 5th, 2005. Hurricane Katrina made landfall in New Orleans on August 29th, most residents were evacuated from the Superdome by September 3rd and the Convention Center by September

4th, 2005 (*TIME*, 2005). New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin issued a mandatory evacuation order for the city on the 5th of September, 2005 (*TIME*, 2005). Even though it is unlikely that all residents remaining in public locales or the city sphere of New Orleans evacuated on the day of the mandatory evacuation, it is clear the majority were no longer present. By September 5th, the mayor had issued the evacuation order and the Convention Center and Superdome were evacuated.

The focus of this study is delimited to include media depictions of residents remaining in the public sphere or city domain, which may include those remaining on highways, in the Superdome, the Convention Center, or wading through water. While residents in the city sphere were rescued from their residences, I only examine how they were depicted when in the city sphere, not during the initial rescue process. This is not to suggest that those remaining in their residences and in need of rescue were represented accurately by the media; however, they are not the focus of this study. Once in the city sphere or public domain, residents may have been interpreted as posing different challenges or threats (depending on perspective) to the social order and thus, it is likely that these individuals were covered by the media from a correspondingly different angle. Therefore the representations of individuals in the public sphere of New Orleans merit a particularized analysis.

In addition to delimiting the focus of this study to residents in the public sphere of New Orleans depicted in television news reports between August 29th and September 5th of 2005, only certain aspects of these representations are coded and examined. Furthermore, the focus of this study is specifically delimited to behavioral characterization of criminal acts in television news reports.

The first major limitation of this study is that it is not representative or exhaustive of all types of post-Katrina media coverage. Moreover, it does not illustrate all of the ways in which New Orleans residents were characterized after the storm, in all the places where hurricane Katrina media coverage occurred. Nor will the reports and pictures that I analyze necessarily be representative of the whole spectrum of news reports depicting the residents of New Orleans during that time. Rather, this study gives a snapshot of these portrayals through an analysis of widely viewed and thus, significant television reports.

Another limitation of this study is its focus on the media representations themselves and not residents' subjective experience of the representations or the ways in which people outside of New Orleans came to perceive New Orleans residents or the city as a result of these reports. Most importantly, I do not examine the experiences of the subjects of these reports. Since residents' experience as the objects of representation is very important to understand, this merits further study.

THEORY

In this chapter, I discuss theories dealing with 1) race in America, 2) media presentation of the news and, 3) the way the media representations of social reality affect the audience. I begin by describing what is collectively known as “colorblind” racism. “Colorblind” racism explains how the media, while claiming to be neutral, still perpetuates racist messages. As an example of this theory and in order to contextualize media frames of crime and race, I describe the position of African Americans in the criminal justice system. Next, theories specific to the study of mass media are described. Theories of media power and theories of the extent of audience passivity to media messages and how the audience receives mass media messages are discussed.

“New” Racism, the Media, and the Criminal Justice System

Prevailing notions of racism equate with the individual and in personal attitudes. “Colorblind” racism is a system of institutionalized privileges in which Caucasians receive systematic privileges at the expense of people of color. Specifically, a “new powerful racial ideology has emerged that combines elements of liberalism with culturally based antiminority views to justify the contemporary order: colorblind racism” (Bonilla-Silva 2007:487). Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2007) describes “new racism” as a form of racial power which differs from more pervasive individualized racial slurs or racial epithets that have been traditionally associated with racism. While the colorblind racism more characteristic of the post-civil rights era may be less obvious to some, it is no more benign than more blatant or overt forms of traditional racism. “New” racism is institutionalized and different from what many commonly think of as “racism/racist” in that it is more invisible and seemingly gentler character make it less offensive to Caucasian middle class sensibilities. For instance, using racial epithets to refer to African Americans may now be perceived as cruel and racist by many Americans, while housing discrimination and unequal pay for equally qualified individuals may not be seen as racist as it can be blamed on individual moral failings like laziness. Also, even though racial patterns of residential segregation can no longer be legally practiced in the United States, studies have shown that African Americans are shown fewer apartments,

quoted higher rents, and steered towards specific neighborhoods, when compared to Caucasians (Bonilla-Silva 2007:486). It is the denial of these structural barriers which tend to exonerate and perpetuate the notion of America as a pure “meritocracy,” assume the openness and efficiency of the market, and locate problems and solutions almost exclusively within the realm of the individual (Entman and Rojecki 2000). However, the very value of privilege or merit (which is touted as the legitimate route to achieving mobility in America) stems from a context that is far from race neutral, but is rather one deeply-entrenched in race.

Social desirability has become a larger factor in terms of the way in which people do race. People do not want to be labeled as a “racist” as this is no longer considered an acceptable, much less desirable trait. For instance, many whites avoid “racial terminology” and now, there is an “ever-growing claim by whites that they experience ‘reverse racism’” (Bonilla-Silva 2007:484). While people may not have the intention of being racist, intentions are not really the issue. Rather it is the *outcomes* of policies and laws even if they purport to be race-neutral which are important. The individuals who are a part of the institution of the media may not be intentionally racist, after all racism is not merely a malleable trait of heartless or malicious individuals as it is currently conceived. Rather the institution of the media and the very context from which the news is developed and the way in which crime is conceived, inevitably are based on raced categories and assumptions. Thus even though the television news media may not be comprised of individual racist reporters, the media is still racist as an institution.

Although signs of “traditional” racism, such as a reporter explicitly attributing an individual’s violent criminal behavior to his race may no longer be a part of mainstream media, “new” racism plays a role in the mass media’s framing of society and social problems. Nonetheless, the media would likely defend post-Katrina reporting as that of a neutral or unmediated picture of what *really* happened. After all, both the media’s orientation to presenting news and the frames in which the media situates the news are based on “color-blind” norms of neutrality. Neutrality is based on the notion that race is a backdrop to the “larger” issue, not the larger issue itself. Claiming that race is no longer a factor serves as a means to mask the fact that who is presented as committing crimes, who are disproportionately defined as criminals

and who is presented as guilty (the “other” category) and by definition as innocent, are all raced premises on which the entire news institution is formed. For instance, the decision to disproportionately cover young African American males engaging in violent crime, rather than covering stories of Caucasian males engaged in domestic violence or corporate crime, is a race-based decision. Even though these decisions may not be intentionally racist, they still have racialized consequences. By not acknowledging this structure, the media can frame African Americans in a post-Katrina New Orleans as stealing, looting, and essentially, as “out of control,” while still claiming to present neutral “facts.”

Ferguson (1998) details methodology for exposing the racism of media constructions of social reality. Ferguson (1998) argues that the production and transmission or diffusion of media messages involves an analysis of the social and historical conditions of production. This must be taken into consideration when examining race and the media. Ferguson (1998) argues that media symbolic constructions of race display or reveal an articulated structure. To reveal this structure, the media’s “re-interpretation” of events and social problems (meaning the media’s interpretation) must be interpreted. The process of making sense of the media’s framing New Orleanians is the process of making sense of something which is already a raced-interpretation. After all, the media’s representation of reality is itself a reinterpretation of social life. However, the media’s institutional norm of color-blind neutrality cloaks the race-based context of the media’s interpretation.

As further evidence of this “color-blind” racism, I have included two studies which demonstrate the extent to which racism is entrenched in the American psyche. The denial of discrimination and the customary focus on individual failings or low motivation as the main factors impeding African Americans in American society comprise a large part of the post-civil rights era “color-blind” racism described above. According to Entman and Rojecki (2000), many Caucasians possess feelings best described as ambivalency towards African Americans. The denial of anti-Black discrimination is the most critical component of racial animosity in America. In a study of the racial attitudes of Caucasian residents in Indiana, those low on the scale of “denial of racism” comprised the smallest group of participants (there were more people expressing outright racial animosity). Those low on the scale of denial were more

sympathetic towards African Americans and spoke with greater conviction about their observations of continuing racism. However, the largest portion of respondents (over 50 percent) comprised the “swing” or ambivalent population who sometimes recognize the legacy of discrimination, but at other times, “lose patience” over racial issues (Entman and Rojecki 2000).

In Entman and Rojecki’s (2000) study, 40 percent of the Caucasian respondents grossly overestimated the size of the African American population. In a study using participants from a Georgia county with the highest portion of Caucasians in the state and college-age participants from racially-diverse cities, the majority of respondents estimated that African Americans comprise over 30 percent of the population (Gallagher 2003). Specifically, many of the participants from the disproportionately Caucasian county had little contact with African Americans and actually invoked evening news reports when describing the portion of African Americans in the population (Gallagher 2003). Essentially, the media, racial segregation, racial stereotypes, and the perception of group threat all contribute to Caucasians overestimating the size of the African American population (Gallagher 2003).

Like the mass media, the criminal justice system reflects the deep-rooted structural racism in the American stratification system. For Angela Davis (2007), who is known for opposing the current criminal justice system in America, the prison-industrial complex represents a form of new racism. After all, because “prisons are seen as places to protect society, prevent further crime, or to keep ‘undesirables’ out of circulation, and those ‘undesirables’ are members of racial and ethnic minorities, racism is both produced and concealed” (Davis 2007:265). Davis (2007) describes the prison system as “an extremely effective criminalization industry, for the racial imbalance in incarcerated populations is not recognized as the evidence of structural racism, but rather is invoked as a consequence of the assumed criminality of black people” (Davis 2007:267). This criminality is taken for granted by the audience who assumes that an objective media and objective rational criminal justice system evaluate offenders from a race-neutral standpoint. However, as described below, this is not the case.

Both currently and historically race, crime, and the criminal justice system are inextricably linked. “Whites are less likely than blacks to be arrested; once arrested, they are less likely to be

convicted and, once convicted, less likely to go prison regardless of the crime or circumstances” (Johnson 2001:28). Furthermore, although African Americans comprise only about 13 percent of the American population, about half of the prison population is African American (Mauer 1999). Moreover, 29% of African American males born in 1991 can expect to be incarcerated over the course of their lives, whereas the likelihood that a Caucasian male will be incarcerated during his life is only 4 percent (Mauer 1999). Congress has begun to call the new generation of criminals “superpredators” (Mauer 1999). “The animal imagery is inescapable here; consider whether most people conjure up the image of a white teenager when thinking of a ‘superpredator’” (Mauer 1999:126). Likewise, reporters and officials featured in the media reports after hurricane Katrina, repetitively used words like “thug” and even “animal,” in a few instances, to describe residents partaking in criminal acts.

The influence of race is particularly salient in certain areas of the criminal justice system. The death penalty is a particularly good example of this fact. After controlling for a wide range of variables, the race of both the victim and offender has a significant impact on the determination of the death penalty as opposed to life in prison (Mauer 1999:129). Also, a report by the Federal Judicial Center found that in 1990, African Americans were 28 percent more likely than Caucasians to receive a mandatory prison term for behavior that fell under mandatory sentencing policy (Mauer 1999). While it appears that the gap of sentencing disparities may be closing for many offenses, this is not the case for drug offenses (Mauer 1999). Thus, even though they may appear race-neutral on the surface, drug policies are often racist.

African Americans are also incarcerated for drug dealing and drug possession at much higher numbers than Caucasians. Despite the fact that African Americans account for only about 12 percent of the population of drug users, young African American males account for 80 to 90 percent of those arrested for drug offenses (Roberts 1997). As African Americans are disproportionately economically disadvantaged in comparison to Caucasians and tend to sell drugs in a more visible manner than suburban Caucasian users, they are being arrested at higher numbers. Furthermore, when a stigmatized social group begins to use a drug, that drug is often perceived differently, resulting in more punitive policies being favored. For instance, as Caucasian middle class college students began to use marijuana in increasing

numbers in the 1960's, laws were passed in the 1970's which lowered marijuana possession penalties by differentiating it from other narcotics. For many years in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, possession of marijuana was classified as a misdemeanor, whereas in the suburbs of that area was merely treated as an ordinance violation (Mauer 1999). Thus, the public perception of what is the appropriate societal response to a drug is often shaped by racialized notions of the user population.

As for the next set of theories, despite the degree to which they perceive the media as accurately conveying reality to the viewing audience, media theorists agree that the media is a powerful agent of socialization which influences (in whatever way this may be) audience conceptions of crime, social problems, and social groups. As the television news is a business, this influences newsmakers' aim of increasing ratings and the subsequent focus on "newsworthy" or attention-grabbing stories. Thus, despite one's theoretical perspective, most media theorists agree that there is a danger in the audience mistaking the media's version of reality for actual reality.

Power Elite Theory

The first theory that pertains to the media's orientation to presenting the news and the media's interests is generally referred to as power elite theory. This theory is also called the dominant ideology thesis or media hegemony model. The power elite theory, developed by C. Wright Mills, was used to study the media's seemingly powerful and direct influence on the viewing audience or public. This theory indicates that the mass media has two important characteristics: "very few people can communicate to a great number; and second, the audience has no effective way of answering back" (Mills 1956). Thus mass communication is, by definition, a one-way and hence, unequal process. Media has the power to shape how we evaluate ourselves and others. Since the mass media has the power to construct social reality for the audience, even if this version of reality is not universally accepted, as a group they are referred to as part of the power elite. The media's version of reality tends to support the status quo and the supremacy of the power elite (Eitzen and Baca Zinn 2001). The power elite also include leaders of large manufacturing and financial corporations, government and military bureaucracies. The power elite has

similar interests and goals, share great authority in important sectors of society, and are to an extent, intertwined both socially and as a social class (Eitzen and Baca Zinn 2001). Recent reemergence of power elite theory includes the idea that means of power and violence are much greater than they were in the past and increasingly centralized (Eitzen and Baca Zinn 2001). Individual corporations, journalists, and news anchors which comprise the media or the voice of the media can also be seen as power elite since they are largely upper-middle class Caucasians, who, like other social actors, present the version of reality that they see and perceive to be true from their social location.

Altheide (1984) challenges the power elite theory. In regards to the first claim of power elite theorists that Altheide (1984) outlines, that journalists' socialization and orientations are replete with the dominant ideology, he found a consensus among researchers that journalists are socialized according to professional and organizational norms. However, while journalists do share some basic ideas and values with the larger capitalist culture, their orientations are much more individualistic and reflective of personal experience than theorists of media hegemony tend to conclude (Altheide 1984). In fact, journalists tend to side with minorities, consumer and intellectual groups against business and labor interests (Altheide 1984). In regards to the media's perpetuation of the status quo, Altheide (1984) cites studies which suggest that the media acts as an agent of social change rather than as perpetuators of the status quo. For instance, changes in voting patterns and political activity often occur as a result of news reporting, as does the challenge of key individuals and institutions (Altheide 1984). Altheide (1984) concludes that the media does not typically support the status quo, and may incite social change.

Altheide (1984) concludes that the media does not typically support the status quo, and may incite social change. While arguably the media may have helped to incite the action that police, rescue workers, politicians and the public took on behalf of Katrina victims remaining in New Orleans, this action was not necessarily as a result of media reports challenging the status quo. For instance, if the media depicted the residents remaining in the city after Katrina as violent criminals (recalling that the studies in the second section of this literature indicate the media perpetuates similarly fictitious stereotypes) this is consistent with the status quo certain groups make seek to further, either consciously or unconsciously, at the

expense of others. Thus despite individual journalist's intentions, they may painted a picture of residents that was not entirely "progressive" or factual.

There are several criticisms of Altheide's (1984) work. First of all, to come to the conclusion that the media does not support the status quo (the interests of upper-middle class Caucasian Americans) he would have had to ignore all of the studies illustrating the medias' tendency to perpetuate disparaging, inaccurate and slanted depictions of the poor and African Americans. While individual journalists may not be attempting to perpetuate the status quo, Altheide (1984) ignores the outcomes of mass media representations and images. Secondly, while the media arguably has the power to incite social change, Altheide (1984) only cites studies which depict the media as liberal purveyors of social change. It is not likely that the historically pervasive depictions of African Americans as poor or lazy, promotes progressive social change. By only examining studies which found the media to be riddled with progressives that side with minorities, Altheide (1984) neglects many studies which present results to the contrary. For instance, Daniel Moynihan's 1965 report on welfare incited racist social change in the form of welfare reform (Roberts 1997).

The elite media has the orientation of the powerful or the "haves" in an unequal social structure in such a way that is not in the best interest of say, African American residents in post- Katrina New Orleans. Although power elite theory may seem to define the audience as mindless victims of mass media constructions of reality, audience members with a repertoire of racist stereotypes and limited knowledge of New Orleans, may be less apt to detect the artificiality of these representations. Thus although portraying a slanted version of reality may not be the explicit intention of the media, media interests tend to reflect the status quo thereby serving to naturalize and reaffirm existing social arrangements.

Pluralist Theory

Pluralism theory emerged as a counter to the dominant ideology theory. Pluralists tend to view power as dispersed among different interests groups rather than concentrated in the hands of the elite (Eitzen and Baca Zinn 2001). For pluralist theorists, the mass media is interpreted as "an embodiment of

intellectual freedom and diversity offered to a knowledgeable and skeptical audience” (Jewkes 2004:21). According to pluralist theorists, the increasing deregulation and privatization of media in recent decades has started to remove the media from censorship and has created an open forum of competition between media outlets wherein possibilities of “counter definers,” or those who challenge the status quo or the dominant message, exist. Within this paradigm there is little discussion of the possibility that media competition may lead to increasingly sensationalistic new stories and as a result, potentially less-accurate news. Also, media pluralism does not necessarily result in message pluralism or a diversity of voices or messages (Jewkes 2004). So, when studying the media depictions of New Orleans residents after Katrina, it is useful to see how similar or pattern-like the messages are that the media presents. Thus, I examine the data to understand the extent of “counter-definers” and diversity in message between cable and network news and between different shows. This brings me to the next set of theories, which deal with media “effects” theories or how media affects the viewing audience.

Hypodermic Syringe Model

In terms of the effects of the media on the audience, it is necessary to mention the hypodermic needle model. According to the purveyors of this theory, the media can be seen as an intravenous needle imparting a message on an entirely passive audience. Thus, the “relationship between the media and the audience is conceived as a mechanistic and unsophisticated process by which the media ‘inject’ values, ideas and information directly into the passive receiver, producing direct and unmediated ‘effects’” (Jewkes 2004:9). According to Jewkes (2004), the theory of the hypodermic needle model has traditionally taken one of three forms: moral or religious anxiety regarding the media’s potential to corrupt the audience, the intellectual right has concerns that the media will corrode “high culture,” and the intellectual lefts’ belief that the media represents the interests of a ruling elite who will manipulate the public according to these class-based interests. The theory of the hypodermic needle model holds little applicability for this work as it assumes that the audience does not interpret the medias’ representation(s) of reality but rather, unquestioningly consumes this version.

Not only do people have different notions of the content of news reports, such as what they feel constitutes violence or newsworthiness, but also the audience interprets the media according to their own understanding of the social world. For instance, an African American New Orleanian watching news reports after Katrina may have interpreted the news reports differently than a non-resident upper class Caucasian who had little contact with African Americans. While those who were watching the media reports of New Orleans after Katrina may not have had many other sources of information to rely on about the “real” situation in New Orleans, they likely interpreted the events according to their pre-existing notions about African Americans or about who commits crimes in America. Furthermore, if there is a hypodermic effect, even in disasters when people may have little information to go by other than what is provided by the mass media, it comes from a much-diluted needle. After all, individuals filter media representations of social groups and events according to their social location, experiences, and their pre-existing notions of other social groups.

Cultivation Theory, Media as an Agent of Social Control

The next and perhaps most well-known theory pertaining to mass media effects on the audience, is cultivation theory. This theory is based on the premise that heavy television watching can ‘cultivate’ attitudes in the viewer which are more consistent with the world of television media-constructed reality than with the everyday world itself (Chandler 1995). In the literature review section several studies (Chiricos et al. 1997; Ford 1997; Dixon and Linz 2000; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Dixon and Maddox 2005) demonstrate the extent to which television presents viewers with a false reality and the extent to which media frames influence viewer attitudes about members of other social groups. A second central premise of cultivation theory is that attitudes cultivated by the mass media reflect the attitudes and values are *already* present in a culture; the media just serves to naturalize these values and reaffirm them (Chandler 1995). Thus, cultivation theory is a critical social theory that is based on many of the same premises as power elite theory.

Cultivation theory was first developed by George Gerbner, and was used to understand how heavy television watching may influence viewers' ideas of what the everyday world is like (Chandler 1995). Gerbner argued that all messages are culturally and historically-bound, and thus media messages are only understandable if one examines the context in which they were produced (Shanahan and Morgan 1999). Gerbner described three different types of television stories that meet the needs of a profit-oriented society. Among the types most pertinent to this study are the “news,” or stories about “how things are,” as a type of story which confirm the visions, goals, and ideologies of a given society (Shanahan and Morgan 1999). The process of media is circular; media messages sustain and give meaning to the very structures, institutions, and cultural practices that produce them. In this vein, rather than viewing television as a medium for the exchange of information, cultivation theorists view it as a process of story-telling wherein the stories of a culture “reflect and cultivate its most basic and fundamental assumption, ideologies and values” (Shanahan and Morgan 1999:13).

Since the media has the ability to shape our perceptions of social reality and the corresponding webs of meaning we create to understand social phenomena, cultivation theorists view the media as an agent of social control which is structured to benefit elites. Shanahan and Morgan (1999:16) caution against simplistically defining elites as ill-intentioned individuals, but rather as part of dominant institutions and to a lesser extent, the individuals comprising these institutions. Although on the surface television viewers are presented with a variety of channels and different programming, “by the late 1990’s, the six largest multiple operators controlled fully 70 percent of the national cable market” (Shanahan and Morgan 1999:211). The result of this centralization may be standardized messages. As news stories may be “told by people with something to sell rather than something to tell” (Shanahan and Morgan 1999:219).

As applied to this study, I would expect to find that those who watched television reports for extended periods of time after hurricane Katrina (heavy TV viewing is probably more likely during and after an unprecedented disaster like Katrina), would come to perceive the reality presented in those reports as accurately representative of New Orleans residents or even African Americans in general. As

the television reports depicted African Americans in disparagingly stereotypical ways, perhaps they confirmed viewers' pre-existing and media-cultivated views about crime and race. "Cultivation theory contends that heavy exposure to television violence cultivates insecurity, mistrust, and alienation and a willingness to accept potentially repressive measures in the name of security, all of which strengthens and helps maintain the prevailing hierarchy of social power" (Shanahan and Morgan 1999:40). Thus, if residents were portrayed for instance, as relentlessly shooting at rescue planes, then rescue workers and policy-makers may have been less likely to want to help residents. If the news media did not cultivate in the viewer inaccurate conceptions of race and crime (see literature review), than perhaps rescue and recovery efforts during that critical time, would have been carried out differently.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first section of this chapter features studies on the subject of how the poor and African Americans are typically depicted by the mass media. As mass media depictions of poverty are replete with images of poor African Americans, researchers investigating the portrayals of African Americans in the media were forced to also examine media representations of the social status and poverty of African Americans. After gaining an understanding of how African Americans are generally depicted by the media, the second section in this chapter contains studies regarding the influence of the mass media on the public's conception of social groups and social problems like crime. The researchers in this section are on a continuum of perceiving the public as completely shaped by media representations or as capable of drawing their own rational conclusions. Beyond examining the media's influence on the way in which people understand the social world, some researchers in this section actually link media representations of social groups with people's everyday actions towards members of these groups. The third section in this chapter contains studies on emergent norm theory and collective behavior such as looting, after disasters.

Media Representations of African Americans

All of the researchers in the subsequent paragraphs compare a variety of disparaging media depictions of African Americans with statistics reflecting reality or objective social conditions. Essentially, African Americans and poverty are disproportionately linked in print media (this same linkage is not always made with Caucasians) with the outcome being that poverty is coded as an "African American problem" (Gilens 1996; Clawson and Trice 2000) and African Americans are disproportionately depicted as criminals (Dixon and Linz 2000; Entman and Rojecki 2000). Shedding light on the *typical* media representations of African Americans, this section provides a basic foundation for understanding the way in which New Orleans residents were depicted by the media in the days after hurricane Katrina.

Gilens (1996) argues that the African American urban poor increasingly dominate the images of poverty. At the same time, the public tends to overestimate the extent to which African Americans

comprise the poor (Gilens 1996). This is problematic since those most likely to oppose welfare are those with the most exaggerated stereotypes regarding the racial composition of the poor (Gilens 1996). Thus Gilens contrasts the pictorial representations of the poor in stories on poverty in popular news magazines from 1988-1992 with the reality of poverty in America. The 635 poor people pictured in these articles were coded for race, age, and work status.

The study showed that African Americans comprised 62 percent of the poor pictured in these magazines, which is more than twice their actual proportion of the poor population (Gilens 1996). Additionally, the most sympathetic subgroups of the poor (like the elderly, children and the working poor) are underrepresented, while the least sympathetic subgroups of the poor are overrepresented. For instance, although 42 percent of poor African Americans work, the magazines only depicted 12 percent of poor African Americans as working (Gilens 1996). Caucasians were depicted as working twice as often as African Americans. Although this analysis reveals discrepancies between the age and work status of the magazine poor and the true nature of poverty, these differences are much greater for African Americans than for Caucasians (Gilens 1996). The analyses show that magazines disproportionately depict poverty as a problem of young unemployed African American males, thereby serving to reaffirm false racial stereotypes in the American mind.

During a time when welfare was high on the public agenda, Clawson and Trice (2000) sought to investigate if the media portrays accurate or stereotypical images of the poor. Specifically, they investigated whether stereotypical portrayals of the poor which violate deep-seated American ideals, like the stereotype of the poor as “loose” morally, are reflected in media portrayals of the poor. Continuing Gilens’ (1996) work which used magazines up until 1992, Clawson and Trice (2000) did a content analysis of photographs depicting poverty in five U.S. magazines between 1993 and 1998. Hypothesizing that the poor would be portrayed stereotypically and disparagingly, each photograph was analyzed as a whole and then coded for demographic characteristics, including race/ethnicity, gender, age, residence, and work status. Secondly, each picture was examined for stereotypical representations, like whether the individuals in the pictures were pregnant, taking or selling drugs, or wearing expensive clothing and

jewelry. Then, they compared these portrayals to objective conditions, as measured in the Current Population Survey.

Despite the fact that African Americans comprise 27 percent of the poor, General Social Survey data indicates that Americans perceive them as disproportionately comprising the poor (Gilens 1996). Moreover, by depicting African Americans as 49 percent of the poor, the media representations reinforced this inaccurate belief (Clawson and Trice 2000). The prevalence of Caucasian poverty was also underrepresented in these magazines (Clawson and Trice 2000). In stories covering some of the more unpopular conflict-ridden issues of poverty (such as welfare reform and the cycle of welfare dependency) the proportion of African Americans among the poor increased to 63 percent, whereas Caucasians comprised only 19 percent of the poor in these stories (Clawson and Trice 2000). Also, only 30 percent of the poor in the magazines were depicted as workers (these workers were also disproportionately depicted as Caucasian). On a positive note, the media did not rely on stereotypes, like of the “welfare queen,” to the extent expected. For instance, no alcoholics were presented, and not many articles pictured poor individuals with flashy clothing and jewelry (however when these individuals were pictured, they were likelier to be African American). Thus, like Gilens (1996), Clawson and Trice (2000) found that the media tended to present an inaccurate demographic picture of the poor. These representations make it likelier that the public will hold unfavorable beliefs about poor African Americans (they were more likely to be depicted in unsympathetic subgroups of the poor) and perhaps African Americans in general.

Dixon and Linz (2000) sought to examine the racialization of crime on television. Dixon and Linz (2000) compared the number of news reports depicting African American and Latino perpetrators with the number of reports depicting Caucasian perpetrators. Also, they assessed each group’s representation as crime victims. To this end, Dixon and Linz (2000) performed a content analysis of 200 randomly selected “breaking news” television reports broadcast in Los Angeles and Orange county California. Crimes depicted on the news reports were then compared with California Department of Justice reports containing arrest statistics (Dixon and Linz 2000). The sampling period for this study was two 20 week time periods; the first sample began in 1995 and ended in 1996, while the second began in late 1996 and

ended in 1997 (Dixon and Linz 2000). Regardless of methodologically-sound random sampling procedures, a study of news reports from two California counties does not likely reflect the content of news reports in all areas of the country.

In regards to their first hypothesis that African American and Latino individuals would be depicted as crime victims less frequently than Caucasians, this pattern proved to be statistically significant only in new reports detailing homicide (Dixon and Linz 2000). Specifically, in news reports focused on offenses other than homicide, African Americans and Latinos were not less likely to be presented as the victims of crime than Caucasians (Dixon and Linz 2000). Also, Dixon and Linz (2000) hypothesized that African American and Latino individuals would appear as perpetrators of crime more often than as victims, whereas as Caucasians would be presented as victims more often than perpetrators. They found that African Americans were more likely to be portrayed as homicide perpetrators rather than homicide victims (Dixon and Linz 2000). Likewise, for all types of crimes and homicide, Caucasians were less likely to be portrayed as perpetrators than as victims (Dixon and Linz 2000).

To examine the ways in which television crime differs from objective conditions, Dixon and Linz (2000) compared their television data to actual crime statistics (according to the 1995, 1996, and 1997 *Supplementary Reports of the Criminal Justice Profile* for Los Angeles and Orange County). Perhaps the largest discrepancy between media portrayals of reality and objective conditions was that Caucasians were presented as 43% of victims on television news shows while they comprised only 13% of homicide victims (Dixon and Linz 2000). In a markedly lower disparity, African Americans were presented as television victims 23% of the time, whereas they were victimized in the population at a rate of 28% (Dixon and Linz 2000). Also, African Americans were depicted in news reports as perpetrators 36% of the time while they were only arrested 21% of the time (Dixon and Linz 2000). Caucasians, who were actually arrested for 27% of crimes, were depicted as the perpetrators of crime only 25% of the time (Dixon and Linz 2000). Latinos were underrepresented as victims and perpetrators, despite the fact that in reality, they comprised the largest proportion of both groups, 54% and 47%, respectively (Dixon and Linz

2000). Thus, Latinos tended to be largely invisible in the media whereas African Americans were portrayed inaccurately as criminals more often and victims less often than they truly were.

In Entman and Rojecki's (2000) book *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*, among other issues, they investigate the racial skew of nonfictional television violence. According to Entman and Rojecki (2000), television paints American society as intensely saturated with violence and assigns African Americans to the dangerous side of our culture. In the chapter entitled "Violence, Stereotypes, and African Americans in the News," Entman and Rojecki (2000) describe the results of their 10 week study of evening news programming on major local broadcast channels in Chicago. While Chicago newscast may not be the same as newscasts across America, research in other areas (as can be seen throughout this literature review) suggests similarities (Entman and Rojecki 2000).

In terms of the news programming, there was an average of 7 violent incidents per show and there was very little focus on any systematic attempts to control this violence (Entman and Rojecki 2000), thereby confirming the message of a chaotic world. As far as the race of the alleged perpetrators in the news programs, African Americans and Caucasians were almost equally represented, but Caucasian victims outnumbered African American victims by a 1.5 to 1 ration (Entman and Rojecki 2000). Also, Caucasian crime victims garnered more news coverage (in terms of minutes) when compared to African American victims; the ration was 3 to 1 (Entman and Rojecki 2000). In reality, African Americans in Chicago are more likely to be victimized than Caucasians. For Entman and Rojecki (2000), this sends a message that Caucasian life is more valuable than African American life. Even if these portrayals did represent reality, the lack of conceptualization in the news may worsen racial stereotyping.

Entman and Rojecki (2000) also found that news stories were four times more likely to show mug shots of African Americans than Caucasians, which makes the former group appear guiltier than the latter. Plus, Caucasian perpetrators were more likely to receive visualization on the screen that included their name on the screen; this visualization provides a sense of an individual's identity (Entman and Rojecki 2000). If people are less often named, this may suggest that they are somehow different from the dominant group (Entman and Rojecki 2000). Also, the news programs pictured African Americans in

police custody twice as often as Caucasians (Entman and Rojecki 2000). Therefore, these “images attach a heightened degree of threats to Blacks, who seem to require physical control or restraint twice as much as Whites” (Entman and Rojecki 2000:83).

These studies show that media portrayals of African Americans, whether in regards to their class status or criminal behavior, are not reflective of objective social conditions (Gilens 1996; Clawson and Trice 2000; Dixon and Linz 2000; Entman and Rojecki 2000). Rather, media portrayals of people of color perpetuate disparaging and inaccurate stereotypes. In regards to this study, the New Orleans residents featured in post-Katrina media reports may not have been portrayed in ways consistent with objective conditions. In fact, they may have been portrayed in ways more consistent with negative Caucasian stereotypes of African Americans and dominant media representation patterns. Thus, if African American residents were for instance, disproportionately portrayed as criminals, as they often are in television news (Dixon and Linz 2000; Entman and Rojecki 2000) this serves to confirm the stereotypes Caucasians already possess about African Americans.

Effects of Media on Audience Conceptions of Social Groups and Problems

Having discussed how African Americans are represented by the media and the inaccuracy of these representations, it is useful to understand how the media influences people’s conceptions about the members of other social groups and social problems like crime. While the authors in the preceding section briefly discussed the consequences of stereotypical depictions of African Americans, the next set of researchers specifically investigate how audience beliefs about this are affected by the media. The first few studies describe audience fears of crime and how these are affected by the media. The last few studies (Dixon and Maddox 2005; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Ford 1997) in this section are experiments which connect the disparaging depictions of African Americans with the judgments people go on to make about who is committing different crimes. People possess a repertoire of media-produced stereotypes of African Americans that influence inaccurate judgments and potentially prompt people’s actions towards members of this group.

According to Warr (1980), many researchers speak of a discrepancy between public beliefs about crime and objective conditions, which they attribute to mass media coverage of crime. So as to “indirectly” know how media coverage of crime affects audience beliefs, Warr (1980) examined the public’s perceived incidence of certain crimes. From 1974-1975 in a major Southwestern community, Warr conducted open-ended interviews where participants estimated the number of offenses reported to the police for 4 different kinds of crimes. Then, he compared their beliefs regarding the prevalence of these crimes to police data depicting the official incidence of these crimes.

Warr’s (1980) results indicate a systematic pattern of deviation between public beliefs and the police data reflecting the actual incidence of those same crimes. The absolute difference between public perception and official data is large only for the most frequently-committed offenses. While respondents tended to underestimate the official incidence of the most frequently committed offenses and overestimated the incidence of the least frequently committed offenses, there was a great deal of similarity between the public perception and official information and the rank-order of the offenses (Warr 1980). Warr’s conclusion that public beliefs about the prevalence of certain crimes and objective conditions are fairly similar, contradicts much previous research in this area. Thus Warr (1980) concludes that the public has been painted as entirely subject to media interpretations and that the accuracy of media depictions of crimes has been underestimated.

While Warr’s (1980) research provides a much-needed critique of theoretical models which simplistically portray the public’s perceptions as completely formed by the mass media, there are several problems with his work. First of all, he failed to analyze media coverage and reporting of crime in the area he studied. Without this information, his argument that the public perceptions of crime do not reflect the media coverage of crime in that area holds no merit. Secondly, although the participants’ perceptions about crime may be similar to objective conditions, perhaps in part, this is because Warr’s (1980) participants were assessing the conditions of the area in which they reside and thus, were likelier to personally and experientially know something about. If he had examined media reports depicting the criminality of social groups that respondents had little contact with (Warr says nothing of the racial or

class composition of his sample) perhaps resident's perceptions would have been more similar to media portrayals. Since Warr (1980) totally excludes the variable of race and does not analyze, much less discuss the news media portrayals of social problems or residents in the city he is studying, his arguments regarding the effects of media representations are little more than pure speculation.

Hubbard, Defleur and DeFleur (1975) adopt a social constructionist stance by suggesting that social problems are what people perceive them to be. In other words, there are no particular conditions of society that are inherently problematic. Acknowledging the significant social role the mass media plays in defining the public's conception of social problems, Hubbard et al. (1975) conducted interviews with 123 residents from a medium-sized Northwestern community. They looked at the residents' perceptions of the prevalence of 10 social problems (which includes problems like unemployment, crime, and racial discrimination) and, unlike Warr (1980), they studied the news-play time given to different social problems over an 18 month period to see how the two were related. They also examined official agency data expressing the true prevalence of these social problems (they defined "prevalent" problems as those affecting the greatest number of victims, not those most frequently committed).

As for results, the public considered unemployment, juvenile delinquency, and crime, respectively, to be the most prevalent social problems (Hubbard et al. 1975). In contrast, a content analysis of media broadcasts and newspapers revealed that media coverage largely centered on stories of 1) crime, 2) transportation mishaps, and 3) discrimination (Hubbard et al. 1975). Agency records indicated that 1) unemployment, 2) crime and 3) alcoholism were the most prevalent social problems (Hubbard et al. 1975). Thus, there was *no* statistical relationship between media emphasis on certain social problems and the true prevalence of these problems. Moreover, there was a high relationship between agency rankings of social problems and the audience beliefs concerning their prevalence (Hubbard et al. 1975). This provides evidence for the argument that individual conceptions of social problems should not be viewed as a stimulus-response of exposure to mass communications. Hubbard et al. (1975) caution that the social problems they studied were institutionalized social problems, as opposed to emerging ones (the latter may be received differently by the public).

Although the participants in this study were representative of the residents in the city they studied, perhaps since they were largely middle class Protestant Caucasian females they filtered the media representations of social problems through a different lens than those of other social groups. Perhaps certain social groups assign differential value to different stereotypes and some of their perceptions may be more malleable in the face of media representations, than others. For instance, if Caucasian females have negative stereotypes about race and crime they may be more susceptible to media stereotypes confirming their racist suspicions

Chiricos et al. (1997) describe a corresponding rise in media coverage of violent crime and public concerns about crime. Specifically, Gallup polls indicate that between 1993 and 1994, that American rankings of violent crime as the nation's foremost problem rose from 9 percent to 49 percent (Chiricos et al. 1997). Thus at the peak of the seeming media-generated crime frenzy, while controlling for age, gender, race, victim experience, and other crime perceptions, they examined the relationship between fear of crime and the news consumption of crime among 2,092 persons residing in the state capital of Florida (Chiricos et al. 1997). By examining so many variables, they entertain the possibility that relationships between fear of crime and news consumption vary in socially patterned ways (Chiricos et al. 1997). In a more thorough manner than many others (Hubbard et al. 1975; Warr 1980) examining similar issues, they examined television, radio, newspaper, and magazine news reports.

Results indicated that age had a significant negative relationship on level of fear and women and African Americans were significantly more fearful of crime than men and Caucasians (Chiricos et al. 1997). Specifically, watching TV news is significantly related to higher levels of fear for low-income Caucasian women between the ages of 30 and 54, with recent victim experience who reside in disproportionately African American neighborhoods (Chiricos et al. 1997). Confused with this race and gender discrepancy, the researchers did a content analysis of nightly news reports to find out who was most often depicted as the victims of crime. Caucasian women were the group most frequently depicted as the victims of crime in these news reports. This explains why significant TV news effects were only found for this group of participants (Chiricos et al. 1997).

The last studies in this section used experiments to discern how television stereotypes affect the judgments people go on to make about other social groups (Dixon and Maddox 2005; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Ford 1997). The fourth study (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997) in this section highlights some implications of the media portrayals described thus far. According to these studies, because of the effects of racialized television stereotypes, even when people are not given enough information to make an informed decision about who commits a given crime, they will go on to make racist judgments about who committed the crime (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Ford 1997).

Dixon and Maddox (2005) exposed a group of 130 disproportionately Caucasian (73 percent) female college students to crime news stories featuring perpetrators of different skin tones (“light-skinned,” “medium-skinned,” or “dark-skinned”). The objective was to find out how exposure to crime news stories with racially diverse perpetrators affects the audience’s judgments about the stories. Dixon and Maddox’s (2005) hypothesis were threefold: that exposure to imagery of African American criminals would activate participants’ pre-existing stereotypic associations and influence their judgments of the news story, and that exposure to “dark-skinned” criminals would lead to an increased activation of stereotypes in comparison to exposure to light-skinned perpetrators. In line with cultivation theory, Dixon and Maddox’s (2005:1559) third hypothesis was that “heavy television news viewers will be more likely than lighter viewers to apply the Black criminal stereotype to race and crime phenomena.”

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the following conditions: a crime news story featuring a Caucasian perpetrator, a “light-skinned” African American, a “medium-skinned” African American or a “dark-skinned” African American. Also, participants were questioned regarding their daily television viewing. After watching the videos, among other “filler” questions, participants were questioned about their perceptions of the perpetrator and the victim featured in the news story. Dixon and Maddox (2005) found that those exposed to stories featuring African American perpetrators expressed more “emotional concern” about the crime story than if the story featured a Caucasian perpetrator (Dixon and Maddox 2005). Additionally, heavy news viewers exposed to the “dark-skinned” African American condition were more “concerned” about the crime story than those exposed to the Caucasian perpetrator

condition (Dixon and Maddox 2005). Heavy television viewers also tended to perceive victims of *all* African American perpetrators more favorably than the victims of Caucasian perpetrators (Dixon and Maddox 2005). “Dark-skinned” African American perpetrators were perceived as more memorable than were Caucasian criminals (Dixon and Maddox 2005).

Further, Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) argue that all television news reports share two main characteristics: a focus on violent crime and a concentration on non-white males as the perpetrators of crime. Thus, they did a content analysis of the nightly news in Los Angeles, California to examine the prevalence of this crime news “script.” For Gilliam and Iyengar (2000), television viewing provides the audience with a set of predictable heuristics or “scripts” through which they are then able to conveniently make sense of the everyday world. Thus, when people encounter situations where they lack certain information (such as the race of an alleged criminal) they make unconsciously racist assumptions that reflect their internalized scripts.

Of the 3,014 crime-related news shows broadcast in Los Angeles during 1996 and 1997, 83% were about *violent* crimes (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). Also, “the crime of murder, which accounts for less than 1 percent of crime in all of Los Angeles county, was the focus of 17% of all the crime stories in the newscasts sampled” (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000:562). Over half of the reports explicitly referred to the race of the alleged perpetrator, non-whites were most likely to be depicted as the perpetrators of crime, and for each type of crime African Americans comprised the largest minority group of suspects (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). As a result of these portrayals, the audience may be left with the impression that there are more violent criminals and that they are Blacker than they really are (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000).

After obtaining evidence for their crime news script theory, Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) conducted a series of experiments with 2331 participants, between 1995 and 1997. Due to interest in African American/Caucasian differences in interpreting news, African Americans were over sampled. In each experiment, there were four groups of participants. The first two groups saw identical 15 minute, randomly-selected news clips about a homicide. However, in the news clip the first group watched, the alleged perpetrator was Caucasian and for the second group, he was African American. The third group

watched the same news report, but it was edited to contain no racially-identifying information about the perpetrator and the fourth group did not watch anything. Since the first two groups were watching the exact same video and only the perpetrators race was altered, Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) argue that any differences in the two groups' responses can be attributed to race.

When later asked to recall information about the stories, participants responded more accurately when recalling that the perpetrator from the news clip with the African American than the one with the Caucasian perpetrator (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). Also, they were less likely to remember if there even was a perpetrator in the news clip with the Caucasian than the one with the African American (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). In the news clip with no pictured perpetrator, 60% of respondents recall having seen a perpetrator and 70% claimed the perpetrator was African American (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). This suggests that people are more likely to remember information or *invent* information fitting neatly into their script of established beliefs about how the world works.

Lastly, Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) replicated a survey done each year by the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of California, Los Angeles. While the survey did not include the original experiment participants, they contend that it still may reflect their views since those comprising the survey population were from the same area and the survey was undertaken around the same time as the experiment (making the impact of history less likely). In line with cultivation theory, Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) hypothesized that heavy television viewing would have a significant positive impact on one's support for the crime news script. They found that as television viewing increased, Caucasian respondents' negative stereotypes about African Americans and crime increased (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). The same relationship was not found with African American respondents (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000).

Like Gilliam and Iyengar (2000), Ford (1997:266) recognizes that television portrayals of African Americans can serve to "create, reinforce, or change disparaging stereotypes." Thus, the activation or accessibility of constructs which create Gilliam and Iyengar's (2000) "script," are largely influenced by media stereotypes. Ford (1997) examined how stereotypical television portrayals of African Americans

affect how Caucasians perceive and react to individual African Americans. Ford (1997) predicted that Caucasians would be more likely to make negative judgments of individual African Americans after being exposed to stereotypical television portrayals of them. Forty individuals (these individuals were not randomly selected, were mostly female, and were all young college students) participated in a 2 x 2 between-subjects experiment. They watched 5 different comedy skits from one television show and the first, third, and fifth of these skits depicted African Americans in damaging stereotypical ways (such as uneducated, and prone to violence). Then, participants reviewed a case from the judicial review files of another university in which African American student had allegedly assaulted a Caucasian student. The case contained no conclusive proof of which student was guilty.

While Ford (1997) found that participants overwhelmingly rated the skits depicting African Americans in disparaging ways as stereotypical, they rated the neutral and stereotype-laden skits as *equally* funny. Also, judgments of the African American student (and not the Caucasian student) were more negative after the exposure to the stereotypical comedy skits than after exposure to the more neutral skits (Ford 1997). These findings demonstrate the power of television stereotypes and their effect on the way Caucasians perceive individual African Americans.

Describing crime as one of the public's main concerns, in their study "Public Perceptions of Race and Crime: The Role of Racial Stereotypes," Hurwitz and Peffley (1997) examine the extent to which racial attitudes influence Caucasians' beliefs about crime and punishment. They administered a series of phone experiments to 501 randomly-selected Lexington, Kentucky residents in a 1994 probability survey. Respondents were asked a series of questions about crime in which the perpetrator's race varied. While the respondents' views may not be reflective of the views espoused by residents of other areas of the country, Caucasians, in general, do tend to favor punitive policies more for African American criminals than Caucasian criminals (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). They hypothesized the extent to which people's racial stereotypes as they pertain to attitudes about crime policy, are influenced by the type of crime (violent crime, operationalized as assault, or non-violent, operationalized as embezzlement), the policy (whether or not punitive or preventative measures are favored), and the type of criminal (Hurwitz and

Peffley 1997). In terms of the “type of criminal,” they predicted violent African American criminals, which confirm racist Caucasian stereotypes, would be deemed more negatively.

First, to examine the degree of racism, they measured the extent to which respondents’ believe that African Americans are lazy and violent (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). In regards to the hypothesis regarding the type of crime, the researchers found that stereotypes are essentially irrelevant in the evaluation of African American embezzlers (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). But when the crime confirms racist stereotypes as in the case of the assault crime, racist respondents were far likelier to evaluate African Americans as guilty, think the individual will commit similar crimes in the future, and to believe the individual cannot be “rehabilitated” (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). The presence of racial stereotypes did not affect Caucasians’ evaluation of Caucasians committing the violent crimes (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). As for the second hypothesis, racist stereotypes increased respondent support for punitive rather than preventive measures for African American criminals (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). “Questions about furloughs, rehabilitation, and prison terms appear to activate racial stereotypes, which, in turn, biases judgments on such issues, but only for the treatment conditions in which the target is black” (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997:387). Lastly, racial stereotypes are only used when evaluating *violent* African American prisoners and not African Americans which are perceived as “model” prisoners (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997).

In regards to the relevance of the above-mentioned research to this study, it seems as though media reports, to a varying degree, *influence* the way that the public regards African Americans and crime (Chiricos et al. 1997; Ford 1997; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). Although, some (Hubbard et al. 1975; Warr 1980) argue against this conclusion, it seems as though those watching television portrayals of “looters” in the days after Katrina likely made some negative judgments of these residents. While the issue is complex, these judgments were likely influenced by both the television images of “looting” and pre-existing racial attitudes. People possess a repertoire of stereotypes about social issues and groups that can either be perpetuated or challenged by media reports. When applying Dixon and Maddox (2005), Ford (1997), and Gilliam and Iyengar’s (2000) work to this study, the judgments that the public and those with

the ability to make rescue decisions formed as a result of these stereotypical media reports may, in part, have affected the aid Katrina victims received.

In the above sections I included research about the way in which African Americans are typically represented by the media and the way in which the audience conceives of crime and race as a result of the mass media. But since this study pertains to the way in which the behavior of disaster victims was portrayed by the media, in the next section I include studies of post-disaster collective behavior. In particular, the focus in the next section is on behavior that is defined as criminal in conventional, non-disaster settings and emergent norm theory.

Emergent Norm Theory and Post-Disaster Collective Social Behavior

After disasters, people's definition of the situation changes and as a result of a changed and unfamiliar social environment, emergent norms (Quarantelli and Dynes 1970; Schneider 1992; Aguirre et al. 1998) help victims cope with the new situation. In this section, a variety of researchers discuss the character of post-disaster collective behavior. Different from the previous two sections of the literature review, there is little research on post-disaster criminal activity and "looting." Some of the work in this section is not original empirical research, but merely the conclusions scholars drew from rather un-systematic studies of other's work on particular disasters.

According to Schneider (1992), after disasters there is often a conflict between the government's "bureaucratic norms" and the "emergent norms" of those victimized by a disaster. Though Schneider (1992) is not clear on her research methods, she examines 5 case studies of different disasters and the factors that make the audience define disaster response as either successful or as a failure. Bureaucratic norms are predictable as they are agreed upon by involved agencies and emergent norms, as a form of "collective behavior," also tend to follow a pattern (Schneider 1992:136). This pattern involves the process of "milling," where victims search for meaning after a disaster and search for appropriate modes of behavior (Schneider 1992). As exemplified by the aftermath of hurricane Katrina (which seems to still be the case), "milling is most pronounced when existing organizations and institutional procedures are

inadequate or inappropriate for the situation at hand” (Schneider 1992:137). According to Schneider (1992) this milling is exacerbated by breakdowns in communication, which tend to make it difficult for authorities to maintain a sense of social order in line with pre-disaster norms. Through the milling process victims construct “emergent norms” which provide meaning and comfort (Schneider 1992).

While the gap between emergent norms and bureaucratic norms is predictable, the size of this gap makes the audience either perceive government response as a failure or success (Schneider 1992). Using the example of the 1989 hurricane Hugo disaster in the Caribbean Islands, Schneider (1992:138) describes how “keynoting behavior took place when acts of social deviance went unpunished.” Schneider (1992) argues that since the government was unable to stop “looting,” this gave residents permission to loot. While (Schneider 1992) argues that “looting” in the case of hurricane Hugo was a result of victims lacking necessary supplies for survival, she blames these emergent “looting” norms and the unprecedented nature of the disaster as the causes of the poor government response. In her conclusion Schneider (1992) suggests that bureaucracies should plan for the unexpected, but also cautions that certain events cannot be foreseen. She argues that the media simplifies the conflict between bureaucratic and emergent norms by portraying inevitable government failures as an inevitable feature of disasters (Schneider 1992). By citing cases where people responded “normally” to disasters and where government responded effectively, she wrongfully implies that disaster victims themselves are responsible for closing the gap between the two types of norms. Rather than interpreting victim’s behavior in terms of normality and abnormality, it is more useful to examine it as context-specific, need-driven and situational.

Similar to Schneider (1992), Aguirre, Wegner and Vigo (1998) describe the process of a disaster prompting the emergence of situational norms. However, they do not perceive these norms as stringent behavior guidelines, but rather as disaster victims’ revised definition of the situation. Aguirre et al. (1998) tested the emergent norm theory of collective behavior looking at the way in which groups deal with normative crisis. Aguirre et al. (1998) administered a survey to 363 randomly selected victims of the World Trade Center bombings in 1993. A note of caution: when relying on people’s memory of the

minute details of an event, like how many minutes it took one to evacuate from a building, memory is reconstructive and not entirely accurate.

In particular, they examined the idea that disaster victims act and behave in solidarity. They predicted that the more serious and dangerous a situation (as agreed upon in the milling process), the quicker group mobilization and the implementation of emergent norms. They also hypothesized that a heightened search for meaning and intergroup milling (which provides group members with multiple definitions of the situation) would contribute to prolonged course-of-action decisions and delay victim's decision to evacuate (Aguirre et al. 1998). In regards to their first hypothesis, if respondents regarded the situation as serious, they did evacuate quicker. However this did not hold true for respondents in large groups or those who know people intimately well in these groups (Aguirre et al. 1998); perhaps the latter two conditions complicated people's decisions rather than simplifying them. They also found a positive association between group resources and the speed of collective behavior (Aguirre et al. 1998). As for the third hypothesis, group cooperativeness was positively associated with the timing of evacuation but, respondents in large groups and who knew others in the group intimately well tended to join evacuation efforts quicker (Aguirre et al. 1998). Those with competing definitions of the situation (defined as victims working on a floor with people from more than one company) did take longer to evacuate (Aguirre et al. 1998). Additionally, although not statistically significant, older respondents and female respondents evacuated quicker than younger male respondents (Aguirre et al. 1998).

Quarantelli (1960) examined "common misconceptions" that victims of disaster exhibit withdrawal behaviors of panic and dependency and the perception this behavior can be controlled by authorities. Since the panic myth, perpetuated by the mass media, suggests that victims of disaster are anti-social, irrational individuals, this may be used as a reason to delay or hamper aid and recovery efforts (Quarantelli 1960). Moreover, when this panic does occur it is rarely on a large scale (Quarantelli 1960). Next, Quarantelli (1960) describes the mythical image of passive, dependent and completely helpless disaster victims waiting to be rescued by officials. To the contrary, disaster victims often act individually contrary to the expectations of government and rescue agencies, working out their own "private

withdrawal arrangements” (Quarantelli 1960:73). Also, disaster officials tend to perceive any informal or unplanned withdrawal behavior as undesirable and hence, any lack of social control may be interpreted as an institutional failing. For officials, a situation of normlessness creates a situation where victims are particularly conducive to techniques of social control (Quarantelli 1960). Quarantelli (1960) brings up several myths that seem to be fairly prevalent in the mass media’s frequently dramatic depiction of disaster and thus, merit investigation.

Quarantelli and Dynes (1970) have come to see looting as a normative behavior and fault other sociologists for not seeing looting this way. Quarantelli and Dynes (1970) argue that looting is guided by norms and is not a symptom of normlessness, but rather of different norms. Rather than viewing “looting” as individually deviant behavior or as a result of faulty socialization, Quarantelli and Dynes (1970) perceive looting as the product of emergent group norms and as a semi-institutionalized response to disaster. “The Jekyll and Hyde image of man implied in some of the previous discussion is not supported by facts” (Quarantelli and Dynes 1970:172). Rather, according to arrest records looters are typically employed, married and long-time residents of the cities in which they loot, rather than deviant, mal-adjusted individuals with few social ties (Quarantelli and Dynes 1970).

Quarantelli and Dynes (1970) describe natural disasters and civil disturbances as two types of community crises which reflect group members’ consensus or incongruity, respectively. The difference between the two types of events is that looting after natural disasters is less prevalent and typically is conducted by individual outsiders rather than collective groups of community members as in the case of community crises, such as like riots (Quarantelli and Dynes 1970). In the case of disasters, Quarantelli and Dynes (1970) argue that private property rights are collectively suspended in the name of the common good.

Similar to Quarantelli and Dynes (1970), Form, Loomis, Clifford, Moore, Nosow, Stone, and Westie (1956) do not see collective post-disaster behavior as the result of normlessness, but rather of different norms. By examining three empirical studies of different disasters, Form et al. (1956) argue that there is both a persistence and emergence of cultural and social systems after disasters. In line with

emergent norm theory, they argue that almost immediately after a disaster, victims construct a “disaster system” which meets their needs of a restored social equilibrium. Far from anomie, social systems operate through all stages of a disaster and social actors create continuity between old and emergent normative systems. Different from other researchers in this section, Form et al. (1956) emphasize that a group’s post-disaster behavior must be interpreted within the context of that group’s pre-disaster community structure, culture, and values. In complex urban societies characterized by complex stratification arrangements, the person’s response to a disaster is a function of his/her social identifications and his/her position in various sub-systems (including the stratification system) of that individual’s community or society (Form et al. 1956:181).

To further exemplify the need to contextualize post-disaster behavior, Form et al. (1956) use the example of the Rio Grande River flood in 1954 which affected the residents of Piedras Negras in Mexico. To enable a comparison of cultural and class differences in community responses to disaster, they also studied the heavily-affected, smaller city of Eagle Pass, Texas. The Mexican victims relied more on kinship ties after the disaster, while the Americans relied more on professional organizations to assess the disaster (Form et al. 1956). The poor were more socially-integrated in Texas than in the Mexican city and also, more integrated into the disaster system. After the disaster, hostility was great on the part of Mexican residents, but not on the part of Americans (Form et al. 1956). The Mexican response to the disaster was a function of that society’s social stratification system and culture. In the Mexican city, there was a very small upper-middle class who held most of the power. In societies like the United States, where there is a slightly stronger presence of middle and upper classes, lower classes may feel resentment towards middle-class rescue and relief organizations like the Red Cross. If one examines a city like New Orleans, with a relatively large group of working class and impoverished individuals that were not included in plans of evacuation or rescue plans, then perhaps the collective behavior of this group can be understood accordingly. The form of disaster victims’ hostility is conditioned by the class structure of their society (Form et al. 1956). In the case of Katrina, it is also affected by race-based stratification.

According to emergent norm theory, after a disaster, residents engage in a process of “milling” where they search for meaning and modes of behavior appropriate to the new situation (Schneider 1992). For Schneider (1992), this post-process is more pronounced when institutional norms are ill-equipped to deal with the situation at hand, like in the case of Katrina. It is through this post-disaster process in which victims formulate a “disaster system” (Form et al. 1956) which meets the needs of victims by helping to restore a degree of social equilibrium. For some, (Quarantelli and Dynes 1970) looting is a part of this normative response and can be *expected* in post-disaster situations. Rather than symbolizing a situation of normlessness, it is the product of different norms. In the absence of “bureaucratic norms” to handle the Katrina aftermath, many disaster victims developed their own systems of response. Since the lack of response, aid, and basic necessities for survival lasted for days, residents “revised definition of the situation” (Aguirre et al. 1998) likely became more established and hardened. The longer these coping systems provided sustenance, the more resistant these systems may have become in face of late-forming and possibly more-resented, bureaucratic norms.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My objective was to devise research questions that are theory and literature-driven and which can be realistically investigated with the available resources. These questions pertain mainly to the content of the media representations. I approach each question from the angle of pluralism theory (see theory section) to see how similar or dissimilar the media representations are across channels and shows. Lastly, I also look for any time shift over the course of the 8 day time frame, in the content of the representations. So as to understand how the behavior of New Orleans residents in the public sphere was characterized by news media, I ask the following questions.

- Were violent criminal acts or non-violent criminal acts covered more on the nightly news?
- Were there any references to crime aimed at rescuers and rescue helicopters described in any of the media reports?
- How was “looting” typically framed? Are those partaking in “looting” usually characterized as “deserving” (engaging in non-criminal “looting”) or as “non-deserving” (engaging in criminal “looting”)?
- In the video footage, what is the race and age of those pictured when “looting” and crime is described? In other words, what type of criminal is most typically pictured?
- In the video footage, how does coverage of Caucasian and African American residents compare?
- Over all, how do representations of African Americans in this study compare to representations of African Americans in the larger media, especially in terms of crime?

MIXED METHODS: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE

According to Creswell (2003), there is a relatively new approach used in the social sciences known as “mixed methods research,” which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research methods. There are advantages and disadvantages to using either quantitative or qualitative methods. Perhaps the main advantage of numbers is the benefit of being able to quantify one’s argument (Babbie 2004). Quantification tends to make observations more explicit, providing a more straightforward means to summarize and compare data (Jensen 2002; Babbie 2004). However, quantitative methods provide less complexity, lack richness and thick description. Qualitative methods are more subjective and interpretive as they are filtered through the experiential lens of the researcher according to his/her social location. However, despite the methodology one uses, the process of conducting social science research is a process of decisions which inevitably involves subjectivity. Thus, while on the surface qualitative research may appear to be more subjective and less objective, this is not necessarily the case. By employing both types of methods in this study, I aim to present a well-rounded and more thorough analysis of the media representations of New Orleans residents after hurricane Katrina.

According to Creswell (2003), a researcher must have an explicit rationale for using mixed methods procedures. As I am describing the way in which the media portrayed individuals after Katrina and specifically, the way in which residents’ criminal behavior was framed, I use the quantitative data to highlight how resident’s criminality was most typically or prominently framed. For instance, if there were 5 references to “violent crime aimed at rescuers” and 2 references to “crime” this suggests that crime aimed at rescue workers was a more prominent theme in the discussion of crime in that show. Then, a qualitative analysis of these themes asks questions about the latent meaning and implications of these frames. My rationale for examining audio-visual data using qualitative methods is that this provides richer detail by allowing me to examine the pictures that are described or referred to in the transcripts. Thus, the use of mixed methods provides quantifiable results and a depth which numbers alone do not provide.

As this study has two distinct data collection phases, one following the other, it can be described as a “sequential transformative study” (Creswell 2003). Either the quantitative or the qualitative phase

may be given more priority depending on one's objectives with a study. In the case of this study, more attention is given to the qualitative interpretation as the quantitative or numerical results provide a background or the foundation for the conclusions I draw about the way in which the media represented New Orleans residents post-Katrina.

The method used in this study is content analysis. Content analysis is the study of recorded human communications (Babbie 2004). Quantitative analysis is the research technique for providing a systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of recorded communication (Jensen 2002). In particular, content analysis is well suited to the study of communications and to answering the classic question of communications research regarding who said what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect (Babbie 2004:314). A main advantage of content studies is that they can serve to confirm or disconfirm one's intuitive thoughts about a particular television show or text by providing a systematic description of a large set of media discourses that express the frequency and prominence of certain themes (Jensen 2002:102). Also, content analysis has the advantage of being unobtrusive, providing a unique look at communications over a period of time, and is economical in terms of time and money (Babbie 2004).

Traditional quantitative content analysis involves the analysis of only "manifest" content of recorded communications and makes no claims beyond that (Riffe et al. 2005). Qualitative content analysis, the method used in this study, examines the latent meaning in communications. Although I use deductive fixed categories, my analysis of the terms and phrases in the transcripts is interpretive, subjective, and qualitative. By looking at latent meaning, I "read between the lines" and take into consideration the meaning that the social actor or the audience, attributes to certain symbols or words (Riffe et al. 2005). For instance, beyond just looking at the manifest meaning of the phrase "going into a store and stealing shoes," I take into consideration how the reporter presenting this story and how the audience is likely to interpret that information. This provides a way of examining the frames, or the way in which criminality, in particular, was framed by the news media following hurricane Katrina.

Role of the Researcher

Both before and after hurricane Katrina, I was a resident of Slidell, Louisiana, a city located in the “Northshore” region of greater New Orleans. The majority of the city of Slidell flooded during Katrina and the southern part of the city in particular, sustained catastrophic damages. Thus, much of Slidell was either damaged or in some cases, completely destroyed by the storm. Although my home did not flood, it was damaged. As a resident of a heavily-damaged community, I dealt with much uncertainty and upheaval for many months after the storm. Since I experienced hurricane Katrina, I have a more personal connection to the depictions of New Orleans residents and New Orleans than someone who has never resided in this area. I care about the way in which residents of the greater New Orleans region, in which I live and work, were portrayed by the media. Furthermore, I think of the mass media’s depictions of residents as vital to New Orleans’ ongoing rebuilding efforts, and perhaps, initial rescue and aid efforts after the disaster. My personal concerns regarding the fairness of the media’s representations of residents and social justice are the primary reasons I chose to study this issue. Therefore, I approach the news media’s portrayal of the disaster from a critical perspective.

Also, examining social artifacts through a content analysis is a more removed method than for instance, conducting in-person interviews with participants who were the subjects of the media depictions. In addition to being removed from the data itself, I was not personally depicted in any media accounts of New Orleans from August 29th, 2005 to September 5th, 2005 (or at any other time) as I do not reside within the city limits of New Orleans, Louisiana. Also, this study focuses primarily on how African American residents were portrayed by the media and I am Caucasian.

Ethical Considerations

There are few ethical issues that pertain to this study as it is not conducted with human subjects. As I study social behavior without directly affecting it, this study is an example of unobtrusive research (Babbie 2004). Rather, I examine social artifacts which contain media representations of human beings. Consequently, an institutional review board will not be necessary. The results of this study may be used to

hold media outlets accountable for the content of their reports and the potential implications of the ways in which they represented New Orleans residents.

DATA

Data Collection of Television Transcripts

All of the data described in this section were obtained from the Lexis-Nexis website, <http://web.lexis-nexis.com.ezproxy.uno.edu/universe>. First of all, in order to find out which shows air on each network/cable station, I went to each channel's website. Looking at each channel's website gave me a good idea about which shows are on each channel. Then I searched Lexis-Nexis to figure out the actual population of television transcripts. After selecting the "guided news search" tab on the Lexis-Nexis website, the first required step is the selection of a "news category" in which I selected the "news transcripts" category. Next, one is required to select a "news source." The news source selected depended on which network or cable station I was examining. Among the other transcripts listed under this section are "ABC News Transcripts," "CBS News Transcripts," "CNN Transcripts," "FOX News Network Transcripts," and "NBC News Transcripts." One is able to either examine an individual channel or to choose "all transcripts" to examine transcripts from multiple channels simultaneously. However, if one selects "all transcripts," the list exceeds the Lexis-Nexis maximum of 1,000 shows and one is unable to proceed. Thus, one must examine each channel and its associated shows separately.

Then for the third required step, one enters "search terms" so as to bring up the list of relevant transcripts. There are three lines in which one can enter search terms. In between each line, one is able to select "and," "or," or "and/or." On the first line, I entered the term "New Orleans" to search in "full text" then "or" and "Katrina" as a search in "full text" on the second line. Then, on the 3rd line, I entered the name of the show I was interested in, such as "Nancy Grace," for a search in "show." For step four, "Narrow to a specific date range," I entered "August 29, 2005" to "September 5, 2005." This generated a list which included all of the shows which used the term "New Orleans" or "Katrina" somewhere in the text (as I searched within the "full text" of each document) on ABC, for instance, during the time frame. While this list of shows was quite long, and not all of the shows were relevant or met the criteria I describe below, I skimmed through each transcript to determine its relevancy. In the following two

sections, I describe how the list of transcripts on each channel was delimited to exclude irrelevant transcripts and I discuss the selection of the sample.

The Population

The data described in this section are the verbatim transcripts of cable and network evening news shows with depictions of residents in the public sphere of New Orleans after hurricane Katrina. I chose to examine domestic evening news programs. Specifically, the shows included in this study are the networks of ABC, CBS, NBC and cable television including, CNN and FOX. MSNBC, which is also a cable television channel, is not part of the population as MSNBC transcripts are not available through Lexis-Nexis. These networks present a wide variety of programming with CNN exclusively airing news programs to channels like NBC or FOX, which are not exclusively devoted to news programming. Not only do these channels differ in terms of the types of shows they broadcast, but also in terms of the types of news shows. Evening news programming encompasses a wide variety of programming such as interview and debate-type shows like CNN's *Larry King Live*, *The O'Reilly Factor* on FOX and less-personality driven programs like CBS's *Evening News*. Moreover, the personalities on news programs include politically conservative, liberal, or those not expressing an outward political orientation (which includes news programs without a designated personality). Therefore the population of news shows is quite diverse.

There are several decisions I made to delimit the entire population of news shows to include shows relevant to the purposes of this study. As most of the literature available on the media and television framing of crime and race stems from studies focusing on primetime or evening news, I delimited the focus of this study to include news programming starting between 5:00 pm and 12:00 pm. Shows before 5:00 are excluded because the majority of the daily news programs air after this time (or in the morning). Although there are a few exceptions, non-news programming comprises the majority of mid-day programming. Also, I only include domestically-oriented news or programs that focus most of on news occurring in the United States, rather than foreign affairs. Although domestic news shows may

cover events occurring in other countries, this is not the focus these programs. While there are several different television shows *exclusively* devoted to foreign affairs, none of these programs aired between the August 29, 2005 and September 5th, 2005. Although ABC's *World News* may not sound like a domestically-oriented news show, I include it as this is ABC's primetime nightly news show. While I included FOX's *Special Report with Brit Hume* because of Brit Hume's reporting style, I later found that he focused much on foreign affairs and domestic business or financial affairs. I did not include CBS's *The Osgood File* as the time of show is listed on each transcript as "various times." Also excluded were transcripts that were not from television shows but which still came up under my search for television transcripts. This included transcripts from CNN.com.

I also exclude all entertainment-oriented "soft news" or quasi-news shows (Baum 2002). While these shows do occasionally cover more substantial or informative news stories, that is not usually their focus (Baum 2002). Soft news is in the business of framing human drama as entertainment and essentially, sensationalizing subject matter (Baum 2002). While soft news may frame "hard news" as entertainment and in the process reduce the costs for an otherwise inattentive audience to watch political or disaster coverage (Baum 2002), my intent is to examine shows which do not explicitly package "hard news" as entertainment. Thus, *Showbiz Tonight*, which aired nightly between August 29th and September 2nd and on the 5th of September, 2005 was excluded. My decision to assign news magazine shows such as *48 Hours*, *60 Minutes*, *Dateline* and *20/20* to "soft" or "hard news" categories was more difficult because "soft news" and "hard news" shows are not necessarily two distinct and separate types of programming. For instance, some may perceive *Larry King Live* or *Nancy Grace* as "soft news" shows. News magazine shows may include both types of content. However, as "soft news" is the most prevalent content of these shows (Baum 2002), they were excluded. Also, these shows tend to be more documentary-style programs, which is a genre that is perhaps qualitatively different than in-the-moment traditional evening news programming. Thus, news magazine shows are not included in the population.

Each of the news transcripts which conform to the above-described delimitations can be seen below (Table 1). As depicted below, there are 113 shows which air during the timeframe of this study.

Table 1: Population of Transcripts

DATE	ABC	CBS	CNN	FOX	NBC
August 29 th , 2005	Nightline World News Tonight*	Evening news*	Aaron Brown* Anderson Cooper* Larry King Lou Dobbs tonight Nancy Grace* Paula Zahn	Brit Hume* Greta Van Susteren* Hannity & Colmes* Live Event O'Reilly*	Nightly News*
August 30, 2005	Nightline World News Tonight*	Evening news*	Aaron Brown* Anderson Cooper* Larry King Lou Dobbs tonight Nancy Grace* Paula Zahn	Brit Hume* Greta Van Susteren* Hannity & Colmes* John Gibson O'Reilly*	Nightly News*
August 31, 2005	Nightline Prime. Live Special Report World News Tonight*	Evening news*	Aaron Brown* Anderson Cooper* Larry King Lou Dobbs tonight Nancy Grace* Paula Zahn	Brit Hume* Greta Van Susteren* Hannity & Colmes* John Gibson O'Reilly* Shepard Smith	Nightly News*
September 1, 2005	Nightline Prime. Live World News Tonight*	Evening news*	Aaron Brown* Anderson Cooper* Larry King Lou Dobbs tonight Nancy Grace* Paula Zahn	Greta Van Susteren* Hannity & Colmes* John Gibson Live Event O'Reilly* Shepard Smith	Nightly News*
September 2, 2005	Nightline Special Report World News Tonight*	Evening news*	Aaron Brown* Anderson Cooper* Larry King Lou Dobbs tonight Nancy Grace* Paula Zahn	Greta Van Susteren* Hannity & Colmes* John Gibson Live Event Live Event O'Reilly*	Nightly News*
September 3, 2005	World News Tonight*	Evening news*	CNN Presents CNN Saturday night Larry King	America's Challenge Hannity & Colmes* Live Event	Nightly News*
September 4, 2005	Nightline	Evening news*	CNN Live Event /Special CNN Sunday Night Larry King Wolf Blitzer	<i>No shows</i>	Nightly News*
September 5, 2005	World News Tonight*	Evening news*	Aaron Brown* Anderson Cooper* Larry King Lou Dobbs Tonight Nancy Grace* Paula Zahn	Brit Hume* Greta Van Susteren* Hannity & Colmes* John Gibson O'Reilly* Shepard Smith	Nightly News*
Sample/ Population	7 / 17	8 / 8	18 / 43	23 / 37	8 / 8

Selection of a Sample from the Population

All shows with an asterisk (Table 1) are shows which were included in the sample. The sample is comprised of 64 different shows or about 57% of the population. For the sample, shows from each channel are included which represent the broad variety of television programming, television news personalities, and perspectives present in the population. Nonprobability sampling is common in media research (Jensen 2002). For this study, I employ a purposive sample in which the sample was selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment according to specific criteria (Jensen 2002; Babbie 2004; Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2005). A commonly-used type of purposive sampling, and the type used in this study, is consecutive-day sampling (Riffe et al. 2005). This involves taking a series of content which was produced during a certain time. Such sampling methods are common when covering continuing controversies or continuing news stories (Riffe et al. 2005).

The main shortcoming of nonprobability sampling is that the sample is subject to the judgment of the researcher. Without using probability sampling methods, one cannot control for error and thus, sample error cannot be calculated accurately. In contrast, probability sampling methods enable one to control the degree of statistical error and allow one to make valid inferences about the population being studied (Babbie 2004). Thus, while the results of this study may not be entirely representative of the population (Table 1), the sample does offer a relatively thorough snapshot of the population as it includes diverse programs, different channels, and as the sampling ratio is 58%.

When examining ABC, CBS, and NBC, the network news channels, I examine the main nightly news program on each of these channels. On the cable news channels of CNN and FOX, I selected shows based on the perspective of the show's personality. Appendix 1 contains biographical information about the CNN and FOX personalities included in the sample. CNN's show *NewsNight with Aaron Brown* and FOX's show *Special Report with Brit Hume* were both chosen as they seem to be relatively straightforward in their presentation of the news and consequently, representative of a less personality-driven news genre. Neither claims an explicit political perspective and both are less-confrontational in their reporting style. In fact, their personalities and style of reporting are more similar to what is often

found on network news shows. The personalities of CNN's show *Nancy Grace* and FOX's show *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren* are both lawyers. Thus, these two shows were chosen because their personalities have a legalistic perspective or orientation towards presenting the news. CNN's show *Anderson Cooper 360* was chosen because of his notorious humanistic perspective. There are no shows or personalities on FOX which have the same "humanistic perspective" as Anderson Cooper. So as to create a sample that includes diverse perspectives, I chose FOX's show *The O'Reilly Factor*, with host Bill O'Reilly. Bill O'Reilly has a much more confrontational aggressive approach to the news. Lastly, as *Special Report with Brit Hume* was only on for half of the week and since FOX is the most-watched cable news network, I include an additional show from FOX. I chose *Hannity and Colmes*, who self-identify as a conservative and liberal, respectively. Since this show combines the perspectives of two people who differ politically, it contributes something different than the other shows in the sample.

Data Collection of Audio-Visual Footage

Whereas there were few limitations with obtaining the television transcripts, I was limited by cost with the audio-visual data. As a result, I was unable to obtain all of the videos which correspond to all the transcripts included in the sample. All of the data described in this section was obtained from the Vanderbilt University Television News Archive website. I began conducting a "TV News Search" by selecting the tab "Browse by Date." First, I selected the month of August under 2005 and looked at the shows, displayed in a calendar format, which aired on the 29th, 30th, and 31st of August. Then I selected the month of September under 2005 and looked the show which aired on September 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

Clicking on a show on a particular day brings up a short list or abstract-like description of the content of each segment, as delineated by commercial break, of that show. From this list, I was able to choose the segments of each show that I wanted to order. In the two sections below I describe how the list of evening news videos on each channel was delimited to exclude irrelevant videos and how the sample was selected.

The Population

For each day during the timeline, the Vanderbilt website <http://tnews.vanderbilt.edu> displays one “evening news” show per channel. Also, almost everyday during the time frame there are special speeches or presidential addresses (in which President Bush addresses the nation about Hurricane Katrina). While most of these addresses were during the morning, some were during the evening. Many of these short (many lasting 10-20 minute) speeches or announcements were excluded from the population as they were not really shows, but rather parts of shows or speeches broadcast at a variety of times throughout the day. Also, the Vanderbilt website does not give very detailed descriptions of these short clips and without knowing whether or not the president discussed crime, criminals, or anything about the behavior of New Orleans resident in the public sphere, I was unable to determine the relevancy of these announcements.

Unfortunately these shows do not comprise an exhaustive list of all shows which aired during the time frame and that conform to the delimitations listed in the section above detailing the population of transcripts. Rather, these shows are what Vanderbilt considers the “regular evening news programs for each national television news network.” The criteria used to delineate these shows as “regular evening news programs” is unknown, but ostensibly it is the primetime time slot they occupy and the fact that they are daily shows. The shows depicted below (Table 2) comprise the population of all nightly primetime news shows conforming to the delimitations listed in the preceding paragraphs.

Table 2: Population of Evening News Programs

DATE	ABC	CBS	CNN	FOX	NBC
August 29, 2005	World News Tonight	Evening News	Aaron Brown	Shepard Smith	Nightly News*
August 30, 2005	World News Tonight	Evening News	Aaron Brown	Shepard Smith	Nightly News*
August 31, 2005	World News Tonight Nightline	Evening News	Aaron Brown	Shepard Smith	Nightly News*
September 1, 2005	World News Tonight	Evening News	Aaron Brown	Shepard Smith	Nightly News*
September 2, 2005	World News Tonight Nightline	Evening News	Aaron Brown	Shepard Smith	Nightly News*
September 3, 2005	<i>No show</i>	Evening News	Carol Lin	Kiran Chetry	Nightly News*
September 4, 2005	<i>No show</i>	Evening News	CNN Live Event/Special	Kiran Chetry	Nightly News
September 5, 2005	World News Tonight Nightline	Evening News	Aaron Brown	Shepard Smith	Nightly News
Sample/Population	9	8	8	8	6 / 8

Selection of a Sample from a Population

In the selection of this sample, I was constrained by costs. Entire shows are not part of this sample as pricing was based on show segments; hence it was more economically feasible to select segments relevant to the purposes of this study. Only show segments which were described in a show’s abstract as pertaining to crime or “looting” were included. Initially, when I ordered the audio-visual materials I was only planning to study media representation through September 3rd, by the time I received

the video, I had extended this timeframe to September 5th. It is for this reason that even though some of material after the 3rd is likely relevant, no audio-visual material is studied after this date.

The shows with the asterisk next to them (Table 2) are the ones included in this purposive sample. Rather than looking at several different shows I choose to study *one program* with the aim of providing more depth. Therefore, these shows are not necessarily representative of those in the population. I chose NBC because of their early presence in New Orleans, the large audience of their evening news program, and the subtlety or outward objectivity of the reporting found in reports on this channel. First of all, NBC was one of the first media outlets to cover the situation in New Orleans both before and after hurricane Katrina (MSNBC, *Nightly News with Brian Williams* 2007) and NBC's *Nightly News with Brian Williams* was the most-watched network news broadcast covering the post-Katrina situation (Johnson 2005b). When initially reading the transcripts for this study, I found that NBC focused somewhat less on crime than many of the other news programs. I could have chosen CNN or FOX to analyze as these channels contained more prevalent and explicit references to crime and violence; however, on these channels, the lack of objectivity was likely more obvious to viewers. Media frames of race and crime are not always so explicit. Therefore, even though objectivity appears to be the standard on NBC and other network news programs, it is not necessarily more objective than cable news. Thus, I sought to examine the subtleties in the presentation of the news.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research approach is an *analytic* case study. An analytic case study provides not only a description of a case, but an analysis as well (Johnson, Rettig, and Garrison 2002). The case is a bounded system delimited by time and place, involving in-depth data collection with multiple sources of information and is situated within its setting (social, historical, or economic setting) (Creswell 1998:61). Examining a single case or a specific case (media depictions of residents in the days after hurricane Katrina) provides the researcher with specific examples by which to test general theories (Johnson et al. 2002). In the following paragraphs, I describe how I did the content analysis, validation of findings, and coding categories.

In terms of the execution of this study, I began by reading through each and every transcript during the timeframe which had anything to do with hurricane Katrina. While reading the transcripts, I crossed out any irrelevant information, such as reports of weather conditions, the situation in Mississippi, oil prices, or other subjects which do not conform to the delimitations of this study. I also underlined any terms, words, or phrases which I deemed relevant to the purposes of this study. Once I had narrowed down the content to exclude any content not about the public sphere of New Orleans or panel or expert-led discussions about the public sphere of New Orleans, I determined which coding category the words and phrases underlined belonged in and recorded the presence of that word or phrase in tables (which are in the results section of this paper).

Coding of Transcripts

First of all, I sought to uncover the focus of the crime news content and thus, the way in which New Orleans residents were characterized. Thus, I distinguish between “non-violent crime,” “violent crime,” and “violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials.” Crime, regardless of the type of crime, likely conveys an environment of lawlessness and chaos to the audience, but “violent crime” and “violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials” probably conveys this image to a greater extent. After all, reports of “vandalism” imply that people’s property may be in danger, whereas reports of “rape” or of people

“taking shots at medevac helicopters,” suggest that people, and not just their property, may be in danger. Crimes were coded as “crime” if they are crimes typically directed at property like “arson,” or “stealing” or which do not necessarily involve force or violence like “rioting.” Acts or behaviors were coded as “violent crime” only if they were described using the adjective “violent,” or if a weapon or some other type of physical force is typically involved in the execution of the described crime. For instance, “carjacking,” “gun battles,” “armed robbery” and “rape” are all crimes which entail the use of violence or force by definition. Crimes were coded as “violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials” only if the crime described was depicted as crime explicitly geared towards national guardsman, members of the army corps of engineers, rescue/medical helicopters, doctors and nurses, police officers or rescuers of any kind. In particular, most of the crime which fell into this category was “shooting” or “gun battles.” I only coded for “violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials” as this was the only type of crime aimed at rescuers/officials described in the transcripts.

Now, I shall describe the crimes and criminal acts which I did not code. Words and phrases such as “chaos” or “violence,” or “fighting,” were not coded as “crime” as I was unable to determine which crime, if any, these words were referring. Consequently, I erred on the side of caution and did not assume that they were necessarily referring to crime. Also, I did not code for the crime of suicide, as it is a victimless crime not involving others individuals or their property. Thus, it is less likely the audience will perceive it as posing a threat to their personal well-being or the efforts of rescue officials.

I also did not include crimes committed by authorities in this coding schema. While I am not intending to pardon acts of state violence, the audience is likely to interpret state violence differently than violence on the part of residents. Also, many of the violent crimes committed by police, while they can be interpreted as immoral, unnecessary or excessive, are still classified under the duties of their job (which alone does make an act acceptable). Just like the media may have perpetuated rumors about the crime and violence in which residents allegedly participated, it is likely law enforcement officials were not always framed in a manner which was authentic. Moreover, every time when reporters described law enforcement officials shooting at residents or committing other violent acts, the behavior was not questioned. Instead,

the media was supportive of the criminal justice system status quo. Thus, I am not suggesting that reports of police violence should be taken at face level, just that they convey an entirely different message to the audience than residents committing crimes.

In addition to coding the type of crimes the media described, I also looked at the how the alleged perpetrators of those crimes were described. Of particular interest is the use of actual labels like “criminal” or “hoodlum” for the perpetrators of crime rather than just “people.” Beyond just using the word “people,” many times words like “thug” or “criminal” were used to describe the alleged perpetrator of a crime. Also, many times rather than labeling the perpetrators of specific crimes, the media sometimes simply referred to “roving bands of thugs” roaming the streets of New Orleans. So, words/phrases used to describe the perpetrators of criminal behavior includes both those who actually perpetrated crimes (at least according to the news reports) like “gunmen” or “rapists” and those not referred to as explicitly committing a particular crime, like “hoodlums” or “bad seeds,” (which are like code words for criminal) but likely to be interpreted by the audience as criminals.

Using similar criteria for coding the perpetrators of crime, I distinguish between “perpetrators of violent crime” and “perpetrators of non-violent crime.” Also similar to the way in which I distinguish crime from violent crime, I distinguish “perpetrators of violent crime” from “perpetrators of non-violent crime” when words are used to indicate violent behavior. Thus, “rapists,” “gunmen,” or “bands of thugs roaming the streets with AK-47’s” were coded as the perpetrators of violent crime as the crimes these groups or individuals would or do commit specifically involves the use of force or violence. On the contrary, if those described were simply described as “roving bands of thugs,” “hoodlums” or “looters,” this was coded as perpetrators of non-violent crime.” Again, I decided to err on the side of caution and consider these individuals non-violent as they are not described as being armed, violent, or engaging in violent crime.

Lastly, I sought to examine how the same criminal act can be differentially framed. The act of stealing items from stores was framed in some instances as need-based and thus, not really criminal, and in other instances, the same behavior was characterized with the criminal terminology of “looting.”

Keeping in mind the way in which the audience is likely to interpret acts of stealing, I distinguish between behavior likely be deemed as “deserving looting” and behavior likely to be interpreted as “non-deserving looting.” However, anytime the term “looting” was used without any contextualization, I coded this as “non-deserving” because “looting” is a loaded term which, by definition describes criminal activity. Besides, the word “looting” was very rarely used in a context of where one would interpret the behavior, such as “looting baby supplies,” as “deserving.” There are two main factors I took into consideration when coding the behavior of stealing items. This included the type of merchandise the individual allegedly stole, and the adjectives or nouns used to describe the looting behavior. In regards to former criteria, if the individual was “stealing guns,” “stealing flat-screen TV’s” or “grabbing sneakers,” this was coded as “non-deserving looting.” If the individual described was for instance, “stealing diapers,” “going into a grocery store and giving out food to people,” this was coded as “deserving” looting. As for the latter criteria if verbs like “ransacking” (regardless of the type of store or merchandise being “ransacked”) or “taking everything,” “cleaning out a store,” were used to describe the behavior, then it was coded “non-deserving.”

Validation of Findings

In order to ensure the integrity of this study, I chose a variety of shows on various channels which represent the broad variety of evening news programming. I re-checked each transcript (many of which are 10 pages or more per show per day) after my initial read through to make sure I had truly read (and not accidentally crossed out or ignored) all the content which adheres to the delimitations specified in this paper. After finishing the initial counting phase of the research, I went back to each transcript to re-count to make sure my numbers matched up. If I found any discrepancies between the numbers in my initial count and follow-up count, I did a third count. As a human researcher, it is inevitable that I will make some mistakes. However, repeated counting helped me to locate and thus ameliorate many counting-related errors. Also, in the results section of this paper, many quotes are included so as to provide extensive examples.

Coding of Audio-Visual Footage

Similar to the coding scheme of the transcripts, I code the audio-visual footage depictions of crime, “looting” and criminals. However, rather than coding for the *type of alleged* criminal act an individual was described as engaging in, I code for the *type of alleged criminal* pictured in the reports. As I was unable to see the alleged perpetrator of the crimes described in the transcripts examining the *type of alleged criminal* in the audio-visual footage adds information beyond what can be gleaned from transcripts alone. After all, the purpose of using the audio-visual is to learn something other than what I learned from the transcripts. Therefore, I do not distinguish between perpetrators of “violent,” “non-violent,” or “violent crimes aimed at rescuers/officials” as I did with the transcripts. Rather if the individual is engaging in *any type* of criminal activity, I examine the pictured individual. Also, while in the reports those who were pictured during discussions of crime or “looting” were not always explicitly labeled as the perpetrators of (or those actually committing) the crime being described, I assume that the audience will perceive those pictured during these discussions to be the perpetrators of those crimes (regardless of whether they actually are).

Thus, I code the *type of alleged criminal* pictured so as to examine whether or not the individual fits the media-generated stereotype of the “dark and dangerous criminal” (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Dixon and Maddox 2005). To achieve these objectives, when the newscaster described specific crimes or criminal activity I coded the pictured individual as “African American” or “Caucasian.” I code this way as individuals of these groups are the only ones pictured as engaging in crime. Since the “dangerous black criminal” is typically thought of as a male, I code the pictured individuals as either “male” or “female.” As the age of pictured individuals was often difficult to discern in video footage, I code the pictured individual(s) as either “youth” (teenager or younger), “younger adult” (twenties to thirties), “adult” (older than thirties) or “various” (for footage with multiple individuals of different ages). Even though it was sometimes difficult for instance, to discern whether the pictured individual is 12 or 15, I can code that individual as a “youth,” who is the member of a group that is received entirely differently than an “adult.” African American “youth” will be regarded with less

sympathy as the media tends to depict poverty as a problem of young unemployed African American males (Gilens 1996; Clawson and Trice 2000). Thus imagery like an alleged criminal's race/ethnicity, gender, and age all affect the extent to which the audience will perceive that individual as a "dangerous black criminal" who poses a threat to the social order.

In a few instances, it was difficult to determine how many individuals were in a given clip. For instance, in one clip where the reporter described "looting," numerous individuals were pictured both in and around a drugstore store. Thus, I was unable to specifically determine which individuals were being referred to as "looting" and which were not. In this case, I coded the number of individuals as "multiple." In other instances, I was unable to tell how old the pictured individual was if his/her face was not shown or if the individual was pictured very far in the distance (the picture was blurry as a result).

In addition to coding for the *type of alleged criminal*, when the newscaster described crimes, I sought to code for the type of behavior the individual was actually engaging in. When newscasters simply described or alluded to criminal activity and a perpetrator was not pictured or no relevant video footage was shown, it was not included. This excluded footage includes clips like one where the newscaster described an incident of "violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials" and only a coast guard helicopter and rescue basket were pictured and another when "shootings" were mentioned and the camera was only focused on the newscaster. The clips which typically fell into this category were those in which violent crime and "violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials," were described which suggests that there was no footage available of these incidents and that they were unverified rumors rather than real occurrences.

Essentially other than in two instances, the only crime there was footage of was "looting," and in one instance there was footage of a family being arrested for allegedly stealing a car to leave New Orleans. In another clip the individuals pictured were described as "breaking into a hotel." So, like I did with the transcripts, I code the looting as either "deserving" looting or "non-deserving" looting. If the crime described was one other than looting, I simply note the crime which was described, and as described in preceding paragraphs, I code for the *type of alleged criminal*.

Validation of Findings

In order to ensure the integrity of my results, I repeatedly viewed the videotape. First, I watched the entire video and after developing a coding scheme, I watched it again, taking notes on relevant scenes. Fast-forwarding through irrelevant reports, I watched the footage a third time, comparing my notes to the footage to ensure accuracy. However, the videotape was of a poor quality and footage was quite blurry in some clips. Therefore it was difficult to see some of the blurrier footage and sometimes hard to hear or understand speakers in the video. For instance, I could not discern the age of individuals in some clips as the footage was too blurry or if I could not see their faces (also sometimes, their faces were not shown). Therefore, others watching the same video may analyze blurry or very distant footage differently. While I planned on watching the video again to code for more subtleties in the reports, my VCR damaged the videotape so I was no longer able to use the tape. Since the video had to be returned, I was also limited by a deadline. Despite these limitations, the audio-visual data serves as an extension of the transcripts which are really the foundation of this study. The show segments I watched provide a layer of depth to this study by enriching the transcript results.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section begins with some key pre-Katrina demographics which describe the setting of this study and the subjects of the media depictions. The quantitative results from the transcripts are presented first. I counted and coded all words and phrases pertaining to the perpetrators of crime, the type of crime discussed, and the type of “looting” described. For each of these words/phrases there is one main table expressing the results of the counting by program and by date. In order to illustrate time shifts in crime-related coverage and the plurality of message across shows and channels, I include two correspondent graphs with each table. The first graph illustrates coverage shifts in the total daily content of all shows during the time frame. The latter graph corresponding to each table depicts the 8 day totals (of words/phrases used in a report) for each news program. This graph provides a clear visual of the plurality of message (see *pluralism theory*) across programs and channels. This quantitative results section is followed by qualitative section in which I analyze the crime frames, using quotes from the transcripts to exemplify emergent themes. The last part of this section contains audio-visual results.

Setting

In order to describe those that were represented by the media, some key pre-Katrina demographics of the city of New Orleans are presented below. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2005), the total household population in New Orleans was 437, 186. In terms of racial composition, 28 % of residents were Caucasian, and 67.5% were African American (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). Moreover, 82.3% of the population had a high school diploma and 31.4 % had a bachelor’s degree (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). The median household income was \$30,711, compared to the national household median income of \$46,242 and the median family income in New Orleans was \$39,428, which is substantially lower than the national median family income of \$55,832 (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). The poverty rate for families was 21.8%, and the poverty rate of individuals was 24.5%, almost double the national average (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). In addition to these high rates of poverty, 15.6% of the population was disabled (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). In comparison to 10.3% nationwide, 27.3% of New Orleans

residents had no vehicle (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center 2000). Thus, the subjects of the media reports were largely lower-income African American residents who were unable to leave the city. While these residents were not the only group affected by the hurricane, they had fewer resources to evacuate than others and as a result, comprised the majority of those remaining in the public sphere of the city.

Quantitative Transcript Results

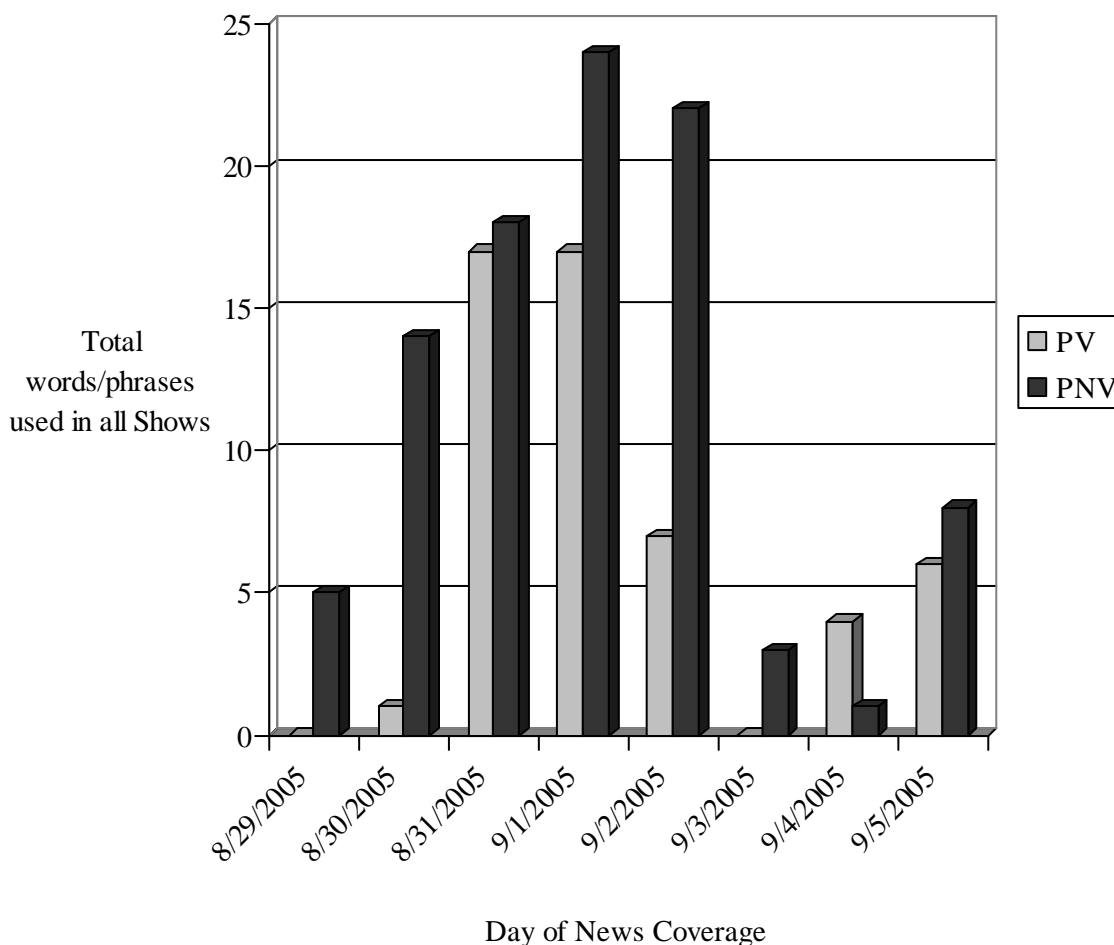
The table below (Table 3) expresses the number of times on each day individuals on a given program labeled (or referred to) the perpetrators of crime. Beyond simply discussing the occurrence of a given crime, on many shows, reporters labeled those who allegedly engaged in crimes either as “criminals,” or with the use of more subjective labels, like “thugs.” Thus, in most cases, without conclusively knowing whether or not crimes were *actually* committed, the labeling of such individuals was widespread. There were few references on the first day to perpetrators of crime; references to perpetrators of crime increased as the days progressed. The perpetrators of non-violent crime were referred to more often than were perpetrators of violent crime. Greater prevalence of non-violent criminals is likely the result of frequent references to “gangs roaming the streets,” “thugs,” “looters,” which do not contain explicit reference to violent crime. Thus, although they were less prevalent, references to violent criminals like “armed looters” and “rapists” were still present.

Table 3: Perpetrators of Violent & Non-Violent Crime

	SUN Aug-29		MON Aug-30		TUES Aug-31		WED Sep-1		THURS Sep-2		FRI Sept-3		SAT Sept-4		SUN Sept-5		<i>Show Totals</i>	
	P V	PN V	P V	PN V	P V	PN V	P V	PN V	P V	PN V	P V	PN V	P V	PN V	P V	PN V	P V	PN V
ABC: World News Tonight	0, 0		0, 2		0, 1		0, 1		0, 4		0, 0		<i>No show</i>		0, 0		0, 8	
CBS: Evening News	0, 0		0, 7		1, 0		0, 0		0, 3		0, 0		2, 0		1, 0		2, 10	
CNN: Aaron Brown	0, 0		1, 2		2, 1		5, 4		2, 2		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		0, 0		10, 9	
CNN: Anderson Cooper 360	0, 0		0, 0		1, 0		1, 0		0, 0		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		0, 0		2, 0	
CNN: Nancy Grace	0, 0		0, 0		4, 6		2, 3		1, 2		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		1, 2		8, 13	
FOX: Bill O'Reilly	0, 2		0, 0		4, 7		5, 9		3, 11		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		4, 5		16, 34	
FOX: Brit Hume	0, 0		0, 0		0, 0		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		0, 1		0, 1	
FOX: Greta Van Susteren	0, 1		0, 0		3, 2		1, 4		0, 0		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		0, 0		4, 7	
FOX: Hannity and Comes	0, 0		0, 3		1, 0		3, 3		1, 0		0, 2		<i>No show</i>		0, 0		5, 8	
NBC: Nightly News	0, 2		0, 0		1, 1		0, 0		0, 0		0, 1		2, 1		0, 0		3, 5	
<i>Daily totals:</i>	0, 5		1, 14		17, 18		17, 24		7, 22		0, 3		4, 1		6, 8		X	

As depicted in the graph below (Graph 1), there were differences in the focus on criminals over the 8 day period. While the graph (graph 1) illustrates the references for *all* programs in a given day, for the most part, this general pattern in focus holds true for individual shows (Table 3). References were fairly low, but still present on the day the hurricane made landfall. References on the first day were limited to non-violent perpetrators. On August 30th, only one day after the storm made landfall, there was a sharp rise in total number of references. After several days of increases, the total number of references reached an all-time high on September 1st. Also, on August 31st and September 1st, the number of references to the perpetrators of violent crime came much closer, than on any other day, to perpetrators of non-violent crime references. References to perpetrators of non-violent crime decreased slightly on the 2nd of September (but remained very high) and also on this day, there was a large drop in references to violent criminals. The major decreases on the 3rd and 4th are reflective of the fact that only 4 and 3 shows, respectively, broadcast during those days. Although many residents were evacuated from the public sphere by the 5th of September, references to perpetrators of non-violent and even violent crime persisted.

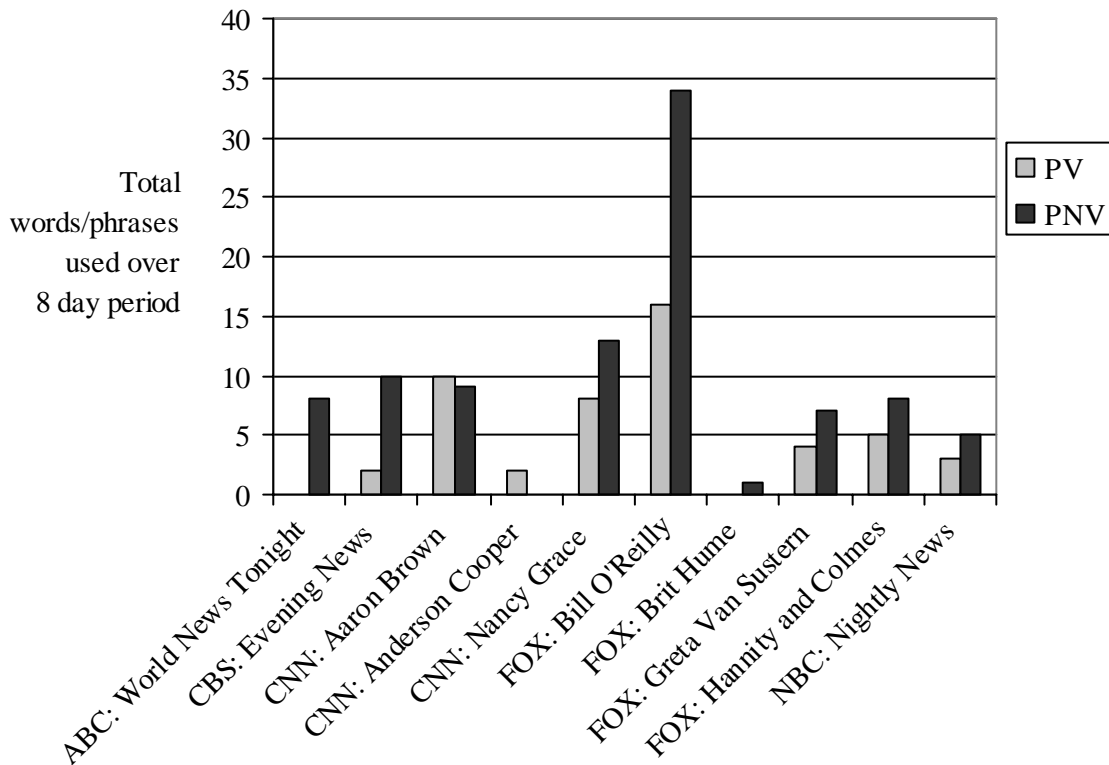
Graph 1: Coverage Shift: Perpetrators of Violent & Non-Violent Crime



As depicted in the graph below (Graph 2), there were also program differences in terms of the references to the perpetrators of crime. Fox’s straight-news style reporter Brit Hume and CNN’s “humanistic” Anderson Cooper made the least references. Also, Anderson Cooper did not label of the perpetrators of crime very often. Nancy Grace and Bill O’Reilly labeled the perpetrators of crime most frequently. On ABC’s *World News Tonight*, no references were made to perpetrators of non-violent crime and Aaron Brown was the only host who labeled or referred to the perpetrators of violent crime more

often than non-violent. For the most part, show hosts did label individuals who allegedly committed crimes. Thus despite the almost non-existent verifiable proof of guilt presented in almost any description, like an arrest, individuals were still labeled as “criminals” or “hoodlums,” for instance. Labeling of non-violent perpetrators was the most frequent, but the extent to which labeling occurred varied by program.

Graph 2: Program Differences: Perpetrators of Violent & Non-Violent Crime



The table below (Table 4) expresses the number of times on each day individuals on a given program referred to crime (non-violent), violent crime, or violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials. In the majority of programs, there were more references to actual crimes than references to the perpetrators of crime (depicted in Table 3). However there is an exception to this pattern. Even though there were a few

references made to criminals (see Table 3) on the day the hurricane made landfall, there were *no* references to actual crimes on the 29th of August (Table 4). Thus even without any alleged criminal activity, questions about potential criminals were already being raised.

A variety of crimes were referred to in all of the programs. Although the perpetrators of non-violent crime were the most-labeled perpetrators of crime (table 3), with the exception of the 5th of September, crime (non-violent) was referred to the least in the news programs. Violent crimes were referred to the most, followed by violent crimes aimed at rescuers/officials. In fact, references to violent crimes aimed at rescuers/officials were more frequent on September 1st, September 2nd, and September 4th than references to non-violent crime. Only on the 30th and 31st of August were there more references to non-violent crime than violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials.

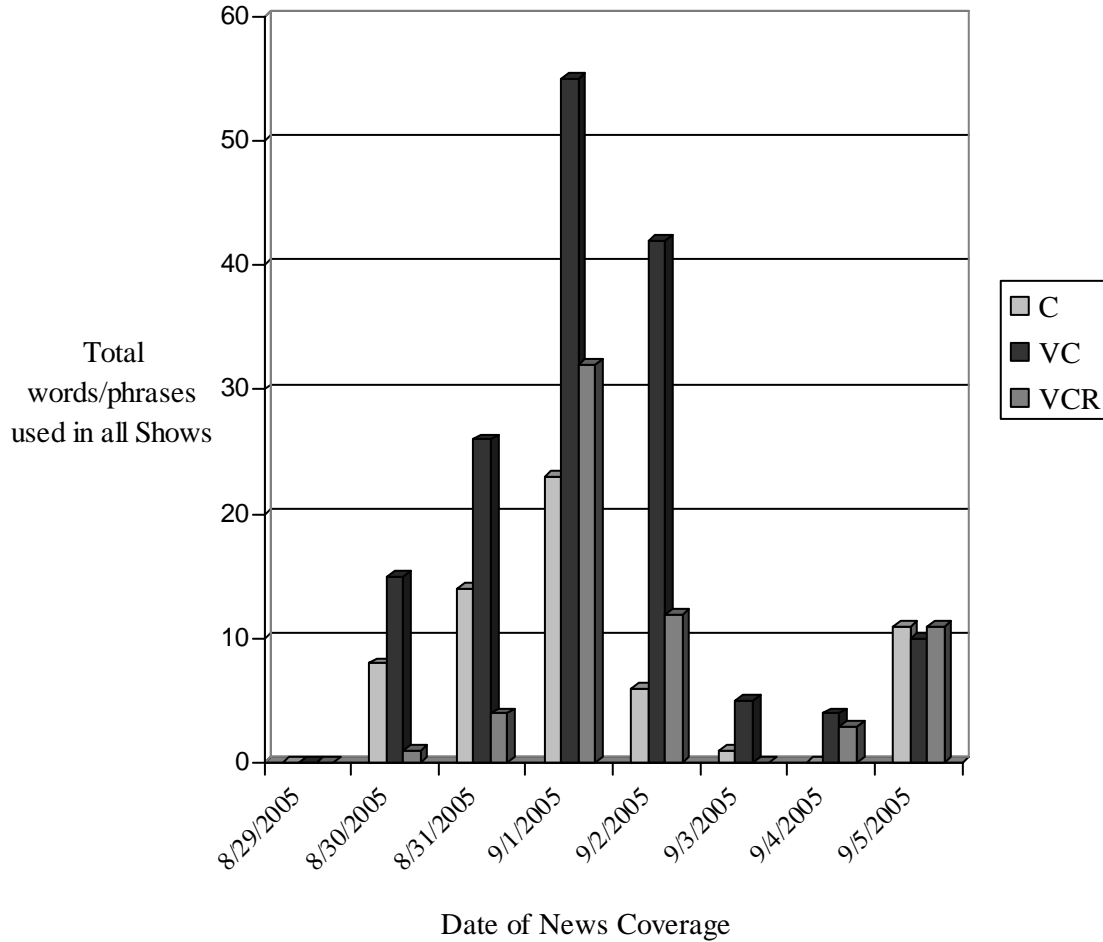
Table 4: Crime, Violent Crime & Violent Crime aimed at Rescuers/Officials

	SUN Aug-29			MON Aug-30			TUES Aug-31			WED Sep-1			THURS Sep-2			FRI Sep-3			SAT Sep-4			SUN Sep-5			<i>Show Totals</i>					
	C	V C	V C R	C	V C	V C R	C	V C	V C R	C	V C	V C R	C	V C	V C R	C	V C	V C R	C	V C	V C R	C	V C	V C R	C	V C	V C R			
ABC: World News Tonight	0, 0, 0			0, 0, 0			1, 1, 0			2, 4, 3			0, 1, 2			0, 3, 0			<i>No show</i>			0, 1, 0			3, 10, 5					
CBS: Evening News	0, 0, 0			0, 0, 0			0, 0, 0			1, 0, 1			0, 0, 0			0, 0, 0			0, 0, 2			0, 0, 1			1, 0, 4					
CNN: Aaron Brown	0, 0, 0			0, 1, 1			2, 5, 0			1, 11, 6			3, 13, 5			<i>No show</i>			<i>No show</i>			1, 1, 0			7, 31, 12					
CNN: Anderso n Cooper 360	0, 0, 0			0, 3, 0			2, 2, 0			1, 3, 8			0, 3, 1			<i>No show</i>			<i>No show</i>			1, 1, 0			4, 12, 9					
CNN: Nancy Grace	0, 0, 0			3, 9, 0			3, 8, 0			2, 7, 4			0, 9, 2			<i>No show</i>			<i>No show</i>			3, 1, 1			11, 34, 7					
FOX: Bill O'Reilly	0, 0, 0			0, 0, 0			1, 0, 1			2, 3, 4			2, 11, 2			<i>No show</i>			<i>No show</i>			5, 3, 9			10, 17, 16					
FOX: Brit Hume	0, 0, 0			0, 0, 0			0, 2, 0			<i>No show</i>			<i>No show</i>			<i>No show</i>			<i>No show</i>			0, 2, 0			0, 4, 0					
FOX: Greta Van Susteren	0, 0, 0			2, 1, 0			1, 6, 1			2, 13, 3			1, 2, 0			<i>No show</i>			<i>No show</i>			1, 0, 0			7, 22, 4					
FOX: Hannity and Colmes	0, 0, 0			2, 0, 0			4, 2, 2			10, 13, 3			0, 3, 0			1, 2, 0			<i>No show</i>			0, 1, 0			17, 21, 5					
NBC: Nightly News	0, 0, 0			1, 1, 0			0, 0, 0			2, 1, 0			0, 0, 0			0, 0, 0			0, 0, 0			0, 4, 1			0, 0, 0			3, 6, 1		
<i>Daily totals:</i>	0, 0, 0			8, 15, 1			14, 26, 4			23, 55, 32			6, 42, 12			1, 5, 0			0, 4, 3			11, 10, 11			X					

As illustrated in the graph below (Graph 3), there were no reports of any type of crime on the day the Katrina made landfall near New Orleans. Following a pattern very similar to perpetrators of crime references, beginning on August 30th, crime references increased, reaching an all-time high on the 1st of September. In particular, references to violent crime and violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials sharply increased from August 31st to the 1st of September. After September 1st, references to all types of crime began to decrease, with references to violent crime still remaining high. Despite the fact that there were very few shows broadcast on the 4th and 5th of September, there were still reports of crime on those days. Almost equal numbers of references to *all types* of crime persisted on the 5th of September. Even though the individuals who supposedly shot at rescuers would have been evacuated from the city by September 5th, they were described or discussed more than they were on August 30th or 31st, before evacuation efforts were complete.

As for individual shows, the patterns in the graph below (Graph 3) tend to hold true. However, (see Table 4) Bill O'Reilly's references to violent crime peaked on the 2nd of September. Also, references to violent crime aimed at rescuers were most prevalent on this show on September 5th. Coverage of crime peaked the 2nd on *Aaron Brown's* show.

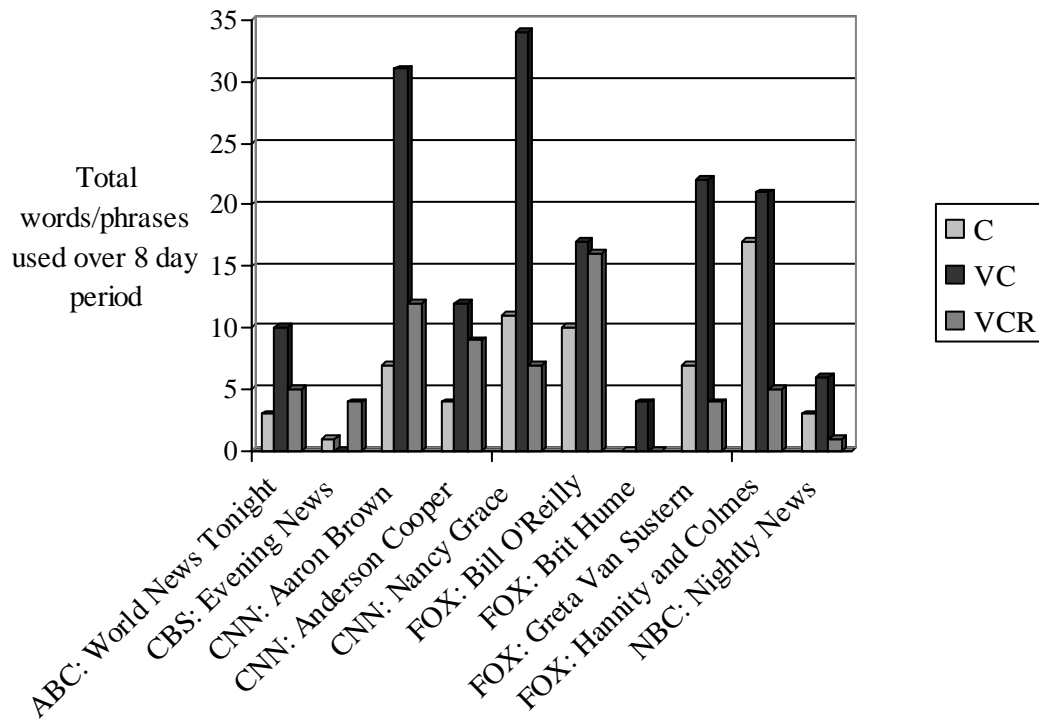
Graph 3: Coverage Shift: Crime, Violent Crime & Violent Crime aimed at Rescuers/Officials



As expressed in the graph below (Graph 4), with the exception of CBS’s *Evening News*, violent crime references outnumbered references to other types of crime. Also, with the exception of FOX show the *Special Report with Brit Hume* (which was broadcast the least nights and covered hurricane Katrina the least) references to *all types* of crime were higher on cable news channels (CNN and FOX) than on network news channels (ABC, CBS, and NBC). CNN’s “straight-news” style reporter Aaron Brown and legalistic show host Nancy Grace focused the most on violent crime, FOX’s *Hannity and Colmes* focused the most on (non-violent) crime, and Bill O’Reilly referred to violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials the

most. The cable show with the least references to all types of crime was *Anderson Cooper 360*. However, Cooper made more references to crime than any network news show.

Graph 4: Program Differences: Crime, Violent Crime & Violent Crime aimed at Rescuers/Officials



Like crime, violent crime, and violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials, when reporters described the behavior of residents in the public sphere of New Orleans, references to “looting” were abundant. Table 5 expresses the number of times on each day individuals on a given program referred to non-deserving and deserving “looting” activity. On the whole, references to non-deserving (or criminal) “looting” tremendously outnumbered references to deserving (or non-criminal) “looting.” Moreover, the focus on looting was much more pronounced earlier in the week than was the focus on criminals (see Table 3) and other kinds of crime (expressed in Table 4). There were already 10 reports of non-deserving “looting” the day hurricane Katrina made landfall near New Orleans.

Table 5: Non-Deserving Looting & Deserving Looting

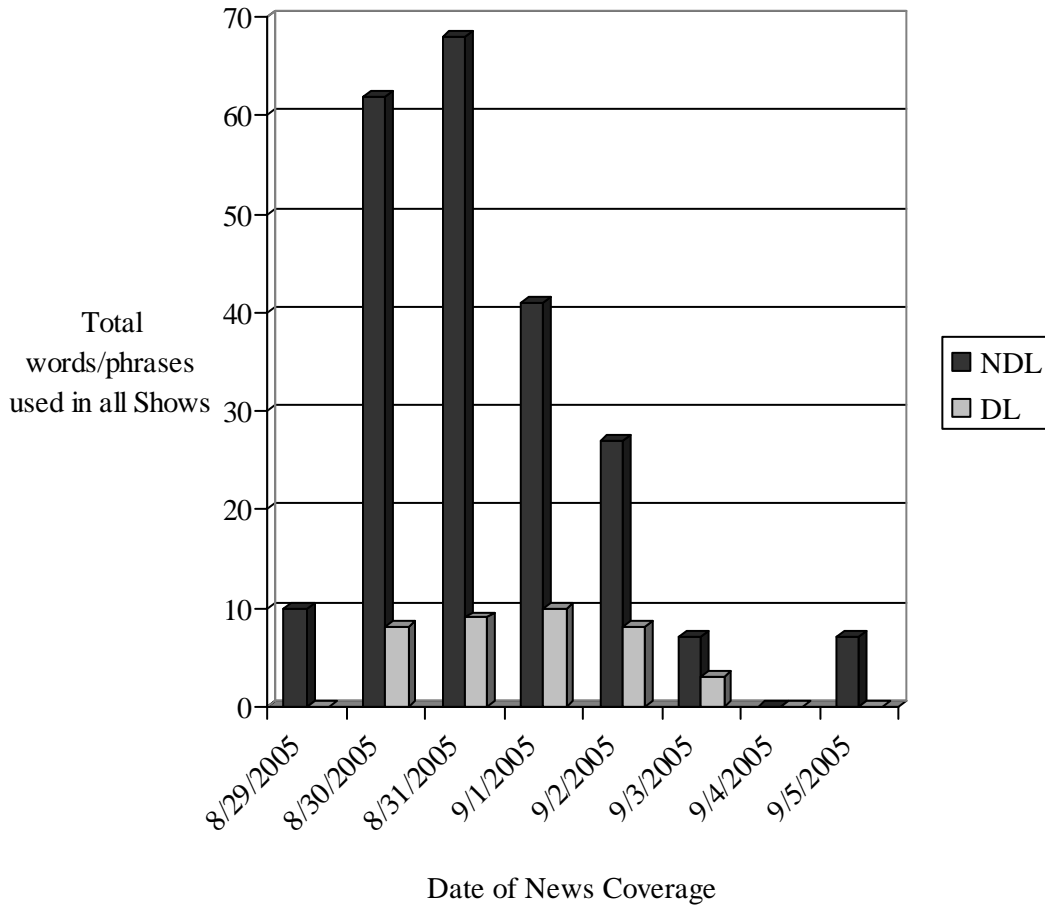
	SUN Aug-29		MON Aug-30		TUES Aug-31		WED Sep-1		THURS Sep-2		FRI Sep-3		SAT Sep-4		SUN Sep-5		<i>Show Totals</i>	
	ND L	D L	ND L	D L	ND L	D L	ND L	D L	ND L	D L	ND L	D L	N DL	D L	ND L	D L	ND L	D L
ABC: World News Tonight	2, 0		2, 0		1, 0		1, 1		4, 3		1, 0		<i>No show</i>		0, 0		13, 4	
CBS: Evening News	0, 0		7, 2		2, 0		4, 0		1, 1		0, 0		0, 0		0, 0		14, 3	
CNN: Aaron Brown	0, 0		8, 0		10, 0		4, 1		8, 1		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		1, 0		31, 2	
CNN: Anderson Cooper 360	1, 0		4, 0		5, 0		8, 3		5, 0		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		1, 0		24, 3	
CNN: Nancy Grace	0, 0		11, 0		23, 5		5, 1		3, 0		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		1, 0		43, 6	
FOX: Bill O'Reilly	4, 0		4, 3		9, 1		12, 3		4, 2		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		2, 0		35, 9	
FOX: Brit Hume	0, 0		0, 0		0, 0		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		1, 0		1, 0	
Fox: Greta Van Susteren	3, 0		14, 1		6, 0		0, 0		0, 0		<i>No show</i>		<i>No show</i>		0, 0		23, 1	
FOX: Hannity and Colmes	0, 0		9, 2		11, 2		2, 0		2, 0		4, 1		<i>No show</i>		1, 0		29, 5	
NBC: Nightly News	0, 0		3, 0		1, 1		5, 1		0, 1		2, 2		0, 0		0, 0		11, 5	
<i>Daily totals:</i>	10, 0		62, 8		68, 9		41, 10		27, 8		7, 3		0, 0		7, 0		X	

As mentioned above, references to both types of looting combined peaked at a much earlier date than references to criminals and other types of crime, which were at their highest point on September 1st. In the following paragraphs Graph 5 is described. From the day the storm made landfall to the 31st of August, the total number of references to “looting” steadily rose. After the number of references to all types of “looting” peaked on August 31st, there was a decline in the total number of references for the remainder of the time frame. Perhaps this decline can be attributed to the media’s heightened references to crime and criminals (Graph 1 and Graph 3) on September 1st and to a lesser extent, September 2nd. Consequently, despite the type of crime being covered, crime was covered in news reports every day during the time period.

Coverage of deserving and non-deserving looting peaked at different times. While the number of references to deserving looting did not really change drastically throughout the 8 day period, the coverage of non-deserving references peaked and then fell (on August 31st), references to deserving “looting” continued to rise. References to deserving looting actually peaked on September 1st, thereafter beginning a gradual decline.

There were also large discrepancies in terms of the number of references to deserving and non-deserving “looting.” When references to deserving “looting” first appeared on August 30th, the ratio of non-deserving to deserving was 7.75 to 1. On peak coverage day August 31st, the ratio between non-deserving and deserving remained quite high, at 7.55 to 1. The ratio between non-deserving and deserving remained high throughout the week, but the gap began to narrow on the 1st of September. In part, this may be a result of declining references to non-deserving “looting” on this day, with references to deserving “looting” simultaneously reaching their highest point. The ratio on September 3rd was 2.3 to 1 and there were no references (and also few cable shows, a point that will be discussed later) on September 4th. On September 5th, when many residents were evacuated from the public sphere, the pattern was very similar to the day the hurricane Katrina made landfall; there were no references to deserving “looting.”

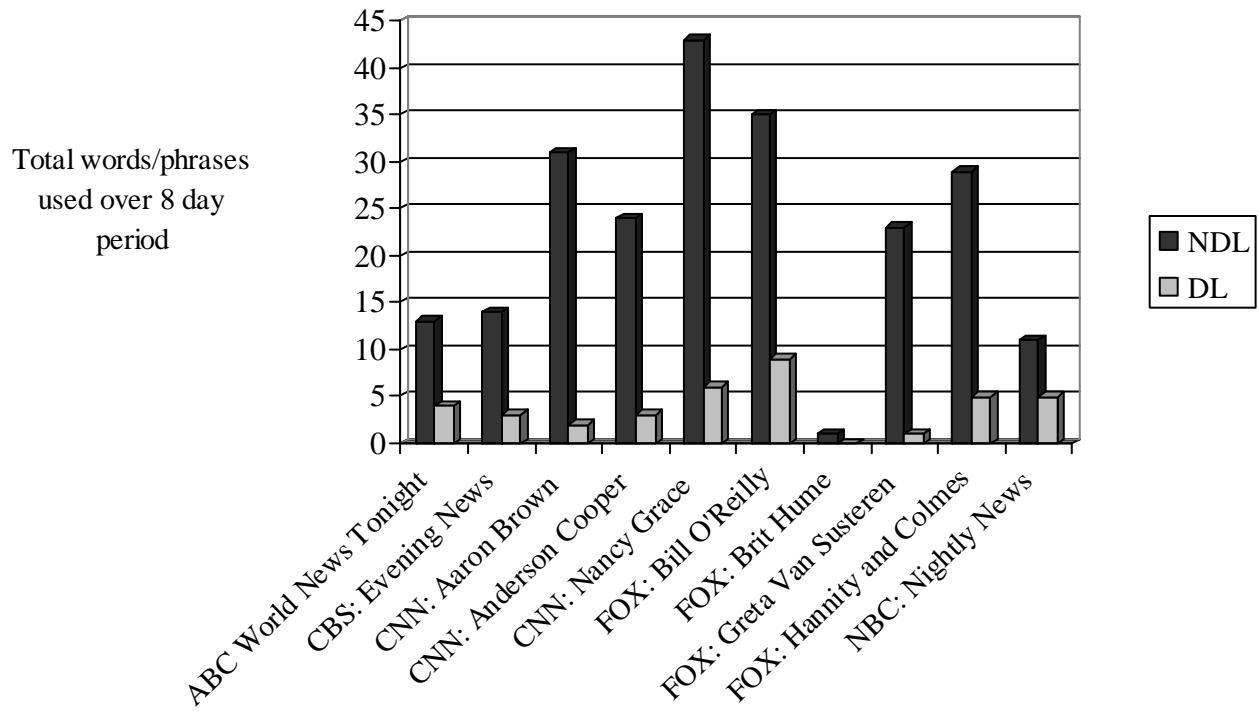
Graph 5: Coverage Shift: Deserving Looting & Non-Deserving Looting



In Graph 6 on the next page, references to non-deserving outnumber references to deserving “looting” on all programs, on both cable and network channels. With the exception of FOX’s *Special Report with Brit Hume* (who did not devote *entire* shows to Katrina and very rarely described the public sphere like all others in this study), references to “looting” were less frequent on network news (ABC, CBS, and FOX) than cable news. Nancy Grace referred to “looting” the most, followed by Bill O’Reilly and Hannity and Colmes.

Not only were there fewer references to looting in network news programs, network news programs, had a much lower ratio than cable news programs between non-deserving and deserving “looting.” The only exception to this pattern was Bill O’Reilly (who nonetheless had the 2nd highest number of references to “looting”) and Brit Hume. The show with lowest ratio between non-deserving and deserving references was NBC, at 2.2 to 1. The show with the highest ratio between non-deserving and deserving was *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren* at 23 to 1. Aaron Brown’s *NewsNight* and *Anderson Cooper 360* also contained very large discrepancies between non-deserving and deserving “looting” references with ratios of 15.5 to 1 ratio of 8 to 1, respectively.

Graph 6: Program Differences: Non-Deserving & Deserving Looting



The quantitative results in this section show how crime was represented after hurricane Katrina. The perpetrators of non-violent crime were described more often than were the perpetrators of violent crime. While cable news more frequently labeled people as criminals, the difference between cable and network news was small. The exception to this rule was FOX show *The O'Reilly Factor*. Over all, references to criminals were highest on the 1st and 2nd of September. With the exception of CBS news, violent crime was the type of crime referred to the most. Coverage of all types of crime, and especially violent crime, was more pronounced on cable news than network news. In particular, cable television hosts Aaron Brown and Nancy Grace covered violent crime the most. References to violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials actually outnumbered references to non-violent crime on three days during the 8 day timeframe. References to crime were most pronounced on September 1st and September 2nd. Looting was framed as “non-deserving” or as a criminal activity rather than an activity of “deserving” survivors. References to looting were most frequent on cable news shows and the ratio between non-deserving and deserving looting was also the largest on these shows. Thus, network news contextualized “looting” to a greater extent than cable news. Coverage of looting was most pronounced on the 30th and 31st of August. The next section contains a qualitative analysis of the quantitative results described in this section.

Qualitative Analysis

In this section of the results, I qualitatively analyze the quantitative data by discussing prominent themes in the framing of the news programs. The themes below are presented in the same order as were the quantitative results in the last section. In other words, I begin with themes pertaining to labeling the perpetrators of crime, then the focus on crime, violent crime and violent crime aimed at rescuers, and end this section with coverage themes relating to “looting.” In order to highlight these themes, many quotes from the transcripts are included. I have underlined some words/phrases in the quotes to highlight the use of certain terms.

“Thugs” and the use of Subjective Labels

As described in the quantitative section of the results and illustrated in table 3, there were more references to the perpetrators of non-violent crime than perpetrators of violent crime. However, there were also differences in the *types* of labels used. On the cable news the use of more subjective labels like “thug” was more prevalent than the use of more objective labels like “criminal.” In very few cases when the perpetrators of criminal acts were described was conclusive evidence presented, such as an actual arrest. Applying *any* label to an individual who has not been proven guilty (and with some labels even if the individual is found guilty) is a subjective interpretation as it follows the assumption that the individual in question is indeed guilty. Nonetheless, on almost all shows people who allegedly engaged in criminal acts were labeled either as “criminals” or in some cases with the use of very subjective scathing terminology like “hoodlum.” The use of subjective labels was particularly pronounced on FOX’s *The O’Reilly Factor*. As in the quotes below, subjective labeling was often almost automatic, as if the criminality of *certain* individuals is just an agreed-upon fact of life (and thus not requiring hard evidence).

BILL O'REILLY, HOST: "The O'Reilly Factor" is on. Tonight, can the National Guard get the city of New Orleans under control? Violence seems to be everywhere. Some thugs are even threatening EMS personnel. We'll have the very latest. (T-128)

O'REILLY: Now a lot of people wonder why, if there are no services in New Orleans, no electricity, no fresh water, no food, all of these thugs are hanging around. Did you figure that out?

OLSHAN: I mean, these -- a lot of these are people who, you know, for whatever reason, chose not to leave and ran out of, you know, important supplies to live. And you know, just really, you know, it just started to boil. And you know, why that, you know, became, you know, grabbing, you know, pairs of sneakers and you know, clothing off the racks, it's hard to say. But I...

O'REILLY: Yes, I mean, look, I'm I trying to figure out whether there - a criminal element made a calculated decision to stay in town so they could loot. That's what I'm trying to figure out. Lisa, do you have any opinion on that? (T-124)

There are qualitative differences in what different types of labels convey to the audience. While labeling someone a “criminal” implies that the person has definitely committed a crime, labeling an individual a “thug” moves beyond this point. Just who are these “thugs” and how do they differ from *ordinary* criminals? References to this “thug” were sometimes coupled with descriptions of lacking police presence, chaos, and violence. Although newscasters like Bill O’Reilly did not actually say that those

being described were African American, the use of labels like “thug” in the context of describing crime in a mostly African American urban environment, is a code for the “dark and dangerous criminal” (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Dixon and Maddox 2005). Bill O’Reilly, host of the most popular cable news show (Johnson 2006) would likely be less apt to use term “thug” when describing middle class Caucasian individuals engaging in similar behaviors. After all, the race of the perpetrator affects whether or not a person’s actions are defined as criminal (Russell-Brown 2006). The use of the loaded term “thug,” is illustrative of the racist “script” that young African American males are the *real* criminals in this society. Because of the “script,” even though there is no evidence, the guilt of these “thugs” is assumed to be a fact. Racial stereotypes do not affect Caucasian’s evaluations of Caucasian criminals, only their evaluations of African American criminals who fit the “script” (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). In this classic case of colorblind racism, newscasters can profess to be race-neutral despite labeling residents who are not necessarily guilty with loaded terminology.

In addition to labeling people without any real evidence, viewers were never furnished with the names of the individuals who allegedly engaged in this criminal activity. When people are less often named, this implies that they are somehow different from the dominant group (Entman and Rojecki 2000). In certain cases, officials even use these subjective labels helping to fuel the notion of a conflict between civil law-abiding society (read: Caucasian) and the “thugs” who occupy the dark side of the criminal continuum (Entman and Rojecki 2000). For instance, Baton Rouge’s African American Mayor sought to reassure audiences that “thugs” and “looters” shooting at officers in New Orleans would not be welcome in his city (White 2006). The dramatic imagery of the “thug” is taken a step further as those afforded with the power to make decisions that affect potentially the life of city residents even refer to these “thugs.” When anchor Brian Williams questions FEMA director Michael Brown about the lack of aid, the latter references to “thugs” in his answer. He employs these labels to justify the lack of aid.

BRIAN WILLIAMS, Direct question: Why can't some of the Chinook helicopters and Black Hawks that we have heard flying over for days and days and days simply lower pallets of water, meals ready to eat, medical supplies, right into downtown New Orleans? Where is the aid? It's the question p--people keep asking us on camera.

Mr. MICHAEL BROWN (FEMA Director): Brian, it's an absolutely fair question. And I got to tell you, from the bottom of my heart, how sad I feel for those people. The federal government just learned about those people today. And I've got to tell you, we are moving heaven and earth to get pallets of food and water to those people. I've watched all day long the stories of the people who are causing trouble, who are, you know, screaming and yelling about things and--and--and just being thugs. And then I hear about this group today. And I told my team, I said, `I don't care what it takes, you get stuff to them and you get it to them now. (T-105)

Later in this paper, I include more examples of “thugs” being blamed for poor rescue and recovery efforts.

A City under Siege by Criminals

Regardless of the type of labels used to describe the perpetrators of crime, it only takes a few references to “criminals,” in the absence of any contextualization, to convey the message that a city is under threat of criminal take-over. Although references to non-violent criminals were more frequent than those to violent criminals, descriptions of “gangs roaming the streets with automatic weapons,” a description not often heard in America, convey the message of a city under siege. The frequent references to armed and dangerous killers roaming the streets reflect the media trend of disproportionately depicting African Americans as homicide perpetrators (Dixon and Linz 2000). Also, African American criminals are perceived as more memorable by audiences than Caucasian criminals and are more likely to elicit public concern (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). The audience is provided, in most cases, with no factual evidence to know if there really are “bands of gunmen” roaming the streets of New Orleans. Adding to the dramatic quality of these reports was the fact that often no information was presented about the identities of these individuals or about the truth of these claims. Like with the “thugs” described above, these gangs are described cavalierly as though proof of their presence is not even necessary. In the quotes below, dramatic references were made to the perpetrators of non-violent (like looters) and violent crime.

SEAN HANNITY, CO-HOST: The situation at this hour is still beyond description. Reporters say that inside the city looks like Hell on Earth. Looting is still rampant. People still roam the streets with automatic weapons, and gunshots can still be heard. (T-42)

JEFFREY KOFMAN (Voice Over): It is clear the city police do not have enough; unprepared and overwhelmed. In most neighborhoods, it is pure anarchy. The number of looters is far more than the number of officers. And police told us they have nowhere to put people they apprehend and

their police cars are running out of gas. For people just struggling to pull their lives together, scenes like this are devastating. (T-144)

Media frames of New Orleans as a city under siege by criminals had implications for rescue and recovery efforts. Public concerns of crime reflect mass media coverage of violent crime (Chiricos et al. 1997). Even though media emphasis on crime does not reflect actual social conditions (Hubbard et al. 1975), in the absence of other sources of information, many people evidently accepted post-Katrina depictions of crime as the truth. All the reports below of law enforcement abandoning rescue efforts to fight criminals were from August 31st and September 1st, the days when media references to criminals (and as described later, crime) were at their highest point. The focus on criminals created a hysteria which hampered rescue efforts just starting to occur on August 31st (White 2006). In fact, on September 1st, Mayor Ray Nagin ordered the majority of New Orleans police officers to stop rescuing people (Dyson 2006; Brinkley 2006). The mayor's rationale for this decision was that "looters" were starting to near heavily populated areas like hotels and hospitals (Brinkley 2006). On September 2nd Governor Kathleen Blanco described recently arriving national guard troops as "battle-tested" and ready to "shoot and kill hoodlums" to restore order in the streets of New Orleans (Dyson 2006). In certain cases, media reports of rampant crime were actually cited as the reason law enforcement focused on "controlling" or "taking the city back from criminals" to the detriment of rescue operations.

ALAN COLMES, CO-HOST: This is a FOX News Alert.

The mayor of New Orleans has issued an SOS and ordered almost the entire police force to abandon search-and-rescue efforts in order to deal with the thieves and criminals that are running amok inside his devastated city.

There were reports today of robberies, rapes, car-jackings, riots, and murder. Violent gangs are roaming the streets at night, hidden by the cover of darkness. (T-41)

GRETA VAN SUSTEREN, HOST: This is a "FOX NEWS Alert." The mayor of New Orleans has just ordered 1,500 police officers to stop searching for survivors and return to the streets to get the violence in that city under control. Armed looters are roaming the streets. It is feared violence could spin out of control if not stopped right now. (T-65)

DEBORAH FEYERICK, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Now people are suffering that they those who want to help them can't get to them because of roving gangs of gunmen, who are shooting at

them. (T-57)

ROBERTS: Gangs of thieves, who armed themselves from local stores, now roam the streets, looting even the hospitals. It's forced state officials to divert scarce resources to neighborhood patrols, hoping that a show of force will keep the looting in check. (*CBS Evening News*, T-15)

Cable News and the Construction of a Moral Panic: A City Plagued by Violent Crime

In addition to some individuals in media reports labeling the alleged perpetrators of crime, as indicated in table 4, there were also many references to actual crimes on all news shows. References to all types of crime were more prevalent on cable news shows than network news shows. While coverage of violent crime was high on all channels, the cable news focus on violent crime was particularly pronounced. The prominent focus on violent crime reflects the larger mass media focus on individualized acts of violence (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Entman and Rojecki 2000), reliance on graphic imagery, and the focus on "offenders at large," or the construction of a world riddled with risk and danger (Jewkes 2004). Also, reflected in the quotes below is the media's tendency to perceive newsworthy unpredictable events, like shootings and rapes in the middle of a national crisis (Jewkes 2004).

JOHN SEIGENTHALER, anchor (New Orleans): But on a day when a federal official acknowledged the death toll from this storm could be in the thousands, we start with the eruption of more violence. It's a deadly shooting here in the chaos of New Orleans, a developing story and NBC's Carl Quintanilla joins us now with the latest. Carl: (T-104)

O'REILLY: "Factor follow-up" segment tonight, a big shootout in New Orleans. Apparently six armed thugs opened fire on several police officers. When the smoke cleared, two of the thugs were killed, three wounded. One other taken into custody. No police were hurt as far as we know. (T-139)

DAVID LEE MILLER, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Now, last night, the New Orleans police and other law enforcement went back into the city's convention center here with their weapons raised. This was the very same building where, only a few days ago, tens of thousands of people were being warehoused. There were reports of rapes. There were reports of shootings. There were reports of decaying corpses. (T- 115)

VAN SUSTEREN: Were there actually weapons brought into the Superdome? I mean, what's the violence -- the actual violence inside the Superdome?

BURNELL: Well, we had several murders. We had three murders last night. We had a total of six rapes last night. We had the day before -- I think there were three or four murders. There were half a dozen rapes that night. We had one suicide that night. Last night, we had one military police shot in an incident through the leg, which we were able to medevac out in the middle of the night. (T-67)

GRACE: Right. I've just been handed a wire. Policemen warn of an arrest at the Louisiana Superdome. Policemen tell CNN unrest rising in that area near the Superdome in downtown New Orleans, three shootings, looting, attempted car jackings taking place in broad daylight, concerned the situation is deteriorating and will do more so overnight outside the stadium. At least 20,000 people holed up there since Katrina roared ashore. We have pulled CNN reporter John Zarrella because of the unrest. (T-47)

New Orleans does have a high crime rate and there was certainly crime in the days after Katrina. However, many of the violent crimes the media described were found to be grossly exaggerated or false. The stories of numerous rapes and killings at the Superdome were dispelled by head of the N.O. P. D. sex crime unit (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005). He and his officers lived inside the Dome and ran down every rumor of rape and atrocity. In the end, they made two arrests for attempted sexual assault and concluded the other incidents rumored had not happened (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005). Although sexual assault crimes are historically underreported, it is unlikely they occurred to the extent which the media described in the days after Katrina (Dyson 2006). Overall 6 people died in the Superdome. Four people died of natural causes, one committed suicide and another person overdosed on drugs (Brinkley 2006). Also, reports of widespread murder at the Convention Center were dispelled; only one person appeared to be a victim of homicide (Knauer 2005; Dyson 2006). Thus residents did not resort to the violence to the extent described in the transcripts above and many of the worst crimes reported never happened (Dyson 2006).

The intense focus on violent crime and the character of those references as evident in the quotes above, create social fears consistent with a moral panic (Gordon 1994). Moral panics are the result of the mass media's at times dramatic exaggeration of problems which pose a threat to the social order. Despite the actual incidence of crime (or the lack of it as demonstrated in the previous paragraph) the media tends to disproportionately focus on violent crime (Chiricos et al. 1997). Moral panics, like the case with post-Katrina rapes, shootings and violent crime, are often short-lived. As demonstrated in graph 3, the height of this panic was August 31st through September 2nd. Also, involved in the construction of moral panics are scapegoats or "folk devils" (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994), which in this case would be the "thugs" and "armed gangs roaming the streets" which were often invoked in media descriptions of violent crime.

As was the case with hurricane Katrina, later examinations of evidence often reveal that the focus on the alleged threat is unwarranted (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994).

However, moral panics differ from fads or trends because they tend to leave an institutional legacy (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994). In the case of Katrina, the moral panic surrounding violent crimes like rapes and shootings reflects the institutional legacy created by the media-fueled moral panic historically surrounding young African American men (Russell-Brown 2006). For Russell-Brown (2006), images of young African American men engaging in violent crime reflect society's notions of what constitutes a crime and which types of crimes are worthy of our collective attention. Moreover, the belief that crime is an epidemic caused primarily by African American street criminals creates a national fear of African American men engaging in crime (Russell-Brown 2006). In the section below, many purveyors of mass media focused on the moral depravity of individuals who jeopardized rescue efforts with their violence.

Rescue Efforts under Jeopardy: The Construction of Pure Myth

While it is difficult to know how many residents remaining in the city sphere after Katrina were really committing crimes, these crimes were certainly not committed on the scale that the media suggested (Knauer 2005; Brinkley 2006; Dyson 2006). In addition to exaggerating the incidence of non-violent and violent crime, there were many references to violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials. In fact, references to violent crime aimed at rescuers actually outnumbered reports of non-violent crime during several days of the 8 day post-Katrina time period (see graph 3). Despite the media's focus on violent crime aimed at rescue helicopters, these stories were later found to be *pure* myth (Knauer 2005). Specifically, no helicopters were attacked and no evacuations were stopped because of gunfire (Dyson 2006). Also, records show that many of the sniper stories allegedly taking place at Charity hospital were false (Brinkley 2006). Nonetheless each time the story spread, rescue planes were grounded for at least an hour (Brinkley 2006).

Reports of one or two alleged incidents, regardless of whether they are verified, become the topic of conversation on a show and then seem to snowball to become much larger than life. Below are some examples of some of the many reports which contained references to violent crime aimed at rescuers/officials. As Bill O'Reilly referred to these crimes the most frequently, two of the quotes below are from the *O'Reilly Factor*

DR. SANJAY GUPTA, CNN MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT: For the first time, we're starting to get some choppers in bound to evacuate a lot of these patients. (INAUDIBLE) remarkable, Anderson. I was hearing some of the early reporting on the sheriff, talking about sniper fire (INAUDIBLE) talk to some of the doctors (INAUDIBLE) the area where some of that sniper fire occurred.

It doesn't appear to be safe now, but it seems that a sniper standing atop one of the buildings just above us here and firing down at patients and doctors as they were trying to be evacuated, unbelievable. It just boggles my mind, actually. (on *Anderson Cooper 360*, T-4)

DAVID MUIR, (Off Camera): And at this hour, rescuers continue to pull those patients from Charity Hospital and from neighboring University Hospital, where conditions are much the same. And Bob, we should point out that the rescuers tried to get to these patients at least once before in the last 24 hours but were turned back by gunfire from looters. Authorities at the hospitals fear those looters are trying to get to the drugs in the hospital. (on *World News Tonight* T-155)

BROWN: It is hard to fathom some of what we report. The looting and the car jackings not so much, but how do you explain snipers firing on a Medivac helicopter trying to get the sick to safety? (*NewsNight with Aaron Brown* T-57)

ZUSCHLAG, ACADIAN AMBULANCE: The military, the Navy and the Army and what they've done to help in the last three days is phenomenal. They have evacuated more than 2,000 patients by air. They're the ones that are helping us get the job done. But they realize that they can't help us on the ground, because we can't get the ground secure enough to get in there to get those patients out by boat or by ground.

O'REILLY: Yes, because the helicopters would be rushed by these people.

ZUSCHLAG: Exactly right. Can I tell you, we tried to drop off emergency supplies at a ground heliport for the hospital. When the pilot went in to land, 100 thugs were standing there with guns, and the pilot got scared and did not land and left. The hospital didn't get the supplies. (T-130)

O'REILLY: Is it rage? Are they driven by rage because their lives are so worthless?

RONAL SERPAS, FMR. CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AT NEW ORLEANS PD: I'm not sure they think at that level. I mean, I spent my whole life in New Orleans, and there's -- that group right there, they don't -- I don't think they think about it. They just see this as an opportunity to show that this is some thug life that's dramatized on TV. And I think that's what goes through their mind.

O'REILLY: And they don't mind if they take a life or if they keep an elderly sick person from

being rescued? They have no conscience? We're talking sociopathic people?

SERPAS: I believe that to be the case. And it's a very small number. It's a very small number of people. But they played it out today. They burnt down buildings. They burnt facilities, shot at doctors and nurses at Charity Hospital. It's just reprehensible. (T-139)

Cable News Frames: Looting as a Criminal Act

As illustrated in Graph 5, reports of “looting” started the day the storm made landfall. Across channels the message was consistent: this “looting” was a crime and not an act of survival. After all, references to non-criminal looting were low throughout the 8 days of media reporting. Cable news programs discussed “looting” the most. While network programs still described non-deserving “looting” more than deserving, the ratio between the two was lower. Therefore, although the gap was still large, network news programming contextualized “looting” behavior more than did cable news.

The presence of “looting” is predicable in disasters. However, “looting” is the result of emergent or situational norms rather than normlessness or social anarchy (Form et al. 1956; Quarantelli and Dynes 1970; Schneider 1992). In the case of Katrina, “looting” can be interpreted as a part of the post-disaster milling process. This process was particularly pronounced given the large gap between institutional norms, or the government’s means of handling victims’ needs, and emergent norms or disaster systems victims devise to cope with uncertainty and procure basic necessities (Schneider 1992). With few sources of accurate information and after repeated promises that help was on the way, it is likely that many engaged in the otherwise criminal act of stealing supplies. Thus, while “looting” provided residents with a means of survival, the media overwhelmingly framed it as a criminal endeavor. Below is an example of the least-common type of “looting” reference, non-criminal looting.

LEE COWAN reporting: If you want a sense of just how bad things have gotten in downtown New Orleans, this corner and this Walgreens pretty much sums it up. Police did finally show up here but not to stop the looters. They actually came to help the looters, to take food and necessary supplies from this store and take them over to a neighborhood on the other side of town that's even worse. After that, the police admit, the looters can have it.

Unidentified Policeman #3: I can't say you're welcome to it, but you gotta do what you gotta do to survive.

COWAN: And tonight survival is by any means necessary. (T-13)

Generalizations of “rampant looting” were repeatedly employed to describe the post-Katrina social environment. In many cases of the introduction of a newscast, reporters used the loaded term “looting” which implies that criminal behavior was the rule, not the exception. Frequent descriptions of criminal “looting” or of those who stayed behind and planned to “loot” (as Bill O’Reilly implied on page 83), fuel the notion of looters as calculated criminals and not desperate survivors. Looters are typically employed, long-time residents of the cities in which they loot (Quarantelli and Dynes 1970) and not the deviant maladjusted criminals which post-Katrina media reports typically suggested. Rumors of looting are common in other disasters, but valid cases are rare (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005). While the extent of criminal “looting” is not known, post-Katrina reports of looting were exaggerated (Dyson 2006). The media’s exaggeration of criminal looting and criminalization of survivors obtaining supplies reflect the media’s tendency to disproportionately depict African Americans as the perpetrators of crime (Dixon and Linz 2000; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). In another example of colorblind racism, if the perpetrators of “looting” were Caucasian perhaps they would not have been described with criminal terminology. After all, the race of the perpetrator affects whether or not the individual is regarded as a criminal (Russell-Brown 2006). As in the quotes below, descriptions of looting were sometimes dramatic; the media presented little concrete evidence of the scope of the problem and failed to contextualize the behavior.

BOB SCHIEFFER, anchor: Most of New Orleans is under water tonight. It's been a day of dramatic rooftop rescues. Looting is rampant.

And now there is no power, no drinking water, and people are being told to leave. (T-10)

JEFFREY KOFMAN: (Voice Over) As night falls, the looting becomes a bigger concern. Officials say they do not yet know how long it will take to restore power, or to restore the city. (T-142)

NANCY GRACE, HOST: Tonight, with the death toll rising as each hour passes, Louisiana in a state of martial law, martial law declared just hours ago in the face of rampant looting on top of the suffering across the South, from New Orleans to Mississippi, Alabama to Florida. The law is struggling tonight to cope. (T-47)

While not the focus of this study, reporters did mention numerous times on different shows about the suffering of residents who had no food and water, yet it was not clear how these residents were

supposed to obtain these supplies. After all, “looting” was typically characterized as a criminal endeavor not something which needy people had to do to survive. Thus Quarantelli and Dynes (1970) argument that property rights are unanimously suspended after a disaster did not apply to Katrina. Perhaps the focus on private property rights was so extreme because of the racial composition of New Orleans. After all, the media portrays African Americans as comprising the most unsympathetic subgroups of the poor and paint poverty as problem of young unemployed African American males (Gilens 1996; Clawson and Trice 2000). Since African Americans are painted this way, even if there is a disaster, African Americans may be regarded as less worthy of aid. Thus, despite the media’s focus at times on post-Katrina human suffering, residents were not deemed worthy of the common good and hence property rights were not suspended, but rather dwelled on.

O'REILLY: You're on St. Louis Street. That's high ground in the French Quarter. No water in the street. But what's the looter factor there? How many of them are there and what are they doing?

SHELNUTT: Bill, it started off I guess the night after the hurricane the looting started. And the police were chasing looters a block away from me. And a couple of looters stopped and shot a policeman in the head - in the forehead and killed him.

The Cadillac dealership downtown, right by the Superbowl, all the cars were stolen. All the shops down on Canal Street, that is the main thoroughfare, your listeners don't know it's a major street downtown, all of those have been looted. The police asked them, you know, why don't you guys stop these guys because they're carrying tennis shoes from the Foot Locker right past them in front of my building. He said we don't have a jail. It's all flooded.

And it's just -- they're pushing carts with tennis shoes and sports gear and everything in the world that you can think of. And they have literally broken in to probably 90 percent of the shops in the Quarter. And thank God my building is right by the police headquarters.

O'REILLY: All right, so they're roving bands of between five and seven young people, usually. And they have no fear, right? They are just doing this with impunity, correct? (T-128)

It is difficult to verify or corroborate many of the claims the media made about “looting.” After all, newscasters did not say where the alleged behavior took place or reveal any other details that could be used to investigate the claim. However, in the case above, the Cadillac dealership was looted by New Orleans police officers and not by residents (Brinkley 2006).

GRACE: Well, Anderson, recently enacted, just August 11, which is uncanny, Anderson, looting laws going into effect in Louisiana, up to three years behind bars for looting, six months for price-gouging. And Anderson, CNN has so much of this on video! The hurricane strikes, and suddenly, that's your free ticket to a microwave!

The problem with looting, Anderson, not just that people may steal a microwave, many people are refusing to evacuate, Anderson, because they fear looting! (T-47)

CHRIS LAWRENCE, CNN CORRESPONDENT: There has been just massive looting here in New Orleans. As I was driving in, I saw it. People smashing windows. Throughout the city, there's just been people taking things out of stores. Some of the police officers say several hardware stores have been raided. The guns were taken out of those stores. (on *NewsNight with Aaron Brown*, T-56)

Sometimes even when the people were described as taking food or other necessities, they were described with loaded verbs such as “ransacking” which suggest criminal, rather than deserving “looting.” In the case below, even though an official framed “looting” non-criminally, FOX show host Shawn Hannity argued that looters were taking televisions and not necessities.

HANNITY: And this is a FOX News Alert This morning, cameras caught people ransacking a grocery store, trying to gather as much food as possible. And joining us now on the phone is the attorney general of Louisiana, Charles Foti. He was also the Orleans Parish criminal sheriff for more than 25 years.

Charles, our thoughts go out to you today. These images of looting have literally shocked a nation. How bad is it?

CHARLES FOTI, LOUISIANA ATTORNEY GENERAL: Well, I think that there is always the opportunity for looting. When you think about, you have no electricity, you have no food, you have limited water, and grocery stores are closed. That might not be looting. That might be self-preservation, OK? That food will go bad anyhow.

HANNITY: I think you can make that case for food, but I see people taking clothes and other items and, to a large extent, televisions. (T-39)

Audio-Visual Results

Television News Frames: Looting and Crime, A Problem of Young African American Males

As indicated in the quantitative results section of this study, NBC focused on crime and labeled the perpetrators of crime the least of almost any station. Also, NBC used few subjective labels and also had one of the lowest ratios between references of non-deserving and deserving “looting.” In other words, on the surface, NBC’s *Nightly News* contained some of the least scathing depictions of crime and

criminals of any show. In this section of the results, I describe some of the footage in NBC's *Nightly News* show.

On television, crime is often pictured as a problem of young African American males (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Dixon and Linz 2000). I found that a similar picture was painted in the audio-visual material I examined. In the table below (Table 6) 20 of the 22 pictured individuals (in some clips multiple individuals were pictured and they are not included in this total) were African American, 14 were male, and 11 were youth (coded child through teenaged). Moreover, when describing crime and chaos, those pictured were exclusively African American. In part, this may be a reflection of the racial composition of the population remaining in the public sphere after Katrina. However, if the majority of remaining residents were Caucasian, it is less likely that they would have been so routinely pictured in scenes describing chaos, "looting," and crime. If the racial composition of New Orleans was different and Caucasian children were routinely pictured wading through the water, their criminality would not be assumed. This is the subtlety of colorblind racism. The young African American males pictured in video footage fit the "script" of who the criminals in society are (Dixon and Linz 2000; Entman and Rojecki 2000). This script is so deeply-entrenched in the public consciousness that even when television audiences watch news reports with no pictured perpetrator, the majority recall seeing an African American perpetrator (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). As those pictured on NBC were disproportionately young African American and male, this gives audience members the impression that these were indeed the "thugs" and criminals who were wreaking so much havoc on the city and Katrina "victims." The pictures seem to suggest that these "criminals" are a distinct and entirely separate group of resident with entirely different interests than the "victims." In real life the dichotomy was not so stark; all residents remaining the public sphere, including young African American males, were struggling to survive.

In addition to the footage discussed above and described in tables 6 & 7, I also viewed a segment from September 3rd. As I only coded the pictures that were shown specifically when crime and criminals were discussed, I did not include this segment in the charts below. Nonetheless, the clip from September 3rd merits discussion. In this clip, the discussion was about the return to safety and law and order in New

Orleans. The only image which had any bearing to this study was the image of several Caucasian National Guardsmen roughly throwing to the ground and handcuffing a very young African American child (while it was difficult to discern, the individual was very small and did not appear to be of teenage age). Media reports show African Americans in police custody at twice the rate of Caucasians attaching a heightened level of threat to African Americans (Entman and Rojecki 2000). No information was presented in this brief clip in terms of what this child did to merit the treatment of a dangerous criminal. After the mélange of media images and descriptions of crime throughout the 8 day period, this picture of the capture of an African American child represented the return of “law and order” in the city of New Orleans.

Table 6: Audio-Visual Footage, Type of Criminal

Date	# of pictured Individuals	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Age
Aug-29, Segment 1	1	A.A.	M	Youth
	Not pictured*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aug-30, Segment 1	1	A.A.	M	Youth
	2	Both A.A.	Both F	Both Younger Adult
	Multiple	All A.A.	M & F	Various
Aug-30, Segment 2	2	Both A.A.	Both M	Both Youth
	2	All A.A.	Both M	Both Youth
	1	A.A.	F	Adult
	3	All A.A.	All M	All Youth
	1	A.A.	M	Youth
	1	A.A.	M	Youth
Aug-31, Segment 1	2	Both A.A.	M & F	Both Adult
	1	A.A.	F	Adult
	2	C	M & F	Both Adult
Sep-1, Segment 1	2	A.A.	M & F	Indiscernible
	Multiple	All A.A.	All M	All Adult
	Multiple	All A.A.	M & F	Indiscernible
Sep-2, Segment 1	1	A.A.	F	Adult
Totals:	22 (multiple not included)	20 A.A. 2 C	14 M 8 F	11 Youth 2 Younger Adult 7 Adult

Having established who was pictured in the video footage and the message this conveys, Table 7 (on page 90) contains a brief description of what the individuals in the video footage were actually doing. Earlier in this study, I discussed how the media often labeled residents as criminals without any evidence. This was also the case with the audio-visual footage. In numerous segments those pictured were not verifiably “looting,” but were still described as though they were committing a crime. In other words, the person pushing a person pushing a grocery cart full of clothes may have been flooded out of his/her home and trying to save what few possessions he/she still had or the grocery cart could be full of looted materials (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005). Some examples of this are August 29th picture 1 of segment 1, August 30th picture 2 in segment 1 and pictures 3 and 5 in segment 2. For the media, the individuals in these pictures typified or represented the typical criminal “looter.”

Thus by continually identifying young African American males who may or may not have been “looting” as looters, these individuals become symbolic of the typical “looter.” Thus even without the evidence to judge whether or not individual people were looting, reporters used the “script” to frame numerous individuals who resembled the “typical” looter as criminals. While “looting” did occur after Katrina, the lack of evidence in particular cases enabled the mass media to describe the same behavior in very different ways. For instance, since many of the individuals described (in Table 6 & 7) were children or teens and were pictured without parents, the media could have framed the youth as engaging in non-criminal “looting” for necessities. Just because these youth were pictured without their parents does not necessarily mean that they were separated from them; however, many individuals at this time were separated from their parents, so this is certainly likely.

Description of Audio-Visual Footage (Table 7)

Date	Description of footage
Aug-29, Segment 1	1: African American youth is running with grocery cart filled with indiscernible items.
	2: Caucasian male police officers look for “looters” inside a French Quarter bar with no door; Caucasian male bar owner also says he is on look out for “looters.”
Aug-30, Segment 1	1: A lone African American teen repeatedly tries to break a store/business window by throwing a rock at it.
	2: One woman carries a full garbage bag and another woman carries a plastic container full of indiscernible items.
	3: While Caucasian by-standers watch, numerous African American individuals walk into and leave (some with merchandise) a Walgreen’s store in the French Quarter.
Aug-30, Segment 2	1: Two young African American children walk into store/business without windows.
	2: Several African American teens leave downtown stores with full garbage bags.
	3: African American woman with very small child carries indiscernible items in a bag.
	4: Three African American teens go in store with no windows (same store pictured in the first clip in this segment).
	5: African American police officer attempts to physically apprehend (forcefully grabs his arm) a young African American teen, who is holding no merchandise, leaving store with no windows (this is the store that has already been pictured twice).
	6: African American youth picks up a baseball cap which is floating in the water.
Aug-31, Segment 1	1: An African American man and woman take soda cans out of a large soda can receptacle which is sitting unattended in the middle of a street.
	2: An African American woman walking with a box of sneakers and two other small bags of indiscernible items is chastised by a reporter. She acknowledges that she isn’t supposed to have the shoes, but that without shoes, her feet will get cut.
	3: Two Caucasian individuals, described as “plundering at will” (the only time a term other than “looting” or “stealing” is used to describe individuals engaging in the same behavior) leave a store with full shopping bags.
Sep-1, Segment 1	1: Police arrest an African American family (the couple’s baby is also briefly pictured) for stealing a car to escape the city. Their faces are never shown, however is pictured from behind in handcuffs.
	2: A fight begins to break out between several African American men, one man attempts to restrain another man by physically holding him back. “Looted alcohol” and “no police” are cited as the reason people must take matters into their own hands.
	3: A crowd of several African American individuals are described as “breaking into a hotel.” An African American woman uses an object to try and break the hotel window.
Sep-2, Segment 1	1: An African American lady with fruit, who is pushing a cart full of indistinguishable items, confesses to stealing the fruit in order to feed others.

It is difficult to compare portrayals of Caucasian and African American residents because there were so few Caucasian residents in the video footage. Therefore, for the most part, this study focuses on the way in which African American residents were portrayed and the factors that contributed to them being portrayed this way. Nonetheless, the way in which the few pictured Caucasian residents were depicted is important. The only time Caucasians were shown engaging in criminal activity was on August 31st in picture 3. They were described as “plundering at will,” rather than “looting.” While “plundering at will” is still criminal terminology, it is a rather sophisticated euphemism which was not used in at any other time to describe other individuals engaging in similar endeavors. Also, in the second picture on August 31st, the police officers and bar owners who were described as hunting for “looters” were Caucasian.

On September 1st, the day in which crime coverage reached its peak, a reporter interviewed several Caucasian individuals (some were described as tourists and one or two were described as residents) on the rooftop of a French Quarter building. While not mentioning a specific crime, these Caucasian individuals indicated that they were terrified of the violence and crime that was unfolding throughout the city. When the reporter made the decision to ask these individuals about crime, this painted them as the “innocents” or the victims of a city under siege by dangerous (read: African American) criminals. The reporter could have also found African American residents who were scared to venture out because of crime. Although the victims of violent crime are more likely to be African American than Caucasian (Dixon and Linz 2000), Caucasian individuals were pictured as the symbolic victims of the terror and chaos that was continually being described.

CONCLUSION

The media is charged with the task of disseminating important and time-sensitive information about disasters to the public. Mass media coverage of Katrina centered on many topics from the human suffering at the Convention center and Superdome to rescue and recovery efforts to the surge in oil prices post-Katrina. In this study, I examined how the criminality of residents in the public sphere was framed by the television news media. While it is common for rumors of looting and all kinds of anti-social behavior to emerge in most major disasters, the volume and persistence of such rumors on TV in Katrina was unparalleled (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005). The objective was not to discern how much discussion there was on each topic, but rather to reveal the character and the content of the discussion relevant to the purposes of this study. Rodriguez and Dynes (2005) found that the most dramatic “evidence” of social chaos assumed to be created by Katrina was centered on New Orleans. They note how the media seized the photographic opportunity to show “mobs” of residents located together provided the backdrop for repetitive stories of looting, rape, murder, sniping and roving gangs preying on tourists (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005).

I began by counting and coding words and phrases pertaining to the perpetrators of crime, to actual crimes, and to different types of “looting.” Results showed that those who were not necessarily guilty of any crime were labeled as “criminal” (with the use of a variety of terms) on many nightly news programs. In the absence of evidence, all labels are subjective since labeling someone as a criminal contains an assumption of guilt. For the most part, labeling seemed to be automatic and in some cases, scathing subjective labels were used to describe residents allegedly engaging in criminal activity. While the labels I describe above were most often used to describe the perpetrators of non-violent crime, at times unverified and sensationalistic references were made to the perpetrators of violent crime (e.g. bands of armed gunman) thereby conveying the message of a city under siege by criminals.

While references to all sorts of crime were numerous, violent crime was the most frequently-described type of crime on all channels. However, as a whole, the focus on crime was particularly prominent on cable news. References to violent crime ran the gamut from reports of “rapes and

carjackings” to reports of “shootouts and assault.” Further fueling the moral panic of a city under siege, there were numerous references to violent crimes aimed at rescue crews, police and national guardsmen, and of snipers firing at helicopters trying to rescue patients from flooded hospitals. Although these accounts were unverified, they spread rapidly and were discussed on every program with the exception of Brit Hume’s show. On September 1st alone there were 32 references to violent crimes aimed at rescuers/officials.

In addition to reports of crime, discussions of “looting” were also quite prevalent. References to “looting,” although on every channel, were most prevalent on cable news. There were references to rape, looting, and shooting on network news, but they were typically only mentioned in passing. Nonetheless, on every program “looting” was framed as criminal endeavor. In other words, across all channels and programs, those who “looted” were framed as undeserving criminals rather than as victims in need of necessities such as food and water. Moreover, the ratio between non-deserving and deserving “looting” was much larger on cable than network news. Results from the video footage show that the young African American male became the symbol for the criminal looter. Not only did the video footage contain much activity that was not necessarily criminal, no evidence presented to confirm that the pictured individuals were indeed “looting.” Residents were not evaluated on a case by case basis, if they fit the script of a looter they were labeled as criminals. Audio-visual footage came from NBC, the channel with one of the lowest ratios between non-deserving and deserving “looting” representations. Even though NBC contextualized reports of “looting” more than other channels, the overwhelming image was still that of a young African American male engaging in criminal looting.

This study is significant for several reasons. In the coming paragraphs I describe the news as a corporate entity and how the drive for profit and rankings affects the evening news. To an extent, cable news is driven by show hosts with distinct personalities and almost entertainment-like (in the sense that dramatic story seems to take precedent over facts) content. Moreover, the results of this study must be understood within this context. Then, I discuss the implications of an entertainment and profit-oriented news culture which in the case of hurricane Katrina appeared to place less emphasis on facts than ratings.

Moreover this study also shed light on how news media frames of African American residents as a violent and out-of-control group affected rescue and recovery efforts. I end by recommending that we hold the mass media accountable for perpetuating rumors and influencing social action in the same way that we often hold public officials and the government accountable.

Television news is a process of reality-making as opposed to reality-describing. In order to understand this discrepancy, it is crucial to examine television news in the context of a capitalist society. Cable news channels CNN and FOX are owned by media conglomerates, and all have corporate siblings heavily involved in other media sectors, from broadcast networks and local TV stations to newspapers, to magazines, and even movie studios (*Project for Excellence in Journalism* 2006). CNN is owned by the Time-Warner Company, which also owns HBO, Warner Brothers, AOL, and Turner networks to name a few (*Project for Excellence in Journalism* 2006). The FOX news channel is owned by News Corp., which calls itself a diversified entertainment company and reports its operations under eight major businesses (*Project for Excellence in Journalism* 2006). FOX is the most-watched cable news channel in the United States and the most successful of News Corp.'s American cable channels, which include FX, Fox regional sports networks, and the Fox Movie channel (*Project for Excellence in Journalism* 2006).

In this study, I also examined the content of network news channels ABC, CBS and NBC. Disney owns ABC, Viacom owns CBS and GE owns NBC Universal (*Project for Excellence in Journalism* 2006). Therefore, cable and network news are multibillion dollar industries which comprise a highly profitable sector of several of America's most powerful corporations. The sale of an image or of a show's "brand" is an integral part of the highly competitive climate of the television news. This competition is evident in the personality-driven nature of many cable news shows included in this study. Personality-driven shows like *Anderson Cooper 360*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, and *Nancy Grace* are not merely about "the news," rather viewers are sold an image and an ideology in the form of a television personality.

Rather than recounting actual events, the television news media provides the audience with a *version* of reality. Understood within this context, it is not surprising that many of the crimes described on the evening news in the days after Katrina and especially the cable news were investigated and found to

be grossly exaggerated or false. However, the media still presented accounts of crimes as the truth, labeled residents as criminals, and disseminated inaccurate myths about residents shooting at rescue helicopters and National Guardsmen. One unverified report of a rape would snowball to later become part of the introduction to a news report claiming “multiple” rapes and shootouts in New Orleans. Television news programming can traditionally be distinguished as either hard or soft news. “Soft news” programming is usually entertainment or gossip-oriented, dramatic and less-focused on political and policy issues (Baum 2002). In this study, I planned to only analyze hard news or shows conveying substantive information of national significance to the public. However, post-Katrina crime coverage revealed that the line between soft and hard news is not so clean, but actually fairly blurred. In many cases reports contained dramatic exaggerations and sensationalistic coverage more like that of “soft” news programs.

While national news media did perpetuate unfounded stories or “gossip” of armed gangs roaming the streets and numerous shootings, coverage of these events was much less pronounced. Cable news shows like the *O’Reilly Factor*, the *Nancy Grace show*, *NewsNight with Aaron Brown*, *Hannity and Colmes*, and *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren*, were particularly soft-news like in post-Katrina crime coverage. All news programs package and in the process, simplify issues of great complexity into manageable half hour time blocks. “Soft” news is simplistic and entertainment-oriented news that requires little intellectual thought on the part of viewers; viewers are courted with a wild story. The human misery that followed hurricane Katrina was fashioned into a crime drama, with stories of armed gangs talking over a city, numerous murders and “armed thugs” standing on a hospital rooftop threatening to shoot at rescue helicopters. Further evidence of the media’s desire to create a dramatic crime story was the fact that it started almost immediately after the storm made landfall (especially with looting) and with recklessness. Before there was much evidence and before rescue and recovery was complete, the cable news referred frequently to these crimes and criminals to create entertainment out of hurricane Katrina. The desire to entice viewers and get the “best story” created a situation where personality-driven news shows in particular, became tabloid-like. A particularly salient example of personality and ideology-

driven news is *The O'Reilly Factor*. Bill O'Reilly, host of the number one cable news show on television (Johnson 2006), labeled the residents allegedly committing crimes the most and referenced violent crime aimed at rescuers and officials more than any other television show host.

Hurricane Katrina crime coverage affected the way hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans and New Orleans residents were (and continue to be) understood by the public. Since the majority of residents remaining in the city were African American and since some crime did occur, this activated the media-created script of the dark dangerous criminal. Even when audiences recognize and object to disparaging media depictions of African Americans, these depictions still affect the way Caucasians go on to perceive and treat individual African Americans (Ford 1997). After all, media representations affect the activation or accessibility of constructs we possess about social groups and have the power to create, reinforce, or change disparaging stereotypes (Ford 1997). Media frames of African Americans as violent and animalistic had a powerful affect on the audience which was also comprised of those with the power to make decisions about rescue and recovery. On September 1st, the day in which reports of perpetrators of crime and actual crime reached their highest point (and on August 31st the day before), “thugs” and other criminals posing a threat to the social order were used by officials as the reason for abandoning rescue efforts. Specifically, the New Orleans police force was actually diverted from search and rescue to focus on looting and crime (Dyson 2006; Brinkley 2006). Also, numerous rescuers described “snipers” and other individuals allegedly hampering rescue efforts as the reason for abandoning rescue efforts. Also, as the climate of fear increased, some EMS personnel refused assignments, citing their own worries about crime (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005).

Indeed media outlets were quick and unrelenting in their coverage of the aftermath of hurricane Katrina as it unfolded in the city of New Orleans. However, coverage of New Orleans tapered off soon after Katrina. As time passed, less and less attention was given to the hundreds of thousands of residents that were displaced, and uprooted from their communities (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005). The story of recovery and rebuilding efforts are somewhat less-dramatic and thus deemed to be less newsworthy than

the stories of mass murders and armed gangs roaming the streets at night in New Orleans. News about reconstruction efforts are not likely to appear on prime time any time soon (Rodriguez and Dynes 2005).

After Katrina some local politicians and legislators were questioned and criticized for perpetuating crime myths. For instance, New Orleans police commissioner Eddie Compass described babies getting raped in the Superdome and mayor Ray Nagin spoke of “hooligans” killing and raping people for five days in the Convention Center (Dyson 2006). At the time, Compass and Nagin may have thought these events were true or they may have exaggerated the violence to draw attention to the plight of otherwise ignored residents. However, intentions are of little importance. The treatment residents received or in many cases did not receive after Katrina overshadows intentions. Nonetheless, the callous descriptions of some officials were later questioned and the mass media depictions were not. Although a few African American activists and politicians appeared on some cable news shows and discussed how the media framed and racialized “looting,” their points of view were largely dismissed. In the end, no specific television reporters or news organizations were held accountable. No one was held accountable for the numerous discussions about “thugs” shooting at medvac helicopters or affects of these reports. As a society we do not recognize the power of the media to influence social action and shape people’s conceptions about social groups and social issues. Therefore we do not hold the mass media accountable in the same manner as public officials. When officials like the mayor and the governor and are elected into office, we afford them with the formal power to affect society on an applied level. So when they perpetuate falsities about the citizens they purport to represent, we hold them accountable (at least to an extent). However, the mass media who is supposed to divulge factual information to the public and when they fail at this task they should be held accountable.

The media criminalized the residents of New Orleans during a time when they needed help the most. These media representations are what likely caused residents to be turned away on the bridge that connects the mostly black city of New Orleans with the mostly white suburbs of Jefferson Parish (Kaufmann 2005). In her piece on the criminalization of New Orleanians, Kaufman (2005) includes the account of two individuals (although many, many more residents also endured this incident) who, at the

instruction of city officials, sought to escape New Orleans by going to the West Bank. Instead, upon reaching the bridge they were greeted by an armed police force shooting guns in the air (Kaufman 2005). Rather than seeing the people crossing the bridge as desperate storm victims trying to escape a flooded city, the guards on the other side of the bridge saw the looters and violent criminals so frequently described by the media. Apparently the media-supplied definitions of New Orleans residents as a menace to society overshadowed alternative definitions of them as people in need of food, water, shelter, and medicine. Consequently, residents were told by these police officers that the West Bank was not going to become New Orleans, and there would be no Superdomes in their city (Kaufman 2005).

Unfortunately the media's criminalization of New Orleans residents did have life and death consequences for many residents in the city. Hopefully this study will serve as a message and a warning about the power of words and descriptions and the responsibility of the media to society. The power of the media to frame social reality and actually affect social reality by influencing the decisions of the powerful in a time when United States citizens of *any* race or ethnicity are suffering and dying must be questioned. As a result of hurricane Katrina, 1,464 people died in Louisiana alone (Louisiana department of Health and Hospitals 2006) and many of these people died in New Orleans. After all, if we look "at Katrina and the only crimes we see are looting and rape, then we miss a much larger story of crime and justice" (Russell-Brown 2006). Hopefully, by revealing the content and implications of the media depictions I have shed light on this larger story.

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APPENDIX 1

In order to provide a rationale and a little bit of background information on various television personalities included in my purposive sample, in the following paragraphs I include relevant highlights of each personality's career and life. Most of the information provided below is biographical information, but when possible, I have included some subjective information regarding the personality's reporting style or political orientation. However, coming across reputable and reliable sources to obtain this more subjective interpretation of certain personalities was not always possible. Any subjective information that was available is woven into the biographical information below.

Aaron Brown, touted as CNN's "cerebral anchor" (Johnson 2005a), was with CNN from 2001 to 2005 as the host of *NewsNight with Aaron Brown* (Marquis Who's Who, 2006). However, Brown no longer has his show on CNN. Brown's show was lagging behind in the ratings and thus he was replaced by Anderson Cooper (Johnson 2005a). Specifically, CNN president Jonathon Klein described these show changes as a response to the "momentum" generated by *Anderson Cooper's 360* and *Wolf Blitzer's Situation Room* since hurricane Katrina, which "left few options" for Aaron Brown (Johnson 2005a). Prior to his endeavors with cable news channel CNN, Brown was an anchor on numerous network news shows including, ABC's *World News Tonight Saturday*, *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings*, *Nightline*, *ABC News*, and was a founding anchor of *ABC's World News Now* (Marquis Who's Who, 2006).

Brit Hume (Alexander Britton Hume), a graduate of the University of Virginia, started out as a newspaper reporter with *The Hartford Times* and the *Baltimore Evening Sun* (Contemporary Authors Online 2004; hereafter CAO). He is currently the host of FOX's *Special Report with Brit Hume* and is also responsible for overseeing news content for FOX News' Washington, D.C. bureau (CAO 2004). Prior to joining FOX news in 1996, Hume, like Brown, was with ABC. During his 23 years with ABC Hume served as chief White House correspondent from 1989 through 1996 (CAO 2004). He also contributed to *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings*, *Nightline*, and *This Week* as well as various specials for the

news division (CAO 2004). Also, he is the author of *Death and the Mines: Rebellion and Murder in the United Mine Workers* (1971), a historical book describing “union’s gone wrong,” *Inside Story* (1976), about his experiences as a reporter, and *St. A.: An Illustrated History of St. Alban's School* (1981) (CAO 2004).

Nancy Grace began her television career in 1996, hosting a legal affairs program on CourtTV (Biographical Resource Center 2006; hereafter BRC). Currently, she is the host of *Nancy Grace: Closing Arguments*, a two-hour program on CourtTV and as of 2005, CNN’s *Nancy Grace*, as part of the evening lineup on *Headline News* (BRC 2006). In the latter show, Nancy Grace goes after defense attorneys with a self-styled crime-victims advocate approach (Johnson 2006) which some describe as confrontational and others describe as irresponsible (BRC 2006). After the murder of her fiancé in 1979, Grace gave up her initial career plans to be an English teacher and enrolled in law school. Grace was a law review graduate of Mercer Law School and received her degree in constitutional and criminal law from New York University (BRC 2006). After graduating and prior to her television debut, she was a prosecutor for ten years at the Atlanta Fulton County District Attorney's Office (BRC 2006). In 2005, addressing what she perceived to be inadequacies of the current legal system, Grace co-authored the book *Objection! -- How High-Priced Defense Attorneys, Celebrity Defendants, and a 24/7 Media Have Hijacked Our Criminal Justice System* (BRC 2006).

Like Nancy Grace, Greta Van Susteren is a lawyer. In 2002 Greta Van Susteren joined FOX news as the host of the primetime news and interview program, "On the Record with Greta Van Susteren (Fox news 2006; *Marquis Who's Who*, 2006). Prior to working with FOX, Van Susteren worked with CNN from 1991 till 2002 where she hosted *The Point with Greta Van Susteren* and CNN’s daily legal program, *Burden of Truth*. Van Susteren earned a Juris Doctor from Georgetown Law in 1979 and a Master of Law in 1982 (FOX news 2006). Van Susteren was also awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree from Stetson Law School (FOX news 2006). Prior to television, Van Susteren represented various clients in civil and criminal cases during her career as a trial attorney (BRC 2007). Also, in 2003 Van Susteren co-

authored the book *My Turn at the Bullypulpit: Straight Talk about the Things That Drive Me Nuts* (Fox news 2006; *Marquis Who's Who*, 2006).

Anderson Cooper was born to a well-known family, his father is Wyatt Cooper, an author, and his mother Gloria Vanderbilt is a fashion designer (BRC 2004). Cooper graduated in 1989 from Yale University with a degree in Political Science (BRC 2004). He began his career in 1991 with Channel One news, worked for ABC News in 1995 and then, after starting with CNN in 2003, he was given his own news program called *Anderson Cooper 360* (BRC 2004). In November 2005, following hurricane Katrina, his show garnered a two-hour, late evening timeslot. According to CNN executives, Cooper was one of the media's "strongest voices" on the scene due to his probative reporting and commentary that was frequently tinged with outrage over the lack of action he was witnessing from federal and city officials (Finn 2006). Cooper is known for his more-humanistic approach towards the news and is often regarded as intense, thorough, and engaging (Finn 2006).

While Cooper likes to focus the attention on what he is reporting, Bill O'Reilly's show is much more focused on O'Reilly's views and opinions. He is the host and producer of the number one cable news program in the U.S., Fox's *The O'Reilly Factor* (FOX 2006). O'Reilly is regarded by some as one of the most opinionated, brash, and colorful news personalities on American television (*Newsmakers* 2001). O'Reilly earned a Master's from Boston College in broadcast journalism (*Newsmakers* 2001) and another Master's in Public Administration from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government (FOX 2006). Over the course of his career, O'Reilly worked at a variety of news stations, including CBS in the early 1980's, on ABC's *World News Tonight* in 1986 and then, in the early 1990's as the host of the soft news show *Inside Edition* for 6 years (*Newsmakers* 2001). In 1998, he authored *Those Who Trespass*, followed by *The O'Reilly Factor: The Good, the Bad, & the Completely Ridiculous in American Life* in 2000 (*Newsmakers* 2001), *The No Spin Zone: Confrontations with the Powerful and Famous in America* (2003), *Who's Looking out for You?* (2004), *Those who Trespass* (2004), and *Culture Warrior* (2006) (FOX 2006). Additionally, he co-authored *The O'Reilly Factor for Kids: A Survival Guide for America's Families* (2005) (FOX 2006).

The last personality-driven show included in the sample is FOX show *Hannity and Colmes*. Sean Hannity joined FOX in 1996 as the politically-conservative co-host of the debate-driven talk show *Hannity and Colmes* (FOX 2006). Sean Hannity attended two different universities, but never finished college. In the early 1990's he began a politically-conservative talk radio program, before eventually moving to television programming with FOX (BRC 2003). Despite his television program, he remained involved with radio and in 2001 *The Sean Hannity Show* was syndicated in the United States on the ABC Radio Networks (BRC 2003).

Also joining FOX in 1996, Alan Colmes is the co-host of *Hannity and Colmes*; he is described by FOX (2006) as the “liberal counterpart” to Sean Hannity. He began his career with a string of successful radio shows on WNBC, WABC and WMCA in New York (FOX 2006). Most recently, he returned to radio as the host of the talk show *The Alan Colmes Show*, which is syndicated by the FOX News Channel (FOX 2006).

APPENDIX 2

While I read through many more transcripts than those included below, these are transcripts which contained reports of people in public sphere or any discussions about issues like crime and violence in New Orleans (despite whether or not there were any words or phrases that were counted and coded). While it may appear below as though there were for example, 5 different *World News Tonight* shows on one night, this is not the case. On the Lexis-Nexis website, ABC's *World News Tonight*, CBS's *Evening News*, CNN's *NewsNight with Aaron Brown*, FOX shows *Special Report with Brit Hume*, *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren* and some episodes with *Hannity and Colmes*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, and NBC's *Nightly News*, are broken up by segment (commercial break or topic). CNN's *Anderson Cooper 360* and *Nancy Grace* are not broken up by segment.

- (T-1) *Anderson Cooper 360*. August 29, 2005. "Hurricane Katrina Slams Gulf Coast." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-2) *Anderson Cooper 360*. August 30, 2005. "Special Edition: Katrina's Aftermath." 2005. January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-3) *Anderson Cooper 360*. August 31, 2005. "Katrina Aftermath: Live From Bay St. Louis." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-4) *Anderson Cooper 360*. September 1, 2005. "Special Edition: Hurricane Katrina." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-5) *Anderson Cooper 360*. September 2, 2005. "Special Edition: Waveland, Mississippi." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-6) *Anderson Cooper 360*. September 5, 2005. "Many Refuse to be Evacuated; New Orleans Now Under Semblance of Control." Retrieved February 9, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-7) *CBS Evening News*. August 29, 2005. "CBS Evening News." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-8) *CBS Evening News*. August 29, 2005. "Thousands of People Seeking Shelter in the Louisiana Superdome; Winds from Hurricane Katrina Rip off Parts of the Dome Roof." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-9) *CBS Evening News*. August 29, 2005. "Potential Impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Oil and Gas Markets." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.

- (T-10) *CBS Evening News*. August 30, 2005. "CBS Evening News." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-11) *CBS Evening News*. August 30, 2005. "Effects of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-12) *CBS Evening News*. August 30, 2005. "Orleans Parish Prison Evacuated as Waters Rise." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-13) *CBS Evening News*. August 30, 2005. "Looting in New Orleans." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-14) *CBS Evening News*. August 31, 2005. "CBS Evening News." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-15) *CBS Evening News*. August 31, 2005. "New Orleans Suffering through the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-16) *CBS Evening News*. August 31, 2005. "Hurricane Survivors in New Orleans Coping with the Aftermath of Katrina." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-17) *CBS Evening News*. August 31, 2005. "Post-Katrina Situation along the Gulf Coast." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-18) *CBS Evening News*. September 1, 2005. "CBS Evening News." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-19) *CBS Evening News*. September 1, 2005. "Chaos and Violence Continues in New Orleans in Katrina's Aftermath." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-20) *CBS Evening News*. September 1, 2005. "Threat to Public Health and Safety in New Orleans Intense." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-21) *CBS Evening News*. September 1, 2005. "Bush under Intense Pressure to Hurry Aid to Hurricane Victims." Retrieved January 19, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-22) *CBS Evening News*. September 2, 2005. "CBS Evening News." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
- (T-23) *CBS Evening News*. September 2, 2005. "Much-Needed Supplies Arrive in New Orleans Today to Aid Hurricane Survivors." Retrieved January 27, 2007 Available: Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.
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