Black Lives Through the Lens

A discussion on media portrayals of black people
Goal of our Presentation

• Discuss the portrayal of African Americans in news media

• Discuss their portrayal in popular media

• Explain the negative effects these portrayals have on African Americans' perception of themselves

• Show how these portrayals have negatively impacted African American lives
Black Portrayals Through the Lens of News Media

• Explain the common themes seen in news media regarding African Americans

• Explore inconsistencies seen in media coverage

• Discuss the lack of minority representation in mainstream news media
Kanye West: A Case Study

- In 2005, Kanye West made headlines for his comment about George Bush in regards to the Hurricane Katrina devastation.
- What actually preceded these comments?
- West's greater message was lost to the public.
Mainstream Media Coverage of West’s Remarks

• 75% of news media included only West’s line about George Bush.

• No news source discussed his claim about the National Guard and the Iraq War.

• West’s dissent was framed in most articles as being either an upset celebrity or a person who chose the wrong forum for politics. (Jackson, 2014)
Black Media’s Coverage of West’s Remark

• Black media mainly framed his dissent as “Community debates about African American uplift and self-sufficiency” or “legacies of institutional inequality” (Jackson, 2014)

• West’s celebrity status took a back seat to the real issues facing New Orleans and African Americans.
A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it...

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)
Media Misrepresentations

• African Americans are underrepresented in coverage overall.

• Coverage exaggerates negative associations and limits positive associations.

• African American’s are overly associated with problems.

• Important stories about black lives are often not told. (Opportunity Agenda)
Do We Know the Causes?

- Biases both conscious and unconscious by media producers.

- Appealing to audience preferences and incorrect assumptions about an audience.

- An effort to promote political agendas.

- Lack of African American input in all levels of the news media. (Opportunity Agenda)
Disparities in Representation

• In 2014 African Americans made up 14.2% of the population.

• Television news employed 10.2% African Americans in 2013.

• However only 4.3% of news directors were African American in 2013.

• Only 7 full powered news stations in the US were owned by African Americans in 2014. (Vogt)
Stolen Culture Through the Lens of Popular Media
Appropriation vs. Appreciation

**Appropriation**: “to take or make use without any authority or right”

**Appreciation**: “full awareness or understanding of something”
Everyday Style
Double Standard

“edgy, raw, and beautiful”

“looks like she smells like patchouli oil or weed.”
Through the Sound Barrier
“The significant influence of African American music is well established in the development of U.S. popular music during the twentieth century.”
On The Screen
Through the Media Lens: Effects on Self & Education
Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

• *Definition*: When a person unknowingly causes prediction to come true, due to the simple fact that he or she expects it to come true.
Effects on African Americans: Education

The Clark Experiment
Effects of African Americans: Identity

Results

Internalized racism

Black attributed to “bad and ugly”

White linked to as “good and pretty”
Effects on African Americans: School Surrounding

Schools fail at: Nurturing, Supporting, and Protecting

Continue to see Stereotyping and Self Fulfilling Prophecies
Youth reacting to media images of Black Women

Where they see themselves in the media? Sports and Hip-Hop

Youth starting to find themselves

Shape how they need to interact
Effects on African Americans: Body Image

Follow own Beauty Standards

White Beauty Standards

Positive Body Image
Through the Lens of Political Justice
#BlackLivesMatter vs. All Lives Matter

- Civil Rights Movement
- Importance of the movement

Analogy in “White Privilege II”- Macklemore

Bryan Stevenson - Criminal Justice System
Police Brutality and Profiling

New York and the zero-tolerance policy

Racial Profiling

White officers profiling beginning of time

Fairness of the criminal justice

Accounts of white drivers vs black

Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, etc.
Current Social Movement
Where do we go from here?

Policy changes

Social Movements

Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar

#BlackLivesMatter

#OscarsSoWhite

Challenge your thoughts and question stereotypes

It is okay to be uncomfortable
Questions?
Paul’s Sources


Wikimedia Commons. (n.d.). Retrieved February 29, 2016, from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Susan’s Sources


