



Copyright © 2023 *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*
All rights reserved.
ISSN: 1070-8286

Paw Patrol and School Patrol:
Characterizations of Law Enforcement

LaNina N. Cooke
Farmingdale State College

Abstract

Outside of parents and peers, television acts as a principal mechanism for childhood socialization. Malleable and impressionable, pre-school children specifically are influenced by the imagery projected in cartoons. One such cartoon, *Paw Patrol*, the apple of many childhood obsessions, features a police dog named Chase who embodies the archetype of the loyal, honest, and fair service officer. Cited as authoritarian, misogynistic, and unrealistic in its portrayal of law enforcement (Hess, 2020; Kennedy, 2020), this characterization lies in direct contrast to the actual roles of the police and the real and perceived actions that children experience through School Resource Officers (SROs). SROs are sworn officers who are assigned to schools, acting as enforcers, mediators, and community liaisons. Although there is no national standardized set of responsibilities that dictate the position's tasks and standards, SROs uniformly have the punitive authority to arrest and enforce policy. Students experience their punitive abilities, assigning judgements of fairness and appropriateness, impacting their perceptions of legitimacy. Also impacting their impressions is exposure to incidents of violence on school grounds and in the community. In the case of this analysis, the fictitious officer paradigm in *Paw Patrol* is compared to real-world characterizations that are influenced by officer identity, cultural norms, and actuality. The analysis considers dissonance, cultural framing, and priming, which shape the perceptive process and lens of children. It examines sections of the show that highlight law enforcement characterization. Also reflected are the implications of these depictions, as well as suggestions of relief.

Keywords: *Paw Patrol*, law enforcement, perception, School Resource Officer (SRO), dissonance; priming, framing

Introduction

There is no absence of television shows and documentaries that depict criminal justice-related incidents and players. As seen through the CSI effect, overstatements of crime rates, and faulty perceptions of perpetrators based on race (Cavender & Deutsch, 2007; Chiceros, Padgett, & Gertz, 2000; Eschholz, 2003; Hayes & Levett, 2012; Holbrook & Hill, 2005; Kim, Barak, & Shelton, 2009), persons with no field experience and only a working knowledge of the criminal justice system are influenced by television and its depiction of system behavior. This influence impacts juries, as well as individual and group feelings toward and about law enforcement, the courts, and corrections.

Lay, “experiential” judgements of proceedings and actions are often subconscious, influenced by television, film, news, and social media. Centered and dramatized, especially, are law enforcement officers. From shows like *Blue Bloods* and *We Run This City*, to real-life instances including Officer Eugene Goodman’s guard during the Capitol riots and George Floyd’s murder at the hands of former Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin, law enforcement is shown through the lens of either heroism or “bad apples”. Commonly geared toward adult audiences, the polarized narration of good guy/bad guy is typically in line with vocalized sentiments of the police, as expressed in social media and online forums (Surette, 2007; Cavender, et al., 2007; Eschholz, Millard, & Flynn, 2004). Paralleled at seemingly opposite ends of the sentiment spectrum are Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter movements, with many unwilling to identify with feelings from the middle. These perceptions are often framed as favorable versus unfavorable, overlapping with race, ethnic, experiential, and age correlates (Chermak, Mcgarrell & Gruenewald, 2006; Weitzer, 2002).

Children’s shows also contain representations, but instead of the inclusion of the “bad cop” persona, these shows are softer, portraying officers as brave and confident. This heroism theme is especially favored by pre-school children, ages 3-5, who are impressionable and apt to messaging. They perceive and process television differently than adults, making television framing more influential.

This work considers *Paw Patrol* and its characterization of law enforcement through its framing of the main character, Chase. It is argued that although the show’s format is developmentally appropriate, the depictions of law enforcement contrast with reality, especially considering the unfortunate incidents that have occurred on school grounds. It evidences the contrasts of reality and what is laid out for children’s consumption by considering *Paw Patrol*’s patterned representations in the absence of necessary social context. The work does not suggest the retailoring of *Paw Patrol* to match reality, but rather views the show content as an opportunity for quality conversations between children and caregivers and between school staff and school resource officers (SROs).

Images of Law Enforcement in Television

There is no mistaking the varying presence of the constructive imaging of law enforcement on television and digital media. *The Keystone Cops* (1912-1917) and more currently, *Reno 911!* (2003-2022) and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (2013-2021), include law enforcement characterizations of buffoonery and incompetence. Relatedly, superhero television shows and movies often negate the legitimacy of law enforcement, pegging the superhero as society’s savior (Kort-Butler, 2012a; Kort-Butler, 2012b). Increasingly, however, the notion of the brave, professional, crime-fighting champion has come to the forefront, beginning with *Dragnet* in 1951 (1951-1957). Shows such as *Law & Order* (1990-), *NYPD Blue* (1993-1995), and *Blue Bloods* (2010-), with titles that suggest loyalty and authority, filter out and frame law enforcement as most noble and heroic. There are shows that have included corruption, but the framework is housed in the “good cop-bad cop” dichotomy, including the emblematic themes of stoicism, bravery, and authority, while leaving out the in between officer who does not occupy the opposite part of the spectrum (Grady, 2021; Hess, 2020).

Regardless of the messaging slant, the characterizations of law enforcement stem from a version of reality presented as storytelling through television. This television reality is a function of culture and emotion and is somewhat metaphorical in its parallels to actuality (Watkins, 1988). The goal is for viewers to heuristically connect to the show and its characters using archetypes, with the hope that their expectations, based on real experiences and perceptions, are mirrored (Champion, 2017). The presence of these symbols creates a collective consciousness of either reality or the ideal, which translates into cognitions about law enforcement.

Perception and the Processing of Information

Although intersecting across styles, children's shows can be loosely categorized based on pacing and foundational elements of reality versus fantasy. Pacing refers to the length of time spent on each scene and the frequency of idea shifting (Fan, Zhan, Qing & Wang, 2021; Kearney & Levine, 2019). Programs such as *Sponge Bob Square Pants* speedily skip through ideas with randomized captioning of events, leaving children unable to anticipate what is going to happen next. This expectation element is an important part of childhood development through its connection to executive functioning, including cognitive flexibility, behavioral processing, and impulse control (Cooper, Uller, Pettifer & Stolc, 2009; Geist & Gibson 2000; Habib & Soliman, 2015). Further psychologically influencing children are fantasy/reality programming. These programs increase cognitive load and violate expectations compared to shows, such as *Sesame Street*, which are more patterned and realistic (Lillard & Peterson, 2011). Routine-based and reality-themed programs are praised as having a long-term, positive influence, in addition to offering educational content (Kearney, et al., 2019). In an evaluation on the impact of *Sesame Street*, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) found that the routine format positively inspired behavior, cognition, and judgment ability when watched for long periods of time (Bogatz & Ball, 1971).

Routine-based programming is favored by childcare and service professionals, especially when coupled with the conveyance of messaging about society and social norms. For example, *Doc McStuffins*, through a girl who takes care of stuffed animals, incorporates kindness and well as methods of expression and emotional competence. Other programs, such as *Hero Elementary*, feature students cooperating to help their teacher problem solve. There are also shows, such as *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood* and *Super Wings*, that discuss elements of society that promote law and social power dynamics in a cognitively and developmentally appropriate manner (Kearney, et al., 2019). Although varied in the specific tenets, these shows, including *Paw Patrol*, are in line with the literal and exploration necessities of play and make-believe (Erikson, 1994; Piaget, 1971; Vygotsky, 1978). *Paw Patrol*, aimed at preschoolers ages 3 to 5, is centered on an imagined world where dogs help humans solve problems. Age appropriate, it is connectively and developmentally designed toward children's moral and social growth.

Television is a major part of the lives of most children, with many spending a great deal of time either actively or passively watching (Vandewater, Bickham, Lee, Cummings, Wartella & Rideout, 2005). Although the American Academy of Pediatrics (2016) recommends that screen time be limited to one hour and replaced with developmental activities such as reading, Nielsen found that 2–5-year-olds watch 32 hours of active and passive television per week (2009). Much of the reason for the increase since 2007 has been due to the amount of programming available and the many ways of consumption. Children consume media through mobile devices, tablets, and computers, different from kids raised in the 1980's. Their shows are more appealing, relatable, and realistic, using technology that adds to the vibrancy and realness of the characters (Paspalakis, 2020; Rideout & Hamel, 2006). Also seeing slight shifts has been gender representation and less normalization of societal gender roles (Thompson & Zerninos, 1995). There has been, however, an area of consistency over

time regarding the presence of “deserved aggression” (Gunter & Harrison, 1995; Klein & Shiffmann, 2012;), which involves the justification of punishment.

Children lack general knowledge and experience, often drawing information from television. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2017), television influences children depending on programming, development, and environmental conditions. Also influential is cognition processes based on age cohort. For example, among teenagers, attitudes and behaviors toward violent content has been correlated with acceptance and desensitization (Sloane, 2016; Zuckerman & Zuckerman, 1985). It has also been cited that the level of attention that young children pay to shows is a function of their expectations, motivation, cognition, and experience, with their visual and audial attention based on their interest (Fowles, 1992). Much of this can be demanding to a young child who has little to no experience outside of their caregivers and familiarities. These cognitive demands change based on the age of the child, with younger children drawn to animation, lively music, auditor changes, sound effects and music (Calvert & Gersh, 1987) that are often shallow, taking less mental effort compared to programs meant for older children (Salomon, 1984).

Television shows act as a representation of what is “typical, safe and acceptable” (Lillard, et al. 2011). Linking patterns of prosocial behavior, television shows help children process social information through the connection of social cues (Padilla-Walker, Coyne, & Fraser, 2013; Ziv, 2013). However, studies have found that although preschool children try to gauge realism and parallels with their world, they may overgeneralize when watching shows that depict real life, attributing reality to what they see, especially when the messaging is repeated outside of television, such as through toys, apparel, and food (Chira, 1983; Ogle, Graham, Lucas-Thompson & Roberto, 2017; Surette, 2007; Van Evra, 2004). Termed cultivation theory, these repetitive images alter conceptions of social reality, often exaggerating cultural norms and constructing ideas of truth (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli; Shanahan, 2001; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 2020; Signorielli & Morgan, 2008). This is true for preschool children who lack the cognitive resources to filter through television content (White, 2012). Through this “mediated structuring”, children passively learn and internalize cultural messages through familiar stories, absorbing the information minus the meaning (Mayer & Bogdan, 1999; Phillips, & Strobl, 2013).

Law Enforcement Framing and Perception

There is a disconnect between what is perceived in cartoons and what children experience when they are older via the media, conversation, or contact. This cognitive dissonance leads to the discarding of one of the conflicting pieces (Cooper, 2007; Festinger, 1957; Perlovsky, 2013). Sometimes there is emotion connected to this, especially when children attribute positive traits, such as heroism, and their expectations are not met. Young children, intrinsically drawn to familiar, “normal” experiences, thrive on consistency and attribute themes such as loyalty, fairness, and trust to law enforcement (Killen & Rutland, 2022). These “controlling images” are passively injected and are reflections of wider societal notions, enforcing archetypes and assumptions of normal behavior.

As children widen their experience, they are influenced by social stigma and are socialized outside of the home and through television, with shifting assumptions. This shift is typically implicit and unconscious in nature, without the activation of a stereotype (Bridges & Steen, 1998; Jarcho, Berkman, & Liberman, 2011). The stereotype connects to the imagery of law enforcement, which is often framed by the media itself. Law enforcement imagery features an in-group that works in solidarity, as characterized by the phrase “the boys in blue”. Creating the thin blue line between them and civilians, these boundaries are well-defined, creating alterity as the group uses its authority over people and spaces (Lamont & Molinar, 2002; Vallas, 2001). The culture and power dynamics of the group dictate the differential distribution of perception, with officers collectively serving as the principal dictators. This portrayal of authority, and the occasional violation of ethics,

are seen as necessary evils for the greater good (Eschholz, et al., 2004). The societal cognition process that follows is patterned, often unconscious and automatic, based in emotion and perception rather than fact (Yahya & Sukmayadi, 2020).

Dissonance can occur when the child's experience via television and primary socialization is different than their secondary socialization. Children experience this internal disagreement based on outcome (Alessandri, Darcheville & Zentall, 2008). They are more likely to choose a side based on what gives them better social inclusion. This inclusion is peer related and centered on in-group favorability, such as connectedness to the school and the student majority. Magnifying the dissonance are the social movements that have arisen out of interactions between law enforcement and the Black community, including Black Lives Matter, Blue Lives Matter, and calls to defund the police. While known and generally understood by older children, students have been met with the notion of the historical and value systems of law enforcement that contrasts with television depictions (Mondschein, 2020).

Research has found that when children, ages 5-8, watched non-preschool television featuring law enforcement, their perception was more likely to be unrealistic, with children overemphasizing arresting actions, rather than service orientation (Briggs & Hawkins, 1993; Low & Durkin, 2001). This is different from the idealized, collective narrative of integrity, fairness and justness that is presented in preschool-aged programming. Outside of television, once children go to school and become socialized by entities outside of their parents, perceptions, and characterizations of law enforcement change (Carter & Fuller, 2015).

Law enforcement images and public notions of legitimacy have changed over time, with sentiments based on direct and indirect experiences with police, as well as changes in police culture as it has evolved between the political, reform, and community eras of policing and from its roots in slave patrols. Symbolic interactionism, or attachment of meaning, leads people to respond to the environment and make sense of it based on subjective meanings. For example, *Paw Patrol* is full of social cues, including the use of the police dog's name, "Chase", and the tank-like vehicle that he drives. These meanings are pliable, and in the case of feelings about law enforcement, there is emotion that is attached (Blumer, 1969). Individuals act in reference to the subjective meaning of objects and create their own relatedness as a method of characterization based on experiences. Television activates cultural primers to influence children's understanding of messages about crime control, which has centered on fear (Garland, 2001; Kort-Butler, 2012b; Simon, 2007). This fear reinforces the legitimacy of law enforcement and punishment analogous to the "deserved aggression" paradigm seen in cartoons (Kort-Butler, 2012b; Klein, et al., 2012; Gunter & et al., 1995).

School Resource Officers

As children are socialized outside of their household and pre-school television, experiences, and subjective meaning changes. The *Paw Patrol* image of the legitimate, neighborhood cop is not one that persists. Even with shows such as *Paw Patrol*, the Police Athletic League (PAL), and officer visits to schools, the positive symbolism of law enforcement does not necessarily stabilize perceptions as patterns of interactions with police change.

The service model mantra that the police are always "here to help", in the words of Chase, are blended with the punitive, physical, confrontational aspects of policing. As children get older, they often come face to face with this element of social control through the enforcer, warrior archetype. This theme does not completely erase the helpful characterization of law enforcement, but rather takes a more prominent role of savior and authority (Solomon, 2021; Kennedy, 2020), often first experienced in schools.

As a means of maintaining discipline and safety, social control is evident in most schools across the United States. The increase of zero tolerance school policies, tragic school shootings, and violations and infractions on school grounds has led to schools including private security and public law enforcement in their

discipline and order fold. Sworn officers, termed School Resource Officers (SROs), are specifically tasked and trained to work with children, although their amount of engagement is often not specified and has blurred boundaries (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). In most cases, however, they are tasked with enforcing policy, bonding with students, and acting as liaisons to the community, with the power to arrest, question, frisk, and detain (Canady, James & Nease, 2012; James & McCallion, 2013).

The use of SROs, which is primarily aimed at formal social control, first began in Flint, Michigan in the 1950s and grew tremendously with the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which provided funding and encouraged schools to find solutions to crime (Hurley Swayze & Buskovich, 2014). Initiatives such as the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (DARE) functioned to reduce the use of illicit substances in school through informal and formal social control and was enforced by private and public entities (Pentek & Eisenberg, 2018). Further encouraging the adoption of law enforcement, especially armed, were school shootings, including the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut and the more recent 2022 shooting in Uvalde, Texas at the Robb Elementary School, resulting in state and federal initiatives, along with attached funding (Community Oriented Policing Services, n.d.). Legislatively in 2018, Parkland, Florida passed laws mandating public schools to have school resource officers or armed personnel on campus.

Between 2017 and 2019, 47% of public schools in the United States were assigned SROs, occupying 36% of elementary schools and 68% of middle schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). The numbers have since increased with school shootings, fatality rates, and the need for the feeling of safety (Theriot, 2016). In addition, some schools have seen a growth in the presence of drugs, disorder, and status offenses, leading to zero tolerance policies and stringent consequences. These policies center on the theme of quality of life and broken windows policing and consider small delinquent acts as a pathway to a “culture of misconduct” and larger offenses, strumming the need for enforcement outside of the range of security and school administration (Ryan, Katsiyannis, Counts & Selnut, 2018; Stinson & Watkins, 2014).

School resource officers are viewed as representations of law and order, acting as a deterrent, reducing opportunities for disorder, and enforcing policy and law (Canady, et. al., 2012; Felson, 1998). The enforcement aspect has been met with varying opinions from adults, with some feeling that crime, disorder, and negative influences decrease with their presence. Others, including policy makers and other stakeholders, have posed that the presence and involvement of SROs maintain the school-to-prison pipeline by increasing the chance for students, specifically Black students, to be integrated into the criminal justice system (Children's Defense Fund, 2007; Gottfredson, et al. 2020; Theriot, 2009; Theriot & Orme, 2016). Relatedly of concern is the increased use of suspensions and expulsions as disciplinary measures, disproportionately impacting Black male students (Ramey, 2015; Ryberg, et al., 2015). Consequentially, increased policy violations increase the likelihood of dropping out school, rates that are linked to economic harm and involvement in the criminal justice system.

Generally, parents of children in SRO schools have more positive perceptions of law enforcement than students, especially in reference to their expectations and assumptions of safety (Blum, 2005; Brown & Benedict, 2005; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hunt, Taylor, Fitzgerald, Button & Kerr, 2019). Some of the expectations stem from their fear of serious violence and school shootings. While it is assumed that SROs decrease the incidence of crime, there are variable findings in the research, with the majority concluding that SROs had little effect on the occurrence of violent, drug, weapon, and status offenses, compared to impact of student body connectedness, teacher/student relationships, and parental involvement (McNeeley, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2022; Theriot, 2009; Whitlock, 2006). Supporting this notion was the decrease in juvenile arrests and reported victimization between 2003 and 2012 in schools with more protective resources (Shaver & Decker, 2017).

Student interaction with SROs is more for deterrence reasons and policy enforcement than arrest (James, et al., 2013; Na, et al., 2013). Influenced by peers and their treatment, students base sentiment on their consideration of fairness in punishment, appropriateness of the use of force, and policy enforcement, with their

own social connectedness within the school increasing their positive perceptions of SROs. Connectedness to peers and school culture operated as a protective factor, increasing perceived and real safety, resulting in fewer arrests for assaults and weapons and less incidents of misdemeanor-level offenses (Theriot, 2016). Oppositely, the lack of connection increased school violence and negative relationships with SROs, especially when SROs disciplined and negatively engaged with the student body (Juvonen, 2001; Theriot, 2016).

In assessments of young people's feelings toward SROs presence, there was variance based on locale, race, and socio-economic status. In one study, the functions of SROs were seen as initially positive, but as interaction intensified and became more regular, sentiments were increasingly negative and officers were viewed as unnecessarily aggressive (Hopkins, Hewstone, & Hantzi, 1992). Supporting this notion was a New York City Civil Liberties Union declaration that students felt uncomfortable with officer presence and regarded them as disrespectful and verbally abusive (2010). It should be noted that contrary to adult opinions of increased safety due to officers on site, students did not necessarily have the same impression, with students feeling more vulnerable, anxious, distrusted, and criminalized (Bridenhall & Jesilow, 2008). A similar sentiment came from students in urban schools and from communities with more crime and victimization (Bracy, 2010; Hurst & Frank, 2000). This can be explained as a function of over-policing in these areas and the different resulting experiences. Students from opposite areas may be shaded from this and may have more favorable views of SROs.

Correlated with sentiments toward SROs was race. Some research cited Black children as feeling more unsafe with the presence of SROs due to experiences from school and the wider community (Borrero, 2001; Brown & Benedict 2002), while others found no differences (Brown & Benedict, 2005; Taylor, Turner, Esbensen & Winfree, 2001). Mediated by socioeconomic status, it was, however, demonstrated that Black children from households with lower median incomes were more likely to have negative feelings about SROs, especially when these areas were urban. This was also true for Hispanic children (Portillos, et al., 2012; Taylor, et al., 2001). Corroborating this race effect was student treatment. Black students were more likely to be disciplined, suspended, or expelled, controlling for classroom behavior and conduct-related diagnoses (Homer & Fisher, 2020). These unequal outcomes lent to their disproportionate rates of being policed, criminalized for minor infractions, and involved in the criminal justice system (Bradshaw, et al., 2010; Brunson & Weitzer, 2009; Gottfredson, et al., 2017). Students with disabilities were treated similarly, facing disciplinary action for incidents that could have been handled by administration and social workers (Hirschfield, 2008; Hirschfield, 2018; Justice Policy Institute, 2011; Shaver, et. al., 2017; Welch & Payne, 2018), as recommended in the National Association of School Resource Officers' best practices.

Student treatment and sentiment sit in direct contrast to the images that law enforcement seeks to express. Their self-images have been classified as consisting of emotion regulation, moral decision-making, and just behavior. Also included are collective influences and social orientations toward crime and ways to apply the law (Wilber, 2007). Much of this is connected to agency culture, which dictates how to apply policy and the law, as well to whom it is applied.

Pre-school children, prior to secondary socialization, are presented with images and equipped with observations of law enforcement and officer roles. Messaging comes from parents and the media, who often frame law enforcement as a friend and source of safety, instructing children to call 911 or find an officer if there is danger. Pre-school oriented characters such as Deputy Dog, the Busy Town Sherriff, and McGruff the Crime Dog display the image of the male officer who saves the day. Coincidentally, after pre-school, children's ultra-affirmative view shifts as they are socialized by their peers and world outside of their household. (Powell, Skouteris & Murfett, 2008). Soft, kind shows, such as *Paw Patrol*, are replaced by more action-oriented shows that depict villains and anti-heroes. Some of these images are dramatic, sensationalized, and violent. Representation can also come from community engagement with law enforcement, news events that highlight an excessive use of force, and hearsay from family and friends, contrasting the self-imagery of the good-cop.

Incidents in Policing

In many police departments there have been patterns of issues, including inaction, recklessness, bias, corruption, brutality, and the excessive use of force. Many of these incidents have been shown on television and social media. Some of these incidents have included child victimization off school grounds. In 2010, 7-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones's Detroit home was raided by a SWAT team that was being filmed for a reality television show. After throwing a flash-bang grenade into the home, she was shot in the head. In 2014, Tamir Rice, 12-years-old but perceived to be a grown man, was the victim of a police shooting after reports of a child waving a toy gun. Fanta Bility, 8-years-old, was victim of police recklessness near Philadelphia where police fired shots among a group, with a bullet entering a car and killing the child (2021). Other children have also met harm, including 17-year-old Devin Guilford in Lansing, Michigan (2015), 16-year-old Ma'Khia Bryant in Columbus, Ohio (2019), 13-year-old Adam Toledo in Chicago, Illinois (2021), and 13-year-old Andre Hernandez, Jr. in San Antonio, Texas (2022).

Also important in this exchange are incidents that occur in the school, such as the use of force by school resource officers and school shootings. In 2015, a 16-year-old girl from Florida was slammed to the floor and dragged by an SRO because of a cell phone incident. In 2018, the family of a 7-year-old North Carolina boy with autism filed a lawsuit because an SRO threatened him and laid him face down on the floor for over 30 minutes. Similarly, in 2020, a 7-year-old autistic child was handcuffed, taunted, and brought to the floor in Statesville, North Carolina. Other excessive uses of discretion have occurred in Colorado, Kentucky, and elsewhere across the country, many which have not received national attention (Shaver, et al., 2017).

Incidents on school grounds that involve police officer intervention have not been limited to minor student infractions. These exchanges have also involved more serious events with a student or outsider perpetrator, including bullying, hate crimes, sexual assault, and rape, with fluctuating report rates across the country. Although victimization has declined overall, school shootings have been trending up since 2020 (Irwin, Wang, Chu, & Thompson, 2022). In 2022 alone, 27 school shootings have occurred, including the murder of 19 children and two adults at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

The 24-hour television news circuit and digital media makes the knowledge of such occurrences unavoidable. These occurrences often leave students feeling vulnerable, scared, and confused (Justice Policy Institute, 2012). Specifically with the shooting in Uvalde, the law enforcement response resulted in hopelessness and a decrease in police legitimacy. These, along with less-publicized incidents, have an even wider impact on the community and subsequent perception. Creating polarity, these illustrations in which children are victimized, met with force, or not protected due to law enforcement inaction contrast with the service-oriented representation of policing. These depictions are contrary to that shown on pre-school television, such as *Paw Patrol*, further widening the gap between expectation and reality.

Data and Methods

Premiering on August 12, 2013, six months after the murder of Trayvon Martin and a month after the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, the show lies as a symbol of the cultural “Back the Blue” narrative that is ever prescribed to preschool children in television and wider society through relatively innocuous framing such as in costumes, characters, and pretend play such as “cops and robbers” games, with children imitating the image of “good guys” versus “bad guys”.

Illustratively, *Paw Patrol*, features the idealized representation of police officers through a dog named Chase. Centered around dogs who represent service professions, such as firefighter, sanitation worker, and pilot, Chase, the main character, is a male German Shepard with the role of traffic cop, equipped with sirens and tools. He is labeled by Nickelodeon as an “Alpha Dog” who is “passionate about protecting his community and

playing by the rules. He is confident, super smart, and the fastest thing on four paws. If there's a problem to be solved, Chase is always on the case". With machismo as an overarching dynamic, he is characterized as loyal, brave, honest, fair, and sound, congruent to the police archetype and "protect and serve" aspect of law enforcement.

Paw Patrol was selected as the show of analysis due to its wide popularity among children ages 3-5 across varying demographics. In addition, there have been other considerations of the show, highlighting the reality gaps (Hess, 2020; Kennedy, 2020; Smith, 2018; Solomon, 2021). This research is meant to add to the existing knowledge on the cultural framing of children's shows that feature criminal justice systems. The show is streamed on television and online, both with the same episodes. There are 255 television episodes in circulation. Since children view multiple platforms, the researcher used the 15 episodes that are streamed on the Nickelodeon site. The episodes were initially aired between 2013 and 2023. Episodes were viewed in its entirety for theme, language, character props, and outcome.

Evidence from Paw Patrol

For pre-conventional preschool children, the central content of shows such as *Paw Patrol* is not strenuous due to its predictable reality, which is one of the reasons why the show gained so much popularity (Smith, 2018). Geared to the 3 to 5-year-old preschool audience, *Paw Patrol* constructs law enforcement as legitimate and community-oriented problem solvers, exposing kids to the service, helpful nature of policing, rather than the punitive side. In every episode, Chase engages with his service peers and helps the community by problem solving. Well-respected and extolled as a leader, he has positive relationships with his cartoon society. All citizens have to do is "yelp for help". Overall, there were three themes that persisted: Chase uses law enforcement tools to deal with infractions, he operates as "the criminal justice system" and he always gets it right.

The show begins with an energetic theme song featuring the pups leaving a headquarters dispatched by Ryder, a human character. Chase, whose name is symbolic of stopping the bad guys, is the leader of the pack and is always "on the case" and sometimes helps "the others be police officers too", which is portrayed as an easy task (S5 E11). He drives a police car that is tank-like in comparison to the other vehicles, including the construction truck. Along with the military-like vehicle, his responses to Ryder often include "Ready for action, Ryder, Sir!", speaking to the militarization of law enforcement (S1 E17; S9 E21).

In criminal justice-related adult television programming, crimes are violent, danger is ostensible, and there is frequent disorder. Contrasting, in *Paw Patrol*, law enforcement's archetypical representation is warrior-like in its ability and willingness to use tools such as nets, firing weapons, and spikes as a means of force to stop kids from skateboarding, to stop a runaway food truck, and to catch a stolen jukebox (S9 E24a/b; S8 E26a/b; S9 E25a/b). Also apparent in adult shows are officers who are responsive and effective, speedily solving crimes (Britto, Hughes, Saltzman, & Stroh, 2007; Deutsch & Cavende, 2008; Donovan, & Klahm, 2015; Eschholz, et al., 2007). Similarly, Chase is quick, accurate, and ethical, serving as a detective, traffic controller, and enforcer who's "paws uphold the laws" (S1 E2, S5, E1, S9 E21a/b, S9 E24). The reality of policing often says otherwise, especially regarding historical incidents in policing, such as slave patrols, occurrences during the Civil Rights Movement and political era, disproportionate uses of stop and frisk, and patterns and practices of misconduct (*Floyd v. City of New York*; Hassett-Walker, 2001; Lopez, 2021).

Relatedly, *Paw Patrol*, specifically the police dog Chase, has been criticized as unrealistic and disconnected from the true nature of law enforcement, creating an "us versus them" paradigm and perpetuating the notion of a police savior (Kennedy, 2020; Solmon, 2021). Part of the reasoning behind this is not that Chase is a negative character, but that he represents the ideological, archetype, service-oriented police dog. Marked as

“copeganda” (Hess, 2020), the indication is that it creates a conjured, perfect criminal justice system that is always “here to help”.

Interestingly, Chase is the criminal justice system. He operates as law enforcement and the courts, questioning witnesses and “perpetrators”, determining the culprit, and issuing punishment. Chase makes assumptions about who is responsible, based on his “nose that knows” (S9 E25a/b). There is an obvious absence of due process. In Season 5, Episode 11, Mayor Humdinger steals the royal kitties. Once Chase determines that he is guilty, he is sentenced to hard labor and tasked with manually propelling the train. In another episode, Mayor Humdinger is sentenced to attack by a monster (S5 E17).

Paw Patrol and its archetypal charactering is full of priming elements which contrast with reality. With such priming, children are more apt to accept the prescribed frames of reference which include the functions of law enforcement and their omnipotence. They are not, however, capable of interpreting events due to their lack of reference point and context, although they do understand elements of morality (Atheide, 1999; Smith, Sparks, & Girling, 2000).

The protests and critics have “come for *Paw Patrol*” (Hess, 2020), with reason. Its depictions of reality include elements of patriarchy in its positioning of female characters in supportive or confused roles and government mis-leadership in the bumbling and conniving of Mayor Goodway. Coupled with this are erroneous views of how crime happens, such as stranger danger. In *Paw Patrol*, perpetrators of criminal activity are nomadic (Kennedy, 2021) although in reality, crime is typically of opportunity, involving people with a familiarity of the area, such as through family homes, school, or leisure (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1991; Cohen & Felson, 1979; Menting, Lammers, Ruiters, & Bernasco, 2016). In *Paw Patrol*, and other shows, crime is socially constructed, strumming up moral panic, in which quick acting pups save the day.

Exemplified in *Paw Patrol* is the concept of the thin blue line. This line puts law enforcement in front of disorder, creating a perceptual gap between them and civilians. Chase, maintaining order and always on call, is illustrated as a hero, with others beyond the line depicted as violators or people in need of protection. There are two groups who occupy opposites on the law-abiding spectrum: the bad guys and the enforcers who save the day (Kort-Butler, 2012b). Similarly, adult shows exaggerate this line through the depiction of a few bad apples amongst a slew of Constitution-supporting protectors. This loyalty paradigm of “us vs them” as evidenced in *Paw Patrol* and adult programming, creates solidarity and in-group association within a romanticized profession.

Implications and Remedies

Cognitive experiential self-theory (CEST) is the two-way mechanism in which individuals process information through experiential or rational means (Epstein & Pacini, 1999; Pacini & Epstein, 1999). This rationality is typically reserved for adults who have the ability and decision-making skills to decide between emotion and logic. Children do not have a developed frontal lobe and are more impulsive, short-sighted, and irrational than adults. With their inability to adequately process, they accept characterizations as they are presented. As children get older and presented characterizations change, rather than reasoning with the dissonance, they often drop the notion of service-oriented police officers, replacing it with the authoritative, masculine, “law and order” officer.

Children’s shows such as *Paw Patrol* depict law enforcement as a constant positive, with communication, negotiation, and problem-solving skills. Besides the male-oriented archetype, there is some overlap between the characterizations, which encompass heroism, solidarity, and leadership. As children mature, they are exposed to more harsh characterizations of law enforcement, including the “bad apple” prototype and the depraved or fumbling officer that is seen through peers, social activities, and television, shifting the expectations that children have, creating dissonance. The disconnect can be subconscious or it can

be recognized, with children beginning to question their experiences. The influences of television can cause a misrepresentation and misinterpretation of law enforcement and their duties, altering legitimacy due to children's difficulty to consider logically. The result is their reliance on experience and emotion.

The gap between expectations, which are formed at a young age, and the "reality" of experiences can be daunting, which may necessitate conversations with children during their formative years, specifically prior to secondary socialization. With the potential to ease confusion and disconnect, it is in the best interest of child development that parents, teachers, and administrators openly discuss law enforcement and student-body dynamics with children to promote rational processing. Supportively, studies have found that the reason for the negative effects of television are not the fact of watching or consuming, but in part the absence of caretaker involvement (Manasib & Bhattacharya, 2010). Clarification and explanation would help frame the perceptive process for children.

It would be impractical to imply that officers should paint themselves in a negative light. It is, however, suggested that along with positive imagery through events and community programming, open engagement forums meant for the discussing of officer roles, school safety, and publicized occurrences would help bridge divides and promote understanding and logical reasoning. This could level perceptions and temper unrealistic expectations, fostering positive relationships. Also, helpful would be the inclusion of the student body, parents, the community, administrators, and teachers in the defining roles and the utility of school resource officers.

An area from *Paw Patrol* that is problematic is "episodic framing", which snapshots issues, rather than outlining the structural and societal issues that are apparent in society (Kennedy, 2020). The lack of context is not necessarily easy when discussing law enforcement to children. Pre-school children are arguably not developmentally ready to handle the social constructs that surround law enforcement. They can, however, understand that collectives are not monolithically good or bad (Lillard, et al., 2011; Smith, et al. 2009). This is where parents come in as liaisons of information. They are important conduits of explanation and discussion and are important in making sure that children receive content based on age and developmental appropriateness.

It is no question that the umbrella of law enforcement has work to do to come closer to their idealized characterization, especially concerning children. Although differences in sentiment are sometimes based on demographics and socioeconomic status (Borrero, 2001; Bracy, 2011; Bridenhall, et. al., 2008; Hurst, et al., 2000; Theriot, 2016), some post-preschool children have differing views of law enforcement due to their own experiences with local enforcement, the experiences of their family, and media influences. While the source of their sentiments cannot be isolated to a solitary influence, programs such as *Paw Patrol* prime children toward the savior, alpha, archetype police officer.

School resource officers, who deal directly with children, are expected to understand the juvenile developmental components that make their duties different. They should also understand the importance of developing relationships, rather than promoting "get tough" objectives. It is not always possible to reach positive outcomes in every situation, but school resource officers should be versed in conflict resolution and be armed with options so that they can use their discretion appropriately. States differ in their acceptance of SROs. Some schools have opted to consider getting rid of resource officers due to student fear and the possible contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline (Paterson, 2022; Ryan, et al., 2018; Stinson, et al., 2014; Theriot, 2009). States such as Florida give SROs additional rights, with the power to arrest and transfer children for psychiatric examination based on behavioral displays in school (Florida Mental Health Act, 2009). Still, many school districts have zero tolerance policies that box out juveniles with behavioral concerns, even when they exhibit developmentally connected behavior (Gottfredson, et al., 2020). This raises the need for schools to restructure their frameworks so that they, at least in some ways, reflect the "here to help" paradigm that is implied in almost every law enforcement agency's mission statement. The New York Civil Liberties' Union (2019) presented a memorandum of understanding that outlined what the school and SRO partnership should look like to serve the population effectively and appropriately. De-escalation and situational-based training are

paramount in their outline, stressing the execution of best practices for working with students with mental health concerns and disabilities, and students who have been victimized. It also suggests that SROs should be able to navigate through student social issues and understand the consequences of criminal justice system involvement. They suggest the use of restorative justice, when possible, and the establishment of options so that officers do not have to resort to punitiveness. According to the NYCLU, the restoration and maintenance of order should be in the hands of the school administrators and should reflect school codes, rather than enforcement's standards.

While not in the scope of this work, it would be beneficial for future studies to consider the correlation between children's current perception of law enforcement and television-viewing behavior. It is further suggested that researchers gauge how in touch children are to the social constructs of crime, as well as the social contexts that frame law enforcement. This work cannot separate the varying impacts of the different media types that children are exposed to, but it does contribute to the understanding of how archetypes and characterizations are a piece of puzzle that contribute to preschooler reality.

References

- Alessandri, J., Darcheville, J.C. & Zentall, T.R. (2008). Cognitive dissonance in children: justification of effort or contrast? *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 15, 673–677.
- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (2017). TV violence and children. *Facts for Families*, December 13.
- American Academy of Pediatrics (2016). Council on communications and media: media and young minds. *Pediatrics*, 138.
- American Civil Liberties Union (2010). *ACLU Lawsuit Challenges Abusive Police Practices in New York City Schools: NYPD Officers Routinely Subject Schoolchildren to Excessive Force and Wrongful Arrests*. January 20.
- Altheide, D. (1997). The news media, the problem frame, and the production of fear. *Sociological Quarterly*, 38, 647-668.
- Blum, R. (2005). A case for school connectedness. *Educational Leadership*, 16-20.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Methods*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bogatz, G. & Ball, S. (1971). *The Second Year of Sesame Street: A Continuing Evaluation*. Princeton: Educational Testing Service.
- Borrero, M. (2001). The widening mistrust between youth and police. *Families in Society*, 82, 399-408.
- Bracy, N. (2011). Student perception of high-security school environment. *Youth and Society*, 63, 365-395.
- Bradshaw, C., Mitchell, M., O'Brennan, I., & Leaf, P. (2010). Multilevel exploration of factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Black students in office disciplinary referrals. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102(2), 508-520.
- Brantingham PL, Brantingham PJ (1991). Notes on the geometry of crime. In: Brantingham PJ, Brantingham PL (eds) *Environmental Criminology*, 2nd ed. Waveland Press, pp 27–54.
- Bridenhall, B. & Jesilow, P. (2008). What Matters. The formation of attitudes toward the police. *Police Quarterly* 11(2), 151-181.
- Bridges, G. S., & Steen, S. (1998). Racial disparities in official assessments of juvenile offenders: Attributional stereotypes as mediating mechanisms. *American Sociological Review*, 63, 554-570.
- Briggs, F. & Hawkins, R. (1993). Children's perceptions of personal safety issues and their vulnerability to molestation. *Children's Australia*, 18, 4-9.
- Britto, S., Hughes, T., Saltzman, K. & Stroh, C. (2007). Does "special" mean young, White and female? Deconstructing the meaning of "special" in Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 14, 39-57.
- Brown, B. & Benedict, W. (2002). Perceptions of the police: past findings methodological issues. Conceptual issues and policy implications. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 25, 543-580.
- Brown, B. & Benedict, W. (2005). Classroom cops, what do the students think"? A case study of student perceptions of school police and security officers conducted in a Hispanic community. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 7, 264-285.
- Brunson, R. K., & Weitzer, R. (2009). Police relations with Black and White youths in different urban neighborhoods. *Urban Affairs Review*, 44(6), 858–885.

- Calvert, S. L., & Gersh, T. L. (1987). The selective use of sound effects and visual inserts for children's television story comprehension. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 8(4), 363–375.
- Canady, M., James, B. & Nease, J. (2012). *To protect and educate: The school resource officer and the prevention of violence in schools*. Hoover, AL: National Association of School Resource Officers.
- Carter, M. J., & Fuller, C. (2015). Symbolic interactionism. *Sociopedia*, 1(1), 1-17.
- Cavender, G. & Deutsch, S. (2007). CSI and moral authority: the police and science. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 3, 67-81.
- Champion, D. (2017). Policing as a myth: narrative and integral approaches to police identity and culture. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 10(1), 1-13.
- Chermak, S.M., Mcgarrell, E.F., & Gruenewald, J. (2006). Media coverage of police misconduct and attitudes toward police. *Policing - An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 29, 261-281.
- Chiceros, T., Padgett, K., & Gertz, M. (2002). Fear, TV news, and the reality of crime. *Criminology*. 38 755-786.
- Children's Defense Fund (2007). *America's cradle to prison pipeline*.
- Chira, S. (1983). What children 'see' when watching TV. *New York Times*, January 6.
- Cohen LE. & Felson M. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: a routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review* 44 (4), 588–608.
- Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). *United States Department of Justice*
- Cooper J. (2007). *Cognitive dissonance: 50 years of a classic theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Cooper, N., Uller, R., Pettifer, J. & Stolc, F. (2009). Conditioning attentional skills: examining the effects of the pace of television on children's attention. *Acta Paediatr*, 98, 1651-1633.
- Deutsch, S. & Cavende, G. (2008). CSI and forensic realism. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 15, 43-53.
- Donovan, K. & Klahm, C. (2015). The role of entertainment media in perceptions of police use of force. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 42(12), 1261-1282.
- Epstein, S., & Pacini, R. (1999). Some basic issues regarding dual-process theories from the perspective of cognitive-experiential self-theory. In S. Chaiken & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual-process theories in social psychology* (pp. 462–482). The Guilford Press.
- Erikson, E. H. (1994). *Identity and the life cycle*. WW Norton.
- Eschholz, S. (2003). Crime on television shows: issues in criminal justice. *Journal of the Institute of Justice and International Studies*, 2, 9-18.
- Eschholz, S., Millard, M., & Flynn, S. (2004). Images of prime-time justice: A content analysis of "NYPD Blue" an "Law & Order." *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 10, 161-180.
- Fagan, F. & Tyler, T. (2005). Legal socialization of children and adolescents. *Social Justice Research*, 18, 217-242.
- Fan, L., Zhan, M., Qing, W., Gao, T., & Wang, M. (2021). The short-term impact of animation on the executive function of children aged 4-7. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18, 8616.
- Felson, M. (1998). *Crime and everyday Life*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.
- Festinger L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press
- Florida Mental Health Act of 1971. Florida Statute 394.451-394.47891 [2009 rev]
- Floyd v. City of N.Y.*, 959 F. Supp. 2d 540 (S.D.N.Y. 2013)

- Fowles, J. (1992). *Why viewers watch: A reappraisal of television's effects*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Garland, D. (2001). *The culture of control: Crime and social order in contemporary society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Geist, E. & Gibson, M. (2000). The effect of network and public television programs on four and five-year-old's ability to attend to educational tasks. *Instructional Psychology*, 27, 250-261.
- Gerbner, G. Gross, L., Morgan, M., Signorielli, & Shanahan, J. (2001). Growing up with television: cultivation processes. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 2nd ed. Hillside NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorelli, N. (2020). Cultivation Theory. *The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Mass Media and Society*.
- Gottfredson, D., Crosse, S., Tang, Bauer, E., Harmon, M; Greene, A. (2020). Effect of school resource officers on school crime and responses to school crime. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 19(3), 905-940.
- Grady, C. (2021). How 70 years of cop sows taught us to valorize the police. *Vox*, April 12.
- Gunter, B. & Harrison, J. (1997). Violence in children's programmes on British television. *Children and Society*, 11(3), 143-156.
- Habib, K. & Soliman, T. (2015). Cartoon's effect in changing children mental response and behavior. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 4, 248-264.
- Hassett-Walker, C. (2021). How you start is how you finish? The slave codes and origins of Jim Crow policing. *American Bar Association*.
- Hayes, R. & Levett, L. (2012). Community members' perceptions of the CSI effect. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38(2), 216-235.
- Hess A. (2020). The protests come for 'Paw Patrol': critic's notebook. *New York Times*, June 10.
- Hirschfield, P. J. (2008). Preparing for prison? The criminalization of school discipline in the USA. *Theoretical Criminology*, 10, 79– 101.
- Hirschfield, P. J. (2018). Trends in school social control in the United States: Explaining patterns of decriminalization. In J. Deakin, E. Taylor, & A. Kupchik (Eds.), *Handbook of School Security, Surveillance, and Punishment* (pp. 43– 64). Palgrave.
- Holbrook, R. & Hill, T. (2005). Agenda-setting and priming in prime-time television: Crime dramas as political cues. *Political Communication*, 22, 277-295.
- Homer, E. & Fischer, B. (2020). Police in schools and student arrest rates across the United States: examining differences by race, ethnicity, and gender. *Journal of School Violence*, 19(2), 192-204.
- Hopkins, N., Hewstone, M., & Hantzi, A. (1992). Police school liaisons and young people's image of police: an intervention evaluation. *British Journal of Psychology*, 83, 203-220.
- Hunt, V. H., Taylor, M. A., Fitzgerald, B., Button, E. D., & Kerr, B. (2019). An examination of the characteristics and perceptions of school resource officers in rural and urban Oklahoma schools. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, 34(2), 1-24.
- Hurley Swayze, D., & Buskovick, D. (2014). Law enforcement in Minnesota schools: A statewide survey of school resource officers. *Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs*.
- Hurst, Y. G., Frank, J. (2000). How kids view the cops: The nature of juvenile attitudes toward the police. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 28, 189-202.
- Irwin, V., Wang, K., Chu, J. & Thompson, A. (2022). Report on indicators of school crime and

- safety: 2021. *Institute of Education Services, June*.
- James, N. & McCallion, G. (2013). School resource officers: law enforcement officers in schools. *Congressional Research Service*.
- Jarcho, J. M., Berkman E. T., Lieberman M. D. (2011). The neural basis of rationalization: cognitive dissonance reduction during decision-making. *Soc. Cognition. Affect. Neuroscience*, 6, 460–467.
- Justice Policy Institute. (2011). *Education under arrest: The case against police in schools*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute.
- Justice Policy Institute. (2012). *Measured responses: Why increasing law enforcement in schools is not an effective public safety response to the Newtown tragedy*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute.
- Juvonen, J. (2001). School violence: Prevalence, fears, and prevention. *RAND Issue Paper*.
- Kearney, M. & Levine, P. (2019). Early childhood education by television: Lessons from Sesame Street. *American Economic Journal Applied Economics*, 11(1), 318-350.
- Kennedy, L. (2020). “Whenever there’s trouble, just yelp for help”: Crime, conservation and corporatization of Paw Patrol. *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal*, 17.
- Killen, M., & Rutland, A. (2022). Promoting fair and just school environments: developing inclusive youth. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 9(1), 81–89.
- Kim, Y., Barak, G. & Shelton, D. (2009). Examining the “CSI-effect” in cases of circumstantial evidence and eyewitness testimony: multivariate and path analyses. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37(5), 452-460.
- Klein, H. & Shiffman, K. (2012). Verbal aggression in animated cartoons. *International Journal of Child and Adolescent Health*, 5(1), 7-19.
- Kort-Butler, L. (2012a). Rotten, vile, and depraved! Depictions of criminality in superhero cartoons. *Deviant Behavior*, 33(2), 566-581.
- Kort-Butler, L. (2012b). Justice League? Depictions of justice in children’s superhero cartoons. *Criminal Justice Review*, 38(1), 50-69.
- Lamont, M. & Molnar, V. (2002). The study of boundaries across the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology* 28, 167-95.
- Lillard, A. & Peterson, J. (2011). The immediate impact of different types of television on young children’s executive function. *Pediatrics*, 128, 644-649.
- Lopez, C. (2021). Preventing and remedying patterns or practices of misconduct in law enforcement. *Department of Justice Civil Rights Division*.
- Low, J. & Durkin, K. (2001). Children’s conceptualization of law enforcement on television and in real life. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 6, 197-214.
- Mayer, J. F. & Bogdan, G. (1999). The elders were out textbooks: The importance of traditional stories in social control. In J. Ferre & N. Websdale (Eds.), *Making trouble: cultural constructions of crime, deviance, and control* (pp. 25-46). New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Manasib, A. & Bhattacharya (2010). Is the ‘Idiot’s Box’ raising idiocy? Early and middle childhood television watching and child cognitive outcome. *Economics of Education Review*, 29(5), 873-883.
- McNeely C. A. Nonnemaker, J. M., & Blum R. W. (2002). Promoting school connectedness: evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Journal of School Health*, 72(4), 138-46.
- Menting, B., Lammers, M., Ruiters, S., & Bernasco, W. (2020). The influence of activity space and

- visiting frequency on crime location choice: findings from an online self-report survey. *British Journal of Criminology* 60(2), 303–322.
- Mondschein, K. (2020). Liberal arts for social change. *Humanities*, 9(3), 1-14.
- Na, C. & Gottfredson, D. C. (2013). Police officers in schools: Effects on school crime and the processing of offending behaviors. *Justice Quarterly*, 30(4), 619– 650.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2019). Indicators of school crime and safety. *Institute of Education Services*.
- Nielsen Company (2009). *Television Audience: 2008*.
- New York Civil Liberties Union, ACLU, (2019). *Recommendations for a memorandum of understanding between schools and police*.
- Ogle, A., Graham, D., Lucas-Thompson, R., & Roberto, C. (2017). Influence of cartoon media characters on children’s attention to and preference for food and beverage products. *Journal of Academic and Nutrition Diet*, 117(2), 265-270.
- Pacini, R. & Epstein, S. (1999). The relation of rational and experiential information processing styles to personality, basic beliefs, and the ratio-bias phenomenon. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(6), 972–987.
- Padilla-Walker, L., Coyne S., & Fraser, A. (2013). Is Disney the nicest place on Earth? A content analysis of prosocial behavior in animated Disney films. *Journal of Communication* 63(2), 393-412.
- Paspalakis, K. (2020). How have cartoon animations changed over time. *Oddesey*, March 13.
- Paterson, J. (2022). Making schools safe and just. *NEA News*, April 4.
- Pentek, C. & Eisenberg, M. (2018). School resource officers, safety, and discipline: perceptions and experiences across racial/ethnic groups in Minnesota secondary schools. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 88, 141-148.
- Perlovsky L. (2013). A challenge to human evolution-cognitive dissonance. *Frontiers in Psychology*, Apr 10, 4, 179.
- Phillips, N. & Strobl, S. (2013). *Comic book crime: truth, justice, and the American way*. New York: New York University Press.
- Piaget, J. (1971). The theory of stages in cognitive development. In D. R. Green, M. P. Ford, & G. B. Flamer, *Measurement and Piaget*. McGraw-Hill.
- Portillos, E. L., González, J. C., & Peguero, A. A. (2012). Crime control strategies in school: Chicanas/os' perceptions and criminalization. *The Urban Review*, 44(2), 171-188.
- Powell, T., Skouteris, H., & Murfett, R. (2008). Children’s Perceptions of the Role of Police: A Qualitative Study. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 10(4), 464–473.
- Ramey, D. (2015). The social structure of criminalized and medicalized school discipline. *Sociology of Education*, 88(3), 181-201.
- Rideout, V. & Hamel, E. (2006). The media family: electronic media in the lives of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their parents. *Kaiser Family Foundation*.
- Ryan, J. B., Katsiyannis, A., Counts, J. M., & Shelnut, J. C. (2018). The growing concerns regarding school resource officers. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 53(3), 188–192.
- Ryberg, R., Her, S., Temkin, K. & Harper, K. (2021). Despite reductions since 2011-12, Black students and students with disabilities remain more likely to experience suspension. *Child Trends*, August 9.
- Salomon, G. (1984). Television is “easy”, and print is “tough”: the differential investment of mental effort in learning as a function of perceptions and attributions. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76, 647–658.

- Shaver, E. & Decker, J. (2017). Handcuffing a third grader: interactions between school resource officers and students with disabilities. *Utah Law Review*, 2,1, 229-281.
- Simon, J. (2007). *Governing through crime: how the war on crime transformed American democracy and created a culture of fear*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Shollenberger, T. L. (2015). Racial disparities in school suspension and subsequent outcomes: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth, In D. J. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the school discipline gap: Equitable remedies for excessive exclusion* (pp. 31-43), New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Signorielli, N. & Morgan, M. (2008). Cultivation analysis: research and practice. In D.W. Stacks & M. Salwen (Ed.), *An integrated approach to communication theory and research*.
- Sloane, J. (2016). How are adolescents affected by what they watch on TV? *Anneberg School of Communication*.
- Smith, G. (2018). Paw Patrol and the twilight of the world-conquering kids TV show. *Bloomberg Pursuits*, October 20.
- Smith, M. Sparks, R., & Girling, E. (2000). Educating sensibilities: the image of “the lesson” in children’s talk about punishment. *Punishment & Society*, 2(4), 395-415.
- Solmon, C. (2021). Puppet pups: is Paw Patrol authoritarian propaganda in disguise”. *The Guardian*. August 11.
- Surette, R. (2007). *Media, crime, and criminal justice: Images, realities, and policies*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Stinson, P. M., & Watkins, A. M. (2014). The nature of crime by school resource officers: implications for SRO programs. *SAGE Open*.
- Taylor, T., Turner, K., Esbensen, F. & Winfree, I. (2001). Copin’ an attitude. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 29(4), 295-305.
- Theriot, M. T. (2009). School resource officers and the criminalization of student behavior. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37(3), 280-287.
- Theriot, M. T. (2016). The impact of school resource officer interaction on students’ feelings about school and school police. *Crime and Delinquency*, 62(4), 446-469.
- Theriot, M. T. & Orme, J. (2016). School resource officers and student’s feelings of safety at school. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 14(2), 130-146.
- Thompson, T. & Zerbinos, E. (1995). Gender roles in animated cartoons: Has the picture changed in 20 years? *Sex Roles*, 32(9/10), 650-675.
- Vallas, S. (2001). Symbolic boundaries and the new division of labor: engineers, workers and the restructuring of factory life. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 18, 3–37.
- Vandewater, E., Bickham, D., Lee, J., Cummings, H., Wartella, E., & Rideout, V. (2005). When television is always on: heavy television exposure and young children’s development. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(5), 562-577.
- Van Evra, J. (2004). *Television and child development*. 3rd ed., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. *Mind and Society*, 79 - 91.
- Watkins, B. (1988). Children's representations of television and real-life stories', *Communications Research* 15(2),159-84.
- Weitzer, R. (2002). Incidents of police misconduct and public opinion. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 30, 397-408.
- Welch, K. & Payne, A. A. (2018). Latino/a student threat and school disciplinary policies and practices. *Sociology of Education*, 91(2), 91–110.
- White, A. (2012). Perception is reality. *Not Your Ordinary Librarian*, 125-129.

- Whitlock, J. L. (2006). Youth perceptions of life at school: Contextual correlates of school connectedness in adolescence. *Applied Developmental Science, 10*, 13-29.
- Wilber K. (2007). *The integral vision: a very short introduction to the revolutionary integral approach to life, God, the universe, and everything*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc.
- Yahya A. H. & Sukmayadi, V. (2020). A review of cognitive dissonance theory and its relevance to current social issues. *Mimbar, 26*(2), 480-488.
- Ziv, Y. (2013). Social information processing patterns, social skills, and school readiness in preschool children. *Journal of Experiential Child Psychology, 114*, 306-320.
- Zuckerman, D. & Zukerman, B. (1985). Televisions impact on children. *Pediatrics, 75*(2), 233-40.

Appendix A

Paw Patrol Episode List

Season 1 (2013-14)

Episode 2: *Pups Save the Sea Turtles/ Pup and the Very Big Baby*

Episode 17: *Pups Save a Pool Day/Circus Pup Performers*

Season 5 (2018-19)

Episode 11: *Ultimate Rescue: Pups Save the Royal Kitties*

Episode 14: *Ultimate Rescue: Pups Save the Tigers*

Episode 17: *Ultimate Rescue: Pups Save the Movie Monster!*

Episode 25: *Ultimate Rescue: Pups Save a Runaway Stargazer*

Season 6 (2019-21)

Episode 5a/b: *Ultimate Rescue: Pups Save the Mountain Climbers/Ultimate Rescue: Pup Save Captain Gordy*

Season 8 (2021-23)

Episode 17a/b: *Pups Save a Box Fort/Pups Save Travelin' Travis from Really Big Bill*

Episode 26a/b: *Pups Stop a Big Leak/Pups Save a Baby Anteater/Pups Save a Hatch Day/Pups Save the Munchie Mobile*

Season 9 (2022-23)

Episode 8a/b: *Pups Save a Hatchling/Pups Save a Wrong Way Farmhand*

Episode 12a/b: *Pups Save Katie and Some Kitties/Pups Save a Mayor Humdinger*

Episode 16: *All Paws on Deck*

Episode 21a/b: *Pups Save a Flamingo Dancer/Pups Save a Mayor and Her Mini*

Episode 24a/b: *Pups Save a Jukebox/Pups Save a Mayor on a Wire*

Episode 25a/b: *Pups Save the Baby Space Rocks/Pups Save the Eddies and Emmys*