

# Moving from *Them* to *Us*: Challenges in Reframing Violence among Youth

## Appendix

This appendix contains details on the methods for the literature review BMSG conducted to update the 2001 report from Building Blocks for Youth, “Off Balance: Youth, Race, and Crime in the News.” After sifting through hundreds of research studies that touched on either youth, race, or crime, we found 37 that were directly relevant to this inquiry. Most upheld the original findings from “Off Balance,” indicating that news coverage continues to distort youth, race, and crime.



In 2001, with the Justice Policy Institute, BMSG published “Off Balance: Youth, Race, and Crime in the News.”<sup>1</sup> That report reviewed every available study on youth, race, and crime. We wanted to know: Does news coverage reflect actual crime trends? How does news coverage depict minorities and crime? Does news coverage disproportionately depict youth of color as perpetrators of crime? What are the implications for prevention and public health policy?

The studies we surveyed then covered a range of media – local and network television, newspapers, and broadcast and print news magazines<sup>2</sup> – from 1910 through 1999. In preparation for this report, we collected and examined any study on youth, race, and violence published since we collected studies for “Off Balance.” This Appendix contains our detailed search strategy description. After sifting through hundreds of research studies that touched on either youth, race, or crime, we found 37 that were directly relevant to this inquiry. Most of the studies examined either youth and crime in the news (12 studies) or crime and race in the news (12 studies). A few examined only race in the news (four studies) or only youth in the news (three studies). We also included six studies that addressed some aspect of the intersection of race, crime, and youth in the news but did not feature primary news data collection or content analysis (e.g., literature reviews or experiments). All 37 studies are listed at the end of this Appendix.

“Off Balance” had four major conclusions from its review of the literature:

1. The news media report crime, especially violent crime, out of proportion to its actual occurrence.
2. The news media report crime as a series of individual events without adequate attention to its overall context.
3. The news media, particularly television news, unduly connect race and crime, especially violent crime.
4. Few studies examine portrayals of youth in the news. Those that do find that youth rarely appear in the news, and when they do, it is connected to violence.

### **Methodology for Updating “Off Balance”**

As the issues of interest—youth, crime, race, and the news—represent intersecting and often distinct fields of study, we searched a variety of databases available through the University of California, San Francisco and the University of California, Berkeley libraries to gather relevant articles. Our focus was U.S.-based studies with original data collection, published between January 1, 2000 and the present,

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<sup>1</sup> Dorfman L., and Schiraldi V. Off Balance: Youth, Race, and Crime in the News. Building Blocks For Youth Initiative: Washington, D.C., 2001. Accessed at <http://www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/media/> on August 11, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> We found no studies of crime on radio news.

although we included a study comparing U.S. and Canadian crime coverage as well as papers from pre-2000 that were not included in *Off Balance*.

We searched for articles in the following databases: PubMed, PsychInfo, Web of Science, Lexis/Nexis Academic, Sociology Abstracts, Social Science Abstracts, JSTOR and PAIS using the search terms “youth and violence”, accompanied by the terms “news” or “frame” (See Attachment A). Our interest in youth was principally focused on teenagers, aged 13-17. We also searched Google Scholar for the authors cited in the “Off Balance” report, to determine whether they had any new publications on the topic.

Our initial searches yielded few relevant articles. We then used the reference lists of pertinent articles to determine whether any of the cited articles were relevant to this study: those that looked promising were located and assessed. As the articles represented a range of academic and professional fields and styles of writing, it was often difficult to determine from the abstract alone whether or not the article should be included. Thus we read through numerous articles that turned out not to be appropriate for our study.

We then conducted a final search of two databases, PubMed and Web of Science (Attachment B), using variations of the word “gang” as a supplement to our original search as a few of our selected articles had used this terminology when describing youth and crime in the news.

Each of the articles selected and deemed relevant for our study were read and abstracted in a uniform manner (Attachment C) by one of three research associates.

## Findings

Thirty-seven studies, including peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and self-published works by advocacy organizations are included in this study. The majority of these studies collected their own news data content, and represent the following categories: youth, crime and news (Table 1–12 studies); crime, race and news (Table 2–12 studies); race and news (Table 3–4 studies); youth and news (Table 4–3 studies), and other relevant material (Table 5–6 studies).

The youth, crime and news studies (Table 1) were focused exclusively on youth violence—the selected news samples were purposively narrowed to youth crime. Consequently, the majority could not address Finding 4 from the previous report, as they did not determine the larger context of youth coverage in the news. Also rare were those studies that compared news coverage of crime to real-world crime statistics, relevant to answering Finding 1 above. Studies of different aspects of the news coverage of the Columbine school shootings were a focal point of one-third (4/12) of these studies. Of the 12 studies, two supported Finding 1, two supported Finding 2, three supported Finding 3 while one did not support it, and one study supported Finding 4 from *Off Balance*. The majority of the studies were not designed to answer more than one of the pertinent questions, and therefore Table 1, like the tables that follow, has many cells with N/A—Not Applicable.

Crime, race and news articles (Table 2) focused on a mixture of subjects—from intimate partner violence (IPV) compared to all other forms of violence to coverage of “gangs” to comparisons of TV crime coverage in the U.S. and Canada to studies examining the race of perpetrators on TV news. Among these 12 studies, three supported Finding 1 while one had a mixed finding on this count, four supported

Finding 2 and one had mixed findings, four supported Finding 3, and one study supported Finding 4 from *Off Balance*.

Table 3 includes four different chapters from Campbell's 1995 book examining race and television news and newspapers. He found multiple manifestations of discrimination, including what he called "traditional" racism, "enlightened" racism, and stereotypical portraits of African Americans. This book was included because although it is from the 1990s, it is an in-depth look at many of the issues raised in *Off Balance* and it was not included in the original report. Two of the chapters supported Finding 3; the rest were not directly applicable.

Three studies concerned youth in the news (Table 4), including a recent and unique study of adolescent girls in the news. Of these studies, one supported Finding 2, one supported Finding 3, and two supported Finding 4 from *Off Balance*.

Six other studies of interest that addressed some aspect of the intersection of race, crime, youth and the news, but that did not feature primary news data collection and content analysis are listed in Table 5. Two of these studies are literature reviews, and two others are primarily experiments that test the impacts of news portrayals of minority groups in different populations. Another study is a replication of Gillen's analysis of the portrayal of poverty and how it is associated with African Americans in news coverage. Yet another study analyzes opinion and other data to offer suggestions for how to reframe youth issues. Among these studies, two supported Finding 1, two supported Finding 2, and one study supported Finding 4.

Table 1: Youth, Crime & News, Comparison of Studies with Primary Data with the Findings from “Off Balance,” N=12.

<b>Authors, year of publication</b>	<b>1: News reports crime out of proportion to its actual occurrence.</b>	<b>2: News reports crime as events without context.</b>	<b>3: News unduly connects race and crime.</b>	<b>4: Youth rarely appear in news unless connected to violence.</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Colomy & Ross Greiner (2000)	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Newspapers. Sample focused on juvenile crime stories.
Consalvo (2003)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TV news, newspapers and news magazines. Focused on Columbine school shootings.
Herda-Rapp (2003)	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	Newspapers, professional publications and conference transcripts. Sample focused on school shootings.
Lawrence & Birkland (2004)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TV news and newspapers. Focused on Columbine school shootings.
Muschert (2007)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TV news and newspapers. Weak study; difficult to follow. Focused on Columbine school shootings.
Ogle et al. (2003)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Newspapers. Focused on Columbine school shootings.
Simon & Hayes (2002)	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Newspapers. Sample focused on articles connecting youth and crime.
Spencer (2005)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Newspapers and news magazines. Sample consisted of in-depth reporting in NYT and news magazines.
Welch et al. (2002)	N/A	Yes	Yes	N/A	Newspapers. Primary data and previous findings.
Welch et al. (2004)	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	Newspapers. Sample focused on youth violence case in NYC.
Yanich (2005)	Yes	N/A	No	N/A	TV news. Race is not generally reported in kid and adult crime stories (p. 26).
Youth Media Council (2002)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	TV news.
<b>Total</b>	<b>2=Yes</b>	<b>2=Yes</b>	<b>3=Yes, 1=No</b>	<b>1=Yes</b>	

Table 2: Crime and/or Race & News, Comparison of Studies with Primary Data with the Findings from “Off Balance,” N=12.

<b>Authors, year of publication</b>	<b>1: News reports crime out of proportion to its actual occurrence.</b>	<b>2: News reports crime as events without context.</b>	<b>3: News unduly connects race and crime.</b>	<b>4: Youth rarely appear in news unless connected to violence.</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Anastasio & Costa (2004)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Newspapers. Content analysis and experiment; differences in reporting by victim gender.
Chiricos & Eschholz (2002)	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	TV news.
Dixon & Linz (2000a)	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	TV news.
Dixon & Linz (2000b)	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	TV news.
Dixon et al. (2003)	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	Black and White perpetrators represented accurately.
Dowler (2004)	N/A	US-Yes Canada-No	N/A	N/A	TV news. Canadian stories follow crime story longer and provide motive (p. 590).
Klite et al. (1997)	N/A	Yes	Yes	N/A	TV news.
McManus & Dorfman (2005)	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Newspapers. Examines blame and intimate partner violence
Rodgers & Thorson (2001)	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Newspapers.
Taylor & Sorenson (2002)	Mixed	Mixed  Stories about IPV were episodic while gang violence (p. 124-5) was contextual.	N/A*	N/A	*Victim ethnicity not correlated (p. 126)—but the methods and finding on this are unclear.
Thompson et al. (2000)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Newspapers. Focus on “gangs.” (Articles on gang crime tend to stress the youth of gang members)
Yanich (2004)	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	TV news.
<b>Total</b>	<b>3=Yes, 1=Mixed</b>	<b>4=Yes, 1=Mixed</b>	<b>4=Yes</b>	<b>1=Yes</b>	

Table 3: Race & News, Comparison of Studies with Primary Data with the Findings from “Off Balance,” N=4.

<b>Authors, year of publication</b>	<b>1: News reports crime out of proportion to its actual occurrence.</b>	<b>2: News reports crime as events without context.</b>	<b>3: News unduly connects race and crime.</b>	<b>4: Youth rarely appear in news unless connected to violence.</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Campbell (chapter 3) (1995)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TV news. Traditional racism.
Campbell (chapter 4) (1995)	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	TV news. Stereotypical portrayals of African Americans. Sambo/savage stereotype in aggressive/criminal roles.
Campbell (chapter 5) (1995)	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	TV news. “Enlightened” racism.
Campbell (chapter 6) (1995)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Newspaper coverage of MLK holiday compared to TV news.
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>2=Yes</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

Table 4: Youth & News, Comparison of Studies with Primary Data with the Findings from “Off Balance,” N=3.

<b>Authors, year of publication</b>	<b>1: News reports crime out of proportion to its actual occurrence.</b>	<b>2: News reports crime as events without context.</b>	<b>3: News unduly connects race and crime.</b>	<b>4: Youth rarely appear in news unless connected to violence.</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Mazarella & Pecora (2007)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	US newspaper coverage of adolescent girls.
Gilliam & Bales (2001)	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes	TV news. Content analysis, experiment, survey, etc.
Parker et al. (2001)	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	TV news.
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1=Yes</b>	<b>1=Yes</b>	<b>2=Yes</b>	

Table 5: Other Studies of Interest Compared to the Findings from “Off Balance,” N=6.

<b>Authors, year of publication</b>	<b>1: News reports crime out of proportion to its actual occurrence.</b>	<b>2: News reports crime as events without context.</b>	<b>3: News unduly connects race and crime.</b>	<b>4: Youth rarely appear in news unless connected to violence.</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Clawson & Trice (2000)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Study deals primarily with poverty, not crime.
Frameworks Institute (2001)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Secondary data.
Gilliam et al. (2002)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Experiment examining the effects of racial segregation on public opinion of race and crime.
Gilliam & Iyengar (2005)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Experiment testing the “Super-Predator” hypothesis (increased fear of minority youth criminals)
Reiner (2002)	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Literature review 1950’s-present. Violent, dramatic crime over-represented, property crime under-represented, White perpetrators higher in network news, minority suspects highest in local TV news.
Wenger & South (2003)	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Literature review.
<b>Total</b>	<b>2=Yes</b>	<b>1=Yes</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1=Yes</b>	

**Cited Studies**

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Youth Media Council (2002). *Speaking for Ourselves: A Youth Assessment of Local News Coverage*. San Francisco, CA: We Interrupt This Message.

**Attachment A**  
**Original Search**

Via UCSF Library

Online Journals

Social Sciences

Sub-categories

Journalism +

Book History

Canadian Journal of Comm.

youth and violence and framing

0 hits

youth and violence and news

29 hits (yield= 0)

Communities & Urban Planning

American City and County

youth and violence

0 hits

Subject Heading Databases

Pubic Health

Lexis/Nexis (Congressional)

youth, violence and news

17 hits (yield= 0)

Rand California

youth and violence

0 hits

Health Administration & Policy

Lexis/Nexis (Academic)

PAIS

youth and violence and news

4 hits (yield= 0)

youth and violence and framing

0 hits

Social & Behavioral Sciences

Web of Science (2 Databases included) (note this was re-researched at UCB)

Soc. Abstracts

youth and violence and news

40 hits (yield= 0)

youth violence and framing

5 hits (yield= 1)

Social Services Abstracts

youth and violence and framing

11 hits (yield= 1)

youth and violence and news

77 hits (yield= 1)

PubMed

youth and violence

90 hits (yield= 0)

Via UCB Education/Psych Library

PsychInfo-Articles (includes 15 other search engine databases-School of Ed/Psych)

youth and violence (title only), news or fram\* or media (keywords)

161 hits (yield= 1)

Via UCB Public Health Library

Electronic Newspapers, +

youth and violence and news or media or fram\*

0 hits

Subject Heading Databases

Public Health

Web of Science (includes 3 databases, not 2 like UCSF)

youth and violence and fram\* (anywhere)

58 hits (yield= 0)

youth and violence and media or news or fram\*

75,743 hits

same search, "media" removed

67,074 hits

youth and violence (title only)

9,749 hits

youth and violence (title only), NOT prevention

182 hits (yield=2)

Lexis/Nexis Academic



## Attachment B Secondary Search

Searches were conducted using two search databases: Web of Science and Pub Med. Three main topics were searched: gangs and news media, victims and news media, and youth in the news.

For the first search the following terms were used:

gangs and news media;  
gangs media;  
gang media;  
gang news;  
gangs news.

These terms yielded no relevant results in Pub Med. However, a search of Web of Science using the same search terms yielded four relevant articles (Thompson, Dreier, Teo, and Poynting).

For the second search, regarding victims and news media, the following search terms were used:

victims and news media;  
victims rights news media;  
and victim portrayal news media.

The latter two terms yielded no results in either one of the search engines used. However, the first term, victims and news media, yielded five relevant results in Web of Science (Spencer, Anastasio, Dixon, Chiricos, and Dixon).

Finally, for the third search, regarding youth in the news, the following terms were used:

youth in the news; and  
youth news media.

No relevant results were found in Pub Med. One relevant article (Colomy) was found on Web of Science, resulting from the term "youth news media." A final search, with the term "youth" and "news media", was conducted in Pub Med, yielding no relevant results.

### Found Articles

Anastasio, PA; Costa, DM. Twice hurt: How newspaper overage may reduce empathy and engender blame for female victims of crime. *Sex Roles*. 51(9-10):535-542. 2004.

Chiricos, T; Eschholz, S. The racial and ethnic typification of crime and the criminal typification of race and ethnicity in local television news. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. 39(4):400-420. 2002.

Colomy, P; Greiner, LR. Making youth violence visible: The news media and the summer of violence. *Denver University Law Review*. 77(4):661-688. 2000.

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Spencer, JW. It's not as simple as it seems: Ambiguous culpability and ambivalent affect in new representations of violent youth. *Symbolic Interaction*. 28(1):47-65. 2005.

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Thompson, CY; Young, RL; Burns, R. Representing gangs in the news: Media constructions of criminal gangs. *Sociological Spectrum*. 20(4):409-432. 2000.

**Attachment C  
Annotated Bibliography for the Framing of Violence, Race and Youth**

Annotated Bibliography:

Design:

Sample:

Method:

Measures:

Statistical Analysis:

Results/Author's Analysis:

Were there any deviations/additions from/to the conclusions and recommendations in Off Balance?

Do the authors suggest any new ways of framing teen issues?

Comments: