

MEDIA ANALYSIS ACTIVITY

SOC 204A - Sociology of Mass Media and Popular Culture

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Goals

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Conduct a content analysis of news articles on police violence.
- Compare and contrast patterns found in these articles.
- Evaluate how these patterns shape public opinion.

Instructions

Before Coming to Class

1. Find a news article from a reputable news source that deals with police violence or police brutality.
2. Read the news article before coming to class.
3. Bring a laptop and copy (electronic or printed) of the news article to class.

During Class

1. Analyze your article using the matrix in Part I.
2. Each group member should record their response in the matrix (e.g., group member 1 enters response in column 1, group member 2 enters response in column 2, etc.) This will be how we code our data.
3. Answer the discussion questions in Part II as a group.

Part I: Fill out the Following Matrix

(Your responses will be our data)

	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5
1. Source of your article? (ex: New York Times)					
2. Publication Date?					
3. Type of news article? (Ex: Editorial, letter to the editor)					
4. Article headline?					
5. What key words from the headline stand out to you?					
6. Race or ethnicity of the crime perpetrator (the “criminal”)?					
7. Race or ethnicity of the officer?					
8. Cause of the altercation? (e.g., did a disagreement or theft incite the use of force?)					
9. Was force used? What kind?					
10. Was anyone injured or killed from the incident? Explain.					
11. Was the “criminal” armed? If so, with what?					
12. Count the number of times you see:					
a. Deadly force					
b. Murder					
c. Kill					
d. Illegal acts					
e. Conflict					
f. Disagreement					
g. Control					
13. What do you notice about the context of their use?					

Part II: As a group answer the following open-ended questions based upon data collected in Part I

1. Compare each member's data. What is similar?
2. Compare each member's data. What is different?
3. Now look specifically at the data for questions 6, 7, and 12 in Part I. What, if any, trends or patterns do you see?
4. Are there any other interesting things presented in your articles that are worth noting?
This may include any data not captured in the matrix or open-ended questions that may improve our class code book.

Reflecting on Learning Outcomes

In this activity we gathered data on how the media reports about police brutality. Focus solely on the information you've learned from the readings and the content analysis you conducted.

1. Using the data you have compiled, what patterns of police violence did you find in your news articles? What were some exceptions or differences?

2. Do you think the type of data collected, and the method used to collect them, influenced the results? Explain your view.
 - a) If you were to develop this activity into a research project, what would you do differently? Why?

3. Many scholars discuss the role of media as it pertains to stereotyping and criminalizing African Americans. Based on your data, what role does media play in constructing our views of police violence against marginalized communities?

4. What do you think this activity demonstrated about how the media report stories on police violence directed towards men?
 - a) Is the media representation of police biased in your data? If yes, how? If no, why not?