Ordered Images: Cooking Reality in *Cops*

By

Ryan Cotter
Keele University

Willem de Lint
University of Windsor

Daniel O'Connor
University of Windsor

This paper reports on a comparative content analysis of the reality-based television program *Cops* to illustrate changes and continuities influenced by official policy and other cultural indicators. *Cops* is seen to reflect contemporary changes in policing policy on the handling of incidents. Our analysis also reveals the perpetuation of a 'crime sensibility.' This crime sensibility is based on an image of unraveling ethnic and familial solidarities in which police retain a primary role in preventing further dissolution of the social fabric. Our analysis points to the significant transformation that the mass media performs on social and political anxieties, while at the same time working to produce compensatory structures that encode fantasies of social harmonization.

Keywords: reality television, representation, media, police, public relations

INTRODUCTION

Police have always used public relations venues to foster a positive public image. New venues including reality-based television programs provide police with the opportunity to become more proactive in the production and dissemination of positive images of police activity. In this paper we examine some of the characteristics of this new pro-policing image management. This is accomplished using a historical and comparative examination of episodes of the long-running and successful television program *Cops*. In documenting quantitative changes in the presentation of this 'reality drama,' we hope to contribute to the literature on the mediation of crime, specifically how such shows are reflective of the hardened ordering between police as moral subjects and suspects as racial others. We hypothesize that *Cops* finds widespread support because it functions to legitimate existing relations in which police retain a primary role in re-ordering strained and frayed edges of the social fabric. We find continuity with reality-based expectations of crime in general and offenders in particular, but also some softening with respect to the association between African-Americans and violent crime. In assessing our data, we hypothesize that the difference between 'reality' and 'reality television' may be an artifact of the interplay between media production (particularly the effectiveness of repetitive visual patterns) and media control (the sedimentation of political and nostalgic cultural affirmations).

MEDIA, POLICE AND *COPS*

The role of media in constructing social perceptions and shaping social events and boundaries has been widely acknowledged (Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1989; Reiner, 2002; Young, 1971). As Ericson et al. (1989) note, "[m]edia do not merely report on events but rather participate directly in processes by which events are constituted and exist in the world" (p. 219). The police, like many other organizations, know the importance of positive public representations of their activities and events related to their activities. Public police agencies are increasingly proactive in developing their public image through the use and control of a variety of mass media venues to foster positive representations of police activity (Mawby, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002; Ericson et al., 1989, p. 93).[i] With the proliferation of compact, portable video technologies multiplying potential 'Rodney King effects,' police departments now placed a high premium on controlling messages related to their activities. Most large police departments now deploy public information officers and official press conferences to ensure that they are 'on message' (Surette, 1998). Even more reflexively, the police also structure their major projects and 'deliverables' according to public relations sensitivities, that is, in terms of "how their activities will play on the news" (Reiner, 2002, p. 407). Police agencies are also dominant producers of both 'fact' and media 'copy,' capitalizing on their dual role as information broker and accredited source (cf. Ericson et. al., 1989). As Reiner (2002) argues, "the police and criminal justice system control much of the information on which crime reporters rely" (p. 404). Media and public police agencies have a long history of cooperating in the production of public representations of policing activities and policing events.

One venue for positive policing images is reality-based TV programs, including *Cops.* Produced since 1989 by the Fox Network, *Cops* has become one of the longest running reality TV programs, recently celebrating its 20th season.[ii] *Cops* features a police-approved selection of video-recorded police incidents that present the work of police officers in a 'highly stylized' manner (Hallett & Powell, 1995) and reveals a legal process that is both 'truncated and sensationalized' (Mastro & Robinson, 2000). It is well documented that the police control what we see on *Cops;* the agreement "to have cameras in the cruisers" also means that the police have "full editorial control over the footage" (Hallett, 1994). As Cavender & Fishman (1998) note:

> The producers of *Cops* need permission to ride in patrol cars and to film in station houses. In order to get high-quality video or rich details in a pending case, cooperation between media and police is absolutely necessary. In exchange for this cooperation, those who produce reality programs cannot or will not exercise independent and critical judgment of law enforcement agencies (p. 11).

One effect of this control is that *Cops* registers a socially conservative image of policing, that is, as crime fighting, law enforcing, and victim assisting (see Doyle, 1998, 2003). Rigid modernist binaries of us/them, victims/offenders, we/they are the backstop against which subject-officers offer suggestions of redemption, philosophy, even world-weariness (see Surette, 1998; Hallett, 1994; Pepinsky & Quinney, 1992; Hallett & Powell, 1995, p. 105; Doyle, 1998; Donovan, 1998).

In terms of audience, Fishman (1998: 69) found that while reality programs are more popular with women, *Cops* showed an approximately even split between male and female viewers. In addition, Fishman (1998) notes, while "the audience for broadcast network programs skews older and more female, the audience for *Cops* comes close to reflecting the actual age and gender composition of the population" (p. 71). Research on attitudes towards police among audiences of reality programs, including *Cops,* found that reality programs increased the racial divide (Eschholz, 2002). Such findings could be based, at least partially, on increased use of excessive force against young minority perpetrators (Mastro & Robinson, 2000).

RESEARCH APPROACH

A dominant perspective for examining the social role of television is known as the 'cultivation hypothesis' (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Oliver & Armstrong, 1998, p. 23-24). The cultivation hypothesis suggests that television conveys information about the social environment that is capable of effecting audience perceptions regarding the social world (see Mastro & Robinson, 2000, p. 386). According to Gerbner et al. (1976), "people who watch a lot of TV see the real world as more dangerous and frightening than those who watch very little. Heavy viewers are less trustful of their fellow citizens and more fearful of the real world" (p. 41). From this perspective, the shaping of social perceptions by television varies with the amount of television watched. Those who watch a lot of television are more likely to perceive their social reality as a reflection of what they see on television.[iii] Media portrayals of crime are therefore capable of intensifying fears and perceptions among this 'heavy user' audience segment (see Gerbner et al., 1976, 1977, 1978; Hawkins & Pingree, 1981; Potter, 1994).

Critics of the cultivation hypothesis point to the inability to reproduce the original research in other contexts. As Reiner (2002) argues, "it appears that 'cultivation' does not export well. British attempts to replicate the Gerbner findings have failed to do so, possibly because American television has a much higher violence profile" (p. 400). Critics suggested that the relationship between fear of crime and television viewed is much more complicated (Hirsch, 1981; Hughes, 1980; O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987; 1986).

While not all media researchers support the cultivation hypothesis, most suggest the media has significant effects and agree that the media makes a significant contribution to the social construction of reality (Livingstone, 1996, pp. 31-2; as cited in Reiner, 2002, p. 399). For example, Surette (1998) claims that: '[t]he media provide both a foundation for the public's various final images and the mortar with which the public constructs its social reality' (p. 96). Other scholars suggest that reality police programs are popular with specific audiences because they appeal to simplified "law and order" politics (Cavender & Fishman, 1998; Doyle, 1998; Donovan, 1998). According to Doyle (1998), *Cops* exploits several production techniques to render this ideological bias and promote audience identification with it.[iv] The most obvious production technique is the use of point-of-view where every episode of *Cops* begins with an 'establishing vignette' from inside the police cruiser in which the subject-officer offers his or her impression of their work 'on the job' in the city they serve (see Doyle, 1998, p. 99-104).

As ideological contrivances, programs such as *Cops* are more than empty distractions and do more than merely represent or reflect *particular* subjective or historical anxieties. In line with the analysis of the 'mugging crisis' in Britain (see Hall, Critchely, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978), the images in *Cops* relate less to a particular meaning or message and more to a

generalized or polysemic anxiety. In ushering these anxieties, they carry out the political function of legitimizing the existing order only to the extent that they also encode a mythological utopian or transcendent dimension (see Jameson 1992, p. 25). According to Jameson (1992), works of mass culture cannot manipulate unless they also offer a fantasy bribe – an image that expresses our hopes about the nature of social life and how it ought to be lived (p. 27, 34). In this way *Cops* offers a palliative to those nostalgic for the *status quo* ante, whatever its specific politics turns out to be. We argue that that 'programmatic reality' of *Cops* is a product of simplified cultural memories and that this mythic function is aided by a particular mode of presentation.

The perceived authenticity of reality programs such as *Cops* exists, partially, as a consequence of the advent of cheap portable video recorders (Cavender & Fishman, 1998; Mason, 2002). In the era of reality programming, *Cops* was the first to utilize the now common 'ride-along' authenticity formatting (Doyle, 1998). Here, the advent of mobile video cameras serves to promote the distinction between high-tech and low-tech video productions. According to Fiske (1998), low tech video or 'videolow,' with its limited technical control over the image, serves to reveal the extent of discursive and editorial controls exercised in video-high productions: in the domain of the videolow, "video has an authenticity that results from the users lack of resources to intervene in its technology" (p. 215). If putting events into discourse through videolow enhances the sense of the authenticity that viewers perceive, incorporating or simulating videolow in highly controlled productions like *Cops* serves to blur distinctions between the image and reality in this new genre of television programming.

In addition to the perceived 'authenticity,' reality based programs such as *Cops* are praised for their low production costs, lengthy shelf life, and flexibility (Fishman, 1998).[v] The flexibility of such programs has been seen as advantageous to TV executives who can move the program to time slots that require filling (Fishman, 1998, p. 69). As Fishman (1998, p. 68) notes, programs like *Cops* are filmed without dates or temporal references that might age the episodes, thus affording their endless re-broadcast. This temporal displacement of the episodes' images allows their continuous re-telling, inviting viewers not only to recover what they already know, but also what they want to know (Eco 1985, p. 164). These displacements refute the historical development of events and draw viewers instead to the instant and its aesthetic dimensions of timelessness and immanence (Jameson 1992, p. 12). Thus, these programs are able to perpetuate, through repetition, the redundant aesthetic structure of images.

The political or ideological function of images involves not simply the displacement of generalized anxieties and fears onto some (racial, gendered, or class-based) population, but the association of these anxieties with moral concerns, for example, with concerns over things like dishonesty rather than with racism or poverty. Video imagery is highly susceptible to ideological functions pertaining to race and gender because these are the social differences most effectively encoded by visual technologies like television (see Fiske 1998, p. 154). Recalling our earlier discussion of media relations, reality shows like *Cops* are stylized productions highlighting the peculiar disorders of race and gender. It is our contention that these political functions are encoded in *Cops* in the terms of crime and redress through the repetitive visual patterns of representations of relations between victims, offenders, and police. In *Cops*, problems or incidents do not stem from racial differences, since they are represented as problems internal to racial groups, and have more to do with problems associated with a lack of ethnic

group solidarity. Similarly, interpersonal problems do not stem from economic concerns and class differences, but from the deterioration of the domestic sphere, the decline in family values, and a lack of self-reliance associated with illicit drug use. Following this line of inquiry, we hypothesize that a snapshot of *Cops* that froze the recipe in production would not only reveal the fault-lines of race and gender, but also a nostalgic dimension of ethnic and familial solidarities. We examined these functions as well as how they have changed over time comparing previous research with our own.

METHODS

Data for this study was derived from a content analysis of 60 episodes of *Cops* broadcast between May 16th and July 1st, 2005. The problem or 'incident' the police responded to represented the primary unit of analysis (n = 231). Each incident was coded by: the type of incident/call; the class of incident (violent, property, drug related, other victimless, domestic, or other[vi]); and the characteristics of the victim, suspect, and officer. While most incidents involved multiple officers (n = 974), officers were differentiated into primary or 'host' officers (n = 319) and secondary or 'supporting' officers (n =655). Officers were also coded by rank (constable or sergeant). Suspects involved (n = 310) were coded according to Oliver's (1994) categories which included those portrayed as committing, having committed, suspected of having committed, or those wanted by police for committing a criminal offence. Suspects were then further coded as either: armed, arrested, resisted arrest, as well as how they resisted arrest (e.g. fled in vehicle, fled of food, physical altercation, or verbal altercation). Visual representations of victims were rare (n = 62) and were coded according to race, gender, and approximate age. This data was then compared with the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) 2005, previous research on *Cops* (Kooistra et al, 1998), and previous research on reality police programs which included *Cops* (Oliver, 1991; Carmody, 1998). [vii]

Analysis One: Representations of Crime

Our analysis of the type of crime in Reality-based police programs reveals that reality television is fairly consistent over time in its tendency to favor representations of violent crime over property crime, that is, when compared to official US (UCR) representations of crime (see table 1). When violent crime is disaggregated it appears that aggravated assault is the main contributor to televised violence since 1995.[viii] Overall, violent crime continues to be featured as the main reality-based policing problem.

Table 1	**1991**		**1994**		**1995**		**2005**	
Representations of Index Crimes	**Oliver**	**UCR**	**Kooistra**	**UCR**	**Carmody**	**UCR**	**Our data.**	**UCR**
Violent Crimes	**87.0%**	**12.9%**	**84.0%**	**13.3%**	**65.1%**	**13.0%**	**71.8%**	**12.0%**
Murder	49.7%	0.2%			5.2%	0.2%	1.4%	0.1%
Rape/Sexual Assault	3.0%	0.7%			2.1%	0.7%	1.4%	0.8%
Robbery	19.5%	4.6%			9.8%	4.2%	11.3%	3.6%
Aggravated Assault	14.8%	7.3%			48.0%	7.9%	57.7%	7.5%
Property Crimes	**13.0%**	**87.1%**	**16.0%**	**86.7%**	**34.9%**	**87.0%**	**28.2%**	**88.0%**

When we compared the proportionate representation of all types of crime (not just UCR categories) significant differences appear. Over time, representations of violent and victimless

crime have decreased as a problem on *Cops*, while property crime incidents have more than doubled and domestic crimes have increased by more than 82 percent (see table 2).

Table 2. Representations of Crimes on *Cops*	**1994**	**2005**
Type of Crime*	**Kooistra**	**Our data**
Violent	31.8%	16.1%
Property	8.4%	22.6%
Drug	19.6%	24.2%
Other Victimless	24.3%	8.1%
Domestic	15.9%	29.0%
total N	107	124
$\chi 2$= 19.41399, df=4, prob.< .001		
*Category 'Other' excluded due to incompatible coding		

When representations of police effectiveness were compared, significant similarity was found between Kooistra et al's findings and those presented here (see table 3). Both studies found that *Cops* over-represents police clearance rates in comparison with official UCR crime statistics. One key difference is found when comparing the clearance of domestic violence incidents. While our analysis found that 76.7 percent of domestic violence incidents were cleared by police, Kooistra et al. found only a 29.4 percent clearance rate. Our analysis suggests that representations of domestic violence have changed over time and that reality-based policing programs are more likely to portray these incidences as resulting in the arrest of suspects. In addition, this suggests that changes in official police policy could be translated into changes in the representation of crimes on reality policing programs. Here, the implementation of policy changes that require police to take action in domestic situations could be suggested, at least partially, to have resulted in shifting media representations. Thus, *Cops* may be influenced by changes in the political climate.

Table 3. Crimes Cleared by Arrest in the UCR and "Cops"	**1994**		**2005**	
Type of Crime	**Kooistra**	**UCR**	**Our data**	**UCR**
Violent	65.8%	44.6%	53.8%	46.3%
Property	88.8%	17.7%	89.3%	16.5%
Drug Offences	95.5%		94.7%	
Other Victimless	96.6%		83.3%	
Domestic	29.4%		76.7%	
Total Clearances	74.8%	21.4%	78.3%	19.7%

Analysis Two: Representations of Racial Characteristics

When examining the representation of suspects, victims, and the police there were significant differences between the results presented by Kooistra et al. and our data (see table 4).

While Kooistra et al. found an almost equal number of "White" and "Black" suspects, our data suggests that suspects are more likely to be "White" (46.9%) than "Black" (35.3%). Although both studies suggest that police officers tend to be "White," it appears that this is even more likely in current episodes. While Kooistra et al.'s (1998) data suggests that victims tend to be represented as "Other" (43.7%), we found that victims tend to be "White" (50%). Our data suggests that suspects, victims, and the police tent to be "White" in current iterations of *Cops.*

Table 4. Changes in the Representations of Race on *Cops*	**1994**			**2005**		
	Kooistra et al.			**Our data**		
Race	**Suspects**	**Victims**	**Police**	**Suspects**	**Victims**	**Police**
White	47.4%	28.9%	62.2%	46.9%	50.0%	85.6%
Black	48.9%	27.4%	5.2%	35.3%	29.0%	7.7%
Other	3.7%	43.7%	32.6%	17.8%	21.0%	6.7%
Total N	**135**	**135**	**135**	**309**	**62**	**974**

Chi square difference between suspects $\chi 2$= 18.23625, df=2, prob.<.001; between victims $\chi 2$= 11.37847, df=2, prob.<.001; between police $\chi 2$= 103.5204, df=2, prob. <.001

We found significant differences when comparing our data with Kooistra et al's (1998) in terms of the relationship between ethnicity and type of crime (see table 5). Both studies found that Non-white suspects were more likely to be responsible for violent crime, however, the proportion responsible for violent crimes has decreased from 44.8% to 23.9 %. Our data also suggests that Non-whites are more likely to be responsible for drug offences (31.3%). While Kooistra et al. (1998) suggests that White suspect are responsible for victimless crimes (32.7%), our data suggests that White suspects are now more likely to be represented in relation to domestic offences (42.1%). While these findings confirm the suggestion that minorities are disproportionately represented as responsible for the majority of index crimes (especially violent crimes) in the media, they also suggest a shift in representation whereby minorities are now more than twice as likely to be associated with drug offences.

Table 5. Race of Suspect by Type of Crime in *Cops*	**1994**		**2005**	
	Kooistra et al.		**Our data**	
Type of Crime*	**White**	**Non-white**	**White**	**Non-white**
Violent	16.3%	44.8%	7.0%	23.9%
Property	4.1%	12.1%	28.1%	17.9%
Drug	26.5%	13.8%	15.8%	31.3%
Other Victimless	32.7%	17.2%	7.0%	9.0%
Domestic	20.4%	12.1%	42.1%	17.9%
Total N	**49**	**58**	**57**	**67**

Chi square differences between White category $\chi 2$=25.45, df=4, prob.<.001
*Category 'Other' excluded due to incompatible coding

The final analysis examines the representation of relationships between victims and offenders through a comparison of sex, race, and age (see table 6). When victims are involved, the prevailing representation is that crime occurs between sexes, intra-racially, and within comparable age cohorts. For example, during incidence involving female victims the suspect tend to be male (69%), whereas in incidences involving male victims the suspect tend to be female (72.7%). Intra-racially, 91.3% of white suspects were found to have white victims, 77.8% of black suspects were found to have black victims, and 83.3% of 'other' were seen as victimizing a member of the 'other' category. Finally, individuals tend to be portrayed as victimizing members of their own age cohort, with individuals aged 25 or older representing the most victimized group. The characteristic victim tended to be portrayed as a white female, 25 or older (19.4%), followed closely by the white male, 25 or older (17.4%). The characteristics suspect tended to be portrayed as a white male, 25 or older (30.1%), followed by a black male, 25 or older (18.8%). The characteristic police officer is both white and male (81.8%)

Table 6. Suspect Characteristics compared against Victim Characteristics

		Victim Characteristics		
	Sex	**Male**	**Female**	
Suspect Characteristics	**Male**	31.0%	69.0%	
	Female	72.7%	27.3%	
	Total N	**21**	**32**	
$\chi 2$=6.35886, df=1, prob. <0.05				
	Race	**White**	**Black**	**Other**
Suspect Characteristics	**White**	91.3%	4.3%	4.3%
	Black	16.7%	77.8%	5.6%
	Other	16.7%	0.0%	83.3%
	Total N	**26**	**15**	**12**
$\chi 2$=63.65465, df=4, prob. <0.001				
	Age	**Under 25**	**25 plus**	
Suspect Characteristics	**Under 25**	55.6%	44.4%	
	25 plus	15.9%	84.1%	
	Total N	**12**	**41**	
$\chi 2$=6.705249, df=1, prob. <0.01				

DISCUSSION

Editorial control over the content of images and their associations on *Cops* makes it susceptible to the production of ideological effects. In terms of the politics of the image, representation of crime on *Cops* is an inverted, mirror image of the other reality-based encodings of crime, namely the official statistical representations of crime presented in the UCR. *Cops* features more violent imagery than its statistical counterpart while downplaying the role of property offences. Similarly, it also differs in terms of police success in clearing crime through arrest. Over time, the images on *Cops* have changed to feature more police interventions

involving domestic offences. This change suggests that policing representations may be reflections of current policing policies. The association between minority groups and violent crimes has diminished and the victims, suspects, and police now tend to be white. Nevertheless, minorities continue to be associated with violent and index crimes and are now portrayed as largely responsible for drug offences. The association between offenders and victims reveals that images of crime are predominantly gendered, occurring between men and women, and are almost exclusively intra-racial.

Images of crime and policing on *Cops* reflect a particular kind of public relations politic. These images tend to steer clear of representation that link crime to issues of economic inequality (property relations) and are carefully crafted to avoid critical reflections of the problems of crime and race relations so evident in the US (see Wacquant, 2000, 2003 on the policing and punishment of race and poverty in the US and elsewhere). We surmise that *Cops* serves two functions central to the perpetuation of mass culture. First, it serves to manage generalized anxieties about problems in the social order by steering the focus, repetitively, to select problems and their solutions. The focus is crimes of violence and vice, where violence is seen to stem from problems related to the character of domestic relations and vice is a problem of drugs associated with minority populations. We see in these associations larger political messages that define social problems in terms of declining family values. By folding back social and political anxieties on the presumed failing institutions of family and ethnic solidarity, *Cops* supports the ongoing legitimization of existing social and political relations. Second, *Cops* is proactive in presenting a pro-policing reality. Through their capacity to arrest crime by arresting criminals, police are seen to be highly effective instruments of social order. While predominantly white and male, they are also seen to successfully intervene in support of both the domestic sphere and minority groups. In this way police on *Cops* serve as heroic figures of the collectivity, representing support for the family, ethic solidarity, and hope for their reconstitution.

Our analysis of the popular cultural imagery of *Cops*, allows us to move beyond the somewhat simplified analytics that present popular culture forms as mere empty distractions. Our analytic points to the significant transformation that the mass media performs on social and political anxieties while at the same time working to produce compensatory structures that encode fantasies of social harmonization. Fantasy perpetuation and myth reconstitution is an important aspect of the management of anxieties, reflecting what Jameson (1992) calls the utopian dimension of culture or the "ritual celebration of the renewal of social order and its salvation" (p. 27). In the absence of encoded mythic functions the audience may simply resist the more or less apparent attempts at manipulation and the text may fail to obtain its ideological ends (see Kellner, 1995, p. 88).

In addition to the specific formatting techniques used to shape the reality of *Cops* it is also important to highlight the structures involved in the social and anticipatory dimensions of visual systems (see O'Connor 2002, p. 73-93). With the aim of affecting familiarity, ensuring that we find what we expect, and rewarding our ability to foresee what will happen next, these structures encourage audience co-production in the flow of the visual experiences. We are thus entertained by stories or figurative tropes that reflect back fundamental repetitions. These mythic functions are as fundamental to TV viewing of police work as they are to the making up of the craft of police work (as outlined in Shearing and Ericson, 1991). Audiences are enabled to read-

off from visual patterns the mythic structures of policing so as to become familiar with what Ericson and Shearing call the 'sensibilities' that direct policing actions (ibid. p. 49). In *Cops* we find the repetition of structures that highlight not only the sensibilities of policing but also the 'sensibilities' that direct the world of crime. This 'crime sensibility' is directed by the interrelated (dys)functions of 'the family' and 'ethnic solidarity,' that is, by the same mythic structures that make up modern representations of organized crime (where films like 'The Godfather' and its serial repetition are modern exemplars [see Jameson (1992)]). In *Cops* we see the interface of the policing and crime sensibilities as myth structures necessary to the production of reality TV.

ENDNOTE

Correspondence concerning this article may be sent to:

Ryan Cotter, Department of Criminology, Keele University, Newcastle-under-lyme, Staffordshire, United Kingdom, ST5 5BG (E-mail: r.cotter@ilpj.keele.ac.uk),

Willem de Lint, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Windsor, 401 Sunset Avenue, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, N9B 3P4 (Email: delint@uwindsor.ca).

Daniel O'Connor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Windsor, 401 Sunset Avenue, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, N9B 3P4 (Email: doconnor@uwindsor.ca).

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[i] As Ericson et al. (1989) suggest, "Police now accept that, in relation to a particular incident or activity, a proactive approach to the news media is useful in controlling the version of reality that is transmitted, sustained, and accepted publicly" (p. 93).

[ii] Nielsen ratings show that *Cops* is about half as popular as it was a decade ago. In 1993, approximately 8.4 – 8.8 million households viewed *Cops* while in July, 2005 this number declined to approximately 3.1 – 3.7 million households.

[iii] See Gerbner et al., 1976, 1980; Gerbner et al., 1977, 1986; Signorielli & Morgan, 1990; Gerbner, 1994; Ettema & Whitney, 1994; Carlson, 1985; Howitt, 1998; Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1978; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980.

[iv] Doyle identifies several production techniques that bias the formatted reality: naturalization, identification, closure and selection of events and situations.

[v] Reality TV programs have extremely low productions costs when compared to other popular programs and are highly versatile due to the lack of temporal references. For example: reality programs cost somewhere between $150,000 and $250,000 per week to produce, while one episode of *Star Trek: Next Generation* costs approximately $1.5 – 1.7 million to produce (Fishman, 1998, p. 67).

[vi] These categories were also aggregated to enable comparison with definitions of violent crime (murder, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) and property crime (larceny/theft and

arson) used by the FBI in their Uniform Crime Report.

[vii] Oliver's 1991 findings are based on the combined analysis of (*America's Most Wanted, Cops, Top Cops, FBI, The Untold Story* and *American Detective*). Carmody's (1998) findings are based on an analysis of of *Cops* and *Real Stories of the Highway Patrol* between December 1994 and May 1995.

[viii] Kooistra et al.'s analysis does not disaggregate violent crimes. Oliver's 1991 data is excluded because it deals only with incidents of murder.