

Policing Race:
A case study of media coverage of
police shootings

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Policing Race:

A case study of media coverage of police shootings

Abstract

The focus of this study is on racial discourse in print media. Given that knowledge of the Black community is often limited to what people receive in media publications, it is important to investigate the accuracy of messages that are being communicated. A content analysis of articles relevant to police shootings of Black and White victims as reported in the 1980s and 1990s in *The Toronto Star* newspaper provided the primary data source. The analysis employed a critical Social Dominance framework to identify strategies used in this medium and further applied those tenets to thematic foci in the print articles. The goal is to determine the potential impact of racial discourse on its respective readership with regard to perceptions of the Black community during the specified time. It is expected that exposure of the ideological implications uncovered in this study will influence future policy reforms for a more egalitarian society.

Keywords: systemic racism, police shootings, Social Dominance, Blacks, Whites

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INTRODUCTION

Conventional criminological and contemporary popular approaches reduce the relationship between crime reporting and race to monolithic, totalized and essentialist conceptions within a narrow theoretical vision that informs an overarching conceptual closure. Consumers of the media are seldom asked to be brazen in deconstructing traditional texts like the print media. Equally, it is essential that readers are not only well informed but urged to explore the contradictions and closures inherent in conventional depictions of crime. Research suggests that 95% of Canadians learn about crime from the media (Visano 2006: 108). In this study I examine the role of an array of extraordinarily persuasive moral campaigns by the newsprint media, an industry of inter-related agencies obsessed with regulating differences and punishing defiance. The media conceal as much as they reveal about crime. Because of the pervasive influence of the media the general public is made to feel both content and competent in talking about crime generally and racialized criminality specifically. Without interrogating the sources of knowledge, the general public is encouraged to defer to the media and learn to participate as crime experts well-nourished by media illusions, deceptive bits and biased fragments. What, then, emerges as the image of the criminal in the public eye? Generally, the racial profiling by the media targets Blacks when covering specifically crime-related stories, perpetuating the idea of this social segment as being the most

criminogenic. This stratification is based on principles that value and reinforce racism, criminality and inequality.

Typically, contact with members of the Black community is often limited to what people hear from others and what they read or see in the media about Blacks. This is because the marginalization of the Black community away from mainstream society limits their interaction. Consequently, mainstream society relies almost entirely on media for information about Blacks and the issues that concern that community (Henry et al., 2000). News coverage of incidents involving Blacks and the police provide an excellent source through which racial discourse in print media may be explored. Regrettably, as Williams (2005:93) notes, crime control is significant insofar as its apparent synonymy with policing elevates the latter to the status of a practice that produces unimpeachable outcomes.

One of the most important yet controversial powers of police in a democratic society is the use of force. Police are authorized legally to use firearms in apprehending suspects whenever there is a threat to life. However, the legitimacy of police shootings of Blacks has often been doubted by the Black community which has for decades openly complained about hostility by police especially toward young Black males. Incidents of police shootings of Blacks reached epidemic proportions in the 1980s and 1990s leading members of the Black community to believe that police were indeed inclined to use excessive force where Blacks were concerned. Consequently, a state of mistrust and resentment towards the police lingered among Canada's Blacks

and resulted in strained relations between police and the Black community particularly in Toronto. What role did media play in communicating this message to its readers?

The general purpose of this paper is to critically assess the role of newsprint in mediating the relationship between colour and crime. The specific aim of this study was to investigate the production of racial discourse in the print media. A number of questions were considered to help unveil the situation. For example, how often do people in general read newspapers and are subtly influenced by innuendos and suggestions without realizing it? Newspapers are read on a daily basis, but rarely do we stop to consider and evaluate the messages they send. Thus, the analysis first examined how the media bias produced racial discourse in reports of police shootings. For example, how do media reports normalize, obscure, and or rationalize police shootings? Do these reports cast particular victims of police shootings as physical and social threats? To what extent do these portrayals demonize victims while glorifying police violence? Second, the analysis explores how these reports encourage the perception that police services are discriminatory and thereby have the potential to foster tensions between police and the Black community.

Rationale for the Study

This research builds on the current literature on racial discourse in print media by focusing on a new theoretical perspective concerning police-community relations in the highly controversial time of police shootings that occurred in Toronto and surrounding area between 1979 and 1997. This new perspective is an enriched theoretical understanding that will reveal nuances of the situation that have yet to be

uncovered by other studies. Additionally, by focusing on a larger period, trends over time will reveal a more comprehensive view of the epidemic that affected an entire community for nearly 20 years and how media portrayals contributed to society's perception of that community. The importance of this study cannot be underestimated for it fuses different aspects of racism to demonstrate the interconnectedness of different theories of oppression and how they apply to the police shootings of Blacks in Canada with an extension of its larger applicability to the general oppression of Blacks in Canada. It is anticipated that the emergent findings contribute to a broader understanding of Black / White relations in Canada in an effort to improve conditions between the two groups.

Literature Review

Literature on the topic reveals four main themes in media production of racial discourse: 1) media influences public opinion, 2) media reflect and promote tolerance for police violence, 3) media reinforces racialized ideologies, and 4) media reproduce racism. These themes are accomplished through particular framing of news narratives. That is, the stories emphasize certain values, themes, or interpretations that give meaning to events. Furthermore, these frames provide cues and clues that lead readers to evaluate situations that have been presented.

The subliminal seduction manipulated by the media cultivates the dominant ideology, moulds mindless ways of understanding, and homogenizes the everyday life experiences of racialized communities (Visano 2006:45). The media plays a very important role in the socialization process because of its ability to provide images of

experiences. Knowledge is unknowable except as mediated encounters which claim an experiential basis for understanding reality. Indeed, media portrayals legitimize order, build consent and de-legitimate outsiders.

With respect to crime, Hirschfield and Simon's (2010) study demonstrated that "crime beat" reporters' close connections to police information requires that they report the news such that police actions look legitimate and this can sometimes skew the integrity of the report. Conversely, the portrayal of victims of police homicide is generally not presented in the same fair manner as most murder victims.

Print media, in particular, plays a fundamental role in influencing public opinion about racial minorities by supporting and sustaining dominant beliefs and perceptions, including racial and cultural stereotypes, and may even help to create new ones. Among the values linked to news narratives, ethnocentrism and allegiance to maintaining the social order are two of the most prominent values (Gans 2004). Black suspects in crime news narratives, in particular, who fail to exemplify these values are usually regarded and portrayed as outsiders (Dovidio et al. 2010: 242-43) while a pattern of racial stereotyping develops that encourages implicit comparisons to Whites. These, in turn, reduce Whites' empathy and heighten animosity toward Blacks (Entman & Rojecki 2000: 91). Consequently, by highlighting certain aspects or attributes, media may influence *what* people think as well as *how* they think about racial issues (Kuypers 2002), and in this way, feed racial stereotypes that encourage hostility and fear of Blacks (Entman 1994). Cottle (2000) has also pointed out that media occupy a key site and perform a crucial role in the public representation of unequal social

relations and “the play of cultural power” (Cottle 2000: 2). That is, they construct a binary of “Us” versus “Them” which help to create a divide in society.

Moreover, the mass media play an extraordinary role in influencing public opinion about the police. Weitzer and Tuch (2006) have found in their research that repeated exposure to media reports on police abuse is a strong predictor of perceptions of police misconduct, view on racialized policing, and support for reforms. On many of these issues, media effects were evident for Blacks and Whites alike, though in some cases Whites were less affected. Similarly, others have suggested that newspaper coverage of police-perpetrated homicides may reflect and promote public tolerance for police violence. Lawrence (2000) focused on whether articles define use-of-force as a systemic or an individualized problem and the causes and consequences of alternative frames. She found that typical news accounts privilege official depictions of police violence as a normal authorized response to dangerous behaviour.

Henry and Tator (2010) have argued that the media reinforce racialized ideology and practices through the production of racist discourse. Other studies further corroborate this claim and demonstrate that the Canadian media, in general, produce a negative view of marginalized groups (Mahtani 2001; Wortley 2002; Fleras & Kunz 2001; and Henry & Tator 2010). For example, Black men are often depicted as creating social problems and jeopardizing the harmony and unity of Canadian society. Henry & Tator also have noted that print media has a tendency to focus negative attention on cultural aspects and neglect to acknowledge the positive. That is, in reporting on the violent death of Black men, the inclusion of irrelevant information

such as the number of children left behind and questioning how many mothers and fathers may be involved is often included in the report (Henry & Tator 2010: 269). They also found that Blacks are strongly implicated in activities involving shootings, killings, drugs, and guns. A consequence of this over-reporting is the persistent negative representation of the Black man (through images, ideas, and words) as criminal, and this eventually leads mainstream society to harbour hostility for Blacks.

From a group-position perspective, Teun van Dijk (1991) in his study found that the reproduction of racism by the media, particularly the press, takes the specific form of “elite racism.” His thesis posits that since the dominant White media’s values are inextricably linked to political, social, and corporate elite groups, it is also in their interests to play a role in producing and generating consensus (Henry & Tator 2010: 276). In this respect, the media uses certain strategies to weaken the positions, issues, and ideas advocated by minority groups that threaten the status quo. Thus, Henry and Tator (2010) argue that the media corporate elite are communicating a distorted picture of the world that is becoming part of a “commonsense perspective” which results in blocking out the formation of alternative visions and discourses resulting in reinforced racialized ideology (Henry & Tator 2010: 275).

Theoretical Perspective

Derived from a psycho-sociological perspective, Social Dominance Theory (SDT), as introduced by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), is the framework upon which this study will be modelled. It is an enriched theoretical understanding that offers an explanation of motives for dominance and responses for perceived threat when viewing

prejudice as the response of a dominant social group to out-groups who are regarded as encroaching on or challenging the dominant position. This theoretical perspective is well suited to this study because it focuses on the way that social discourse (i.e. ideology, attitudes, and stereotypes) and individual and institutional behaviour contribute to and are affected by the nature and severity of group-based hierarchies. Specifically with a racial hierarchy, the theory also demonstrates that group-positioning endorses discrimination and prejudice for the purpose of maintaining social inequality.

Social Dominance Theory is based on the premise that all human societies tend to be structured as systems of group-based social hierarchies. It proposes three attributes. Firstly, the dominant group enjoys a disproportionate share of positive assets (such as wealth and prestige) while conversely, subordinate groups enjoy a disproportionate share of negative liabilities (such as poverty and social stigma). Secondly, groups compete over scarce materials and symbolic resources as they seek to enhance their own relative positions. Thirdly, in this competition, groups use ideological strategies (such as racism and meritocracy) to advance the standing of their group. The ideologies are created and promulgated by the dominant group at the top of the hierarchy and define a general theory of society to which all groups are subject. In that way, social systems are affected by legitimizing myths (LMs) which consist of attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes, and ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for the social practice that distribute social value within the social system. Furthermore, these social systems are subject to the counterbalancing influence of hierarchy-enhancing (HE) forces which produce and maintain high levels of group-

based social inequality, and hierarchy-attenuating (HA) forces which produce high levels of group-based social equality. Of course, the dominant group will tend to be more influenced by HE forces because group-based dominance is fundamental to the establishment of social hierarchies.

A society that encourages social hierarchies produces social inequalities and this is often facilitated by asymmetries in power. Goodwin, Operario, and Fiske (1998) in their study demonstrate that situational control and dominance are conditions that promote motives to stereotype leading to cognitive and judgemental biases that cumulatively reinforce the status quo. That is, stereotyping subordinate group members is the mechanism by which the dominant group maintains the status quo. Kugler et al. (2010) have suggested that support for group-based dominance is championed by the dominant group out of social identity motives and a lack of humanitarian compassion for the disadvantaged. This in turn is associated with hostility toward out-groups and concerns about inter-group competition. Miller, Maner, and Becker (2010) in their study show that the stereotypes of criminality and aggressiveness that Whites apply to certain racial out-groups are directed disproportionately towards Blacks. Consequently, because Blacks are stereotypically viewed as threatening, the priming of threat-related cues results in an activation of the Black stereotypes. This demonstrates the power of stereotypes when applied to media discourse.

A key variable of SDT is social dominance orientation which refers to one's preference for inequality among social groups. In their study of group-based prejudice and oppression, Pratto et al. (1994) demonstrated that people possessing a personality

type of social dominance orientation tend to pursue occupations that are “hierarchy-enhancing” (HE) such as law enforcement, politics, and business. Personality types that are of a more egalitarian orientation, on the other hand, tend to pursue “hierarchy-attenuating” (HA) occupations such as social work and counselling. In that way, the police force represents an institution that is prone to support social dominance. The question then remains: how do media as a bureaucratic organizational structure produce discourse that depicts police forces?

In his article, “Framing Bias, Media in the Distribution of Power,” Robert Entman has suggested that in order to reveal the critical dimension of political communication, it is necessary to employ agenda setting, framing, and priming under the conceptual framework of bias (Entman 2007). On the other hand, Reid and Ng (1999) have suggested that ‘language’ should *not* be seen solely as a passive conduit of power but as an active co-player in the exercise of power (Reid & Ng 1999: 120). In their study, they analyze language in terms of language reflecting and creating power from a social dominance perspective. The power of the media then, as told by Jones (1997) is that it both reflects and creates images of minority-group members that lead to stereotypical perceptions and, often biasing expectations and behaviours. This is particularly noteworthy because the mass media have become a significant element of culture and have been instrumental in cultivating cultural expressions of racialized worldviews (Jones 1997: 458).

As an institution, the media do have codes of practice relating to their role and responsibilities in representing ethnic identities. However, as Downing and Husband

have pointed out, not all professional bodies engage with their responsibilities (Downing & Husband 2005: 147). Consequently, deviation from protocol is likely to affect ethnic representation. The challenge of this study then is to identify and explain that deviated practice.

In order to combine the two aspects of the events of the police shootings and how the events were reported by the newspaper, Social Dominance Theory will be enhanced by a critical look at race dominance, infusing other elements of oppression such as zero-sum mentality and “Othering”. The new framework is called Critical Social Dominance Theory.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

Methodology

Content analysis of newspaper articles is the methodology used in this research. Articles were taken from *The Toronto Star* located primarily through the database of *Lexis-Nexis Academic*. Additional articles were retrieved from a *ProQuest* library search containing the database for *The Toronto Star Pages of the Past* which provides articles from earlier years. The sampling frame encompassed a 19-year period from 1979 to 1997. All articles found relevant to police shootings of Blacks and Whites were used for the analysis providing that racial identity could be confirmed. A total of 320 articles were used in this study.

The analysis took a qualitative approach to investigating manifest content and the underlying meanings and themes apparent in articles relevant to police use of lethal force against Blacks and Whites. The focus was on depictions of both the victims and the police officers whose character and actions are critical to the perceived legitimacy of the shootings. Particular attention was paid to the News and Editorial sections of the newspaper.

Coding of texts was focused on linguistic concepts such as grammar and syntax, sentence order, as well as contextual and referential aspects that included repetitive use of stereotypic or racial slurs and frequency of latent themes surrounding the shootings. Articles were also categorized according to thematic focus. Racial

identity was determined by explicit mention of race in the article or accompanying photograph.

Introduction to the Analysis

In order to have a thorough understanding of the epidemic evident in the rash of police shootings in the 1980s and 1990s, the analysis involved a sorting of articles according to the various themes presented. The themes subsequently revealed a pattern of bias against Blacks that could only be classified as systemic racism. It was perpetrated by the police force and the criminal justice system to a lesser degree. This was the basic theme on which the newspaper's framing strategy appeared to be operating. However, analysis of the style of the newspaper's discourse, in general revealed that newspaper editors and columnists alike were producing a racial discourse that was effective in "Othering" Blacks as unwelcome outsiders of the dominant European society.

What became evident in this study was that the newspaper's role in revealing racism on the police force did not concern the breaking down of inequality, but in effect was supporting the hierarchical system of inequality. Its focus on the police force as an agent of racism was merely to show that some institutions were still guilty of blatant racism. However, the newspaper neglected to analyze its own actions in disseminating racist ideology through its production of racial discourse. In fact, the newspaper's coverage of these police shooting incidents seemed to encourage racial polarization through its production of racial discourse. In conducting the analysis on the various themes presented in this section, two questions were considered when

reviewing the articles: What was the theme in the article? And how did the newspaper use this information in the production of its discourse.

The analysis involved three phases. Phase one involved the collection of basic statistics in order to identify demographics and particulars of the offences and the encounter between police and the victims. Phase two identified the more circumstantial conditions that applied to articles as a whole with a brief comparison between the two racial groups. Phase three involved a more detailed examination of the major themes identified in all articles in the study.

Demographics of Source Data Used in This Study

(Race, Age, Gender)

The names of people used in this study consisted of those found in articles retrieved from *Lexis-Nexis* via a keyword search of "police shootings in Toronto". Of those articles retrieved 42 names were found. Of those 42 names, only 28 individuals could be confirmed as having the racial identity of either Black or White and were accordingly included in this study. All others that were either unknown or confirmed to be of another racial identity were not used in the study as the purpose of this study was to identify how *The Toronto Star* newspaper produced racial discourse in its reporting of police shootings in the 1980s and 1990s by comparison of commonalities and differences between the two identified races. Eighteen victims with a racial identity of 'Black' and 10 victims with a racial identity of 'White' were confirmed in the articles analyzed. Where Black cases or White cases was used, the racial qualifier "Black" or "White" referred to the racial group to which the victim belonged.

It is highly plausible that the racial identity of more Blacks were confirmed because that race was identified more readily than was the White race. In that sense, the newspaper pointed out racial identity in the article either through explicit mention of race or through the inclusion of a photograph in more cases related to Blacks than to Whites. Explicit mention of "White" as a racial identifier was found in only 2 percent of the articles (relevant to an officer as opposed to a victim) whereas "Black" as a racial identifier was explicitly mentioned in 93 percent of the articles analyzed.

The study also revealed that more Black youths were being shot during this time period than were White youths. Twelve of the 18 Blacks shot were under the age of 25. Five of those Black victims had not yet turned 20 years of age. Black victims ranged in age from 16 to 49 while White victims ranged in age from 19 to 59. The most frequent age of Black victims was 22. The most frequent age of White victims was 32. With respect to gender, both Black males and females had been victims of police shootings. No police shootings of White females were identified in the articles analyzed.

All individuals shot by police in this study have been referred to as victims rather than suspects simply because they were subjected to suffering at the hands of police lethal force.

Confirmation of Racial Identity

In both Black and White cases, confirmation of racial identity was simply and conveniently made by photograph. Over 80% of Black cases included at least one photograph of the victim in the article. For the remaining cases, racial identity was

determined by explicit mention in the article. Less than 20% of these cases were identified by both photograph and printed text leaving no doubt of racial identity in each case. However, racial identity in cases involving White victims was rarely mentioned explicitly in the articles. The assumption during this time period seemed to be, because White was the norm, no mention of racial identity automatically indicated a White victim. Nonetheless, 70% of White cases were confirmed by photograph. All photographs for both Black and White victims were secured from supplementary information obtained from *Pages of the Past Toronto Star* where there was a photograph of the victim included in the article and displayed on the newspaper page that the article was written on. (Note: This information was sought outside the framework of *Lexis-Nexis* because the *Lexis-Nexis* Database did not provide photographs with their printed text.) One individual White case was confirmed via the victim's last name as no other proof was available. But it was determined that this method was highly credible because of the commonness of the Eastern European sounding name (Falkowski).

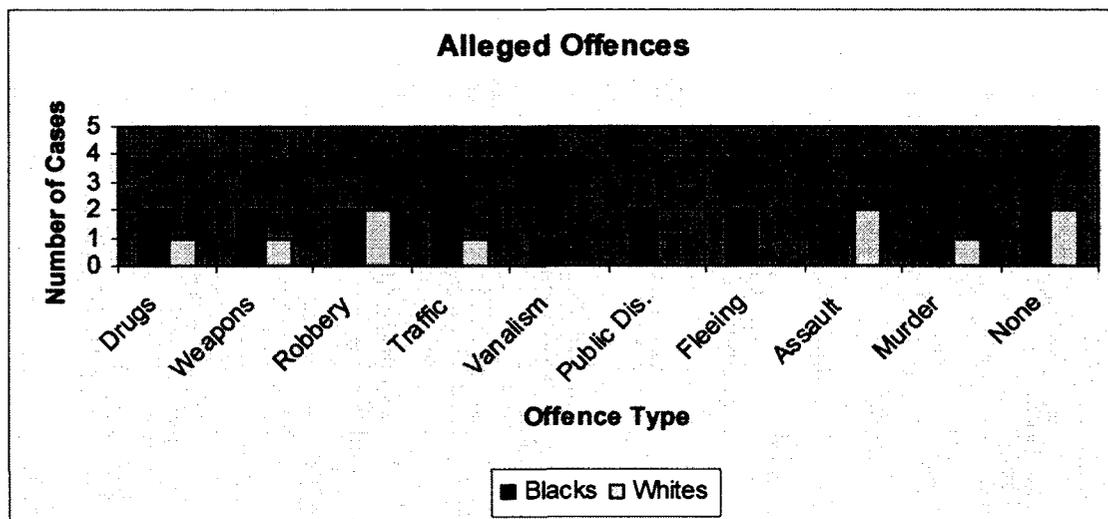
Chapter Outline of Thesis

Each chapter reveals an extensive breakdown of the analysis concerning various aspects of the shootings and how this information was communicated by the newspaper. The first few chapters provide basic statistics of the breakdown of the analysis. Numbered results in most cases were calculated according to percentages bearing in mind the ratio of 18 Blacks to 10 Whites. Elaboration of some specific concepts as defined in this study is also presented. As the chapters progress, the

discourse becomes more qualitative focusing on specific themes with a deconstruction of the racial content. At the end of each chapter is a theoretical discussion of the major theme identified in the overall sections presented in each chapter. Toward the later chapters, information concerning how the newspaper produced its racial discourse is elaborated upon with underlying themes and a broader understanding of Black / White relations as presented in the articles. The appendix includes an example of a statistics record sheet and some examples of section criteria used in the analysis of the articles.

VICTIM PARTICULARS

Criminal Offences



* Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.
 † Public Dis. Refers to Public Disturbance.

Figure 3.1

Each case was analyzed according to the criminal offences alleged to have taken place by the victim immediately prior to officers arriving on the scene. Figure 3.1 illustrates the types of offences. Offences were categorized according to the three headings: *Serious*, *Minor*, and *No Offence*. *Serious* was defined as an explicitly violent crime involving a direct threat to human life. *Minor* was defined as a criminal offence having no immediate threat to human life. *No Offence* was defined as no crime committed meaning that no act was deemed injurious to public welfare.

In both Black and White cases, offences included weapons, drugs, driving, and property offences. Both racial groups also had incidents of *No Offence* occurring prior

to the arrival of police on the scene. Of the Black cases, 27 percent were categorized as serious offences, 50 percent were minor, and 22 percent were identified as no offence. Of the White cases, 80 percent were identified as serious, 10 percent as minor and 10 percent as no offence. The majority of offences of which Blacks were alleged to have committed involved traffic offences, while the major offence alleged to have been committed by Whites involved weapons offences, namely guns. Incidents involving victims who were said to be emotionally/mentally disturbed and categorized as a danger to public safety because of uncontrollable violent behaviour were also identified in this study (4 Black victims; 1 White victim).

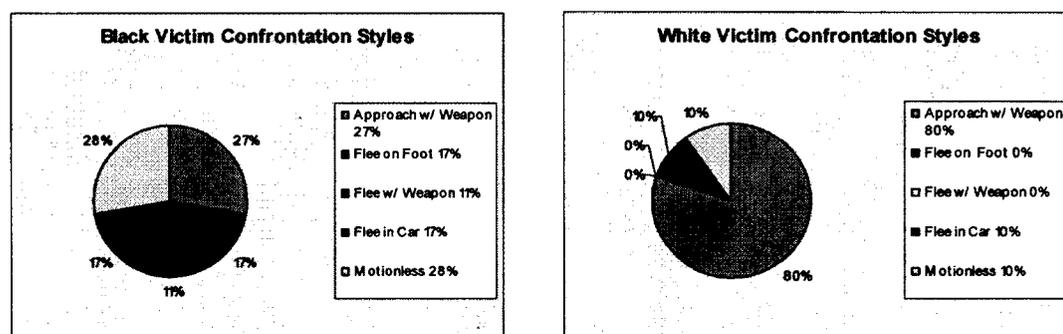
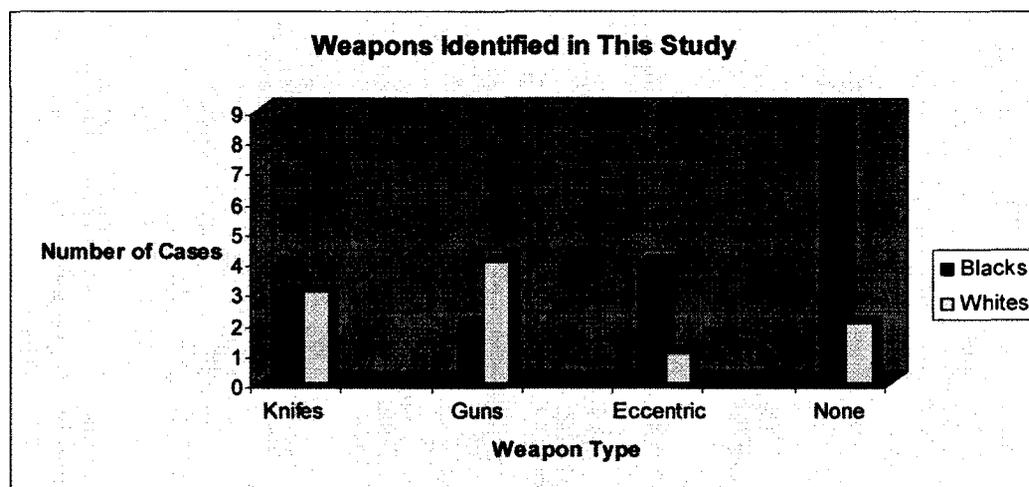


Figure 3.2

Further analysis took into account the victim's response to the appearance of police on the scene and the officer's subsequent reaction in diffusing the situation prior to resorting to lethal force. Each case was analyzed according to the criminal offences alleged to have taken place immediately prior to the shooting of the victim that was the actual catalyst triggering the officer's lethal response (see Figure 3.2.). According to scenarios depicted in the newspaper regarding police-victim confrontation prior to the shootings in Black cases: 5 victims approached officers with a weapon (27%), 2 fled on

foot with a weapon (11%), 3 fled in cars with no weapon (17%), 3 fled on foot with no weapon (17%), and 5 were motionless and unarmed (28%) without weapon and non-confrontational when shot by police. In contrasting these results with White cases, only three confrontation styles were identified. According to the scenarios depicted in the newspaper, 8 victims approached officers with a weapon, 1 fled in a car with no weapon, and 1 was motionless and unarmed when shot by police.



* Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.

± Eccentric weapons include: hammer, sword, edge trimmer, baseball bat

Figure 3.3

Overall, Black victims were unarmed in 50% of these police shooting incidents. Figure 3.3 illustrates the breakdown of weapon types held by victims in both Black and White cases. Blacks were said to have used a variety of weapons, the more eccentric weapons (hammer, sword, edge trimmer) being connected to individuals believed to be mentally unstable. Among White cases, one mentally ill victim was said to have wielded a baseball bat at officers. Other weapons according to racial category included knives (3 Black victims, 3 White victims) and guns (2 Black victims; 4 White victims).

In 77% of Black cases it was unclear whether or not officers used any defusing strategies to bring the situation under control before resorting to lethal force. However, in 40% of White cases, it was explicitly stated that officers attempted to use defusing strategies before resorting to lethal force. In the 3 Black cases explicitly mentioned, the newspaper indicated that officers gave verbal instructions to victims before discharging their weapons. In the 4 White cases, officers used both verbal and physical strategies to warn and disarm the victims prior to discharging their weapons. In one Black case, after the victim complied with the verbal warning to stop fleeing, he was subsequently shot by police.

With regard to a history of police contact, 55 percent of Black cases were confirmed as either having a criminal record or not having one. Of these cases, 38 percent were confirmed as having criminal records that indicated they had been in conflict with the law prior to the current shooting. In the other 17 percent of Black cases, while no criminal past was on record, the newspaper explicitly mentioned this fact. In White cases, only one victim was confirmed as having a criminal record; all others were not mentioned.

Shooting Location and Dates

The location of the shootings was categorized as either within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) or outside the GTA. Outside areas included Ottawa and Montreal. Approximately 80 percent of both Black victims and White victims were subject to police shootings within the GTA. Many incidents involving Blacks began with police confronting Blacks while they were in cars. Eight incidents began with

Black victims in their vehicles. Four victims were shot in their own private homes. Fourteen Black victims were shot in public places. However, with regard to the White racial group, there was a tendency for police to make shootings less visible to the public. In the majority of cases, White victims were shot in private places away from spectators while Black victims were mostly shot in public view with spectators present.

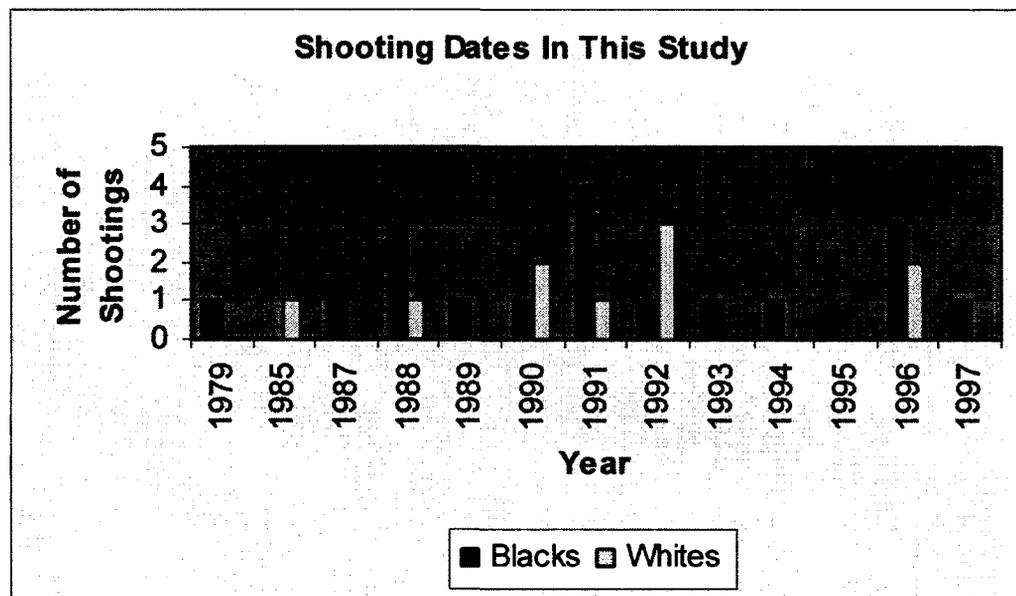


Figure 3.4

As indicated in Figure 3.4, in the decade between 1979 and 1989, there were 6 shootings of Blacks. This trend was doubled in the next eight year span to produce 12 shootings of Blacks between 1990 and 1997. No shootings with the racial identities used in this study could be confirmed for the year 1995. However, beginning in 1987, at least one Black was shot each year up to and including 1997. This suggests that the frequency of police shootings of Blacks had doubled in a shorter time period in the second decade. Shootings of Whites were sporadic throughout the years. During the

study period, 2 shootings of Whites occurred in the first decade and this was followed by 8 shootings in the second. There were no apparent consistencies with regard to shootings on a particular day of the week for either racial category. However, the study did reveal that the majority of Blacks were shot in the fall and spring seasons while the majority of Whites were shot during the summer season.

Shooting Outcome

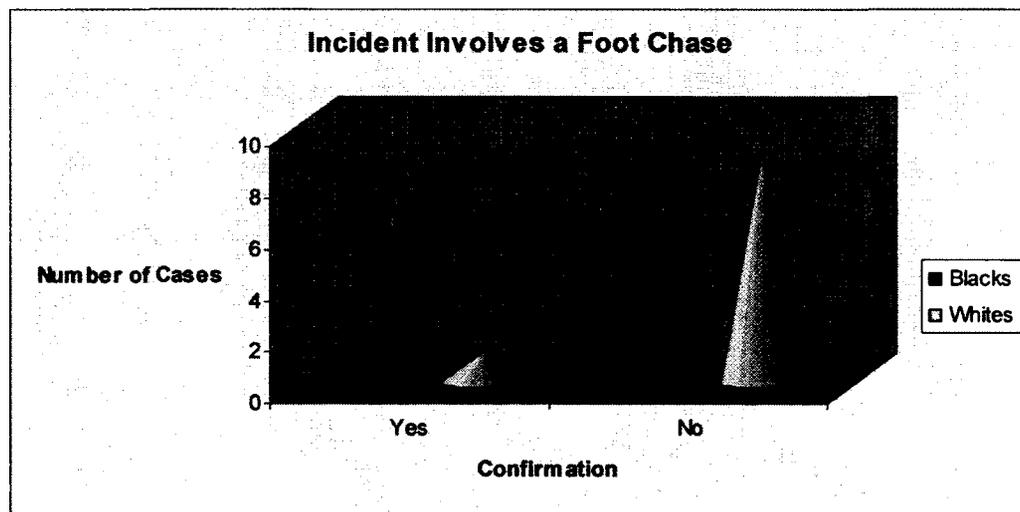
Police shootings of Blacks resulted in 66 percent fatalities in this study period while the smaller sample of Whites resulted in 40 percent fatalities. Although it would be relevant to know how many shots an officer fired from his gun compared to the number of contact hits a victim received, in most cases that information was not communicated in the articles. Consequently, a comparison in that respect could not be ascertained.

Many articles however, did communicate the number of contact hits that an officer's discharged weapon made. In a few Black cases, the newspaper made a point of mentioning the number of contact hits versus the number of shots fired at the victim. In those cases, the agenda-setting seemed to be geared toward demonstrating police brutality toward Blacks. For instance, a victim who was fatally wounded received 1 contact hit out of 6 bullets fired (at that time the suspect was running away from police and was unarmed). In cases where Whites were shot multiple times, the victims were portrayed as being very aggressive toward police in that they actively used their weapons in an attempt to harm the officers. One White victim received 26 contact hits for allegedly shooting at police. In cases where Blacks were shot multiple times (with

the exception of two mentally ill individuals), there was no apparent resistance indicating an imminent threat to officers. What was significant in the Black cases, however, was that none of the victims (with the exception of the two mentally ill victims) actually shot at or attempted to attack police with a weapon and yet they were shot multiple times. One Black victim received 11 contact hits while sitting alone in his vehicle boxed in by police vehicles.

In both Black and White cases, target areas concentrated on the upper body. Blacks were shot in the back of the head, forehead, face, abdomen and back. Whites were shot mainly in the chest and stomach. The newspaper was more explicit with details of contact hits for Blacks than for Whites. In 40 percent of White cases, no explicit mention was made of the body part contacted.

Foot Chases – Power Struggles



* Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.

Figure 3.5

As illustrated in Figure 3.5, of the 18 Black cases studied, 8 incidents involved foot chases, half of which resulted in fatalities. In White cases, only 1 incident resulted in a foot chase and a serious injury. Analysis of foot chases in this study proved to be significant in that it demonstrates the lengths to which police officers were willing to go in order to apprehend a 'suspect' - even if the 'suspect' was not an immediate threat to the officer's life.

Given the rash of shootings resulting from foot chases, according to the newspaper, some officials and critics of the police force had contended that officers should be *standing down* from confrontations with 'suspects' who do not present an imminent threat to life even if it means allowing them to escape. In this way, officers would not be making the final decision to end a person's life. As it was, their action in killing 'suspects' was resulting in a final verdict of guilty without allowing for due process in court. Closer examination of this trend as per this study suggested that this pattern of police "machoism" was a response to fear of losing face in front of suspects and the potential ridicule officers would face from colleagues. The 'aggressive street cop' demeanour was somewhat of the cultural ideal that officers were expected to live up to in accordance to the understanding of the police subculture (Brown 1988). Succeeding in a difficult arrest was an accomplishment and a feather in one's cap. It was about being recognized and accorded the respect and attention of colleagues. As such, the option of "standing down" in a volatile situation with a 'suspect' was rarely exercised by officers. This notion was highlighted in a police-training video (depicting an officer's response to a knife attack by a suspect) that was shown at an inquest:

I'm not going to die in the ghetto. No animals out there are going to get me. ("Officer Sites Race Bias in Police Training Video," *The Toronto Star*, June 11, 1993, A7)

The officer's comment was in response to aggression from a non-white suspect with the implication that the officer was going to take the '*animal*' down before *it* was able to escape. The comment suggested a sense of superiority on the part of the officer in believing himself to be the human in the situation while his quarry was deemed the animal. Coupled with this derogation was the fact that in this video the perpetrators were Black individuals, suggesting an over-tone of racism in the comment. But most problematic was the fact that the video was currently being used to train officers on the police force even though such comments were stereotypical and overtly racist. This notion of '*machoism*' depicted in the article supported the newspaper's framing of a racist police force and suggested that such power struggles have resulted in differential treatment of Blacks. In line with the above quote, in many of these cases, it appeared that fear of the 'appearance of incompetence' may have triggered chases wherein officers felt that they had to apprehend a person at all cost – even if it meant taking a life in the process. Officers had a reputation to uphold and could not afford to be seen as powerless.

Vehicle Involved

The study also revealed that a number of these cases involved victims in personal vehicles: 8 Blacks and 2 Whites. In many of these cases, there was an indication that these victims were under surveillance at the time that the shootings occurred. The higher number of cases among Black victims may lend some credence to

the fact that previous research has determined that Blacks are profiled drivers (Brown et al 2003).

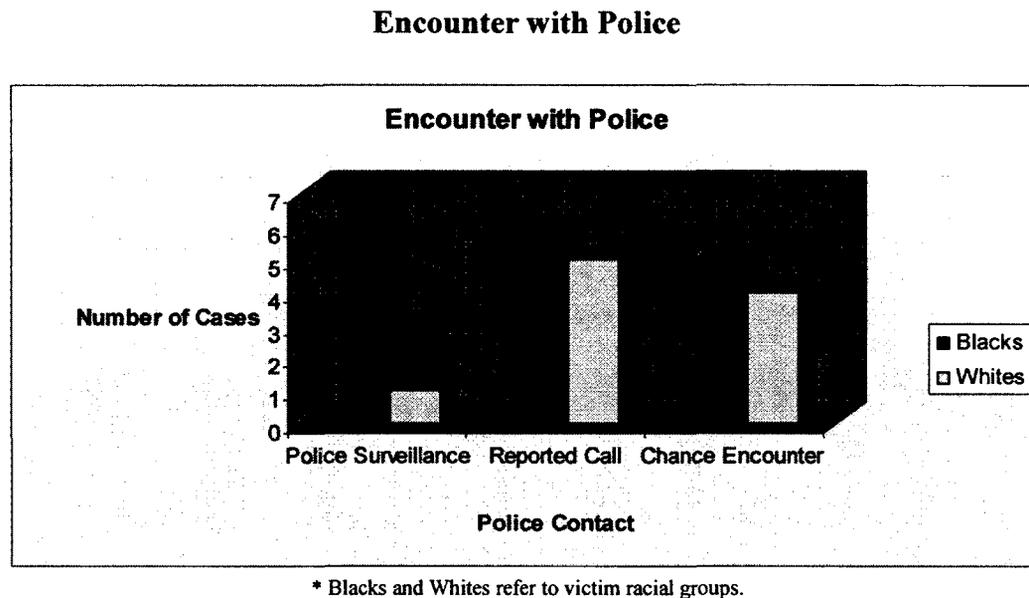


Figure 3.6

Another aspect of the articles studied focused on the encounter between police and their victims. The topic was divided into three categories: *Police Surveillance*, *Reported or Called In*, and *Chance Encounter*. Again, the pattern demonstrated a focus on the Black racial group as Black victims were four times more likely than White victims to be under surveillance. In the majority of White cases, victims were shot after an incident had been reported to police.

Lawsuits / Settlements

Out of the 18 Black cases analyzed in this study, only 6 resulted in victims and/or their families pursuing lawsuits against police and other government officials. Of those cases, only 3 could be confirmed as securing settlements; the rest were unknown because the information was not provided in the articles. The most

significant lawsuit in Black cases sought a total of \$2.3 million in damages; but the result of that particular case was not found in the articles analyzed. The most significant settlement awarded to a Black victim or victim's family was \$250,000. One particular case of interest involved a Black mother's claim for \$2.04 million for the death of her son who was fatally wounded after complying with police instructions to stop running. The mother was awarded \$14,795 by the judge because he decided that the officer at fault had already been penalized for having spent several months in jail during the legal proceedings. This case was particularly significant for the Montreal Black community in 1988 where it was felt by Blacks that racism ran rampant on the police force. Thus, the low settlement awarded to this Black mother further added insult to injury and increased tensions between police and the Black community in that city. News of this uproar was subsequently included in Toronto's news coverage via correspondence to highlight the depth of racism in the justice system.

This inclusion in the Toronto news indeed highlighted the tension between Blacks and police forces in other parts of Ontario with a significant Black population. It also served the dual purpose of emphasizing the upset that racial diversity was producing in a relatively calm society. Consequently, this discourse served to demonize Blacks as a problem people in society.

In White cases, only two lawsuits were known to have been filed. The amounts were for \$7.65 million and \$3.3 million. The awards in both cases resulted in settlements of \$2.1 million and \$4 million respectively. The first case involved the victim losing an eye and incurring brain damage to the point of needing 24 hour

medical care for the rest of his life. In the second case, the victim was fatally wounded from 13 police bullets due to mistaken identity.

Inquests

The relevance of an inquest to this study is that it was precisely at the inquest that the public really learned the specifics of a case since inquests proceedings are not banned from the public. The newspaper also took advantage of this venue to demonstrate which side of a controversial issue it supported. In many of the Black cases, the newspaper seemed to support Black allegations of racism by showing that both the police and the justice system in general were indeed biased in their treatment of Blacks.

An inquest was usually conducted when a victim died as a result of a police shooting. However, one Black case represented an anomaly in that the family specifically refused to have an inquest held after the fatal shooting of their kin. The family chose not to have an inquest because they felt that nothing was really accomplished in terms of making officers accountable for their actions. In other words, inquests did not result in disciplinary action for officers but families of Black victims in particular generally felt that disciplinary action meant justice was served. In Black and White cases, a total of 6 inquests and 3 inquests were conducted, respectively.

DISCUSSION

Zero-Sum Mentality

Several studies have demonstrated that intergroup threat and conflict increases as the perceived competition for resources increases between groups (Duckitt, 2006; Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong, 1998; Sidanius, 1999). Additionally, they have revealed that the greater the threat and conflict between the groups, the more hostility is expressed toward the source of the threat and this hostility helps to justify the conflict and the differential treatment of outgroup members. Those in positions of power are especially likely to believe that allocations of resources and social value are zero-sum (more for minorities means less for the dominant group) so that in order for them to prosper, others have to suffer (Sidanius et al, 1994). In other words, if minority groups were to begin to prosper, this would necessarily be at the expense of the dominant group. Thus, when Blacks steal cars or sell drugs in order to increase their money capital, they are competing with Whites for limited resources.

This perceived competition for resources, consequently, led police to remove the source of the competition by using lethal force against Blacks. While arresting victims certainly presented one option, systematic annihilation of a race offered a more definitive solution to the problem. Motivation to remove the competition was also based on the notion that the social world was dangerous and threatening and that subordinate groups such as Blacks were challenging the status hierarchy. In effect, if the hierarchy changed, the dominant group was in danger of sliding down the ladder, thereby, having limited access to the resources they now possessed. Therefore, police

as control agents of the state acted with lethal force to put an end to the threat and reduce the chances of equalizing access to recourses.

This concept of zero-sum mentality applied to the analysis of this study revealed that certain offences demonstrated a difference between the “haves” and the “have nots” or the wealthy and the impoverished. Black individuals involved in offences related to stealing property (including driving stolen vehicles) and selling drugs for profit were categorized as belonging to the impoverished group. The dominant Anglo-society at large, particularly those belonging to the middle- and upper-classes, were deemed to belong to the wealthy category. They were largely unseen in the articles but understood to be present in the readership and the audience to which the newspaper communicated its ideological beliefs about White dominance. Police played a dual role in the sense that they were both members of the dominant society as well as agents of control responsible for removing the threat.

Consequently, the offences alleged to have taken place by Black victims in this study met with severe sanctions because the situation was perceived as one of the impoverished trying to take resources from the wealthy. In essence, police shootings were a result of perceived competition between Blacks and the dominant society reinforced by a zero-sum mentality about the availability of limited resources. The thieving and drug dealing was viewed as competition for material goods and money capital which the dominant group perceived as being limited and in need of vigorous protection.

The majority of offences alleged to have been committed by Blacks were regarded as a means of increasing their wealth while offences alleged to have been committed by Whites were mostly concerned with violence and a general disregard for property and life. In a few White cases, it was difficult to ascertain whether or not the offences should be classified as belonging to the impoverished category or violent category because it could not be determined if the offence was committed for profit or mere thrill-seeking. This difficulty was a direct result of the lack of background information provided about White victims. However in Black cases, it was clearly demonstrated that Black victims generally came from impoverished communities and were attempting to increase their financial positions, albeit through illegal means.

Overall, results demonstrated that interactions between police and their Black victims was a case of zero-sum thinking in which it was understood that the gains of Blacks necessarily entailed losses for the dominant White society and therefore the threat had to be eliminated. This was because the dominant White society had a vested interest in the conservation and protection of the economic and residential resources they held. With the aid of police through differential enforcement practices (lethal force) against Blacks the decision was made to remove the threat. Thus, elimination of the threat resulted in police shooting Blacks even for offences that did not require the use of lethal force. In essence, police shootings were focused on annihilation of a race viewed as a salient threat to limited resources and creating an imbalance in the distribution of power. Lawsuits also reflected this zero-sum mentality in the sense that

Black victims were rarely awarded settlements and if they did receive compensation it was minimal compared to what White victims received.

POLICE PARTICULARS

Police Officers

This study reveals that a total of 30 officers were involved in shootings of both Blacks and Whites during this time period. Of the 18 Black cases studied, a total of 20 officers were named and of the 10 White cases, 10 individual officers were named. Not all officers were classified as White according to the newspaper reports. Among the Black cases, one officer was identified as Black and among the White cases one officer was identified as Asian. All officers however were male. Shooting incidents occurred in both cases where officers were undercover and uniformed. In the majority of incidents in both Black and White cases, officers were easily identifiable in their uniforms.

There were some demonstrated patterns with respect to officers' involvement in the use of lethal force against the victims. In three Black cases, one victim was shot by more than one officer. In two separate shootings, two Black victims were shot by the same officer. Also evident in two separate and unrelated shootings, the same officer was involved in the shooting of both a White victim and later a Black victim. No significant patterns were demonstrated in any of the White cases. The incident involving the White victim who was shot 26 times was downplayed as an anomaly even in the coverage of inquest reports. The newspaper did however make mention of one particular Black case in which the officer was previously involved (several years

prior) in an altercation with a different Black man (assaulted the man) in a case of mistaken identity for which the officer took no responsibility and was thusly supported by his superiors. The newspapers reporting of this background information about the officer demonstrated the framing of an agenda of police brutality toward Blacks. That the officer shot a Black victim and had previously been involved in aggressive behaviour toward another individual of the same race suggest racial targeting as alleged by members of the Black community. In this way, the newspaper was supporting claims of racism alleged by the Black community.

Shooting Officer's Years of Service

Officer's years of service on the force was analyzed to determine if a pattern could be identified. For example, multiple years of service could possibly indicate a middle aged or older officer that may potentially hold a conservative attitude that would support the status quo of inequality, thus resulting in differential treatment of Blacks. Similarly, fewer years of service could indicate overzealousness in policing stereotypes. The analysis showed that years of service of police officers ranged from 1 year to 31 years. In both Black and White cases, over 80% of officers were considered veteran officers having had 10 or more years of service on the force. When years of service was not known, the article usually reported the age of the officer. Ages ranged from 23 to 36 for police shootings involving both Black and White victims. No patterns could be determined from the results nor did data provide information to support any officers' attitudes toward social acceptance of racial difference.

However, while no pattern was immediately evident, closer examination of circumstantial evidence showed that there were differences between the two races. In White cases, veteran officers used lethal force because their lives were in immediate danger (i.e. they had guns pointed at them). However, in Black cases, officers rarely faced such peril and yet they discharged their weapons at Blacks. This information coupled with other variables such as the number of bullets a Black victim received and the body part injured would indicate that police treated Blacks differently from Whites. Consequently, the framework set by the newspaper suggested that there was an extermination of the Black race being executed by the police force. The agenda here showed that rather than focusing on the demonizing of Blacks, the newspaper had switched focus demonizing instead police officers and suggesting that they were indeed targeting Blacks. In that sense, veteran officers were not young and overzealous officers acting impulsively, rather they were seasoned officers who knew what they were doing and discharged their weapons with intent to kill Blacks.

Charges Laid Against Officer

Charges Laid (Against Officer)		
	Victim Racial Group	
Charges Laid	Black	White
Yes	12	1
No	6	8
Unknown	0	1

Table 4.1

There were differences between the two racial groups with respect to officers being charged after a shooting. Table 4.1 demonstrates whether or not charges were

laid against officers after a police shooting. Among the White cases, only one officer was charged and subsequently convicted. However, charges were laid against officers in almost all Black cases with one rare conviction. Eleven shootings of Blacks occurred between 1979 and 1991 and all accused officers were charged but none was convicted. Between 1992 and 1997, seven shootings of Blacks occurred and only one conviction was made. The last case was noteworthy in the sense that the victim's brother was also an officer on another police force; this may have been a factor in the officer being charged in this shooting.

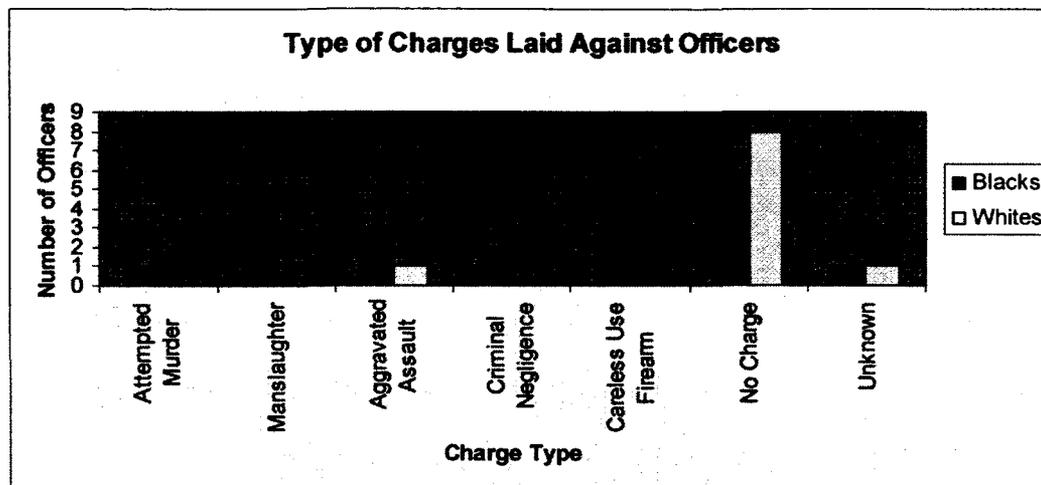
Authorities in the early years (1979 - 1989) seemed to be acknowledging that there was a problem in terms of potential racism on the force as attempts were made to investigate the possibility. However, in the latter years, this trend seemed to dissipate with a quiet resolve that any investigation was akin to an outright admission of guilt. The trend thereafter seemed to be a shift toward paying quiet settlements outside of court to victims' families as it became increasingly difficult for officials to explain the brutal force being used by officers. Again, the problem seemed to be amplified as officials found that the frequency with which police shootings were occurring was becoming too costly. The final strategy was to out-rightly deny any suggestion of racism on the force despite evidence to the contrary.

While charges were laid in 12 of the 18 Black cases, only one officer was convicted despite compelling evidence. This pattern, as hinted at by one prosecution lawyer, would suggest that there was really never any intention to convict a charged officer.

The fact that there have been very few convictions does not reflect a lack of vigour in the prosecution ... The fact is that to satisfy public need, they have prosecuted people who, had they not been public figures, would not have been prosecuted at all. ("Conviction of Officer A Rare Win by Crown," *The Toronto Star*, January 11, 1994, A1.)

The gist of that statement seemed to suggest that officials were merely bowing to public pressure to appease the masses. This sentiment also tied in with the idea that convictions in Black cases would have meant public humiliation for officers and the justice system. It also supported the trend in a number of cases where officials opted for out-of-court settlements that were intended to be kept private. Given that so many officers were charged and almost all of them were cleared or acquitted, it would appear that officers were merely being charged for *appearance sake*, and in fact, there was no intention of convicting an officer. This conclusion was also supported by the fact that the justice system flatly refused to consider the possibility of racism in any police shooting.

The idea of appeasing a particular readership was also contrasted with White cases. Officers involved in 90% of those incidents were not charged because there was no political agenda requiring officials to appease the masses. It was merely understood that if a White victim was shot, the officer had good reason to use lethal force (i.e. his life was threatened). In the one White case where an officer was convicted, the shooting became politically charged and controversial because of the apparent unwarranted force used against an innocent victim who was unknown to the officer. The entire incident was perpetrated by the officer in a case of mistaken identity.



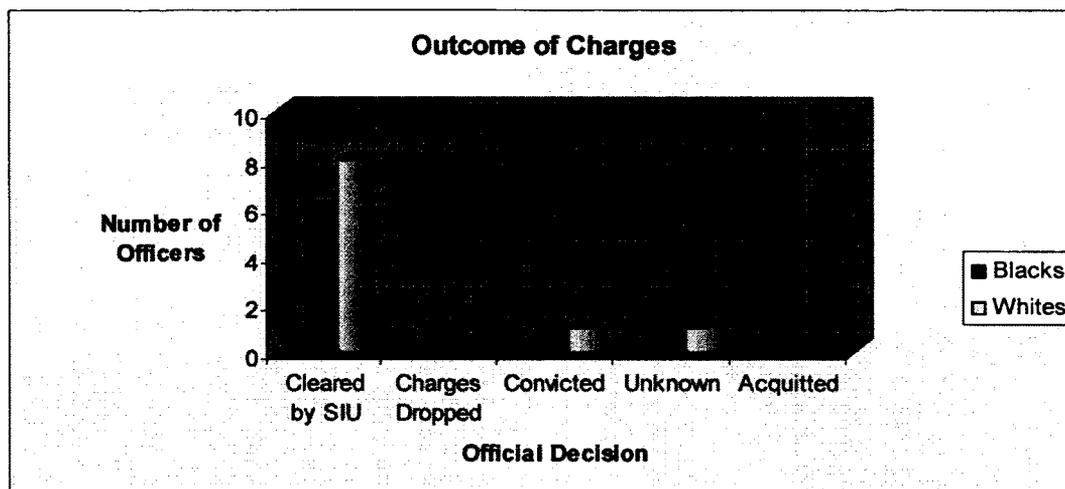
* Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.

Figure 4.1

Of the 18 Black cases studied, seven officers in six incidents were cleared by the SIU during the initial investigation, twelve officers in ten incidents were acquitted in court, and charges were dropped against one officer in a separate incident due to an out-of-court settlement. Of the 10 White cases, six officers were cleared by the SIU of any wrongdoing, one officer was convicted in court, and the outcome of officer's accountability in three separate cases was unknown.

The most common type of charge laid against an officer for shooting a victim was manslaughter (shown in Figure 4.1), followed by aggravated assault and careless use of a fire arm, specifically in Black cases. However, in White cases, rarely was an officer ever charged in the shooting of a victim. Of the 10 White cases studied, only one officer was charged with aggravated assault; he was later convicted and sentenced to 6 months in jail. The one conviction in a Black case decreed by a trial judge resulted from a charge of criminal negligence causing death. The more serious charge of

attempted murder was laid against an officer in a Black case, but the officer was eventually acquitted at trial.



* Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.

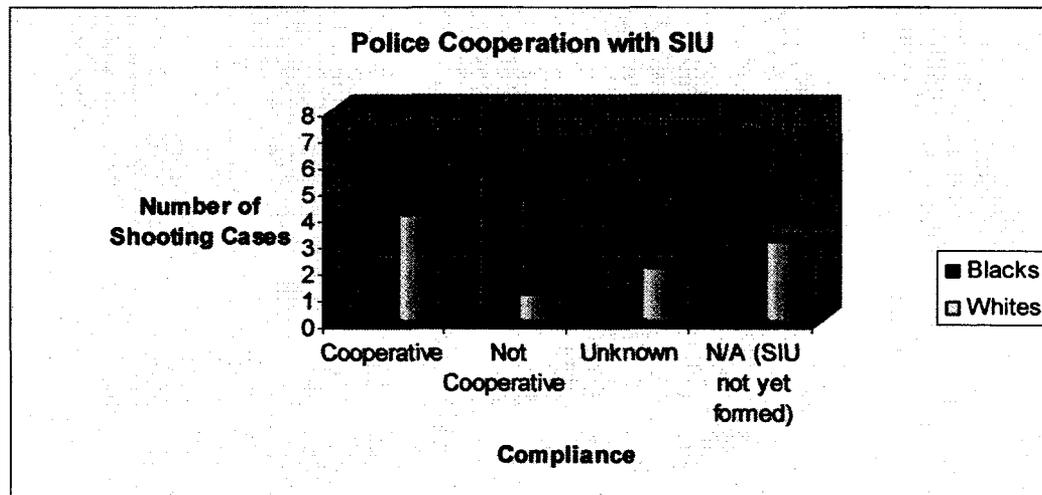
Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2 depicts the outcome of charges laid against officers. While the most common charge in Black cases was manslaughter, no officer was ever convicted of this charge. This has often been a grievance for members of the Black community who fail to understand the significance of the charge. That is, while their focus was centered on uprooting the evils of racism, this charge has never allowed for such inquiry. The interesting aspect of a manslaughter charge is that it absolves the officer of taking responsibility for his actions. Because the charge suggests that a death has resulted not out of intent but in the natural course of duty, the officer does not have to explain his intent in shooting a victim. In that way, the prosecution cannot require him to speak to the issue of racism because that would suggest intent on the officer's part. As such, the charge of manslaughter is but another loophole that the police have found to distance themselves from dealing with the issue of racism on the force. The other protection

mechanism in which the police force engaged with respect to charges and evading the issue of racism has been to engage in out-of-court settlements rather than following through with court proceedings.

SIU Cooperation

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU), a special civilian unit outside the police force that investigates incidents of police shootings was formed in June 1990 after pressure from community leaders to deal with apparent racism on the police force. Prior to this date police officers involved in police shootings were not subject to the scrutiny of an outside body. During this time, officers investigated themselves to determine wrongdoing in the carrying out of their duties. Generally, the provincial police investigated the local municipal police when the situation warranted it. As such, police shootings that took place between 1979 and mid-1990 were not associated with the SIU. From June 1990 onward, officers were investigated by the SIU.



* Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.

Figure 4.3

Cooperation with this civilian unit (as illustrated in Figure 4.3) seemed to vary depending on the race of the victims. During the time that officers were made accountable to the SIU, 72% of Black cases resulted in officers having uncooperative contact with the investigative unit while only 10% of White cases saw the same result. There was no clear indication of reasons as to why officers refused to cooperate with the SIU in Black cases. Officers' most common defence was that they were exercising their right to be protected against incriminating themselves. In spite of this explanation, it was still difficult to ascertain why there was this difference between the races strictly from the information provided in the articles.

Officer Shows Remorse

Remorse in this study referred to the attitude with which the officer presented at inquests or at trials as reported by the newspaper. Sometimes it was explicitly stated in the article that the officer was indeed sorry for having shot a victim. In 67 percent of Black cases, officers did not show remorse for having shot their victims. This percentage was even higher in White cases (70 percent). There was evidently a confident air about police officers in White cases as none of them expressed concern for having shot a victim. A plausible explanation here might be that officers feared no political retaliation from White victim's families. But as the situation with failure to cooperate with the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) indicated, fear ran rampant among officers when a Black person fell victim to their guns and they were placed in positions of public scrutiny. This was in response to a burgeoning era in which political

correctness was paramount in interactions between the races, especially for those in positions of authority.

DISCUSSION

The Police Subculture: Beliefs about Excessive Force and Race

According to Waegel, shootings have a special prominence in the police subculture. They are the stuff of “real” police work as opposed to routine peace keeping activities (Waegel, 1984: 146). The importance of guns carried by police officers cannot be underestimated. If nothing else, it is the symbol which sets them apart from other persons and other occupations. That is, every police interaction takes place against an awareness of the ultimate power that can be brought to bear. As such, the police subculture contains special beliefs and understandings about using firearms against citizens and includes unwritten rules about how to respond to someone who challenges police authority. In this subculture, police intervention means, above all, making use of that capacity and authority to overpower resistance.

While specifics about the encounter between police and their victims could not be ascertained as articles in this study did not provide that kind of information, some aspects of the police-victim encounter provided some clues. Multiple shots at a victim suggested that officers perceived some type of resistance from victims or they were merely responding to skin colour. Either way, it reflected an important understanding of police subculture, particularly for those who work in inner-city neighbourhoods. That is, Blacks are criminals who need to be punished when they exhibit any signs of insubordination in their encounters with police (Waegel, 1984). Results revealed that a

number of police shootings were severe in the sense that some victims were shot multiple times in situations that were not considered life threatening to either the officer or to bystanders. Background information on officers also demonstrated how brutal some officers had been in terms of a history of brutality.

The police subculture included such aspects as the crime fighter image and an “Us” versus “Them” orientation toward citizens. Blacks, for example, were viewed as different from respectable White citizens and their moral inferiority rendered them deserving of harsher treatment. Shooting Blacks in situations that did not require the use of excessive force was a way of teaching them respect for authority. It also reinforced the power the officer had over *inferior* individuals. This aggressive police demeanor was a cultural ideal that when achieved was an accomplishment worthy of recognition by colleagues.

Given the differences between police treatment of the two racial groups, it became evident that a zero-sum mentality and the extermination of the Black race by police were also at play. These findings demonstrated the close association of police with the dominant hegemonic society. In fact, it bolstered the argument that police were indeed control agents of the state. This sentiment was confirmed by the fact that few charges ever resulted in a conviction for police.

Officers were rarely charged because of the cultural understanding on the police force about the nature of police work and how citizens were to be treated. The subculture of secrecy also played a significant role in the outcome of officers' charges. This was particularly evident when police investigated police. Despite the fact that the

Special Investigations Unit (SIU) was formed with the intention to scrutinize police misconduct, it too embraced aspects of the subculture since the agency was comprised of former police investigators. While these investigators did not belong to the actual force under investigation, literature on police subculture has suggested that police are a collegial breed among themselves, a brotherhood that protect themselves against all others on the outside world (Cancino and Enriquez, 2004). This then places investigators in solidarity with police. Nonetheless, despite this camaraderie, police forces were generally against any agency that scrutinized police conduct. The SIU having that responsibility (in name, if nothing else), therefore, was seen as oppositional to the very core beliefs of police work and in particular the beliefs of the subculture. Consequently, the SIU encountered much resistance in their investigations of police misconduct.

Another aspect of the subculture that encouraged excessive force against citizens was the lack of reprimand from administrators. If administrators were indifferent to officer's excessive use of force, this served to condone and reinforce the sub-cultural mentality that Blacks were to be treated harsher than other citizens (Paoline 2003). That apparently was the situation in this study. Police officers tended to band together and close ranks in protecting their fellow officers against accusations of excessive force. Similarly, police chiefs and numerous board members fought vigorously to defend police actions in various controversial shootings involving Blacks and excessive force.

Overall, the police subculture provided a brotherhood of shared beliefs about what police work entailed. It included aspects such as an “Us” versus “Them” orientation and rules about how to deal with certain citizens, it demonstrated secrecy and a fellowship with regard to police conduct, and it encouraged the use of excessive force against certain citizens. The subculture also guided officers in how best to negotiate encounters with certain citizens such that Black victims in particular met with harsher treatment than did White victims. On two accounts, the subculture encouraged lethal force against Blacks even when the situation was not a perilous one. First, it encouraged aggressive policing against Blacks as the cultural ideal officers were expected to live up to. Second, it encouraged a belief that the justice system did not deal with Blacks severely enough, consequently, officers were expected to take it upon themselves to execute street justice on Blacks so that Blacks got what they deserved and were eliminated as a competition for limited resources reserved for the dominant group.

NEWSPAPER PARTICULARS**Total Number of Articles Written That Included Victim's Names**

In producing reports on incidents of police shootings, newspapers tended to repeat the names of past victims of police shootings in articles that were unrelated to some individuals. In one Black case, 77 articles were identified as having the victim's name included in the article. The highest number in the White cases was 10 articles for one individual victim. In many cases, multiple articles were usually tied to the fact that there was a lengthy inquest in progress for one of the victims, but not necessarily the one that was casually mentioned. In Black cases, 78 percent of victims received mention in ten or more articles. Sixty percent of White victims received mention in between four and eight articles. While some articles were mere 'incidentals' (mentioning the person's name as a simple statistic of police shootings), it was still meant to represent part of the racial discourse in the newspaper's agenda-setting strategy.

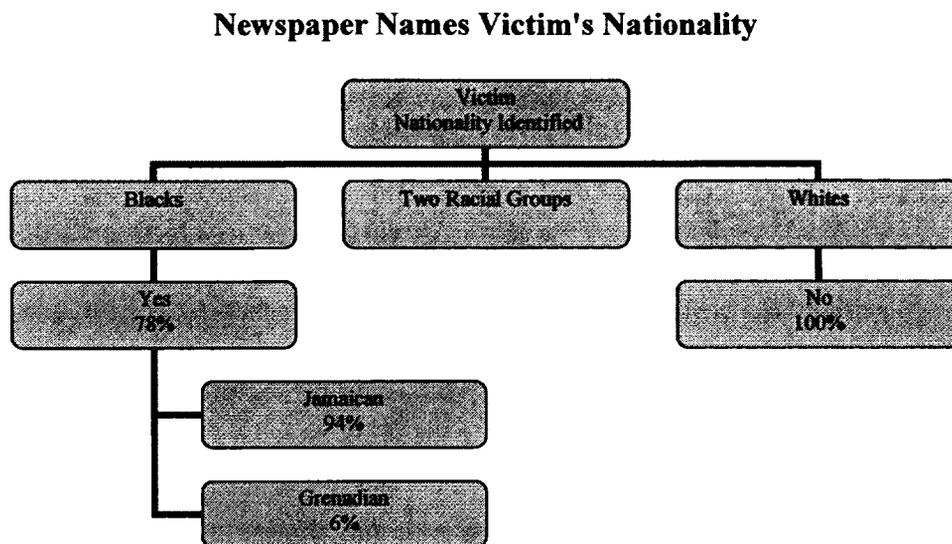


Figure 5.1

One interesting observation made in the analysis of the articles in this study was that in 78 percent of Black cases, the newspaper made mention of the victim's nationality while in no White cases was a victim's nationality mentioned in the articles (see Figure 5.1). There seemed to be an assumption in the article that 'White' simply meant Canadian. Of the Black cases mentioned, the Jamaican nationality was identified in 72 percent of cases; and in a number of those cases, nationality was mentioned even when the victim's only connection to the foreign country was by parental immigrant status. For example, the newspaper stated in some cases that the victim was the son of a Jamaican immigrant or that he came from a Jamaican home.

Elliot, who grew up with Lawson's father in Jamaica clutched his head in his hands and sobbed. ("Friend of Slain Boy's Family Leaves Race Hearing in Tears," *The Toronto Star*, February 3, 1989, A2)

Despite the fact that the father was not an actual part of the situation being discussed, the newspaper found a way to identify the youth's nationality by making reference to his father's background. The significance of this strategy with respect to racial discourse would suggest a form of "Othering" in singling out those that did not belong. The focus on a particular nationality also served the purpose of singling out a particular group to be identified as problematic in society.

During the study period, a highly publicized topic in mass media was the focus on Jamaican criminals thought to be the group most represented in drug and gun crimes in Canada, particularly in Toronto. As a result, topics relevant to Toronto police and criminals of Jamaican descent became sensational news eagerly reported by media. *The Toronto Star* was not immune to this frenzy. In fact, they contributed to much unsubstantiated reports about the existence of Jamaican criminals and consequently sought to make any links to Jamaica where Black victims were concerned. The problem was that all Blacks were stereotyped as criminals involved in drug culture and the frequent associations with Jamaican Blacks and crime resulted in the defamation of the Jamaican culture. This was part of the collective memory revealing the fact that for more than half of a century, violence and criminality have been typical components of the stereotype of Blacks (Devine 1989; Correll et al. 2002) and their association with physical threat (Madon et al., 2001). Consequently, Blacks of Jamaican descent in Canada have been defined as a particular type of problem population.

Newspaper's Use of Layperson Witnesses

In Black cases, layperson witnesses were included in more than half of the articles while in White cases less than 40 percent included layperson witnesses. This is significant in the sense that laypersons were used to augment the political position of the newspaper in producing its racial discourse. It was rarely about the position that the layperson witness had taken. For instance, the idea of witnesses to the police shooting of a Black victim was associated with the idea of public humiliation and the need to make the incident a spectacle for demonizing the victim. This was common in articles where the shooting incident took place out in public view. For instance, one article portrayed the victim as a very eccentric individual indicating that neighbours often observed the man wearing big cardboard hats and talking to plants in his outdoor garden. In this way, not only was the eccentric behaviour highlighted but so was the cultural difference emphasized by the fact that he was a Black man.

In other situations, witnesses were used to identify cultural difference between some Blacks and the dominant society, such as in the following excerpt where a Black man attending a meeting of Black activists commented on the rash of police shootings of Blacks:

One man, wearing a tie-dyed T-shirt and knit cap told the meeting, "We have a lot of well-behaved (blacks) in this town. What we want is some bad, crazy (blacks). ("Angry Blacks Condemn OPP Probe of Killing," *The Toronto Star*, August 12, 1988, A6)

Here, the newspaper demonstrated the cultural difference of this witness by making explicit the clothing he was wearing and the semantics of his speech. From the perspective portrayed by the newspaper, the witness was suggesting violence as revenge for police shootings of Blacks. However, while the remark was flippant, in the context of the situation, the witness was making the point that a lot of Blacks are well-behaved, but authorities are suggesting otherwise. The newspaper, on the other hand, used this quote as a framing strategy in “Othering” the man to show that this witness and others of his cultural background were different from the dominant society – highly volatile, and extremely dangerous.

Conversely, in cases where Whites were involved, layperson witnesses were usually portrayed in a different light. They were often confined to family members or those who happened by chance to be in the vicinity of a relatively secluded area. Victims were portrayed as highly respected, caring co-workers and/or loving family members. For the most part, however, layperson witnesses were not usually used in reports as a demonizing strategy for White victims. In most cases, they were used for the expressed purpose of praising White victims.

Circumstantial Conditions Highlighted in Articles

Circumstantial Conditions Highlighted in Articles		
Circumstantial Conditions	Victim Racial Group	
	Blacks	Whites
Mental Illness	4	1
Black Problem	9	0
Mistaken Identity	0	1
Victim of Circumstances	3	1
Police Brutality	17	4

Culturally Different	7	0
Racism	18	0
Violence	6	4
Criminality	7	6
Weapons	2	8
Drugs	6	1
Fear	3	0
Policy Reforms	6	0

Table 5.1

Some of the dominant and recurring themes identified in the discourse presented in this study included *Racism, Police Brutality, the Black Problem and Criminality* as indicated in Figure 5.1. Less dominant were themes of *Violence, Drugs, and Policy Reform*. While there were elements of most themes evident in the articles concerning both Black and White victims, the discourse in White cases tended to focus on *Weapons, Criminality, and Police Brutality* while Black cases focused on *Racism, Criminality and Policy Reform*. Articles were placed in categories based on specific definitions of the above headings.

In this study, *Weapons* referred to the presence of a gun or 'active use' of a less dangerous weapon such as a knife. For example, in several White cases, the newspaper indicated that White victims tried to attack police with a knife while in Black cases it was simply mentioned that a victim refused to drop a knife or that a knife was later found among his possessions. Therefore, in order to establish the significance of violence depicted in a report, a distinction was made between mere possession of a weapon and active use of a weapon. Consequently, active use of a weapon was

identified more frequently in articles concerning White victims than it was in articles concerning Black victims.

Reference to *Drugs* applied to either trafficking or consuming an illegal chemical substance such as a narcotic. This theme was more frequently identified in Black cases than in White cases.

General *Criminality* was a category that identified situations involving breaking the law such as involvement in the drug culture, involvement with guns and other weapons, gang activity, having a past criminal record, evading police and or escaping custody. Gang and drug activity was mostly relevant to articles focused on Black victims while active involvement with weapons was the focus of articles relating to White victims.

The *Black Problem* referred to Blacks being a disruption to society and attempting to affect moral standards through disorderly and/or disruptive conduct which was portrayed in the reports as being costly to society as a whole. Consequently, Black victims involvement in these circumstances was automatically viewed as a problem for dominant society because it resulted in an upset in the status quo. The Black problem was also connected to fear in that a change in the status quo meant that the structure of society was changing and producing anxiety in citizens who were previously comfortable with the way things were. Specifically, *fear* in that sense referred to the idea that the city had become a dangerous place because of crime and the type of people associated with it (mainly Blacks). One thing that demonstrated difference between Black cases and White cases with reference to fear was that even

though numerous incidents in White cases involved weapons in which victims actively tried to attack police, creating public fear was not part of the agenda-setting being framed in the newspaper's discourse on White victims. However, in articles relevant to Black victims this theme was highly relevant.

Police Brutality referred to police use of lethal force prior to employing defusing strategies to attempt negotiation at a calm resolution to the situation. The issue for Black victims of police brutality was that police were not using discretion before resorting to the use of their guns to apprehend a '*suspect*'.

Racism referred to structural, conscious and unconscious biases that resulted in differential treatment based on race and the notion that there were distinct cultural characteristics that endowed some races with an intrinsic superiority over others. In this study, allegations of racism issued by the Black community were directed mainly at the Toronto Police Force that was predominantly made up of the White Euro-Canadian race.

Recommendations that were made to improve police training and police-minority relations were the main focus of *Policy Reform*. While the articles may have been in response to a shooting incident (usually relevant to Black cases) these articles were usually stand-alone in the sense that they were not always a part of a report on a specific victim. These policies were often instituted by government officials on the recommendations of various government-commissioned task forces and committees.

The Allocation of Blame and Imputation of Criminality

The three most common areas to which the newspaper attributed blame in order of severity were: the police first, victim second, and finally, the justice system in general. In Black cases, 56% of cases showed blame to be attributed to police conduct; 22% toward the victim; and 11% toward the justice system. Similarly, in White cases, blame was attributed mostly toward police and then the victim: 50% and 40% respectively. However, the justice system was not portrayed as culpable in biased treatment toward White victims.

When blame was attributed to the victims, the newspaper basically suggested that the victim was the author of his own misfortune. However, blame focused on the police suggested that police were abusing their authority in controlling a situation. When blame was extended toward the justice system it usually suggested that the extent of the problem was quite systemic in that not only were police at fault but that the justice system also supported the police's unorthodox methods of apprehending a victim (i.e. shoot first and ask questions later).

The identification of blame attribution was determined by the position that the article seemed to support. For example, if the article suggested that a civilian was a victim of police brutality, then that suggested that blame was attributed to police for the outcome of the situation.

DISCUSSION

The Politics of “Othering”

In this study, it was revealed that *The Toronto Star* portrayed Blacks as outsiders within the dominant Anglo-Canadian society, reinforcing the “We” versus “They” mindset. Dividing society into “We” and “They” groups was framed in the context of examination of the relative values and norms of the majority versus minority populations. “We” represented the White dominant culture while “They” were the Black “Others” possessing different values, beliefs, and norms. The “We” were the “true Anglo-Canadians” who possessed power, privilege and status, and the “They” were understood to be different and undeserving of the privileges afforded to true Canadians. In essence, those who were marked as “Others” were therefore not considered to be part of the national identity of Canadians. This “We” and “They” mentality reflected the idea of ethnocentrism in which one’s own racial group was considered to be better than others and played a central role in the overall racial discourse produced in the newspaper.

The problem of categorizing people into groups has been recorded in an abundance of work using the minimal group paradigm (Tajfel 1978). From such research projects it has been made clear that arbitrarily dividing individuals into groups can foster ingroup bias and out group hostility. However, constructing Blacks as “Others” (as was the mechanism through which *The Toronto Star*’s discourse on race was revealed) provided the dominant White culture with invisible privilege and power.

It also helped to create the impression that Blacks as “Others” threatened the democratic and moral values of Canadian society.

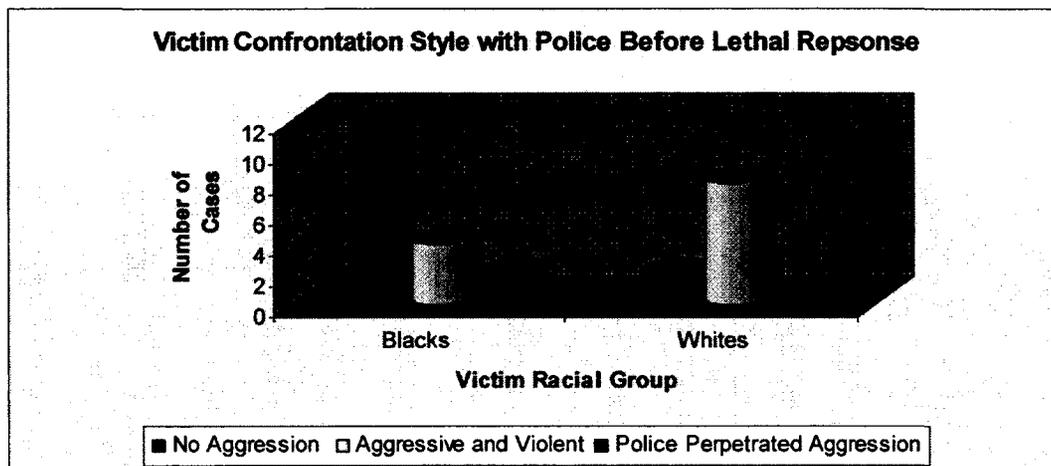
Through “Othering” the newspaper continued to uphold problematic stereotypes of Blacks portrayed as different, exotic, special, and even abnormal. This racial defamation was fuelled by the fact that the newspaper as an institutional organization of the dominant culture was closely aligned to the elites in society who had vested interest in the dominant culture and were reluctant to changing the status quo (Fursich 2010:117).

“Othering” emphasized difference and in this process of “Othering,” Blacks were thought to be inferior because they are culturally different. As a result, the Black race was depicted as odd and peculiar. Strategies included: repeating the names of past victims; focusing on Jamaicans as Black criminals; demonstrating Blacks as a group problematic to society; using layperson witnesses to augment the newspaper’s position in identifying cultural difference; and illustrating the need for government involvement by highlighting policy reform meant to control problems initiated by the presence of Black “Others.” The issue of police brutality, however, served a dual purpose. On the surface, it appeared that the newspaper wanted to show that police had not yet advanced to the modern age of *political correctness* because they still exhibited behaviours of discrimination and blatant racism toward Blacks. However, this focus on police brutality in light of the issues emphasized regarding the Black problem revealed that police brutality was an acceptable control mechanism meant to protect the White dominant culture while maintaining the status quo.

“Othering” was also effective in the sense that it was a practice in comparing one’s self to others while at the same time distancing one’s self from them. Thus, by “Othering” Blacks, the readership of dominant Whites were able to distance themselves from Black “Others” and secure their own identity as the dominant group by stigmatizing Black people based on their country of origin, physical appearance, skin colouring, and socioeconomic status. In this way, *The Toronto Star*’s “Othering” of the Black racial group united the dominant White group and supported the status quo which enhanced the racial hierarchy of hegemonic rule. In essence, “Othering” was a strategy of social dominance used by the newspaper to demonstrate the power Whites had over subordinates such as Blacks.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF POLICE SHOOTING INCIDENTS

Brief Description of Incidents



* Police perpetrated refers to victim becoming aggressive after being antagonized by police.

Figure 6.1

The compilation of a brief description of the incident in individual cases of police shootings analyzed in this study illustrated that offence type varied between the two racial groups and that there was differential treatment by police with regard to the two groups. Among Black victims, the major criminal offence was theft. Other offences included guns, violence, speeding and public disturbance. Within the White racial group, guns was the most common offence. Other offences included theft and disturbance to a lesser degree.

The analysis also demonstrated a difference between the two racial groups in terms of the instability of the situation after police arrived on the scene (see Figure 6.1). Among victims of the Black racial group, the incident turned into a volatile

situation after police arrived; however, among victims of the White racial group the situation was already a dangerous one before police arrived on the scene. This would suggest that in Black cases, the situation was aggravated by the presence of police; but whether or not it was triggered by police hostility or victim aggression could not be determined. The way in which victims confronted police, however, did provide some evidence as to why the situation quickly escalated after police arrived on the scene in both group comparisons. Of the White cases, 80 percent involved victims aggressively confronting officers with weapons when they arrived on the scene. Most of these situations involved victims pointing and shooting guns at police indicating that the lives of officers were indeed in danger in most White cases. Of the Black cases, 18 percent were also classified as high risk situations because of gun involvement. On the whole, incidents involving guns were classified as extremely dangerous since guns were made for the sole purpose of killing people whether or not a police officer was on the scene. The identification of knives in particular incidents however were not classified as dangerous unless they were actively used to ward off or injure police as was the situation in more White cases than Black cases. The more eccentric weapons identified in Black cases were not considered dangerous until after police antagonized the victims thus resulting in a volatile situation and the use of such weapons against police.

Unlike the aggression demonstrated in the majority of White cases, in Black cases, 83 percent of victims either ran from police or remained at the scene and complied with police direction. That is, the victims did not confront police or

demonstrate aggressive behaviour that would cause police to feel that their lives or the lives of others was in danger. Coupled with this lack of aggression, the analysis showed that in 61 percent of Black cases the situation worsened after police arrived on the scene. In that respect, it would appear that police were guilty of differential treatment in their dealings with victims of the Black racial group. On the whole, it would appear that police discharged their weapons at Blacks despite the fact that their lives were not in danger. In other words, these situations could have been resolved without the use of lethal force since the victims did not present an immediate threat. However, in the more violent confrontations with White victims, it appears police use of lethal force was justified (with the exception of one case in which the officer was eventually convicted). Overall, this analysis showed that police were biased in their treatment toward Blacks.

In summary, the analysis shows that somehow police presence triggered hostility from victims resulting in victim aggression and a very volatile situation. In a number of Black cases, it was determined that police antagonized the victims to the point of aggression resulting in police retaliation of lethal force; but in White cases, aggression was the result of victims actively using lethal weapons which they had in their possession before police arrived on the scene. Consequently, police immediately reacted with lethal force.

All incidents involving a gun were classified as extremely dangerous whether or not police were on the scene given that guns were made for the sole purpose of killing people. (This applied mainly to White cases but was also relevant in two Black

cases.) Other weapons that were actively used to try and harm officers were also classified as extremely dangerous. The use of eccentric weapons was not classified as dangerous until police arrived on the scene. (This was mostly applicable to Black cases because the situation did not become a dangerous one until police antagonized the victim.) On the whole, extremely dangerous situations justified a lethal response from officers. (This was the situation in 80% of White cases.) Incidents involving no weapons did not justify a lethal response from officers. (This was the case in over 80% of Black cases and only 10% of White cases.)

The difference between Black and White cases, then, was that White victims tended to aggressively confront police with lethal weapons while Black victims tended to flee from police unarmed. However, while police responded to aggression with lethal force, they also responded to compliance and no aggression with lethal force. The former scenario was relevant to White cases while the latter applied mainly to Black cases. In conclusion, it would appear that while Whites were more aggressive than Blacks in the commission of crime, police apparently reacted to a preconceived stereotype of Blacks as being the more aggressive racial group, and in that way were guilty of differential treatment resulting in racism.

Relationship of Victim Offence to Police Reaction

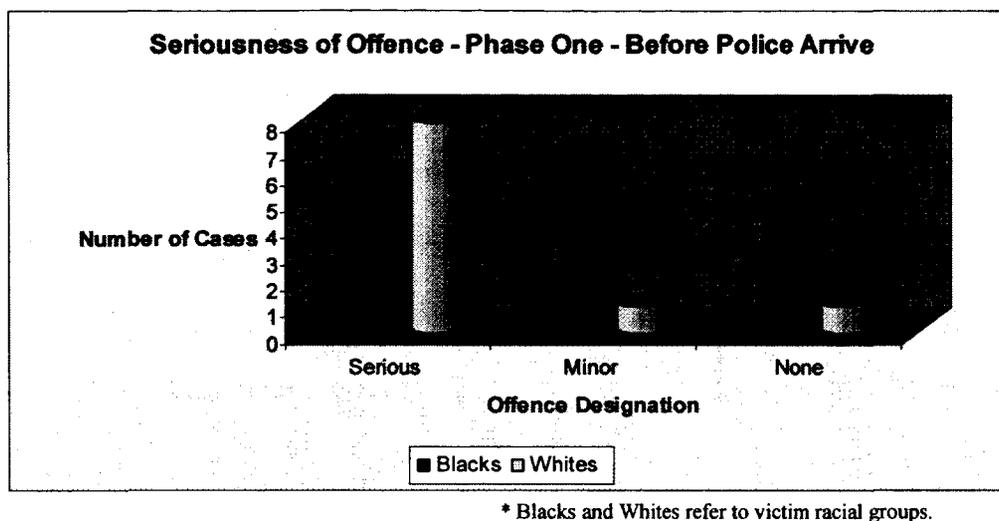
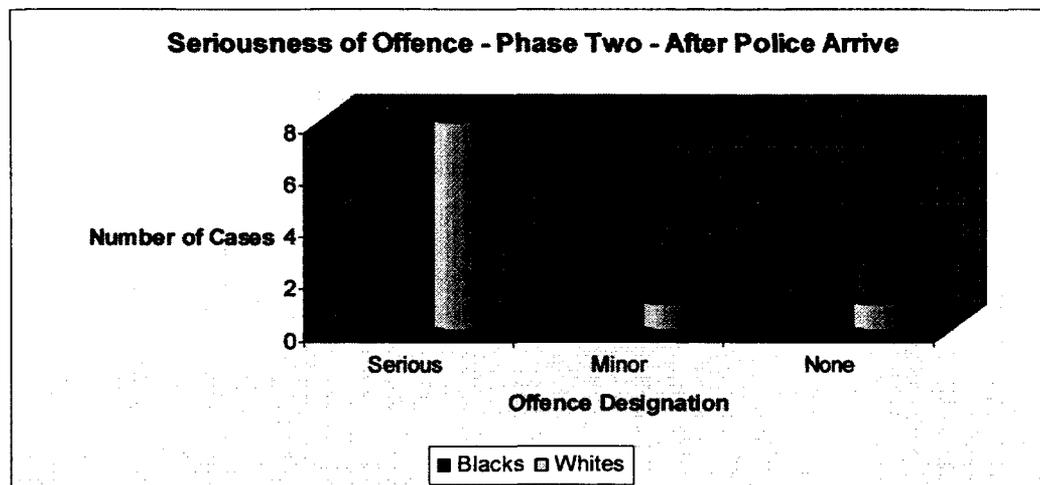


Figure 6.2

Analysis of offences was conducted in two different phases. First, they were analyzed according to the criminal offence alleged to have taken place prior to police arriving on the scene (see Figure 6.2). Second, the offences were viewed in their totality, including the arrival of police and the events that occurred up to the moment of the officer discharging his weapon. This distinction between the two phases was required as some cases did not produce a criminal offence or altercation between parties (police and victim) until police arrived on the scene.



* Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.

Figure 6.3

In the second analysis as shown in Figure 6.3, the offences were subdivided into the seriousness of the offence: Serious, Minor, and No Offence. In the *Serious* category, the offence presented a life threatening danger to the officer and those in the immediate vicinity; it usually involved some type of weapon. The *Minor* category was defined as an offence under the criminal code that is thusly labelled but presented no immediate threat to life. The *No Offence* category indicated that no offence, criminal or otherwise had been committed by the victim. In identifying the offence presented in each case, a brief description of the incident as identified in the articles was summarized for each victim.

A review of the incidents demonstrated a pattern of ambiguous police actions that was difficult to explain. Again, the question returned to the issue of: Are police officers discharging their weapons because they fear for their lives (i.e. there is an immediate threat to life in a volatile situation producing an equally intense response from police)? Or is there an alternative explanation to the officer's lethal response?

Given that other alternatives may exist, this portion of the analysis was only able to highlight the probability of the threat faced by police in terms of imminent danger as compiled from the evidence presented in various articles. According to the analysis, if the incident was identified as *Serious*, lethal force would have been an appropriate response. If the response was *Minor*, lethal force would have been an inappropriate response. And if the response was *No Offence* a lethal response would have been inappropriate to the point of raising questions about police misconduct and improper gun use.

Of the 18 Black cases, 6 incidents were classified as life threatening situations in which a lethal police response was appropriate; 9 were considered a criminal offence but did not present an imminent threat to the police or the public; and 3 incidents raised questions about police misconduct and brutality toward civilians. Of the 10 White cases, 8 incidents involving weapons were classified as life threatening situations in which lethal police response was appropriate; 1 was considered a criminal offence but did not present an imminent threat to police or to the public; and 1 raised questions about police misconduct and brutality towards civilians.

The difference between phase one and phase two demonstrates that police presence at the scene contributed to the escalation of the situation which resulted in a lethal response by police. Two Black cases moved from *No Offence* to *Serious* after the arrival of police on the scene. For example, in one case, officers went to the wrong apartment to talk to a would-be suspect but instead found an individual (unconnected to the police investigation) who was later said to be emotionally unstable, and during the

course of the police visit, he became a victim of two police bullets. This individual invited officers into his room and then attacked one with a hammer. In another case, the victim was also believed to be emotionally unstable and was known to police as hostile when in the presence of police.

Movement was also evident among the White racial group. Two of the cases involved a move from the *No Offence* category to the *Serious* category after police arrived on the scene. Although they were identified as two separate cases, both incidents were a result of mistaken identity that escalated to the fatal wounding of the two victims.

While no Black cases or White cases involved a movement from serious to a lesser degree upon arrival of police, there was movement from the *Minor* and *No Offence* categories to the *Serious* category after police arrived on the scene. In such cases, it was police presence that apparently triggered the escalation of the incidents. This analysis did not assign guilt to either the police or the victim as either party could have instigated hostility that evolved into a very volatile situation. However, it did indicate that with police presence the situation sometimes escalated dramatically out of control. Accordingly, it was hinted at in the articles that because the police are the ones legally allowed to use lethal force to apprehend a suspect, that power should be used as a last resort rather than used at police discretion as had been the case with the rash of shootings. In that sense, officers needed to be trained to negotiate situations and employ the use of diffusing strategies to de-escalate situations before they became life threatening situations. While the strategies of diffusion were unknown in many

cases, close scrutiny of the reports suggested that these skills were lacking in police training.

Unequal Treatment (in individual cases)

Unequal treatment generally referred to favouritism toward officers and protection strategies that shielded officers from allegations of racism consequently resulting in officers not being held accountable for their actions. In this respect police were often treated differently from regular citizens in that they were not given as severe a charge when deemed to be culpable of wrongdoing. The term unequal treatment also referred to the newspaper's framing strategy and who they appeared to support on a particular topic.

Incidents of unbiased treatment were evident in more Black cases than in White cases. Some of the incidents highlighted by the newspaper in Black cases included issues surrounding an all-White jury (which may have contributed to the officer's acquittal), officers caught in telling lies but still being cleared by authorities, and judges awarding less than reasonable settlements in a lawsuit over a death. Other areas of unequal treatment were indicated by publication bans on evidence at trials, and officers not being severely disciplined when charges were laid. When looking at the police force and the justice system in general, issues concerning recommendations being made but not acted upon were highlighted. With regard to the newspapers' development of racial discourse, *The Toronto Star* also focused on negative aspects of the Jamaican culture in order to demonize that group of people. For example, highlighting poverty and strife in that community with the suggestion of involvement

in drugs and crime and the practice of having children out of wedlock were often indicated.

Unequal treatment in White cases was usually demonstrated through sympathy being shown to victims despite their serious (usually violent) offences. For example, in one White case, the victim had discharged his rifle at police during a police raid at his house yet during the inquest, both the coroner and witnesses commented on the fact that the victim was an upstanding member of society and a gentle and loving father. However, in no Black cases were victims ever referred to as “gentle” or “loving” fathers. Reference to their parenthood usually highlighted the fact that they were young people having children out of wedlock and that they were irresponsible because of their involvement in crime.

Indication of Bias in Cases

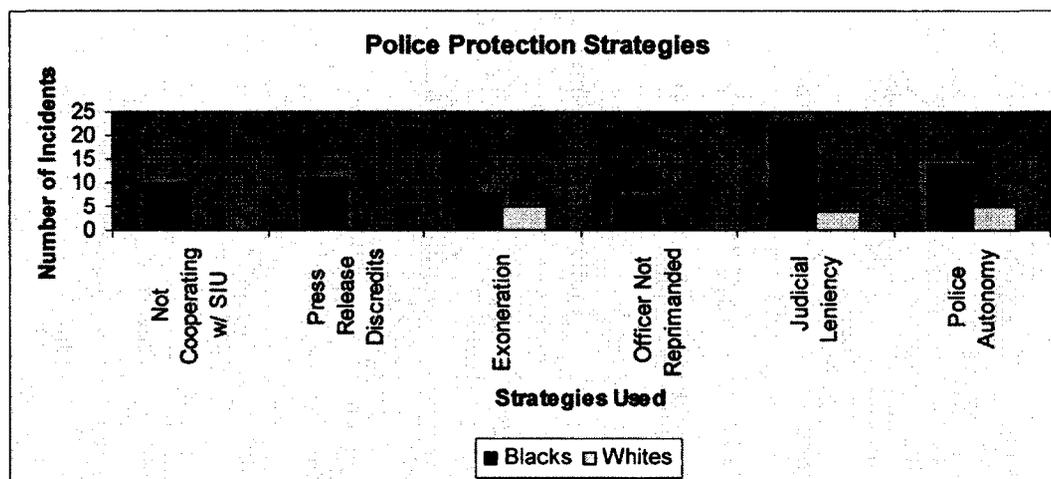
After a shooting incident occurred, the newspaper had a tendency to indicate a particular area in which they had implied or stated explicitly that bias was occurring. The four categories were labelled as *SIU investigation*, *Justice System*, *Police Investigating Police*, and *Society*. *SIU investigation* referred to a tendency to show favouritism toward police usually despite evidence to the contrary or it referred to an indication of negligence by investigators in carrying out their duties. Demonstrations of bias in the *Justice System* were also indicated when favour was shown toward police by officials such as a court judge. While the justice system did not enter the picture until after the incident had occurred, its continued avoidance of the issues of police brutality and potential racism contributed to a negative view of its motives in

delivering justice, thus making them culpable in demonstrating bias toward certain victims (i.e. Blacks). Police *Investigating Police* was another situation in which bias was evident in this study. It received much attention prior to the development of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) because this was the only means of scrutinizing police conduct. Finally, *Society* referred to the public's general intolerance of difference, be it cultural or otherwise, and the impact this had on the delivery of police enforcement. This category was often punctuated by neighbours' complaints of victims' cultural differences to the acceptable norm in the dominant White society.

According to the articles analyzed, in Black cases, *The Toronto Star* had indicated bias mainly toward police and secondly toward the justice system. Questions had been raised regarding the credibility of an investigation when police (a very close-knit community) were permitted to investigate themselves. Because the civilian unit (SIU) was not introduced until the early 1990's, there was much controversy over the fairness of police investigations of themselves. Similarly, even after the SIU took over the responsibility of investigating police, the controversy continued as police were still permitted to conduct investigations of themselves because of a secret deal between the SIU and the police. The justice system, particularly at inquests, was also identified as blameworthy by the newspaper because it too demonstrated allegiance with police rather than remaining impartial in conducting a fair hearing. Overall, the issues of bias were more strongly indicated for Blacks than for Whites. According to many articles relevant to Black cases, bias and corruption were indicated in many areas resulting in a systemic problem that was not favourable to Blacks. It is noteworthy to indicate that in

this study, the term *bias* is used interchangeably with racism primarily because the latter was not clearly evident until a pattern of bias toward race had been established. Thus, in one particular incident *bias* may have represent racism while in another it merely indicated a situation of unequal treatment that eventually resulted in racism when viewed in the aggregate.

Protection Strategies (for police)



*Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.

± Indiscretions refer to police strategies in general whereas misconduct refers to specifically to individual officers.

Figure 6.4

There were various strategies employed by police and the justice system to exonerate officers. These strategies were divided into six subtitles: 1) *Uncooperative with SIU*, 2) *Press Release Discredits*, 3) *Exoneration*, 4) *Officer Not Reprimanded*, 5) *Judicial Leniency*, and 6) *Police Autonomy/Discretion*. The first category of *Uncooperative with SIU* was as stated: the articles indicated that officers were uncooperative with the SIU. This was a protection strategy in the sense that officers refused to speak with the SIU claiming that they did not want to incriminate

themselves, or they merely avoided contact with the SIU without any formal explanation. In other situations officers delayed contacting the SIU to come to a shooting scene until they had discussed the situation with each other. This, of course, was contrary to protocol and would have definitely impacted the SIU's investigation. In these situations, the officer was shielded from any backlash resulting from misconduct on his part. That is, if wrongdoing was not revealed, then he was protected.

The category of *Press Release Discredits* referred to police releasing information that put victims in a non-flattering light especially when the information was not directly relevant to the shooting incident. For example, releasing information about a victim's previous police record was a common strategy employed by police to demonstrate that by shooting the victim, they were getting a dangerous criminal off the street. Police leaking information to the media was also included in this category.

Articles that depicted officials publicly clearing an officer of wrongdoing before an investigation had begun or was completed were placed in the category of *Exoneration*. The term "official" referred to anyone occupying an administrative capacity with the police force, the judicial system, the legal system (i.e. lawyer), or even a police union administrator.

The category of *Officer Not Reprimanded* referred to situations where the officer had erred in judgment (whether intentionally or by negligence) thereby becoming the catalyst in the chain reaction of events that led to the officer's lethal response to the situation. Significant to this category was the fact that despite some

officers' culpability, they were not sanctioned by supervisors for instigating the incident. In two specific cases highlighted, police administrators made no issue of the fact that officers made mistakes in going to the wrong home and subsequently shooting a civilian to death and arresting the wrong individual. Because of this, there was no accountability on the officer's part.

Judicial Leniency referred to allowances that judges made to protect officers from facing difficult questions from prosecutors and opponents during legal proceedings. This category scored the highest in terms of article references and the result was likely augmented because it was in reports on inquests and trial proceedings the detailed information of shooting incidents and victim background was revealed. Such articles counted for more than a third of the articles in this study. Overall, various themes were relevant to this category. Some focused on the fact that the issue of hollow-point bullets was never allowed to be raised at an inquest or trial because it involved investigating intent which could only be raised during a murder trial. However, murder was rarely a charge that was laid against an accused officer. Consequently, such a serious issue was not dealt with and allowed police again not to take responsibility for their actions. Other themes included police paying out-of-court settlements with conditions placed on recipients not to discuss the matter with anyone, protest groups being denied standing at inquests, and publication bans being placed on officers' trials.

The final category of *Police Autonomy/Discretion* referred to situations in which officers used their discretion in such a way that it resulted in abuse of power.

For example, in situations where there was no witness to a shooting, an officer's version of events could not be contested. In many cases, it was also the situation that police withheld information from victim's families during the course of an investigation which sometimes went on for months at a time. In other situations, some officers changed their statements at inquests from that given to the SIU during the initial investigation. However, because no disciplinary action was usually taken with regard to information revealed at an inquest hearing, officers were apparently free to spin a tale that supported their version of events. Such biases were prevalent in articles during this study period.

On the whole, the three categories which received the highest representation were *Judicial Leniency*, *Police Autonomy/Discretion*, and *Press Release Discredits* in order of greatest to least number of articles. The category of *Judicial Leniency* represented 25% of articles relevant to the topic of protection strategies in Black cases. Overall, judges were portrayed as exceptionally biased particularly in Black cases where indications of excluding discussions of potentially damning evidence against an officer particularly when the discussion leaned toward allegations of racism on the force were revealed.

The category of *Police Autonomy/Discretion* was the second highest category for highlighting protection mechanisms that shielded police from being made accountable for their actions. It accounted for 16% of articles relevant to Black cases. In addition to the those strategies mentioned above, this category also included themes of officers not being sequestered before being interviewed by the SIU demonstrating

camaraderie among officers and the lengths to which they went to aid one another from prosecution. One case even involved officers applying for a publication ban on inquest proceedings which was highly irregular (this of course was not granted). Another incident involved an officer being quickly removed from the scene after a shooting incident before the SIU was contacted. All of these situations demonstrated the autonomy that police had and how they used it to protect themselves from potential prosecution for misconduct in the line of duty.

The third most significant category highlighting police protection strategies was *Press Release Discredits*. In Black cases, the category represented 13% of the articles analyzed. The strategies identified in this category were usually initiated by police, however, the media also contributed to this category. The target of discredit was usually the victim of the police shooting. Police often leaked information to the media in these situations. This breach of protocol was usually in an attempt to exonerate an officer. In one situation, police were said to have “erred at the scene” when they permitted the officer’s lawyer to view the scene before the SIU had been contacted. That the gentle term “erred” was used was significant in framing the article as one that protects the officer since usual protocol was to notify SIU immediately after an incident had occurred. This protection strategy was made even more significant since the incident had occurred in 1992, two years after SIU protocol had been established. In that sense, officers were aware of proper procedure and had made a calculated decision that was meant to aid their position in the investigation. Additionally, in siding with the police, the newspaper was also culpable in reinforcing this protection strategy

because they employed a particular word-choice in communicating this perspective of innocence on the part of the police. Other strategies employed by the newspaper included drawing on the victim's cultural background by singling out a particular cultural group of people and highlighting such aspects as marital status, parenthood, and citizenship status. In many cases, articles highlighted citizenship status for the Black racial group even when the victim was a native resident of Canada.

Within the White racial group, the three protection strategies that demonstrated the most significance were *Exoneration*, *Police Autonomy/Discretion*, and *Judicial Leniency*. *Exoneration* accounted for 6% of the articles analyzed. However, officers had been exonerated in almost all cases involving the White racial group. The mechanisms employed in this category included, getting a psychiatrist to testify at trial that the officer was undergoing a psychosis at the time of the incident, officials taking the word of an officer without proof, and officers quickly being cleared by SIU after an incident.

The category of *Judicial Leniency* in White cases (accounting for 5%) demonstrated one significant strategy which was to permit an officer to retire from the force before he was sentenced after a conviction. Another protection strategy employed by the legal system was that at inquests, jurors could only determine cause of death but not determine fault. In that respect, even if it became clear that a victim died as a result of an officer's misconduct, fault could not be attributed that late in the legal proceedings. This appeared to be a mechanism used by some officers as incidents of

officers changing their statements at inquests were highlighted by the newspaper as discrepancies in individual cases.

Finally, within the category of *Police Autonomy/Discretion* as it related to White cases (representing 5% of articles), it was clear that officers, officials and even politicians were engaged in damage control in order to make the police force not look bad in the public eye. In a number of articles, it was clear that a few politicians were supporters of the police force whether or not their image was tarnished by allegations of misconduct and or racism.

Overall, fewer protection strategies were used in cases involving victims of the White racial group compared to victims of the Black racial group. This difference in protection strategies may have been related to the fact that there were fewer cases involving the White racial group or possibly because the shootings of Blacks produced more controversy than did shootings of Whites. Significant, however, is that Black cases were represented in all six categories, whereas only three categories were represented in White cases. This would suggest that police did not employ as many protection strategies in White cases because they felt confident that their dealings with White victims were legitimate. However, because of the variances in protection strategies and techniques, it would appear that confidence was lacking with regard to Black cases.

Allegations of Racism

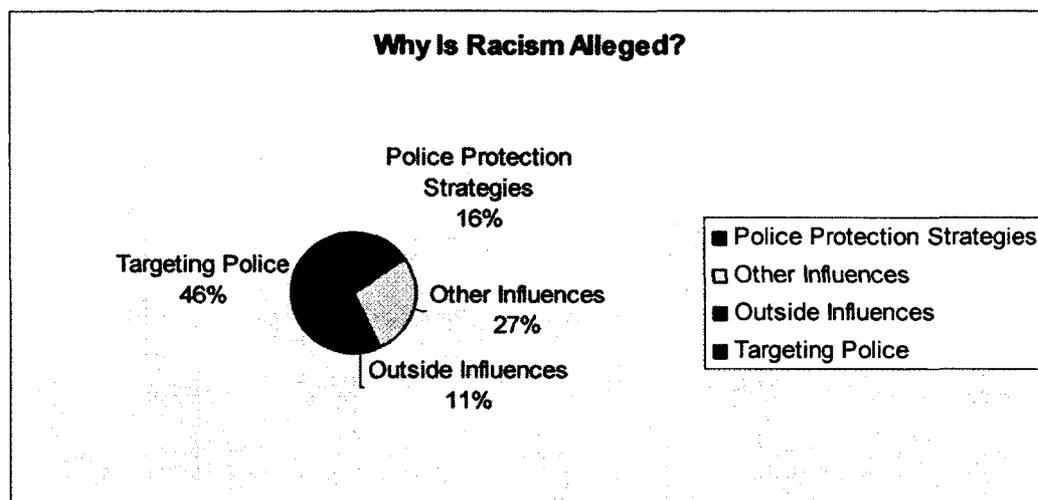


Figure 6.5

For the purpose of this study, alleged racism was divided into four categories: *Targeting of Blacks*, *Police Protection Strategies*, *Other Influences*, and *Outside Issues after the Fact* (see Figure 6.5). *Targeting of Blacks* referred to incidents that occurred prior to the actual shooting. These were incidents that demonstrated that a bias was at work on the police force and/or within the criminal justice system. For example, there were complaints made that Blacks faced an extra layer of policing. Additionally, there was an apparent stereotype held by police that Blacks were drug dealers and or that they were heavily involved in crime. This was particularly stereotypical because it was a notion that applied to Blacks in general and affected the way officers discharged their duties when encountering Blacks. Furthermore, there was an assumption among police that Blacks committed the most crime and consequently there was a focus on this group while the White racial group received less attention. These themes were

particularly evident in a number of the articles and lent credence to the notion that police were targeting Blacks.

Protection Strategies were those mechanisms that were usually put in place after the shooting to do damage control, but mainly to protect officers from prosecution. For example, there was a refusal of police and the justice system in general to look at the issue of racism in police shooting incidents. Additionally, there was a pattern that demonstrated that officers were rarely charged after an investigation into a shooting incident. Moreover, there were many rules at trials and inquests that prevented officers from being made accountable for their actions and especially shielded them from answering to charges of racism.

Other Influences referred to police actions that sabotaged an investigation or biased public perception in individual cases. For instance, the newspaper sometimes hinted at corruption or pointed out that there were allegations of cover-up during an investigation. Other influences included police questioning the legal status of some victims. In a few cases, there was also an indication that more Blacks were believed to be illegally residing in the country as some of the initial articles indicated that a victim's immigration status was being investigated. No such inquiry was every made about any White victim. There was always an assumption that White victims were Canadian or at leased legally residing in the country.

Outside Issues After The Fact involved such activities as protest activity and government-commissioned reports on police minority relations. In no White cases was racism ever alleged. However, in Black cases, almost all incidents resulted in a

complaint of racism. There were also issues of bias in court proceedings as some officers were tried by an all-White jury in cases involving Black victims. Consequently, there was concern that such juries were stacked to acquit the officer of wrong doing irregardless of which way the evidence leaned.

Overall, the number one reason that racism was alleged in the Black community was that Blacks believed they were being targeted by police. Blacks also felt that after a shooting incident, police often sabotaged an investigation thereby preventing the 'truth' of the incident and what really happened to be exposed. Concern was also expressed by many that officers were reluctant to cooperate with the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) in their investigation. This refusal, in turn, triggered an appearance of racism because the refusal was more prevalent in Black cases than in White cases. The strongest allegations of racism were based on the fact that Black victims were shot while unarmed and/or fleeing from police. The continuation of this pattern over the years led to a belief in the Black community that Blacks were receiving differential treatment from police.

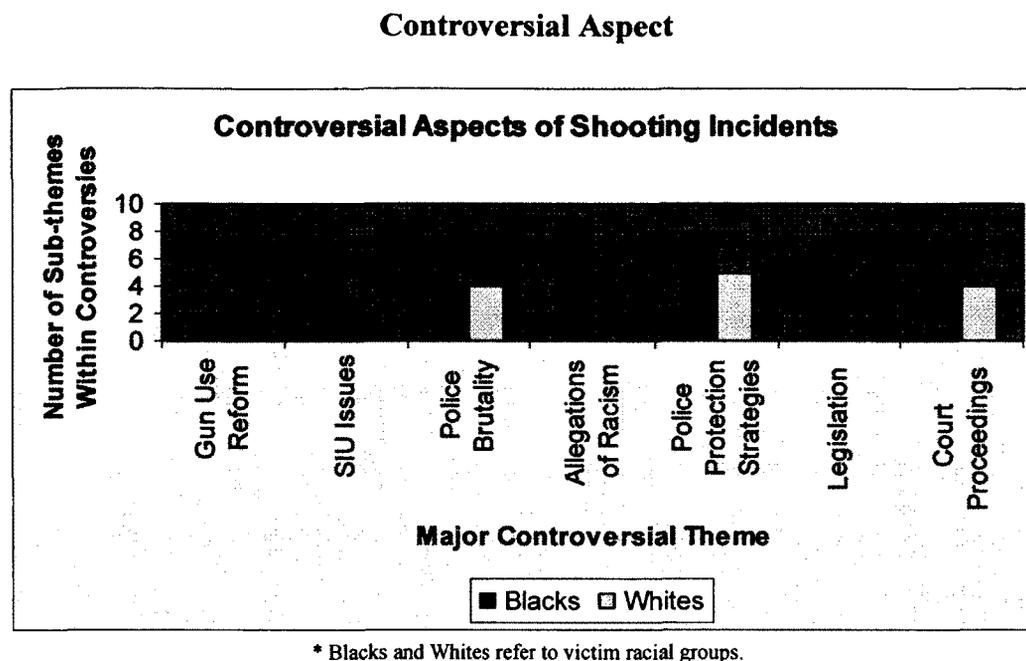


Figure 6.6

There were a number of controversial aspects identified in this study that were instrumental in prolonging the brevity of an initial report of a police shooting as illustrated in Figure 6.6. Aspects of controversy varied between the Black and White racial groups with the Black group producing the highest number of controversies. The categories under this section were divided into seven subgroups: *Gun Use Reform*, *SIU Issues*, *Police Brutality*, *Allegations of Racism*, *Police Protection Strategies*, *Legislation*, and *Court Proceedings*. Among the Black racial group, the three categories demonstrating the highest representation were *Allegations of Racism*, *SIU Issues*, and *Police Protection Strategies*.

Allegations of Racism was a common controversial theme throughout most of the articles concerning Black victims. Allegations were made against police as well as other officials including judges and politicians. In a few articles, the police chief as

well as the police union president charged that racism was being instigated not by members of the police force, but rather by individuals grandstanding in the Black community. In that sense, they were deflecting charges of racism back onto the Black community. Another controversy concerned the Black problem versus police racism. In other words, was it a case that Blacks were a problem in society (drugs and crime) requiring increased police surveillance or was it the case that police were racist toward Blacks and over-policed them? This was the big question that the newspaper hinted at and tended to lean to one side or the other depending on the situation.

Police Protection Strategies often centered on officers invoking their Charter of Rights in order to not incriminate themselves by speaking to the SIU. This in turn led to numerous incidents of officers delaying an investigation by refusing to give an account of the events of a shooting. In a few articles, officers went so far as to demand guarantee from SIU investigators that their statements would not lead to criminal charges being laid against them. SIU issues became controversial mainly because of a lack of cooperation from police in an investigation. In some cases, allegations of SIU incompetence were made by police in an attempt to get politicians to dissolve the special unit which was viewed by police as a counterproductive force.

Protection strategies also included lawyers attempting to manipulate the judicial system in order to ensure that officers were shielded from uncomfortable types of questioning (i.e. allegations of racism). In one particular case, the lawyer had attempted to represent too many parties at the inquest and had found himself in a conflict of interest.

One other category worthy of mention in the Black racial group was *Police Brutality* which highlighted the issue of police use of hollow-point bullets; these bullets were intended to cause maximum damage upon impact. Tied in to this controversy was the fact that administrators and politicians often supported the use of such weapons despite the fact that they were illegal in Ontario according to the Police Act (“Smith Refuses to Tell Police to Stop Using Banned Bullet,” *The Toronto Star*, December 30, 1988, A3). Consequently, officers continued to use them as they were never disciplined for such misconduct.

Within the White racial group, the two categories indicated as most significant for Controversial Aspect were *Court Proceedings* and *Police Brutality*. With regard to one particular case in *Court Proceedings*, a controversy arose when a coroner demonstrated bias at an inquest when he was overheard at lunch discussing a victim’s case with some jurors. In another case, *The Toronto Star* newspaper was named as a defendant in a libel case in which the plaintiff accused the media of unfair representation of the police squad. Specific details of that case were not available, but mention was made that the plaintiff (Ontario Provincial Police Tactical Squad) was awarded financial compensation as a result of that lawsuit. The lawsuit stemmed from information revealed at the inquest concerning errors made in the mistaken identity case that demonstrated that the OPP at the time were working with a poor communication system that resulted in the lethal response and a White civilian fatality. *Police Brutality* focused on police training in terms of gun use and their response to the mentally ill. Many advocacy groups felt that police were ill-trained when it came to

dealing with mentally ill people. The allegation centred on the fact that lives were being lost needlessly because of police brutality.

Overall, the categories of *Allegations of Racism*, *SIU Issues*, and *Police Protection Strategies* represented 50% of the articles analyzed in this category for the Black racial group. In White cases, the relevant categories were *Police Brutality*, *Police Protection Strategies and Court Proceeding* representing a total of 27% of the articles analyzed. These controversies were used by the newspaper to prolong the discourse on racism against the police force and general bias within the judicial system. The newspaper's coverage of these controversies was also instrumental in highlighting the political agendas of some politicians and where their sympathies lay.

DISCUSSION

The Tenet of Terror in Social Dominance

Critical Social Dominance Theory views the determinants of group-based hierarchy at multiple levels of analysis, including psychological orientations, the discriminatory behaviors of individuals, the legitimizing ideologies that permeate entire social systems, and the social allocations of groups and social institutions. Given that institutions allocate resources on much larger scales and with a degree of greater stability than individuals, Critical Social Dominance Theory regards institutional discrimination as one of the major forces maintaining systems of group-based hierarchy. The criminal justice system, in particular, reflects and promotes the interest of the more powerful members of society who generally own and operate society's major institutions.

The criminal justice systems (including police forces and court judges) are designed to maintain “law and order”. However, from a critical social dominance perspective, *law* is often written and enforced mainly to favour the interest of the dominant group and *order* is often defined as those social conditions that disproportionately protect and maintain the interests of the dominant group. Therefore, contrary to the commonly held assumption that discrimination against subordinates within the criminal justice system is relatively rare, critical Social Dominance Theory suggests that discrimination and the resulting racism within the criminal justice system is quite systemic in its effects (Sidanius 1999: 42).

Canadian society is hierarchically stratified along a number of dimensions, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, and economic and political power especially when it is associated with notions of superiority and inferiority. When people are categorized according to such dimensions, a sense of identity and difference is established primarily within the dominant group. “The categorization of people in this way can provide a shared sense of identity as well as distinctive perceptual, normative and behavioural patterns. These differences are then injected into society’s policing process including the criminal justice system (Henry et al. 2000: 180).

The manner and conditions in which the criminal justice system discriminates against subordinates follows five basic principles called the Law of Laws: 1) The Disproportionate Prosecution Principle; 2) The “Out of Place” Principle; 3) The Social Dominance Orientation Principle; 4) The Tolerance of Abuse Principle; and 5) The Hierarchy-Terror Principle. These principles were evident in this study particularly

with regard to police reactions in their encounters with Black victims more so than with White victims.

The first principle of Disproportionate Prosecution states that *when society's laws are violated, the level of negative sanction directed against subordinates will be greater than that against dominants, everything else being equal*. As results in this study revealed, the criminal justice system did indeed treat Blacks and Whites differently. Patterns of policing and attitudes and behaviour of police officers were marked by overt prejudice and the differential treatment of Blacks. White victims were treated more favourably in their encounters with police even though their offences and their encounters with police were more threatening toward officers than was the situation with Black victims. Blacks were shot at even when they complied with officers' directions in their encounters with police. In that way, White identity served as a source of protection and privilege. Similarly, in the later stages of the criminal justice process, biased decisions of judges at officer's trials and victim inquest hearings that negated the importance of Black grievances and concerns also demonstrated the severity of negative sanctions directed against Blacks in terms of the rights they sought. Whites on the other hand, at inquest hearings in particular, were viewed with sympathy and compassion for the situation they found themselves in. Again, White identity served as a source of privilege and protection. Thus, the criminal justice system's differential treatment of Whites and Blacks were clearly systemic and reinforced the group-based social order of dominance and hegemonic rule with regard to Blacks.

The second principle of “Out of Place” states that *when subordinates are accused of acts of violence against dominants, the accused face a particularly high risk of being found guilty and of suffering particularly severe punishment.* This is because the lives and well-being of dominants are considered more valuable than those of subordinates. Thus, crimes against the lives of Whites versus Blacks are judged as more serious. This was evident in the two cases involving the two mentally ill Black victims whose potential for violence was openly aggressive to both police and bystanders. Thus, they were dealt with severely at the scene and the outcome ended in fatalities.

Taken to another level, however, this principle was also applied to the dominant perception that Blacks were acquiring resources reserved for the White dominant group with regard to incidents involving theft of property. Severe police reaction, then, was the dominant response to this perceived threat of a loss of resources. Blacks were viewed as being insubordinate for not showing deference to the authority of White dominance. They had gained notoriety from involvement with drugs. They took resources from the dominant group with regard to theft and driving stolen vehicles. Moreover, they expressed cultural values that were different from the dominant culture. In this way, they had stepped out of place in the social order and had to be put back in their place with a display of police enforcers as state power. All of this was viewed as violent insubordination perceived as a potential threat to the stability and integrity of the group-based system of social hierarchy. Thus, police use of lethal force against Blacks was the dominant group’s reaction to the insubordination of Blacks.

While the law does function in the interest of the common good, it also functions to protect and maintain the status, privileges, and power of dominants. In essence, policing is not simply a response to individuals or to isolated crimes; it also represents a response to the society's racial order and the interest of the dominant group.

The principle of Social Dominance Orientation or Social Role Congruency which states that *within the criminal justice system, the level of social dominance orientation (SDO) among hierarchy enhancers will be relatively high, while the level of SDO among hierarchy attenuators will be relatively low* is the third principle of the Law of Laws. The principle highlights the fact that in order for the criminal justice system to function effectively as a hierarchy-enhancing (HE) institution, it should recruit people who are well suited to hierarchy-enhancing social roles. Among other things, such personnel should have particularly high levels of social dominance orientation.

According to several studies carried out by Sidanius in the development of Social Dominance Theory, police officers scored much higher on SDO than did those more oriented toward helping. Sidanius's findings demonstrated that race-targeted cases of police brutality such as police shootings in Toronto and Montreal were not just examples of exceptional cases, but rather examples of how police forces conducted their hierarchy-enhancing function by intimidating subordinate groups such as Blacks. Two highly publicized cases in this study that demonstrated such police brutality were that of Albert Johnson in 1979 and Hugh Dawson in 1997. In both cases, the force

with which police pursued the victims left little doubt as to their social dominance orientation, thus demonstrating that police abuse and mistreatment of Blacks included a prejudice that was always smouldering beneath the surface with regard to their interaction with Blacks.

The fourth principle of Tolerance of Abuse became a very controversial issue during this time. It states that *the degree of negative sanctions against security forces for abuses of power will tend to be exceedingly small, especially in cases of abuse against subordinates*. The problem was that racially prejudiced police behaviour had not been clearly defined in Canada, and as a result, it was generally not seen as a disciplinary offence by many police administrators.

In fact, police officers who were accused of brutality were often rewarded rather than punished by the departments, at least as long as this brutality did not become a public issue. In that way, police administrators were generally indifferent to police shootings of Blacks, thus condoning the behaviour. Among police colleagues, officer's also received laudable recognition for successful pursuit and arrest, (albeit a deadly arrest) of a Black 'suspect.' During criminal proceedings, officers were usually exonerated, cleared and acquitted of wrong doing all supported by their superiors in the general tolerance of abuse.

When concerns of discrimination were made public, the administrators did attempt to justify the presence and extent of this discrimination usually in the form of denial. That was because a democratic society such as Canada that espouses equality before the law could not be seen as discriminatory toward any specific group of

citizens. In this regard, the justice system had to maintain plausible deniability. Consequently, police chiefs in many of these shooting incidents were constantly doing damage control to exonerating officers after a particularly controversial police shooting.

In 1992, Ontario introduced a new regulation indicating that a member of a police force should not draw a firearm and discharge it, unless he or she believed, on reasonable grounds, that to do so was necessary to protect against the loss of life or serious bodily harm (Henry et al. 2000: 201). However, part of the confusion was that police officers were also governed by the Criminal Code which allowed a police officer to draw and discharge a firearm to apprehend a suspect who attempted to escape, unless the escape could have been prevented by less violent means. Many urged changes to this section of the Code (otherwise known as the Fleeing Felon Rule) particularly because of a rash of cases in which the 'suspect' did not present a life threatening risk. In 1994, the government of Canada had indicated its commitment to changing these provisions of the Criminal Code; however, it had not done so by the end of this study period. Thus police administration continued to support police brutality on Black citizens.

The fifth principle of Hierarchy-Terror states that *the greater the degree of social hierarchy, the greater the use of formal and informal terror there will be*. Semi-official terror, as suggested by critical Social Dominance Theory is the violence or intimidation directed against subordinates and carried out by officials of the state (such as police). This type of terror (called semi-official terror) is not publicly, overtly,

officially, or legally sanctioned by the state. In that way, police are not reprimanded for violence against subordinates. This semi-official terror functions to maintain relationships between dominants and subordinates and enforce the continued deference of subordinates toward dominants.

The difference between the stratum of European Whites at the top of the social hierarchy and Blacks at the bottom demonstrates a chasm of difference in power and social status relations. The relative dominance of Euro-Canadians over Blacks has remained unchanged since the European occupation of the New World more than 400 years ago. This has produced a greater degree of social hierarchy resulting in a greater potential of revolt by Blacks.

Given that wealth is allocated to the powerful group and actively kept from the less powerful groups, that group-hierarchical societies are set up in ways that make life relatively easy for dominants and relatively difficult for subordinates, and that dominant group's attitudes toward other racial groups are shaped by a sense of superiority over minority groups and a need to defend the dominant group against threats to its interests, the potential for Black revolt against their oppressed position is inevitable. Consequently, the dominant group views Blacks as the greatest threat to the established social order and therefore direct greater terror toward that racial group in the interest of protecting perceived White interest. One of the resulting effects of this fear has been a concentrated effort on police shootings of Blacks particularly in cities with higher percentages of Black residents.

For many years, Blacks have suggested that policing in Canada was discriminatory because they were the objects of a constant systemic pattern of harassment and unnecessary violence. This principle of Hierarchy-Terror would suggest that Black concerns were indeed legitimate.

The resulting deaths and injuries were perceived as manifestations of the daily discrimination and harassment that many Blacks experience in their interactions with the police. In short the shootings were perceived not as isolated incidents, but as part of a systemic problem affecting the entire community. Thus, despite its stated creed to enact equality before the law, the criminal justice system with a focus on police activity was highly culpable in differential treatment toward Blacks. From a critical Social Dominance perspective, police shootings of Blacks can be explained in terms of the White dominant society's desire to protect and maintain their positions of power and privilege.

FAMILY / COMMUNITY REACTION

Family/Community Reaction

There were a number of issues emerging from police shootings that inspired family and community reactions. Cases in the Black racial group focused primarily on allegations of racism. Following from this was the demand for police accountability which inspired a wave of protest from various advocacy groups. Sixteen out of eighteen Black cases had inspired protest activity. Initial reactions were usually focused on shock and disbelief because of allegations of police brutality and abuse of power particularly toward Black youth. Other reactions highlighted by the newspaper included the contesting of police version of events and frustration directed at police for a lack of sharing of information in individual cases. Increasing numbers of police shootings over the years also triggered a fear in the Black community as there was concern that no one knew who would be the next victim. Parents of male youth were particularly concerned that their child was highly vulnerable (Lewis 1992).

Among the White racial group, family and community reactions focused on allegations of police abuse of power. As in the Black racial group, the follow-up reaction in the White racial group was the demand for police accountability. In general, police shootings involving the White racial group did not inspire a lot of community reaction. Protest activity tended to be a private matter usually taken up by family members. However, there was one case involving a mentally ill victim that

inspired community protest on a wider community scale. One interesting comparison between White and Black cases was that in nearly 40% of White cases there was no reaction at all to the shooting of a White victim, but in all cases involving Blacks, family or community reaction was indicated in the newspaper.

Involvement of Advocacy Group

The involvement of community support and advocacy groups in each case was stronger for Blacks than for Whites. Almost 90% of Black cases involved community advocacy while only 20% of White cases involved community advocacy. In the one Black case in which little was mentioned of community activism, an out-of-court settlement had been reached shortly after the incident had occurred. Consequently, a need for activism was not necessary. However, this individual victim's name was later referenced numerous times acknowledging the number of Blacks shot by police over the years. Therefore, while the matter had been dealt with, the newspaper continued to reproduce racial discourse by including this individual as part of the statistics that would support dissonance between police and the Black community.

Among White cases, only one had an advocacy group connected to it. The group protested on the basis that a mentally ill man was fatally shot by police when other measures should have been taken. As a result, police were strongly condemned and demonized for such callousness both by the advocacy group and the newspapers' apparent framing of the situation.

Types of Protest Activity Advocated

In both Black and White cases, family and/or community groups were advocates of protest activity in support of victims of police shootings. Protest activity referred to one or more people involved in denouncing, questioning or calling for change in police authority. A common theme among Blacks was the allegation of racism in light of the differential treatment between Blacks and Whites. In 94 percent of Blacks cases, advocates complained of racism by police and in some cases of subsequent judicial bias in the criminal justice system. Police brutality and insensitivity toward the mentally ill were also common complaints from the Black community. Minor protest activity from family members in White cases focused mainly on police brutality resulting in 60 percent of White protest activity. In the other 40 percent of White cases, no protest activity was identified.

DISCUSSION

Mistrust of Police

Group protest on the whole was a manifestation of the contempt and mistrust Blacks held for police. High levels of mistrust, according to Jones, represents one source of adaptation to personal and collective experiences of discrimination, stereotyping, and disadvantage (Jones 1997: 276). He notes that it is not necessary for an individual to have personal negative experiences with Whites in order to develop high levels of mistrust since a high degree of mistrust could easily be an adaptation to the cultural portrayals and events seen regularly in the news, or in neighbourhood streets.

In this study, Blacks were aware that the over-policing of their community led to the perception that their members committed more crime than other races and ethnicities. Some leaders were also aware that by choosing not to make white-collar crimes a priority, the police simultaneously removed a large segment of the community from potential criminal liability. Consequently, police focus on Blacks resulted in discrimination against the group, but more profoundly, it represented an attempt at annihilation of the race. From a critical Social Dominance perspective, then, mistrust of and protest against police represented a broader consciousness about social hierarchies and the status and privileges that Whites received at the expense of Blacks because of an awareness of Blacks' oppressed position. Indeed, race relations in Canada have historically been motivated by positions of dominance and oppression and the over-policing events of this era continued to demonstrate that the situation had not changed in over 400 years.

Therefore, lack of confidence in the police and a mistrust of that authority was a result of deep-rooted suspicion of their tactics in policing the Black community. Mistrust continued not only because of the shootings themselves, but even more because of the apparent lack of response by the police administrators and the criminal justice system as a whole to deal appropriately with police discrimination.

NEWSPAPER FRAMING STRATEGIES

Newspaper Framing Strategies

TOP 5 NEWSPAPER FRAMING STRATEGIES		
FRAMING STRATEGIES	VICTIM RACIAL GROUP	
	BLACK	WHITE
Police Discrimination	18	0
Priming	14	2
Mentioning Race in Headline	15	0
Mentioning Race in Article Body	15	0
Include Photograph	15	9
Demonize Victim	13	3
Not 'Airing Dirty Laundry	2	7
Not Elaborating on Controversy	6	6
Make Negative into Positive	1	4
Highlight Criminality	10	5

Table 8.1

Table 8.1 demonstrates that there were many framing strategies employed by the newspaper in setting their agenda with the various themes presented in the articles. For example, discrediting layperson witnesses was usually done through the use of quotations in order to strengthen the position that the article was supporting. A headline was often used to exonerate an officer. Even the mere mention of race was a way of setting up an opposition between an "Us" versus "Them" dichotomy.

The top 5 strategies used in Black cases were: *Police Discrimination*, *Priming*, *Mentioning Race in the Title or Body of the Article*, *Inclusion of a Photograph*, and *Demonizing the Victim*. In White cases, there were fewer strategies used to identify the race of the victim. Rather than focusing on race or demonizing the victims, the

newspaper's agenda-setting was centered on presenting the White racial group in a more positive light despite evidence suggesting that there were more serious physical altercations between police and White victims than there were between police and Black victims. It was also evident that even though White victims presented as the most threatening because of their strong association with weapons, they were not portrayed as a menace to society that had to be feared. No disparaging comments were stated or implied. In fact, despite evidence to the contrary, layperson witnesses were often used to bolster this position of *gentleness and innocence* on the part of White victims. Articles concerning Black victims on the other hand demonstrated a range of demonizing strategies.

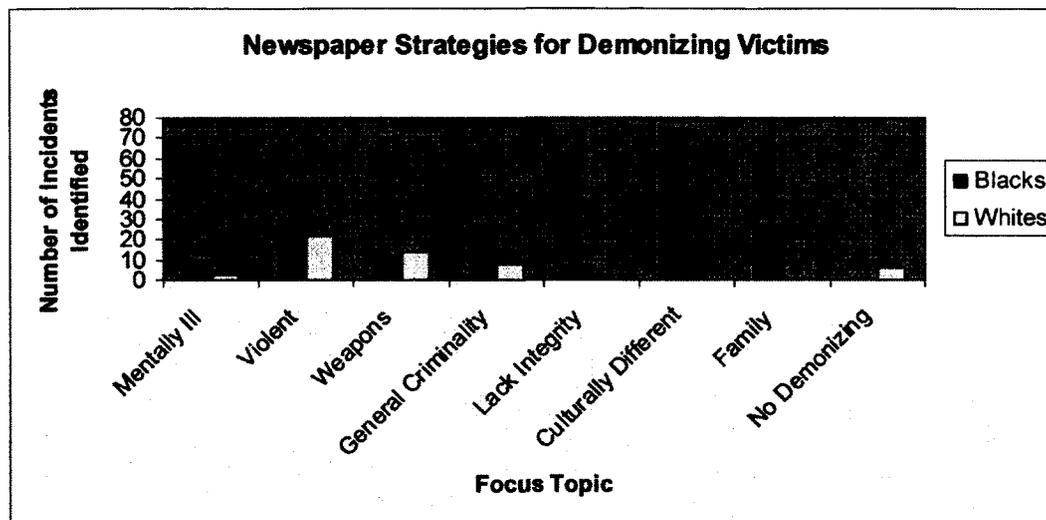
There was often frequent priming of the newspaper's position suggesting a certain way editors wanted their audience to think about the victim and his or her situation. Controversies contributing to the '*airing of dirty laundry*' were more prevalent in Black cases than in White cases. That is, the newspaper had a tendency to dig up information that was not directly relevant to the incident but in the process of framing an agenda primed the reader into looking at an issue in a certain way. Much of the information was introduced in a sandwiched fashion so that the information was communicated though seemingly without importance. For example, rather than stating race explicitly in one article, the victim was identified as a "native of Grenada in the West Indies" suggesting that he was an outsider even though the focus of the statement was on the fact that the officer would not comment on the victim's situation:

He refuses to comment on reports that Moses, a native of Grenada in the West Indies, was a crack cocaine addict and that the rooming house was "a haven for crack-heads and drunks," as local residents have said. ("Man Shot by Metro Police Still on Life Support in Hospital," *The Toronto Star*, October 1, 1994, A6)

By sandwiching this information, the article also linked this Black individual to drugs and a potentially problem people increasingly believed to be associated with drugs. Yet this information was never confirmed in the statement.

In White cases however, fewer framing strategies were used in articles concerning White victims as the newspaper did not tend to discredit this racial group. Even though Whites presented as the most threatening because of their use of weapons in the alleged offences, the articles did not tend to instil fear in the readers concerning Whites as a group to be feared. In White cases, no identification of cultural or ethnic difference was made explicit whereas in almost all Black cases race was explicitly stated in the article. Confirmation of race in White cases was usually made by photograph. In no White cases was government involvement highlighted by the article suggesting that there was no political agenda to be addressed by politicians. However, Black cases were frequently concerned with political issues and the need for politicians to get involved. There was however, a higher percentage of discrediting police in White cases than in Black cases (60% and 40% respectively). The most interesting framing strategy in White cases involved the attempt by the newspaper to counter negative situations with positive comments.

Demonizing the Victim



* Blacks and Whites refer to victim racial groups.

Figure 8.1

There were eight general categories in which the demonizing of victims was divided in order to highlight the various strategies that the newspaper used to demonize the victims. They were: *Mentally Ill*, *Violent*, *Weapons*, *General Criminality*, *Lack of Personal Integrity*, *Cultural Difference*, *Family*, and *Not Applicable*.

The demonizing of victims was stronger for Blacks than for Whites. There were also more strategies applied to Blacks than to Whites. The most significant category for the Black racial group was *Cultural Difference* which included such aspects as citizenship status and identifying the group as a problem people. The idea was that a stereotypical lens was applied when the newspaper reported on the Black racial group. They were seen as a people that caused problems and were consequently deemed disruptive to society. This also touched on the idea that this group did not belong in this society. This perspective in turn highlighted an "Us" versus "Them"

dichotomy which was meant to encourage readers of the dominant group to stigmatize the subordinate group on the whole. Power was wielded by the group having the higher socio-economic status and control of ideology. In this case, the White Euro-Canadians wielded all of the power. Thus by demonizing Blacks, the newspaper supported this inequality and consequently helped to maintain the status quo.

With regard to citizenship status, much effort was put into linking a Black victim to a particular idea of illegitimacy within the country. This connection was made by highlighting their illegal status in the country or the fact that they were associated with another country either by birth or familial associations. This information was further linked to the idea of increased criminality in society and an association with drugs from the West Indies. If the information was not readily available from police, the newspaper tended to use layperson witnesses to strengthen this position.

The time period in which these reports occurred was significant to events happening at the time. In particular, there was a rash of articles discussing the issue of trust in the city of Toronto as Black immigrants were being brought in from the West Indies. The drug problem believed to be brought on by this group of people included both drug dealers and drug users. The island of Jamaica was identified as a place strongly associated with this problem. Connected to the drugs was the idea that it was an illegal commodity that was being protected by weapons. Consequently, drug dealers were often believed to be carrying weapons when they were making drug deals. Also associated with this category was the frequency with which attempts were made

to expose any past criminal record that a victim might have had. This information was usually stated explicitly as being either confirmed or not confirmed. In White cases, less effort was made to expose past history. Consequently, this effort demonstrated a specific strategy that the newspaper used to identify the Black racial group as a problem people.

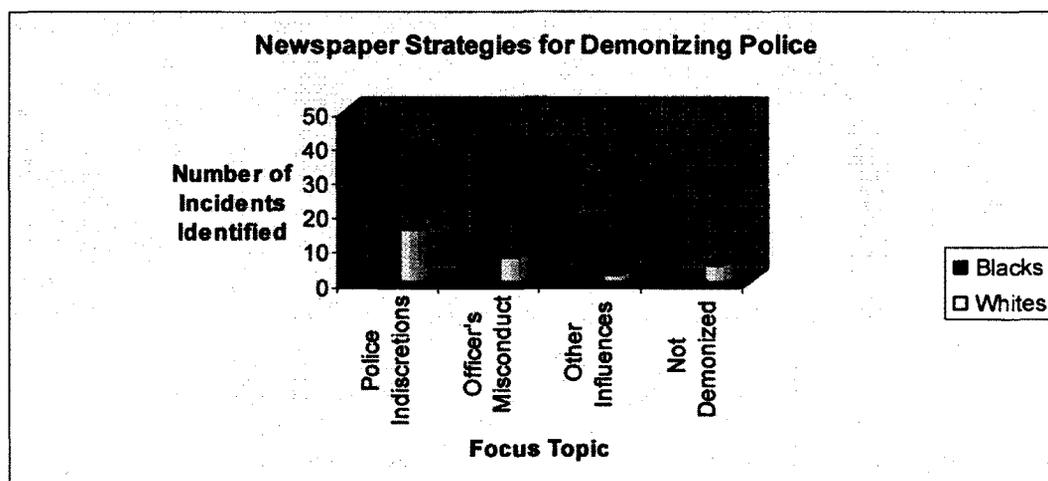
Weapons and violence were also associated with this racial group. Nearly 45% of Black victims were identified as being physically threatening toward police. There was also an indication that several victims in this group were physically aggressive and difficult to subdue or control. In that respect, they were identified by the newspaper as being confrontational with police.

Black cases were also associated with altering the status quo. After the shooting of a Black victim, there was often a suggestion that this created an aftermath of protest activity. In many cases, the implication was that this protest activity was unwelcome. In that way, it was again linked to this group of people being a disruption to society.

At no time was the White racial group singled out as being culturally different. Instead, demonizing of White victims tended to focus on aspects of violence, weapons, and general criminality, the violence was associated with the use of weapons and in particular, being threatening toward police. In the majority of White cases, victims were very confrontational with police and even discharged their weapons at officers. Unlike Blacks, Whites in the general criminality category were generally not linked to drugs as a social problem. Their placement in that category was mainly connected to

an involvement in general illegal activity (i.e. robbery). There was however, one particular case in which drugs was a factor. Yet, despite this clear connection (i.e. police drug raid), the aspect of drugs was downplayed in the article. With regard to information that was revealed at the inquest, it was evident that the inquest judge also downplayed the drug aspect and attempted to portray the victim as an upstanding citizen. The irony of the situation was that this particular victim had been reported as discharging his rifle at police during the incident which resulted in his death. However, for the most part, in White cases, demonizing was minimal because not enough background information was provided in the articles. In some cases, aggressive behaviour was subsequently rationalized thereby exonerating the victim of behaving badly. There were a few incidents in which this was the case among the White racial group.

Demonizing the Officer



* Black and White in legend refers to victim racial groups.

Figure 8.2

Figure 8.2 depicts the four strategies used by the newspaper to demonize police officers. Focusing on *Police Indiscretion* and *Officer's Misconduct* were the most significant strategies identified in the articles. With regard to Black cases, there was concern expressed by the newspaper through opinion articles and the use of layperson witnesses that police were employing force beyond that which was necessary to arrest an individual. Shooting and seriously or fatally wounding a person despite the individual's compliance was one way in which this brutality was portrayed. For example, in one particular case, the newspaper reported that the officer fired as many as nine shots at the victim who was holding a knife. The implication here was that the officer emptied his gun when he shot at the Black victim. Similarly, in another case, the victim was shot at 6 times, but only one bullet struck him. In another case, a victim was shot during the process of an investigation in which the police had gone to the wrong house. Police negligence in this case escalated to a serious confrontation and eventual fatality. And one of the more blatant incidents of police brutality was conveyed in a report of a drug raid conducted by police which resulted in the victim being shot while holding a guitar, yet no drugs were found on his person. These themes of shooting unarmed civilians and firing more than one shot at them were some of the repeated themes evident in the articles associated with Black victims who suffered from police brutality.

As in Black cases, the demonizing of officers in White cases was accomplished mainly by highlighting police brutality. For example, one White victim was shot 13 times in a house raid and another was shot 26 times in a case of mistaken identity.

Because of issues of mistaken identity and allowing armed individuals to escape, some officers were also portrayed as incompetent in discharging their duties with respect to White victims.

In both Black and White cases, there was strong indication of police brutality. However, in Black cases, the newspaper demonstrated that protection mechanisms were more strongly employed by police and the justice system to prevent officers from facing prosecution for alleged negligence or misconduct. In other words, officers were hiding behind these protection mechanisms. For example, 'officers being exonerated before an investigation had begun or was completed' was one way that favouritism toward officers was highlighted. This specific type of protection mechanism was more evident in controversial shootings. Also evident in Black cases was the questioning of an officer's integrity and the highlighting of suspicion of corruption. As well, revealing an officer's history of abuse toward other victims was another strategy that was effective in demonizing officers.

While police brutality was common in cases involving both racial groups, the main difference between the two groups was that the newspaper's demonizing of officers focused more on police brutality with reference to Black victims and more on police incompetence with reference to White victims.

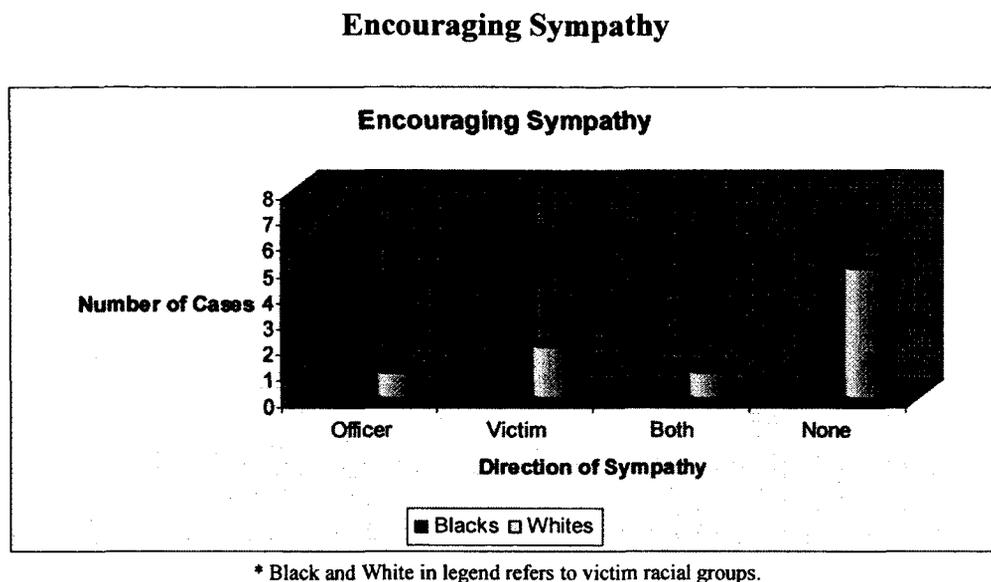


Figure 8.3

Sympathy for the victim seemed to outnumber that of the officer in both Black and White cases. However, when sympathy was encouraged for the officer, it was because damning evidence as presented by the newspaper overwhelmingly demonized the victim. Results of this study revealed that within the Black racial group, sympathy was encouraged for 44% of victims, 39% of officers, and 17% were unknown. Within the White racial group, results demonstrated that sympathy was encouraged for 20% of victims, 10% of officers, and 50% were unknown. In 10% of White cases, sympathy was encouraged for both officer and victim.

These results were somewhat difficult to interpret because of the large number of unknown cases particularly in the White racial group. However, in Black cases, it would seem that sympathy was being mostly focused on the victims of police shootings rather than the officers involved in the incidents. Consequently, with the display of

sympathies, overall results indicated that the newspaper's framing agenda was one of identifying police blatant racism and their targeting of Blacks.

While it appears that the newspaper was fickle in its selection of parties to demonize in the case of police shootings, it was evident that the focus on police was to demonstrate that a blatant racism which was supposed to have been eradicated some time ago, still existed on the police force. This theme was evident also with regard to the justice system as a whole, and certain politicians who supported the police force's strategies in dealing with Blacks. In demonizing Blacks, on the other hand, the strategy was less obvious and certainly meant to be disguised since the newspaper's intent was to give the appearance that each party in a debate was getting fair representation. However, its focus on Blacks was to demonstrate cultural difference and to identify the "Other" in a White Canadian society. Consequently, results demonstrate inconsistency with regard to which party received the most sympathy for the situation in which they found themselves.

DISCUSSION

The Spectacle of Race in the Private and Public Eye

News coverage treated Blacks and Whites differently in terms of private and public display. Private was associated with having a privileged position in society and belonging to the dominant group. It also involved protection from public opinion and open evaluation of a private member's circumstances. Public, on the other hand, was associated with deprivation and the Black "Other" who was never to be awarded the respect of privacy. Public entailed making a spectacle of race that allowed for shared

beliefs and assessments about Blacks that stirred a collective memory. For purposes of newsworthiness, the newspaper focused on the aspect of publicizing the Black “Other.” This was accomplished through various representations herein called, spectacle.

Representations of the spectacle entailed being reported on in the media when going through legal proceedings and having background information unrelated to the current situation displayed on pages for all to see (the airing of dirty laundry). It also included such aspects as implications that children born to unmarried parents may lead to higher levels of criminal activity. Each instance of exposure to the Black man was meant to activate the stereotype of Black criminality, thus strengthening the cognitive association between Blacks and crime.

Consequently, the knowledge that was produced by the continuous reproduction of racial stereotypes was that the dominant White society needed to maintain surveillance of the Black man because the Black man was the embodiment of the main threat to social order (Cottle 2000: 52). Having gained notoriety, from his association with crime, drugs, and violence, the Black man was believed to have acquired too much power and prestige, and had, in effect, gotten out of place in the social order. The spectacle thus represented a way of chastising and humiliating the Black man in order to bring him down in status and back in the place where he belonged (preferably not existing at all).

Making a spectacle of the Black criminal was also a way of displaying White state power over the Black man. It conveyed a warning and taught a lesson about respect for authority and the dominance of the White race. As was depicted in this

study, a forceful and lethal response to the threat assured the dominant White society that the city was being purged of sin and corruption and that the threat was being contained. This type of retaliation exploited Blacks and was meant to chastise, humiliate and shame them out of existence. It represented a way of refusing to recognize Black humanity and served the collective memory of past dominance over the primitive inferior. The spectacle encouraged readers to evaluate evidence in a certain way and usually left little sympathy for the victim.

The spectacle of race was also about the public consumption of the Black body. Not so long ago, audiences were fascinated with the spectacle of Black slaves and keen on ridiculing them at public events. The tradition of slavery encouraged the punishment and public flogging of slaves in order that they were taught a lesson. Public floggings often included stripping slaves of their clothes before applying the whip. However, in reports of police shootings, rather than exhibit partial naked bodies of scars from whipping, in this epidemic era it was to comment on the number of bullets that hit the body and the area of the body it made contact with (i.e. striking him in the groin) that created the image and reproduced that collective memory of long ago.

Overall, the newspaper promoted race as a spectacle and a form of entertainment for public consumption that allowed differences to be held in place by the political fiction of race. The Black man was portrayed to fit the public expectation of the primitive and the exotic and the '*airing of dirty laundry*' was a way of making the spectacle more entertaining for public consumption. Resorting to stereotypic representations was often for comic effect and again reinforced the idea of taking away

humanity from the Black “Other”. Of particular note was the *seeing-eye* in the spectacle. The *seeing-eye* was the White dominant society and the object viewed was coloured. Given that the dominant society was never identified as a race, let alone identified as “white” in the articles, this resulted in Whites being rendered unraced, ‘normal,’ and superior in this spectacle of race.

Report Types and Significant Themes Evident In Many Articles

Significant Themes

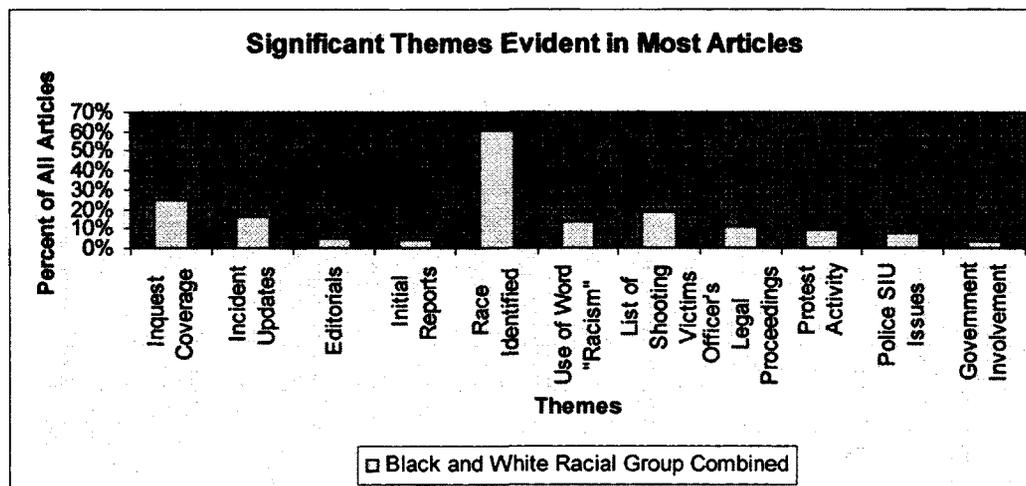


Figure 9.1

The articles used in this study were categorized according to a number of topics relevant to types of reports and particular themes (see Figure 9.1). The most significant categories contained 20 or more articles and were categorized as: *Identification of Race in the Article* (194), *Inquest Coverage* (81), *List of Shooting Victims* (61), *Incident Updates* (51), *Use of the Word 'Racism'* (45), *Officer's Legal Proceedings* (34), *Protest Activity* (29), and *Police/SIU Issues* (26). Other themes in this analysis that did not score as high as the major categories but were significant to this study included *Editorials* (15), *Initial Reports* (12), and *Government Involvement* (11). (The bracketed numbers represented the number of articles that were devoted to this topic.)

Note: Some articles overlapped on themes and were placed in multiple categories. For

instance, some articles had a dominant theme of protest activity but also included a theme which similarly classified it as belonging to a funeral/memorial category.

Most of the articles identified were relevant to Black cases. As such, the following analysis was mostly focused on Black victims. However, where applicable, comparisons were made to indicate differences between treatments of the two racial groups.

Identifying Race

As indicated above, the identification of race was a major theme consistent throughout many articles. The Black race was the theme of focus. This theme was found in more than half the articles used in the study. There were different strategies used to identify race. Some articles specifically identified an individual (usually a victim) as Black. Prominent community activists such as Dudley Laws and Charles Roach were also identified as Black. Another strategy that the newspaper used was to refer to the “black community”, thereby implying that the victim in that article was also Black without actually labelling him or her Black. In some cases, the victim’s race had already been established because of previous coverage throughout the week and, consequently, race was not mentioned in subsequent articles relevant to a particular victim. However, there was usually a comment made about the Black community or a Black group to ensure that readers were aware of the race on which the article content was focused. For analysis purposes, when searching for race identification, the focus was on specific individuals labelled as Black. However, if the use of the term ‘black community’ was used to imply the race of a specific person in the community, the

article was categorized as Black Community for race identification in order to prevent incorrect assumptions made by what appears to be implied, as in the following except:

Metro's black community must turn the police shooting of Raymond Lawrence into a source of strength instead of anger, mourners at this funeral were told. "I want you to look at this casket very carefully and review your lives, see how you live," Rev. Dudley Bent said yesterday. ("Death Challenges Community to Push for New Laws," *The Toronto Star*, May 19, 1992, A7)

By mentioning the Black community, the article implied that the victim was also Black without actually labelling the victim Black. Additionally, in similar articles, mention of the 'black community' was sometimes meant to make the whole community culpable for the acts of that one individual.

The White race did receive some mention in a few articles. When 'white' referred to race in an article, it was usually used to demonstrate contrast between Blacks and Whites and to indicate that there was some opposition between the two racial groups. The qualifier was attached to nouns that indicated 'white suspects,' 'white criminals,' 'white officers,' and an 'all-white jury.' However, in most cases, the White racial group did not receive specific mention as it was regarded as 'normal' for the White race not to be specifically identified. *Note:* 'Normal' in this case referred to the fact that officers were rarely identified by race if they were White, while those of a different race (such as a Black officer) usually were labelled accordingly in the article.

By highlighting race, the newspaper created an insidious dichotomy of "Us" versus "Them." In most cases, it was to show that some Blacks (particularly those

from the West Indies) had different moral beliefs and attitudes from the dominant Whites in society, that they were culturally different and possibly corrosive to the established norms of the dominant Canadian society. This was sometimes the newspaper's focus when Blacks across various cities united together to engage in protest activity. As with individually named Black activists who spoke out against racism and discrimination, the Black Action Defence Committee was a group also portrayed as oppositional to the established norms of the dominant society. For example, in an address to the Police Services Board at a meeting held at police headquarters, the police chief walked out of the meeting said to be disgusted with the performance of the Black Action Defence Committee in their address to the board. The newspaper made a point of highlighting the fact that the activist group was making an issue of race and failing to abide by the Police Service Board's established rules of conduct. What they neglected to acknowledge, however, was the insensitivity of the Board's retort which insinuated that Blacks were killing Blacks and therefore the shooting of two more Blacks by a police officer was not a big deal. Instead the commissioner's retort was portrayed by the newspaper as an acceptable comment among the dominant group for which both the Police Services Board and *The Toronto Star* newspaper represented.

Another strategy that the newspaper used to call attention to race was to demonstrate cultural difference and the potential for violence that this "Other" cultural group represented:

Leaders of Metro's black community have criticized a decision to have the Ontario Provincial Police investigate the shooting death of Lester Donaldson. In an emotion-charged meeting in an alley behind an Oakwood Ave. restaurant last night, speakers called a plan to have the OPP probe the Metro police shooting of Donaldson "totally inadequate." ... Black activist Dudley Laws told about 100 people at the meeting that a meaningful response to the "police murder" of Donaldson had to be found. "If there isn't an independent inquiry, we should have one within our own community," Laws said. The group planned what they believed will be a massive Saturday demonstration to protest the shooting... At times, the meeting became unruly, with shouts of "more white lies and murder."... One man, wearing a tie-dyed T-Shirt and knit cap, told the meeting, "We have a lot of well intentioned (blacks) in this town. What we want is some bad, crazy (blacks)." ("Angry Blacks Condemn OPP Probe of Killing," *The Toronto Star*, August 12, 1988, A6)

This article served to single out a particular community (Jamaican) as hostile and aggressive. Making mention of the fact that the meeting took place in an *alleyway* suggested surreptitious dealings, if not a plotting to overthrow a system. Indicating that the meeting was emotionally charged and that decisions made by officials were unacceptable to the Black community was a framing effect that primed the reader to view this community as potentially hostile. This fear was further enhanced by the visualization created from the description of a *tie-dyed T-shirt and knit cap-wearing* Rastafarian who commented on the need for more *crazy Blacks* to embark on the city, while others shouted 'more white lies and *murder*,' all suggesting the potential for violence at the upcoming '*massive*' *demonstration* to protest the shooting. Even the headline of the article, "Angry Blacks Condemn OPP Probe of Killing," was intended to show the difference between "Us" and "Them." The article was essentially framing

the argument that Blacks were a violent people prone to criminality with some wearing eccentric dress that marked “Them” as different from “Us.”

Inquest Coverage

It was through the newspaper’s coverage of inquests that details about specific cases were revealed. The general theme involving Black victims focused on Black grievances about racial inequality while the general theme involving White victims focused on developing sympathy for the victim despite his indiscretions.

In one particular Black case there was a suggestion that the inquest Coroner was biased. When this was revealed by a victim defence lawyer, another judge cautioned the lawyer that he was “pushing it.” The incident stemmed from the coroner’s ruling that antiracism groups be denied standing at the inquest. In vying for standing, the lawyer had attempted to present to the court the fact that race issues were relevant to the proceedings as the victim was of another race (Black) different from the shooting officer (White) and that many members of the Black community felt strongly about having a discussion of the issue. Many people, according to the victim’s defence lawyer, were concerned as to the racial aspect of the shooting. This was a particularly hot topic because the officer was acquitted despite the controversial nature of the shooting. Yet, the judge felt it was not necessary to allow the issue of racism to be raised at the inquest. Activists believed that race played a major role in this particular shooting and wanted to discuss the issue as well as make appropriate recommendations for future incidents. Nonetheless, the contribution was not viewed as worthy.

The indication that the antiracism group merely wanted to make recommendations at the inquest suggests that they were not to be seen as a violent threat but one willing to work with the current justice system in bringing about equality in society. Despite this, the antiracism group was excluded from participating in the inquest and had subsequently made several requests to have the coroner's decision reversed based on their claim that the ruling was insensitive and irresponsible given that the issue was of substantial interest to the Black community. Nonetheless, the judge supported the coroner's decision to decline the antiracism group standing at the inquest. While the newspaper's message was non-explicit, by giving extensive coverage to such detail in an inquest, the newspaper attempted to demonstrate that racism was indeed a systemic problem throughout the entire judicial system.

This pattern of refusing to discuss racism was evident in a number of inquests. What was interesting about this particular situation was that while the coroners were reluctant to include a discussion of racism, they did however allow discussions of the credibility of the SIU who were generally viewed as incompetent by the police. The implication in these situations was that both the police and the justice system held the belief that the SIU supported the Black position of racial bias if they found an officer's conduct to be questionable or wrong doing. As such, the judicial system, a strong supporter of the status quo, frowned on any group that attempted to attenuate the hierarchical system by reporting that police were racists.

Among Black cases, another major concern for Blacks was that they were being singled out for exceptional policing. One defence lawyer complained that Metro's

Black community was over-policed and suggested that the community was exposed to more layers of policing than the remainder of the citizens in the city. Similarly, one activist complained at an inquest that there was a police squad focused specifically on Blacks: the Metro Police Black Organized Crime Squad.

In a highly publicized case, a controversy arose in which one lawyer attempted to represent several different interests at an inquest; they were the Police Services Board, the Chief of Police, and 5 officers involved in the shooting death of the victim. The lawyer was also tied to the victim's case in that he belonged to the law firm that was dealing with a claim made by the victim's widow. To further enhance the conflict of interest produced by the lawyer's situation, he also attempted to obtain a publication ban on inquest proceedings which was highly unusual since inquests have always been public proceedings. The lawyer was unsuccessful in the latter attempt. Once the conflict of interest was revealed by the victim's lawyer, the coroner finally ruled that because the lawyer was in a conflict of interest, he had to step down from his post. He was eventually recalled to defend only the 5 officers.

At other inquests, according to reports, some activists complained that the police force tried to discredit victims by disclosing certain types of information that was not relevant to the shooting incident. What was interesting was that some of the parties involved (police officials) denied knowledge of the release. A possible motive for this denial was that such bias seemed to support the claim of racism made by the Black community and was an issue that police tried to avoid at all cost.

In much of the inquest coverage concerning Black victims, a common theme was that of racism: complaints of systemic racism, race bias by coroners/judges, and lawyers and activist groups being excluded from proceedings because their contributions dealt with race issues. Stemming from this larger theme, were other issues demonstrating bias in the justice system as a whole. With regard to one victim alone, many issues were revealed: conflict of interest, prejudice and racism and the avoidance of these issues, investigation of police wrongdoing, and an attempt at invoking an unprecedented publication ban on inquest proceedings which did not occur.

The situation was somewhat different in White cases. The difference in the way information was communicated about the two racial groups was significant. While details were explicit with Black victims resulting in the *airing of dirty laundry*, details concerning White victims were usually downplayed, thereby protecting the privacy of White victims and their families. Similarly, issues concerning police conduct were communicated in a very discreet way. In one case, information concerned bias of a judge; in another it was about police brutality in a case of mistaken identity.

However, a major difference between the two racial groups was that White victims were often portrayed with sympathy by the justice system. One White victim who was shot by police during a house raid was portrayed as a picture of innocence by the judge in his final address to the court:

Young said evidence heard during the 12 days of testimony showed Boyarski to be a “quiet, gentle man,” who became troubled because of “continuous problems with drugs and

alcohol.” Referring to the final minute of Boyarski’s life – before he was shot and killed by five blasts and a shot from a service revolver – Young said it will never be known why Boyarski pulled a gun on police after they identified themselves. “I have no answer to these questions. We can all speculate but will never have the answers,” he said. (“Man’s Shooting Death in Raid ‘double tragedy’ Inquest Told,” *The Toronto Star*, January 24, 1986, B8)

What was interesting about this portrayal was that no disparaging remarks were made about the fact that this White victim was violent having shot at police or even that he had been in possession of a gun. Neither was negative reference made to the fact that he was a drug user and possible dealer. In fact, only sympathy was expressed at his circumstances by both judge and witnesses and the apparent silence of the newspaper editor.

Incident Updates

In incident updates, when the situation seemed appropriate, the newspaper selectively chose the parties whom they would demonize. While the main focus was on the police force, victims as well as the justice system were also susceptible to this strategy of demonizing. Many of the issues that editors highlighted were focused on police bias toward Blacks. On the whole, articles were complex and did not necessarily focus attention on one group for its entirety; instead, multiple parties could be seen as blameworthy in some respect or the other in one article alone. Insinuations were often made that police displayed brutality especially toward Blacks, while at the same time the focus could be on issues of unequal treatment doled out by the criminal justice system as an overseeing body. Victims themselves were also indicated as blameworthy

but not necessarily for the criminal activities in which they were initially involved. This was often made evident in situations of *airing dirty laundry*.

In one incident update, the focus was on the fact that the SIU had made a secret deal with police allowing police to take precedence over an investigation that should have been led by the SIU. The controversy, of course, was that the issue became one of police investigating police allowing the potential for bias to creep in. By reporting on such controversies, the newspaper demonstrated that there was racism on the police force since the Black victim was not receiving fair treatment.

The controversy over the secret deal reached between the SIU and police was revealed in one particular case where police were permitted to take the lead role in an investigation in which normal protocol would have been to have the SIU conduct the investigation into police conduct that resulted in the shooting death of the civilian victim. This was not palatable for the Black community which raised concerns that when police had investigated themselves in the past, they were found not to be objective with fellow officers. The irony of the situation was also revealed when the lead investigator of the SIU admitted that his team often relied on identification evidence provided by the very force under scrutiny simply because the SIU did not yet have the resources to conduct thorough investigations without help. Further complicating matters, police were also using this secret deal to their advantage and releasing information about the victim consequently exonerating themselves of any wrongdoing in the shooting.

The above article also showed that disagreement had arisen between police and the SIU in which the SIU, supposedly in charge of the investigation, denied giving police permission to release information about the victim. Countering this statement, police were adamant that permission for the release had been granted by the SIU but were unable to provide the name of the individual who approved the release. The overall issue was that the secret deal had complicated matters exponentially, again, resulting in the portrayal of corruption and unfair treatment for Blacks.

The article also included statistics from a federal study yielding two startling conclusions: one, most shootings occur when officers are trying to arrest unarmed people suspected of traffic or property offences; and two virtually nothing is known in Canada about the situations in which firearms are discharged by and at police. The focus of these two statements was to highlight the fact that relevant Ontario Police Act regulations are complex, wordy and filled with loopholes which allow police officers much leeway to fashion legally acceptable explanations for using their guns. Thus, the overall focus of this article was to demonstrate that police abuse their power and are permitted to do so because of lackadaisical guidelines that allow them to get away with misconduct.

In another article with reference to the above incident the newspaper had shown that police were again abusing their power by refusing to speak to the SIU and breaking protocol by holding private meetings among themselves to corroborate their story. All this was conducted at the police station. Information had been leaked to the

media by police personnel producing controversy in the shooting incident and an overall picture that the system was corrupt.

Other incident updates also spent much time focusing on questioning police integrity and the tactics used with regard to their dealings with victims. For instance, one incident update questioned whether or not the officer fired a warning shot to alert the victim of the seriousness of his situation before he was shot to death. The analysis showed that warning shots were common in more White cases than Black cases. Another incident update showed bias on the police force when it was demonstrated by an SIU investigator's report that a news leak from police to the media claiming that a victim was gunned down only after firing at pursuing officers was actually "false." The report was supported by forensic results revealed by the SIU which showed that a gun found at the scene of the incident (alleged to be the victim's) had not been fired. The news leak by police had also included the victim's criminal record to further solidify the case that the victim was a dangerous Black threat to society. After being called on this breach of protocol, the chief of police stated sheepishly that he would investigate the leak. The head of the police union, on the other hand, defended the release saying that it prevented a riot similar to the one triggered by the shooting of another Black man the previous year. However, this response only served to demonstrate the stereotypical and racist attitude held by the police force: all Blacks are prone to criminality and violence. The newspaper article showed that despite the chief's attempt at damage control, bias on the force was systemic and included more than just individual officers.

The shooting of one particular victim received much update coverage because it was a very controversial shooting. The victim's vehicle had been boxed in by several police cars when he, the sole occupant of the car, was shot multiple times by more than one officer. The lead officer who was also a shooter had brought his wife (an officer of an out-of-town region) along to observe the takedown. Later, the lead officer also refused to cooperate with the SIU and had broken protocol by meeting privately with other officers to corroborate their story. His trial lasted several months, but he was eventually acquitted and the other shooting officers were absolved of any wrongdoing. Again, the focus of these articles was to demonstrate that bias, particularly racism, was rampant on the police force.

Other updates focused on statements indicating that an officer had been charged in the shooting of a Black. Noteworthy was that many of these updates usually included a comment indicating that the shooting was not racially motivated although no investigation had yet been completed. While the stated intention of police officials in these articles was to minimize the political focus on race issues, in effect they augmented concerns in this area as the reader was left with little evidence supporting any other conclusion but racism. The newspaper's framing strategies were particularly effective in setting this agenda.

Another update concerned the police association union president directing officers to "approach stolen vehicles with [their] weapons drawn" despite the fact that an innocent Black victim was recently shot and wounded by a police officer who had his service revolver drawn upon approaching the stolen vehicle. While the union

president did state that the shooting was not racially motivated, he also made reference to the fact that “it’s a violent world out there” and just because police shoot a Black person, does not mean it is racially motivated. However, the damage had been done; the connection was made between Blacks and violence. Because the article focused on a Black victim and members of the Black community, the implication was that officers were to approach stolen vehicles with weapons drawn especially when the vehicles were driven by Blacks.

On a personal note, somewhere in the early 1990’s while driving to work at about 10:45pm one summer evening, I was pulled over by a police officer for doing 52km/h in a 40km/h zone. I remember looking through my side-view mirror as the officer approached my vehicle; he did, indeed, have his hand on his revolver which was still sitting in the holster as he approached me. I also remember thinking to myself, what injury he thought a little Black woman like myself could cause him that he had to approach my vehicle with his hand on his gun. Fortunately, the incident went over without mishap. I received my ticket and was on my way. I remember that he was in no way personable. He didn’t make small talk and did not want to know why I was driving over the speed limit. His only concern was to obtain my driver’s licence and registration. After writing up the ticket, he handed it to me along with my personal effects and I was on my way. But this incident was certainly a testament to the fact that police were indeed following the directives of their union boss. Had it been a woman with a weaker constitution, I dread to think the psychological damage the appearance of this officer would have had.

Turning from a focus on demonizing the police force, the newspaper also produced articles demonstrating concern that Blacks were a problem people. One article thus began with “Angry members of Metro’s black community...,” framing an argument that Blacks were never satisfied and were possibly demanding too much. The article of reference concerned a secret deal made in an out-of-court settlement from police to the victim’s wife. The implication in the article was that the secret payment that the widow received should have been accepted as a generous gift in light of the strong possibility that she probably would have lost the suit. To bolster this position, the newspaper indicated that the police agreed to a settlement on “humanitarian grounds,” and in that way, the settlement was intended to avoid a costly civil trial that would have reopened rifts between police and Blacks. It was made clear that the settlement was not intended to be an admission of liability. However, Black activists feared that the settlement was “tantamount to bribery” and were particularly suspicious because the widow was bound by secrecy with regard to disclosing the specific amount of the settlement. Activists in the Black community were concerned about the deal because they felt that the shooting was not just a personal matter between police and the victim, but rather it concerned the Black community as a whole in light of recent police shootings. The readers of this article, however, were left with an impression that Blacks were prolonging the issue of racism and were reluctant to let it rest.

Another controversial issue that was classified under updates concerned police use of hollow-point bullets despite the fact that these bullets were banned in Ontario

under *The Police Act*. This type of ammunition was banned because it mushroomed upon impact causing greater damage than regular bullets. Controversial, too, was the fact that the Solicitor General, at the time, knowing the catastrophic danger of the bullets, initially claimed ignorance of their use by police, and then refused to ban their use leaving police free to continue using them at their discretion. Discourse in this article was particularly interesting in that despite police indiscretion and the Solicitor General's refusal to deal with such a serious issue, the newspaper's focus in the update was to highlight the fact that the teenaged victim was a criminal because he had stolen a car and was possibly part of a ring of thugs who were into gang activity. None of this information was ever substantiated. Nonetheless, the newspaper overshadowed police wrongdoing and demonized the Black victim's lawlessness while police misconduct went unscrutinized.

In another update, there was a focus on the fact that a 'black man' had been shot 6 or more times, rather than just that he had been shot multiple times. The newspaper made the connection that the family was concerned about the integrity of the investigation since reports of the number of bullets striking the victim varied despite the fact that only the SIU were to be privileged to this information. The focus again was on both police brutality and the fact that bias was at work as police and the SIU worked to the disadvantage of the victim. However, the article was also instrumental in demonizing the family of this victim by showing their lack of attachment to the victim. Following the opening paragraph in the article, a poignant statement was made that "the body of [the victim] lies unclaimed at the morgue" for

over a week, thus demonstrating that although the family showed concern over the integrity of the investigation, they themselves had yet to claim the body of their dead kin. The statement insinuated that Blacks view family differently. This theme of family values in Black cases was another common strategy used by the newspaper to demonize Blacks.

One update served to demonize another victim as she was caught in a lie claiming that she did not know the other people who were in a stolen car with her when she was shot by police. She had however provided police with the other occupants' names and addresses. This female victim was merely a passenger and otherwise innocent in the ordeal. That is, she did not present a physical threat to the officer, but she was the occupant who was shot by the officer. The newspaper, however, further demonized the victim because of the character of the people she was said to be associated with. According to the report, one of the other occupants of the car was the brother to the victim's ex-boyfriend who was at the time serving a jail sentence at a local provincial institution. The victim and the other occupants of the car were just returning from a visit at the jail with the victim's ex-boyfriend. Consequently, her association with these 'criminals' and the fact that her integrity was in question removed the appearance of innocence and made her culpable of deceit despite the tragedy of her situation.

The newspaper also attempted to show that bias was very much a part of the justice system, and in one situation, police were receiving special treatment compared to that of regular citizens. In the article, special mention was made that, for an officer's

preliminary hearing, there was a strong show of support from several other officers. The issue was that they were permitted to enter the courtroom before the public and media were allowed to enter showing special treatment. The newspaper also reported that the court co-ordinator was unaware that privileged seating was happening; but the insinuation was that someone in an official capacity with the court system had allowed the privilege. Again, the newspaper was setting the agenda by suggesting with these small incidents of inequality in the court system that there was a bigger issue of bias namely toward Blacks. The systemic problem in this case was revealed in the unequal treatment favouring police who were considered valuable group members of the dominant society.

Judicial bias was also evident in an article revealing the result of a victim's family lawsuit. The case involved the death of a Black teenager shot to death by police. His parents sought \$2.04 million in damages but were awarded \$14,795. Their lawyer complained to the media that the amount was not enough to even cover legal costs, let alone damages; but the judge indicated that he felt the lawyer dragged out proceedings that could have been completed in half the time. The judge also based his calculations of the award to the victim's parents on the fact that the accused officer had suffered monetary loss for his wrongdoing. However, when discussing the subject with the newspaper, the lawyer later criticized the judge for showing such sympathy toward the accused officer since during the entire legal affair the officer had been receiving much of his salary plus additional monies from his union. The case became a controversial one sparking outrage and protest in the Black community with allegations

of racism against the officer at first and then the justice system second. The original incident began when the teen was shot and killed in a police station parking lot after he was taken into custody following a dispute over taxi fare. He had started to break away in an effort to escape custody, but he had stopped and turned to face the officer moments before being shot. This incident coupled with the judge's lean award was highlighted by the newspaper to emphasize situations of inequality that further demonstrate systemic racism within the justice system as a whole.

Other incident reports focused on government involvement attempting to calm tensions in police-minority relations. In one such article, an archbishop was asked to investigate the issue of racism, however, it became newsworthy because of the controversy that arose. The report received substantial coverage on the fact that an archbishop who had made recommendations on a previous shooting concerning racism was now declining to revisit the issue in a case with similar circumstances. The archbishop was to look into the police force's crisis intervention procedures and community relations. While the archbishop's excuse was that he did not want to duplicate someone else's work because there was another committee developed to look into such issues, there was an implication that the archbishop may have 'bowed out' because of political pressure from some conservative politicians named in the article ("Carter Bows Out of Probe into Police in Donaldson Death," *The Toronto Star*, January 5, 1989, A20).

The newspaper's antics as viewed by police was another issue raised in one article considered to be an incident update. In this article, *The Toronto Star* had come

under fire from police accusations that they were giving wide publicity to criticisms of police and ignoring other statements on the issue of police-minority relations. The article served mainly to give voice to police concerns about critics bashing the police force while the news media gave way to sensational reporting. In the article, the lawyer for one Black victim was said to be “inciting hatred” with “irresponsible and unethical statements” about the police shooting:

[The officer] fired long after two men in the car had escaped... there would have been no delay in laying charges – much more serious charges – if a black person had shot a policeman. Again and again, blacks are being shot down by whites with guns... It's no accident. ("Ruby 'Spewing Hatred' at Police, officer says," *The Toronto Star*, December 6, 1989, A9)

The article also highlighted the fact that members of the Black community were disgruntled about the recent pattern of police shootings. It indicated that individuals distributed pamphlets that read “minorities are clearly not safe in Ontario because police convict us without trial on the basis of race and class.” The major concern for police was that the news media were sensationalizing the incident through their one-sided coverage of the incident. It appears the police were correct, for clearly, printing such an article was beneficial to *The Toronto Star* since it succinctly highlighted the issue of police bias and the tactics used with regard to the policing of Blacks.

On the whole, incident updates with their various sub-themes represented a substantial number in this category. The themes varied, but analyses demonstrated that a focus on police misconduct and negligence helped to set the agenda that indeed

police were targeting Blacks. Incidents of judicial bias and other outside influences also helped to bolster this position taken by the newspaper.

In White cases, however, incident updates mainly focused on the SIU clearing officers of wrongdoing regarding particular victims. There was one case however, in which *The Toronto Star* was named in a libel suit by the OPP for their callous display of facts concerning the case. While an out-of-court settlement was made, terms of the settlement were not disclosed. Again, it was an issue of privacy versus publicity. Because the newspaper belonged to a prominent institution that supported the status quo, details of wrongdoing or indiscretions were kept private.

Protest Activity

In assembling support for egalitarianism, activists often called on churches, synagogues, mosques, labour unions and the bar association to mount campaigns against police shootings of unarmed citizens. The Black Action Defence Committee was instrumental in organizing many of these demonstrations. Some demonstrations merely cited the need for better police training in dealing with people of colour and especially the mentally ill.

Protest activity from within the Black community usually focused on allegations of racism because of the pattern of police shootings of Blacks that had developed by the late 1980s and early 1990s. Particularly distressing for the community was the lack of severity of charges laid against police officers who were deemed to have been guilty of misconduct during preliminary investigations by the SIU. This led one protestor to say that these minimal charges show “how valueless

black people's lives are considered in this society by police." The concern was that police were not being charged appropriately with regard to their actions because of a "deeply ingrained racism, combined with the incestuous relationship of police investigating police," ("Blacks Lives 'Valueless' to Police, Women Say," *The Toronto Star*, December 6, 1989, A9). According to this analysis, common charges laid against officers usually included, careless use of a firearm, aggravated assault, assault causing bodily harm, and unlawfully discharging a firearm. Protestors felt these charges were a "horrible injustice" because most victims had been unarmed citizens, therefore the charges should have reflected the more serious nature of the incident (i.e. murder or attempted murder). Less than a handful of charges were laid at this level. Concern over the laying of charges also contributed to allegations of systemic racism in the justice system since it suggested that police could shoot and maim or kill unarmed citizens without fear of serious consequences which would have applied to any other member of society who committed such an act.

At some protest demonstrations there was often a tone of dismay as Blacks acknowledged the lack of respect that the dominant society held for them. Activists often urged protestors to "never become accustomed to these ... killings" because there is almost a "weariness amongst the public" now that police shooting of Blacks had become so frequent ("Public 'Weary' over Shootings by Police, Black Activist Says," *The Toronto Star*, May 2, 1993, A6). This feeling of dismay was amplified by the fact that police had released false information immediately after a shooting indicating that the victim who had been shot and killed by police had first fired at police. This

information was later negated by SIU investigators who confirmed that forensic evidence showed that the alleged victim's gun found at the scene had never been fired. Again, the newspaper's agenda here was to suggest that police discrimination was indeed biased, if not bordering on racist.

Protests also focused on the freedom police had when it came to disobeying orders to cooperate with SIU investigations.

[Dudley] Laws spoke to about 100 people gathered in Regent Park last night at a forum organized by the Coalition Against Racist Police Violence. The meeting came in the wake of the fatal police shooting of Hugh George Dawson... "It is very hard to understand why a police can kill someone and then say "I'm not going to speak (to special investigations unit investigators). It's a disgrace... We must take a new approach, we must confront this police force and we must have a royal commission investigation into the actions of this police force." ("Activist Demands royal Commission on Police Shootings," *The Toronto Star*, April 11, 1997, A6)

There were numerous incidents of police refusing to speak with SIU on the grounds that they may incriminate themselves. In this way, officers believed they were invoking their Charter of Rights. However, numerous other citizens believed that police should not be awarded such privileges because of the nature of their job. Having the ability to carry guns and to use them held a greater responsibility that made them more accountable for their actions, protestors contended. This issue, however, was not resolved during the 19 year period covered in this study.

Activist also expressed concern about police ability to release fictional information about victims. In one particular case, activist Dudley Laws criticized the

chief of police for publicizing that the victim had been shot because he attempted to grab an officer's gun. When details of the investigation were released, it appeared that officers fired at the victim through the windows and the door, demonstrating that the victim was still in the car and could not have grabbed the officer's gun. Police also said that the victim had a pistol in his possession, but no such weapon was found after the investigation. Clearly, police were abusing their power by creating fictional narratives to exonerate officers of wrongdoing. That the newspaper reported on these incidents demonstrated that whether or not these fictional narratives were invented by the officers or the chief of police, bias on the police force was worthy of further investigation .

In a number of articles, protest was raised against the SIU's handling of police investigations. One activist acting on behalf of the Coalition Against Racist Violence spoke out at a news conference saying:

The SIU is acting as a shield for the police... Police routinely refuse to speak to the SIU, and those who do speak, do so after collaborating to get their stories straight... By its actions the SIU is saying that the police can continue to act with impunity and are above the law. The standards that apply to ordinary citizens are not applied to the police. ("Activists Seek Action on Fatal Police Shooting," *The Toronto Star*, May 1, 1997, A8)

Noteworthy in this article, is that there were no other commentaries made by other parties including the newspaper editor. The article included only the reporting of the voice of the protestor at the conference. This lack of another voice would suggest that the newspaper supported the protestor's position and likely, too, found fault with the

SIU. However, as has been indicated in other articles, the acquiescence was not with the sentiment of the protestors, but rather to show that the SIU were indeed incompetent in their handling of police investigations. Therefore, as police had suggested previously, the SIU should not have been in charge of such investigations. Consequently, through silent agreement and in a most inconspicuous way, the newspaper revealed that its editors were in support of the status quo that maintained the hierarchical system.

Blacks often protested against the findings of an SIU's investigation because in many cases, investigators merely took the word of the officer as *the truth* about what happened. In many cases, officers could get away with inventing stories, because they were the only witness to the shooting of the victim. When other officers were in attendance at the scene, officers usually coordinated their stories before reporting to the SIU. This was a regular theme that newspapers exposed in their reports of police shootings.

Members of the Black community were also suspicious of the nature of policing of Blacks since as they claimed the rate of deaths was out of proportion to the population. In the mid-1990s Blacks reasoned that:

Only 7.5 percent of Metro's population is black, but the seven dead men represent nearly a quarter of the 29 people killed by police in the Metro area since 1991. ("Probe Police Shootings of Blacks, Families Say," *The Toronto Star*, September 28, 1996, A1)

The protestors had informed a news conference that they wanted an inquiry into the role prejudice and racism played in those deaths and whether there were less violent or non-lethal ways for police to use force, saying the system had failed to guarantee police shooting as properly investigated. Also speaking at the conference, one defence lawyer commented that the appointed SIU had not reduced the deaths of Black people at the hands of police. The newspaper did obtain a reply from police:

A Metro police spokesperson said he thinks it would be a mistake for police as an institution to close their minds” to probing the families concerns and the questions raised ought to be addressed. (“Probe Police Shootings of Blacks, Families Say,” *The Toronto Star*, September 28, 1996, A1)

But while concern seemed to be directed toward empathizing with the grief of the protestors, no confirmation of action was indicated in the statement.

In the late 1980’s protest demonstrations usually focused on calls for the development of an independent civilian unit to investigation police misconduct. However, newspaper reports through particular word choice often demonized Blacks for this activity, indicating feelings of exasperation with these peaceful demonstrations. Protestors who verbally expressed displeasure with the current system and its apparent biased procedures were often portrayed as “not satisfied.”

About 110 people protesting the inquiries into Lester Donaldson’s death marched on Queen’s Park yesterday, repeating their call for a civilian probe with power to lay criminal charges. An Ontario Provincial Police inquiry and a civilian review by the Metro Public Complaints Commission have not satisfied the concerns of the Black Action Defence Committee, protestors

marching from Trinity Square to the Legislature were told by committee member Clare Marshall. "We are not content to live in a state where there are two systems, one of justice and one of slavery," said Marshall a teacher. ("110 March to Demand New Probe of Shooting," *The Toronto Star*, Aug. 28, 1988, A3)

The group wanted an independent criminal investigation by an impartial unit of professionals into the investigation of police shootings so that racism in the Metro police force could be exposed. The demonstrators were said to be repeating their call for a civilian probe and that the two established authorities were not satisfactory enough for their liking. In this way, they were a group portrayed to be asking for more than they deserved. To bolster this sentiment, the article included a quip at the end reporting that the victim's widow was unable to attend the rally because she was the subject of a bench warrant for failing to appear in court on an earlier date on charges of possessing 28 grams of marijuana. She had been released on bail. The inclusion of this information in the report on protest activity was to further demonize Blacks by tying them in with drugs and showing that they really had no credibility with respect to calling for changes in society.

Some articles relevant to protest activity had included just two protestors speaking to the media but became powerful publication pieces because of the intensity of the comments and the fact the newspaper played a dual role appearing to support egalitarianism by publishing concerns by Blacks but also supporting the hierarchical system in their framing of certain topics. The duplicity was well disguised. For

example, in one article, a representative of the Black Action Defence Committee spoke at a news conference saying:

This is four years in a row that an unarmed black man has been shot... by Metro police... We, more than any other single group, have historically been at the receiving end of police bullets in Canada. ("Activists Call for Charges against Officer in Shooting," *The Toronto Star*, Sept. 24, 1991, A4)

However, the newspaper reported that the chief of police refused to comment on these allegations, denying that racism was at all a possibility and suggesting that "if there are any areas of racism... it is not by the police." To this, the head of the police union added a flippant remark that he was surprised that the Black community alleged racism since "everyone's black in this one." That comment was referring to the fact that the victim and the shooting officer were both Black and that the surname of the shooting officer's White legal defence was also 'Black.' The newspaper included the fact that the union head went so far as to comment that the Black Action Defence representatives had "no credibility in the community and they do not represent the whole black community."

In framing this satire, the article included a few comments depicting the lack of brilliance on the activist's part to represent the interests of the Black community. For example, the protestors called for the maximum charge (attempted murder) to be laid against the officer (as would be given to any other layperson involved in such a serious matter). But again, protestors were portrayed as obtuse and unintelligent since they could not give a clear indication as to the grounds on which such a charge should be

laid indicating only that “when lay people shoot lay people, there are charges...That’s all we’re asking.”

In that way, the whole affair was intended to be dismissed as comical and without substance showing that while giving air to Black grievances, concerns in the Black community were not to be taken seriously. Black activists were demonized to show that they were not intelligent enough to forge a war against the dominant system and that their protest activity was merely an annoyance to society.

The newspaper also made a point of discrediting people who supported Black protestors. A White mathematician was surreptitiously ridiculed by the newspaper for speaking out against police. The article began with the activist declaring that “unprosecuted violations” of the Police Act was a common phenomenon since officers were getting away with drawing their weapons on civilians when neither their lives nor the lives of others was in danger. This was in response to the recent shooting of a Black youth who was unarmed and running away from police when shot. The mathematician also made reference to another incident in which the SIU investigation revealed that a police-reported “butcher knife” was getting smaller and smaller as the investigation progressed suggesting that the story about the massive knife had been invented by police. By revealing these “violations”, the activist was urging that the provincial government take responsibility for the problem and put an end to these shootings. However, the newspaper saw fit to add to the article that this particular activist was also providing legal assistance at the preliminary hearing of the leader of the Black Action Defence Committee who was currently facing charges of conspiring to smuggle

illegal immigrants between Canada and the United States. This last piece of information was not intended to support the activist's claims, but rather to discredit his character for the associations he maintained. In that way, while grievances supporting the Black community's allegations of racism were communicated in the article, the underlying message was that Blacks were an unscrupulous race of people, culturally different from the dominant Whites in society and should not be trusted. That this White activist spoke on behalf of this group and willingly associated with them implied that he was no longer one of the dominant group and therefore held no credibility in mainstream society. This was the message that the newspaper clandestinely communicated while at the same time appearing to give voice to protest on behalf of Blacks. Again the dichotomy of "Us" versus "Them" was revealed.

Also included in this category of protest activity was an article focused on police disapproval of a Black police commissioner. In the article the commissioner alleged that the shooting of a Black man was "unnecessary" and that he would see that details of the shooting were "thoroughly, and carefully, and fully exposed." This sparked outrage from police officials because they believed the commissioner's position was meant to be one of complete neutrality. The police union president felt the commissioner's comments were out of order and had called for his resignation. However, the commissioner refused to step down. He received support from prominent groups in the Black community, other minority groups, and even politician Jack Layton, a well known supporter of the underdog, who believed the commissioner should be able to make partisan statements. The newspaper made a point of

mentioning that the commissioner was also the current president of the Jamaican-Canadian Association. While no disparaging remarks were directly made by the newspaper editor about the commissioner's comments or affiliations, it was clear that there was a focus on Blacks demonstrating that even in an official capacity of trust Blacks were creating problems for society because they were upsetting the status quo.

While most protests could be classified as peaceful, one article did report a riot with the title: "Toronto Turns Ugly: Riot on Yonge St." (*The Toronto Star*, December 37, 1992, B1). The article communicated that while the demonstration organized by the Black Action Defence Committed began with a peaceful protest, it was over-run by a swarm of youths who stormed along a major Toronto street smashing store windows, roughing up bystanders and fighting with police in protest of the acquittal of two police officers in Los Angeles over the videotaped beating of Black motorist Rodney King. The riot took on more significance following the death two days earlier of a Black man shot twice in the chest by a Toronto police officer. The article reported that no one was killed or seriously injured, but at the same time left a hint that Blacks were indeed connected to violence and were a detriment to society.

At another demonstration, stemming from the case of a Black woman shot by police while a mere passenger in a stolen vehicle, protestors demonstrating outside of police headquarters with signs and placards expressed fear that the nature of policing had now become one of police drawing their guns as soon as a Black person was sighted. (The bullet hit the female victim in the spine paralyzing her instantly.) By demonstrating outside of the police station, the Woman's Coalition Against Racist and

Police Violence was raising awareness in the hopes of encouraging all minority groups to rise up and demand justice and accountability for the murder and/or maiming of Black youths. The article was concluded with the demonstrators refusing an invitation by the police chief to “come in out of the rain” (and into the police station), instead demanding that the chief come out to speak with them, thus showing how unreasonable the demonstrators were being. But what the article did not explicitly express was that when the matter concerned a member of the dominant racial group (i.e. the chief and/or the police force) the matter was meant to be a private affair conducted indoors away from prying eyes. It was only when minorities such as Blacks were to be exposed for wrongdoing that the affair was to be made public. Consequently, police would not engage with the protestors in public. Nonetheless, the message that was conveyed in this article was that the protestors were unreasonable for refusing to come in out of the rain.

Overall, the major theme of protest for Black victims and their families was racism. Other themes concerned police abuse of power and the lack of charges given to an officer involved in a shooting. Most disturbing for Blacks was that if charges were laid they were usually less severe than that which would have been given to the average citizen. While there were calls for an independent body to investigate police misconduct, in the end, concerns remained about the integrity of the appointed civilian unit since they were often found to be siding with police rather than conducting an impartial investigation into a shooting. These themes were readily evident on the surface, but analysis shows that underlying themes as produced by the newspaper were

also evident in production of its discourse. On the whole, the newspaper's agenda was on belittling Blacks, discrediting the SIU and anyone who supported Black protestors. This was because Black protest activity was viewed as an annoyance in society and rarely given credibility for its efforts to bring about egalitarianism. Consequently, the newspaper's framing of protest activity demonstrated that it supported the hierarchical system of inequality and maintained the continuation of the status quo.

Protest activity was not a common theme within White cases. However, there was one article that showed that an advocacy group protested the fatal shooting of a mentally ill man. The group demonstrated to bring attention to the fact that police needed better training in identifying this vulnerable sector of society. While the issue concerned police brutality, the issue was downplayed in the newspaper as merely concern for better police training. Thus, the parties involved (both the police and the victims) were protected from magnification of the situation. In that way, the difference in the treatment between the two racial groups was revealed. This difference again highlighted the theme of privacy for Whites and publicity for Blacks. That is, articles focused on White victims tended to be more conservative revealing fewer negative aspects of details that could be considered airing of dirty laundry. But the situation was reversed for Blacks.

SIU/Police Issues

After years of protest, demonstrations, and complaints of police bias by the Black community (and other minority groups), the provincial government finally mandated an independent body to investigate police shootings. The Special

Investigations Unit (SIU) was formed June 1990. However, during the first year of its inception, a controversy arose over a secret agreement between the director of the SIU and the Ontario police forces in which police investigations were permitted to take precedence over the unit's probe of an officer's conduct.

In a highly publicized case, police took the lead role in the investigation in which the Black victim crouching by a fence after running from a robbery scene was shot by an officer. Police investigators, examining one of their own, concluded that the officer shot the victim after stumbling or tripping over the man; consequently, the shooting was deemed an accident according to their investigation. However, when the SIU took over the case, the officer was subsequently charged with criminal negligence causing bodily harm, and later convicted of the offence in a court of law. The newspapers' coverage of this story demonstrated that the police force's investigation tactics were indeed corrupt; but also that the SIU was incompetent for having allowed the secret deal to happen at all.

While it was the director of the SIU who came under fire for signing the secret deal complicating the investigation in the first place, the newspaper made little acknowledgement of the fact that it was his boss the Solicitor-General (a provincial member of parliament) who also agreed to the deal. Without his approval, the deal would not have materialized. By signing the backroom deal, the Solicitor-General had made a reversal in the government's apparent decision to investigate police wrongdoing. Consequently, this new deal (first revealed by *The Toronto Star*) allowed police to take precedence over an investigation which was a total betrayal of the unit's

original mandate. By signing this deal, the Solicitor-General brought back the original system of “police investigating police” while maintaining the status quo and supporting the racial hierarchy in order that police could continue their indiscriminate shootings of Blacks without repercussion. Through his actions, the Solicitor General demonstrated that he had little respect for Black concerns and was quite comfortable with the continued annihilation of the Black race. This underlying theme, although not the focus of the article’s position, was evidently implying that politicians too were involved in surreptitious dealings to maintain the status quo.

That the existence of this deal was revealed by *The Toronto Star* would suggest that reporters received their information from a police source. From first observation, the release of such highly confidential information was apparently meant to discredit the SIU. Consequently, the newspaper published the information for its controversial nature. However, deeper analysis of the incident revealed that all parties involved were working toward maintenance of the social hierarchy.

The newspaper sold news of the controversy for financial profit thereby accumulating resources mainly reserved for the dominant group. Police maintained their role of defending resources reserved for the dominant group by annihilating Black threat even if it meant inventing stories to do damage control. And the director of the SIU, a member of the dominant racial group and a former member of the judicial system (ex-Supreme Court Judge) agreed to the deal in order to maintain the status quo of social dominance and racial stratification.

The director of the SIU however received the most criticism because the unit had come to be known as an independent body that often supported Black claims of racism on the police force. Therefore, any finding that an officer was guilty of misconduct toward Blacks (or any other minority), was an admission of racist guilt. The trouble was that the secret deal was discovered and the *façade of equality* was revealed.

However, the justice system was adamant in its denial of racism and went to great lengths to dispel such accusations. Furthermore, as an important institution meant to protect the dominant group, the justice system could not be party to any attempt at attenuating the social system of inequality. Consequently, the Solicitor General, also a member of the dominant group, made an about-face to reverse the trend of egalitarianism and maintain the status quo of social dominance and racial stratification. On the whole, the situation demonstrated that police and the justice system were part of a society of social dominance where the White majority were determined to maintain their position at the top of the social hierarchy with all actions geared toward the benefit of that group.

The question is: why would editors of *The Toronto Star* – members of the dominant racial group – want to expose racist tendencies in one of their own members? Some possible answers lay in the fact that *The Toronto Star* was a business that profited from the sale of news, coupled with that fact that they felt exposing the ‘*truth*’ was a public service that provided their audience with information they would not have been otherwise privy to in mainstream society. The newspaper also prided itself in

being a liberal and fair news source giving all ethnicities voice and equal representation. In that way, they could be said to be egalitarians actively working to attenuate the hierarchical system of the status quo.

However, from another perspective lens, evidence would suggest that *The Toronto Star* was also guilty of racism because of the racial discourse it produced. While *The Star* accuses the police force of being racist, the resulting irony was really a case of “the pot calling the kettle black.” The racism evident in *The Star*’s racial discourse was not as overt or blatant, but it still produced and disseminated the same harmful racism that marginalized Blacks from mainstream society. And since racism is interconnected in its various dimensions, the racism produced by the newspaper was just as insidious as that produced by the overt acts of the police and the criminal justice system.

There were also other issues of concern for the SIU. One of the most serious and recurring impediments of an investigation into police shootings was that officers had routinely refused to speak with investigators, instead invoking their Charter of Rights to remain silent. The special investigations unit was created by the provincial government in 1990 to independently investigate incidents in which civilians were injured or killed at the hands of police. Subject officers – those involved in the death or injury of a civilian, and who could face criminal charges as a result – were not required to cooperate. However, witness officers – those who witnessed the occurrence – had on a number of occasions withheld cooperation with the civilian agency.

In one particular case, officers decided to talk with the SIU only after weeks of corroborating their story with one another about witnessing the policing shooting of a Black victim boxed-in in his vehicle by police cars and sitting at the wheel alone in his car. An interesting note to these incidents was that while, SIU investigators often complain publicly that officers were not cooperating with the investigation, when officers did speak with investigators, all such grievances were forgotten. Furthermore, the problem with this acquiescence was that the unit did not take into account the fact that the officers had plenty of time to corroborate their stories. In that way, the SIU was not only seen as incompetent, but in effect supporting the bias of “police investigating police.” This was a common theme revealed by the newspaper’s coverage of SIU issues.

Throughout much of the study period, the Police Services Board struggled with how to handle officers who refused to cooperate with the SIU. Finally, in 1997 the recommendation was made that legislation be created that would force police officers to answer questions from the SIU. However, in return, officers’ evidence was not to be used in any criminal charges against them. This recommendation did not go over well and was vigorously attacked by Black victim defence lawyers. But as the scenario suggested, the police force and the justice system in general did not engage in fair play when it came to attempts at attenuating the status quo of inequality.

As part of their refusal to cooperate with the SIU, police were often the subjects of inquiry into leaks about victims released to the media. Protocol was that release of information to the public was the sole responsibility of the SIU when it involved the

police shooting of a victim. In one article, it was clearly evident that the newspaper was able to publish information concerning the victim's name, details of his criminal record, and a police version of events that led up to his death. There was also a suggestion that while these leaks breached force rules, the head of the police union always supported them:

Art Lymer, president of the Metro Toronto Police Association, said officers would have been justified in releasing details of Coley's criminal past. "Rules are made to be broken... so long as they are legitimate reasons." Without the leaks, Lymer said, the public "may have formed the impression that an innocent individual has been shot and killed by police. What we have here, may have been the potential for another Yonge St. riot." ("Chief Probes Leak to Media in Shooting," *The Toronto Star*, April 22, 1993, A7)

As had been the case in police hastily using their weapons against civilians, the union president's comment implied that he had not only passed judgement on the victim, but had also exonerated the officer involved before the case had been investigated. The SIU was said to be troubled by this leak in light of the fact that police were refusing to cooperate with their investigation, consequently demonstrating the lack of power that the SIU actually had. At the same time, however, the reporting of this situation left no doubt as to the political leanings of this article: police were corrupt and biased, if not racist.

Another issue that developed between police and the SIU concerned the strategies that were employed to make officers cooperate with the SIU. In one case, the director of the SIU had requested that the chief of police make an officer cooperate

with the investigation with a formal order, but the chief refused to do so. Following this strategy, the SIU then downgraded the officer's status from 'subject officer' to 'witness officer' in order to make him cooperate. However, the officer and his lawyer both refused to comply indicating that until medical or forensic proof to the contrary was received, the officer would continue to invoke his Charter of Rights as a 'subject officer'. The fear was that as easily as the SIU was able to change the officer's status from 'subject officer' to 'witness office', he would have just as easily been able to change it back after the officer had incriminated himself. Thus again, the newspaper was able to show that the SIU had weak credibility.

In most Black cases, the lack of cooperation with the SIU had been due to an underlying issue of allegations of racism and the assumption that the SIU was created to uncover such indiscretions. However, in one case involving a White victim, lack of cooperation from the officer was said to be a result of his being under medical care while out of town. Typically, issues between police and the SIU were generally not a problem for White victims. In most cases, officers were cleared by the SIU and the matter was put to rest very quickly.

Government Involvement

Government involvement in police shootings were restricted mainly to Black cases, and often related to allegations of racism with different parties vying for attention with respect to a resolution in their favour. Following a report (from the former United Nations representative Stephen Lewis) that described discrimination in

the province as “pervasive”, Premier Bob Rae did attempt to improve race relations between police and the Black community by targeting police for race relations training.

In 1988, the president of the police association (Paul Walter) also made a petition with Premier David Peterson to have the commissioner (Roy Williams) removed from his post because he threatened to expose racism on the police force with regard to the police shooting of a Black man. Williams had offended the association president because he called the shooting “unnecessary”. However, the premier declined the request stating that he had faith in the commissioner’s ability to carry out his duties equitably. (As a prudent politician, however, it is highly unlikely that he wanted to be seen as supporting a status quo of racial inequality.)

In another controversial incident a city councilman came under fire for making remarks about differential treatment for Blacks:

Metro Public Complaints Commissioner Clare Lewis... criticized Metro Chairman Alan Tonks, a Metro police commissioner, for his recent suggestion that it is “logical” for police to fear blacks, because they commit a disproportionate amount of crime... People in the black community have been told that they are being policed differently because there are black criminals... Lewis said Tonks has alienated the black community with his comments... “The results are that the black community has been isolated, marginalized. The black community has been... told that, by reason of their race, they are more likely to commit crime. I don’t think that is healthy, and I don’t think that is right.” Lewis called it a “classic case of blaming the victim.” (“Lewis Attacks Policing of Blacks,” *The Toronto Star*, May 29, 1990, A1)

In this case, the newspaper chose to expose racism on the political front but also showed that there were those who were trying to attenuate the hierarchical system of inequality. In this case, the newspaper gave voice to both sides of the issue, but a focus on Blacks again left the reader understanding that Blacks in society were a problem people in the sense that their presence upset the status quo.

In another article, members of the Black community held two meetings simultaneously in Toronto and in Mississauga. The Toronto meeting was held at the Solicitor-General's office in Toronto while the other was held in the Mississauga hometown area of a recent Black teenaged victim of police shootings. According to the article, the meetings were portrayed as mutually exclusive in that one dealt with creating a provincial task-force to investigate the status of police training and race relations, and the other dealt mainly with the circumstances of the death of the victim. While the article was intended to focus on political involvement, the overall message conveyed was one of demonizing Blacks.

It appeared that the Solicitor-General had scheduled a meeting to examine police practices and policies, and training and attitudes as it related to visible minorities. However, the Mississauga meeting consisting of family and friends of the slain victim who wanted officials to conduct a civilian investigation into the shooting death of the victim, not a broad range inquiry into police ethnic relations. The tone of the article however, implied that fear was abound in the Toronto meeting because of the potential that members of the unofficial meeting in Mississauga would not cooperate. This tone came across in words like "dissent, "feared," "trouble" and

“worried”. The framing of this story however, when viewed through a different lens, simply meant that the two meetings concerned two separate issues: one concerned the development of recommendations for better community relations, and the other concerned the expression of communal grief. From that perspective then, this article, was a prime example of the newspaper framing an issue to influence the way its readership thought about an issue. In that way, the newspaper was framing an understanding that Blacks were highly volatile and should be feared because among them were those who objected to a peaceful resolution to the current problem.

Finally, in one other incident in mid-1997, the Ontario government appointed a retired judge to determine protocol defining how police officers dealt with the SIU. The judge’s task was to try and improve relations between police and the special unit. Specifically, he had to define the rights of officers involved in serious incidents and provide clear procedures regarding the need for officers to cooperate with the SIU. This appointment was in response to the fact that the Chief’s directives to his officer’s were not comprehensive enough to deal with the varying issues. According to a councilman, bringing in a mediator was also necessary to rebuild public trust in the police. That the mediator was required to deal with this issue of police shootings mainly concerning Blacks again demonstrated the problem being created by presence of Blacks in this mainly White Euro-Canadian society. Interestingly enough, no issue in White cases required the intervention of government personnel to mediate a situation.

In another article concerning a Black victim, Councilman Allan Tonks and Mayor Art Eggleton called a meeting of media editors and producers to discuss their coverage of the shootings and the furor that arose when charges were laid against a police officer. The politicians were in damage control mode and were attempting to influence media publication. The issue was that the press coverage that police were receiving was causing them to lose credibility in the public's eye because they did not want to discuss issues happening on the force. In response, *The Toronto Star* released a report depicting the tone of the meeting:

Police forces respond to a crisis like the Michael Wade Lawson shooting by "clamming up" and that's why they get bad press, a group of journalists told Metro Chairman Alan Tonks and Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton yesterday. "The police will help (reporters) when it's to their advantage," said George Wolff, a senior producer with Global TV. But in the cases of Lawson, a black teenager killed by Peel Region police, or Constable David Deviney, a Metro officer charged in the killing of Lester Donaldson, a black Toronto resident, the forces involved "had a public relations crisis and they dealt with it by clamming up, by becoming defensive," Wolff said. ("Police 'Clamp Up' During a Crisis, Journalists Tell Tonks, Eggleton," *The Toronto Star*, February 4, 1989, A4)

The situation concerned media coverage of several problems that were occurring at once for the police force: the police association accused the attorney general of laying a "politically motivated" charge against an officer; the chief concurred that the charge was politically motivated; and in response to the charge, police protested with a work slowdown. The politically motivated comments became a hot topic in legislature and caused police authorities to go on the defensive creating quite a crisis for the police

force. Media reported on the entire affair causing both the mayor and the city councillor to do damage control. The sensationalism given to the coverage was topped off by a *Toronto Sun* cartoon depiction of a Black stereotype:

The cartoon showed an armed black man grinning as he was escorted by a helpless police officer, whose arms were pinned to his sides by a giant pair of handcuffs. ("Police 'Clamp Up' During a Crisis, Journalists Tell Tonks, Eggleton," *The Toronto Star*, February 4, 1989, A4)

The satire in the cartoon was meant to show that Blacks were taking over the city and police were helpless. This was the sentiment communicated in the article; but at the same time, it was also meant to demonstrate that police and politicians alike were also helpless in their attempts to silence the media.

In 1992, the Attorney General, Howard Hampton was also said to be involved in decision-making with regard to a case with racial overtones. The newspaper quoted him as saying that he would not succumb to pressure caused by rioters in Toronto in his decision whether or not to appeal the case of two officers acquitted of second degree murder and unlawfully discharging a firearm in a highly controversial Black case. The Attorney-General stated that his concern lay with how to make the jury selection process fairer. The verdict of not guilty in this case had come from an all-White jury, and that also helped to fan the flames of fire that infuriated Blacks. As a result, the Attorney-General stated that he would push Ottawa to review the federal Criminal Code rules covering jury selection. Hampton also told reporters that "public opinion does not play any role" in his decision whether or not to appeal the case. His

comment however came across as very cold and insensitive when considering the impact the entire incident had on the Black community. The newspaper concluded the article indicating that the Attorney-General was aware that crown attorneys could use “privileges” to their advantage in “stacking a jury”. In that way, only biased jurors would be selected. The problem for the Black community was that the Attorney-General was not concerned about the outcome of this trial, but suggested that he would look into rectifying the situation for future cases. In other words, their grievances were not being heard. Consequently, the newspaper’s angle in this framing again was to suggest that the criminal justice system was racist and the problem was quite systemic.

As with individuals on the police force and in the justice system as a whole, no political representative had ever directly linked any specific police shooting to racism when asked. However, Premier Bob Rae, in 1992, was quoted as saying racism is a “fact of life in Canada” and a problem that must be dealt with. Although he would not link the shooting of a specific Black victim with racism, he did say that the number of Black victims shot by police in recent years reflected a “disturbing pattern that is very troubling for people.”

We have to recognize the fact that no institution in our society can be unchanged by our becoming a multiracial society....Our Institutions haven’t been changing quickly enough to reflect that, to respond to that and to celebrate that, and the communities are feeling, I think, a sense of isolation and a sense of concern. (“Shootings by Police ‘troubling’ Rae States,” *The Toronto Star*, May 4, 1992, A1)

In essence, the premier was acknowledging that there is systemic racism within the justice system, including the police force. His words however, were not particularly comforting to some members of the Black community who alleged that the premier was simply giving lip-service to pacify community frustrations over the latest shooting. They preferred to hold out until they saw meaningful progress in action rather than mere words. The premier promised to seek solutions to the problem of racism. This lack of commitment to specifics was not lost on the reader or the Black community.

Another political issue which caused concern in legislature was the fact that a number of the victims of police shootings were shot with an illegal weapon: hollow-point bullets which mushroom upon impact to cause greater damage than regular bullets. The Solicitor-General in charge at the time, while knowing about the illegal use of the ammunition, had neglected to ban it stating that the issue was to be dealt with in a revision of The Police Act. Consequently, the problem spilled over to the new Solicitor-General in charge, who similarly knew of the breach but refused to deal with it. As a result, civilians continued to suffer at the hands of police using illegal weapons and not being held accountable because the powers to be refused to deal with the problem. The use of hollow-point bullets had been identified in a number of police shootings of both Black and White victims. These reports the newspaper communicated to demonstrate police brutality toward civilians, especial Black ones.

Use of the Word “Racism”

Nearly 90% of the times that the word ‘racism’ was used in an article, it referred to charges against the Toronto police force made by members of the Black

community. The allegations were supported by complaints that racism was a plague that was rampant in society because of a pattern of police shootings that had occurred over the years. Various activists and members of the Black community such as Dudley Laws and Charles Roach threatened to expose this disease on the police force and held numerous demonstrations in this regard. Similar allegations of racism were made against the Montreal police force accompanied by claims that authorities knew of systemic racism on the force but did nothing about it, quickly sweeping it under the carpet whenever an incident such as the police shooting of a Black victim arose.

This argument of avoidance of the issue was often reiterated at inquests as various anti-racism groups petitioned for standing at the inquest proceedings in order to discuss the role of race in individual cases of police shootings. While some groups focused their arguments on examining police behaviour and attitudes toward minorities with the hopes of making recommendations to improve police-minority relations, others took a more forceful approach stating that they wanted to *expose* systemic racism on the police force. Neither approach was accepted by coroners/judges at the inquests. Reasons for denying these groups participation often were made on the basis that racism was not an issue at the officer's trial and therefore was deemed to be a non-factor in the death of the victim. Consequently, the issue of racism was never discussed at an inquest. However, one anti-racism group was allowed to participate at an inquest on the basis that their discussion was limited to the issue of mental illness and visible minorities. That the issue of avoidance of such an important topic was being neglected by the justice system was another reason articles focused on inquests

accounted for a large portion of the articles used in this study. It was easily accessible with the key word search on *Lexis-Nexis* and it helped to demonstrate the position that the newspaper had taken for years – that the justice system was blatantly racist against Blacks.

On a number of occasions, premiers, politicians and lawyers all acknowledged that racism was indeed a part of Canadian society. Premier Bob Rae vowed to seek out the root of the problem and eradicate it, although, he was careful never to mention any particular institution in which this racism could be found. Despite some activists' scepticism about his sincerity, many felt that at least acknowledgement of the problem was a start. However, blatant denial of racism was a repeated refrain vocalized by members on the police force. Among the most adamant were each successive Toronto police chief and the police association presidents who blatantly and consistently denied its existence especially concerning the police force. In many cases, these individuals denied racism to the point of deflecting the term racist back onto various Black activists suggesting that they were the ones inciting racism towards the police force. As such, members of the police force often referred to prominent Black activists such as Dudley Laws and Charles Roach as 'radicals'.

A common theme regarding acknowledgement of racism was that while officials acknowledged that racism was indeed a fact in Canadian society (in the 1980s and 1990s), all refused to accept that it was occurring in any institution to which each belonged; it was always an isolated incident happening to some other individual in some other place. In other words, few were willing to acknowledge that racism was

greater than individual acts of discrimination. However, protest from the Black community eventually led to the problem being given serious consideration and a few task forces on race relations and commissions on systemic racism were formed to report on the nature of police-minority relations. Several recommendations were made over the years but only a hand-full were ever instituted.

The word racism in articles also referred to names of some protest groups such as the Women's Coalition Against Racism and Police Violence. According to the newspaper, systemic racism was defined as "contention that people of colour are routinely treated differently and unfairly compared to whites". As such, the term racism was never identified in reports related to White victims.

Initial Reports

Initial reports about the shooting of a victim by a police officer usually included several aspects such as identifying names, details about the incident, and police release of particular information relevant to the shooting. In almost all Black cases, racial identifiers were used to indicate that the victim was not a White individual. Occasionally the word "black" appeared in the title, but in most cases it was simply stated that the individual was Black. In White cases, labels were never used to identify a White victim. There was always the assumption that White was "normal," understood, and therefore did not require specific labelling.

In Black cases, reasons provided for a shooting were usually more detailed than in White cases and information was commonly provided by a police source. In White cases, however, details about the shooting were withheld from publication with the

excuse that the “SIU is currently investigating the incident.” The situation here again demonstrates the contrast between privacy for White victims and making information public for Black victims.

Details about the circumstances that led up to a shooting incident were usually communicated in a brief and somewhat sketchy manner since not all information was usually known when the first report was made public. However, there was often a tendency for the report to either lean toward sympathy or blaming the victim. In most cases, sympathy was reserved for White victims while blaming was reserved for Black victims. Sympathy was conveyed when White victims were portrayed as victims of circumstances in that they would never intentionally break the law to have produced such a severe consequence that would cause police to shoot them. This was demonstrated in one case in which quotes from family and friends portrayed the victim as “friendly”, “hardworking” and “not known to ever carry a gun.” (Ironically, having a gun on the passenger seat of his pick-up truck was what got him into trouble.)

On the other hand, however, in cases involving Black victims, there was an implication that Black victims were guilty by association of colour which was often linked to drugs and violence. That is, if the report said the incident occurred in a drug ridden neighbourhood, then the implication was that the victim must have been somehow involved in the drug culture and the violence that was associated with such a culture. When shootings did occur in this type of drug plagued neighbourhood, neighbours were not necessarily shocked by the shooting of a Black person. However,

in White cases, neighbours were often portrayed as horrified and unbelieving that something like that could ever happen “in this neighbourhood.”

In linking Black victims to this inner-city culture, there was often the airing of dirty laundry or publishing of background information that was not relevant to the shooting but depicted a certain identity for the individual. That is, the worst part of their lives was exposed for the world to read about it whether or not it was relevant to the actual shooting incident. Also relevant to Black cases was the fact that there was usually a mention of the victim’s country of origin. If direct mention was not made then there was usually an insinuation that his status may have been illegal in Canada. At first glance, by providing personal background information on a victim, it appeared that the newspaper was attempting to make the victim more *human* rather than just another statistic of police violence. However, a pattern of this tactic reviewed in the articles analyzed demonstrated a difference in how information was portrayed between the two groups. Information revealed about Black victims tended to portray circumstances of a depraved life – be it inner-city living, poverty, dysfunctional family, criminality, drugs and violence, etc. On the other hand, information revealed about White victims was restricted to the bare facts such as name, age, address, and possibly the number of children the victim had.

After a rash of shootings of Black victims in the city, reports started to focus on the possibility that shootings were racially motivated. One interesting observation made in the analysis was that in Black cases where there was a focus on blaming the victim, there was no implication of racial motivation. It was implied that the victim

brought the situation upon himself; therefore, racism was not a factor. However, in articles where the focus was not on blaming the victim, racial motivation was sometimes implied in articles when editors attempted to show that other reasons for the shooting were non-existent. For example, in one case, the article suggested racial motivation:

A Montreal policeman yesterday shot and killed a black teenager who had momentarily broken away from custody, reviving charges of racism within the police force... He stopped and turned toward a policeman after a warning was issued, and was shot in the forehead from about six metres [the police chief said]... "The person did stop and face the police officer before he was killed.... I am personally convinced this incident had no racial motivation" [said the police chief]... But the ethnic community spokesmen expressed outrage at the incident and scoffed at Bourget's contention that it was not racially motivated... "Aw come on," said Arthur Hiess, leader of the Canadian Institution for Minority Rights. "This kid got shot through the front of his head after he had stopped and turned around... The Montreal police force has had a problem with racism for several years and all they've done is sweep it under the carpet..." "(The victim) was in a parking lot with an unscalable fence. There was only one way out of there, and he gets shot in the head?" [said a Black community leader]. ("Black Teen Shot Dead by Police in Montreal," *The Toronto Star*, Nov. 12, 1987, A10)

The article used quotes from both police officials and Black activists to suggest that the incident did indeed contain racial overtones by highlighting different aspects of the case that suggested that motivation for this shooting had no other militating factor but race. In that way, the reader was primed to see that the situation could have no other motive but racism.

Another difference between Black and White cases was that in White cases, names were generally not released in initial reports as per police discretion, while in

Black cases names were released, if known. With the latter group, reports usually indicated that police had difficulty identifying the official name of the victim because of the multiple street names by which the victim was known. Under aged victims were generally not named. For example, one report of a teenage victim did not reveal the victim's identity or circumstances of the shooting because the youth was protected under the Young Offenders Act. Nonetheless, the article was able to communicate through layperson witness quotes that the victim was a "black guy" and that the officer was a "Black cop".

While initial reports rarely identified the names of victims of police shootings or the name of the accused officer, reports often included a list of shootings within the last year or so to demonstrate a pattern of the types of individuals on which police were focused. This was common among Black cases more so than White cases. A list included in an initial report usually included other victims of the same racial group as the victim.

Another common reporting tactic in initial reports was to identify the number of bullets a victim received from a police weapon. This was more common for Blacks than for Whites.

There were few initial reports identified in the articles analyzed for the White racial group. One article however identified a man stabbing his wife to death before police walked in on him and shot him to death after various diffusing strategies were used to get the man to stop. What was interesting was that in this article police

defusing strategies were explicitly stated where as in other articles involving Black victims defusing strategies were not.

DISCUSSION

A Deep Oppression Called Systemic Racism

Media representations were part of a cultural discourse that reinforced a racial hierarchy found in society. News reports often promoted a particular point of view that reinforced the status quo. By presenting Blacks in stereotypical ways, the dominant culture subordinated Blacks through negative images that became part of the collective consciousness that viewed Blacks as being responsible for their own conditions. Print media, in particular, were part of this cultural domination inherent in unequal power relations, and a key feature of historical process by which Blacks had been subordinated and oppressed.

Newspaper narratives about Blacks and crime made sense of experiences by putting events into a sequence that told a story about what happened and why. They identified Blacks' behaviour and values as wrong or right, as important or unimportant, and provided a moral. In this study, articles focused on police shootings of Blacks conveyed messages to readers that helped them develop and reinforce ideas about race. Events were given even more significance when they were published on the front page and reporters chose whom to interview and which quotes to use in framing their stories. However, rather than covering the economic reasons for the Black underclass associated with crime, the newspaper focused on mores, living habits and social patterns such as promiscuity and drug addiction. This concentrated effort on race

treated Blacks as the main subject of concern and focused on their alleged threat to the social order and their opposition to the dominant White society. In essence, racialized coverage triggered people's fears and their willingness to hold Black people responsible for crime increases. Instead of extinguishing irrational White fear of Blacks, the newspaper was instrumental in fuelling it (Larson 2006). This type of racism contributed to a bigger systemic problem of centuries of oppression faced by Blacks; that is, systemic racism.

Systemic racism in the 1980s and 1990s had in some ways changed significantly from the racialized patterns of formal slavery and legal segregation of the not so distant past; yet, in certain fundamental ways such as the enduring racial hierarchy, persistent White-imposed discrimination, and White privilege and advantage in all major institutions, this type of racism remained similar to the systemic racism of earlier years (Feagan 2006: 266). In fact, I contend, it was the same racism despite the fact that contemporary theorists have dressed it up with new names. For analytical purposes racism could be examined from such dimensions including: racism as biology, racism as ideology, racism as culture, and/or racism as power. In effect, each dimension of racial oppression was linked directly or indirectly to every other dimension. One could separate important dimensions of racial oppression for analytical purposes, but in the everyday world of this particular time period, they could not be separated for they generally occurred in concert with one another (Feagan 2006:267).

Systemic racism had persisted for generations because the dominant Whites had been able to reproduce all the necessary socioeconomic conditions and the supportive institutional mechanisms that strengthened it. This resulting social inequality routinely reproduced over the centuries involved disproportionate control by Whites of major economic resources and of the educational, political, and ideological resources that had been necessary to subordinate racial groups such as Blacks.

Consequently, White on Black oppression and its accompanying inequalities had been socially reproduced by a group-based dominance in society acting within critical institutional and community frameworks. Once Whites were racially privileged from the extensive exploitation of Blacks in slavery and legal segregation, they typically passed on that privilege in the form of money capital, social capital, and cultural capital to their descendants, over several generations. This group transmission of privilege and resources had been strongly supported by an array of societal institutions. The ability or inability of this group to transmit important asset-generating resources from one generation to the next was highly dependant on the support of major institutions. These racially structured institutions such as the economic institutions that persistently exploited and discriminated against Black labour and the legal-political institutions that protected that oppression over several generations had resulted in major organizational and institutional structures that had reproduced a highly racialized enrichment and impoverishment which was central to a society of dominant White hegemonic rule. Generally speaking, racial inequality then was

substantially the result of centuries of racial inequality and opportunities, resources, and assets reserved for the dominant Whites in society.

Over the years, collective forgetting by Whites had been critical to the perpetuation of oppressive institutions. For the most part, Whites had repressed the historical memory of much of society's long centuries of oppression and did not see or wish to see, the impact of institutionalized racism or to recognize its role in everyday life. In fact, a substantial majority persisted in denying that White racism was systemic, common place, and devastating for its targets. In this discourse of denial, the assumption was that because Canada was a society that upheld the ideals of a liberal democracy, it could not have been racist. Indeed, when racism was shown to exist, it tended to be identified as an isolated incident relating to a limited number of social deviants as had been evident in *The Toronto Star's* exposure of police brutality against Blacks.

The trickle-down effect of systemic racial oppression was also evident in the criminal justice system. This system reflected and promoted the interests of the more powerful members of society. These members, in turn, exerted influence to diminish the priority and resources given by the police to those criminal activities in which they themselves were more likely to engage (i.e. white-collar crime) and to increase the priority given to "street" crimes, which were committed predominantly by less advantage people such as a small portion of the Black population living in inner-city neighbourhoods. This over-policing then contributed to the notion that Blacks (and other minorities) were more disposed to commit crimes than were Whites. Because of

their interactions with the Black community, police and some members of the justice system commonly believe that Blacks were responsible for more crimes and that Black people came from a crime prone culture. As such, Black crime became the central focus of police activity which led directly to the reinforcement of racist ideology. Such ideology directed at the Black community meant that Black people, in a more general sense, were being examined and understood or misunderstood through the lens which the newspaper (and other media) provided. Once this trickle-down effect reached the target group (i.e. Blacks), they were then blamed for the problems that were manifested for all to see. The elites at the top and the White dominant society in general were absolved of culpability and Blacks were portrayed as *the problem*, leaving the real oppressors nameless and untouchable.

Other institutions have produced similar problems leading Blacks and minority groups to seek recognition and protective rights from the government. Multiculturalism was introduced as the government intervention to deal with minority tensions. Its aim was to create social cohesion where diverse cultures were recognized and valued. Theoretically, it involved equal recognition that assumed a common humanity in which all shared common universal needs. That is, everyone was expected to treat each other equally. However, given that majority populations routinely had difficulty in feeling and believing that a wide range of minority populations were truly equal and worthy of equal respect, this policy was not overly successful in bringing about equality for Blacks or other minorities (Downing and Husband 2005: 197). In essence, ethnic and racial differences made equal recognition problematic.

The idea of multiculturalism had also undergone scholarly scrutiny in which it had been suggested that the concept had been disguised to portray a more benevolent and tolerant Canada, but allowed for the preservation of the cultural hegemony of the dominant group in society. This was because the idea of multiculturalism entailed the notion of tolerance which implied positions of superiority and inferiority thus assuming that some attributes and behaviours associated with minority groups needed to be accepted, condoned, or sanctioned (Henry et al. 2000). However, since tolerance was a discretionary power exercised by the majority, it inevitably denied the legitimacy of minority community claims that they had a right to the resources they needed and sought (Downing and Husband 2005: 197). In effect, multiculturalism supported the idea of cultural racism because it involved the idea of tolerance.

As an institution of culture and an influential shaper of cultural thought, *The Toronto Star* played an important role in deepening interethnic understanding and facilitating the cultural adaptation of ethnic minorities through the symbolic environment they created and sustained. Consequently, their role in creating a social environment conducive to interethnic coexistence could not be minimized. Their role was crucial shaping relations between minorities (i.e. Blacks) and the dominant society. Among other things, they had set norms, created stereotypes, built leaders, set priorities, and educated the public in matters of national interest and concern. Because of their wide-ranging effects, their influence necessarily had an important role in guiding, shaping and transforming the way their audience looked at the world

(“perceptions”), understood it (“conceptions”), and experienced and related to it (“reality”) (Henry et al. 2000: 296).

The Toronto Star's portrayal of cultural difference and negative stereotypes of Blacks in concert with other institutional forces (such as the criminal justice system) demonstrated that multiculturalism was not an effective tool in combating racism. Their production of racist ideology and cultural racism had shown that human beings could be hierarchically classified according to their intellectual and physical abilities; that they could be excluded, disrespected, and dominated by others who considered them inferior to themselves; and that institutional regulations and practices could restrict equal access to the resources and benefits of society. Overall, the racialized discourse in the newspaper had served to support patterns of domination, exclusion, and marginalization and continued the oppression of Blacks in the grand scheme of systemic racism.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Summary

The newspapers focus on police brutality revealed that the police force was racist, involved in systemic racism, and included administrators such as politicians with close connections to the force. Above all, the force was portrayed as blatantly racist because of the many controversial shootings that became evident over the two decades. The judicial system was mired in racism and revealed a systemic problem that greatly contributed to the exclusion of the Black race from mainstream society.

In *The Toronto Star's* coverage of these incidents, Blacks were "Othered" and demonized and viewed as culturally different and not belonging to the dominant society. The persistent focus on this race led to a general belief that Blacks were a troublesome and problematic people bent on upsetting the established social order. On the whole, Blacks were believed to be connected to crime, violence, and drugs, and were to be feared for such associations whether or not there was actual evidence linking them to these associations. With reference to their impoverished positions in life, there were the occasional insinuations that Blacks were blameworthy for the situation they found themselves in. Overall, stereotypes often promulgated these associations and contributed to a spectacle that reawakened a collective memory of the days of slavery.

White victims, on the other hand, were demonized only because of the violent acts called to the attention of police that could not be ignored. Despite the fact that the majority of White victims were involved in violent situations with police, nonetheless, they were portrayed as innocent citizens with legal status who lead good lives. Even those who committed horrendous crimes were guaranteed the confidentiality of privacy and did not have personal information in their lives revealed for the world to evaluate.

The way in which police dealt with Blacks demonstrated a zero-sum mentality that was a result of their role as control agents of the state and the dominant White society. Their aggressive and brutal force was a reflection of the beliefs and values of the police subculture that saw Blacks as subordinate and inferior. Policing strategies of terror followed the principles of dominance as set out by critical Social Dominance

Theory. Again, these strategies reflected group-based inequalities that placed Blacks in an oppressed position at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This oppression was further enhanced by the newspaper's "Othering" of Blacks through the presentation of a spectacle of difference.

In answering the questions proposed at the beginning of this study, results revealed that contrary to other studies' findings, police shootings were not normalized or rationalized. In fact, the focus was on exposing a blatant racism that was still in effect on the police force. However, *The Toronto Star's* coverage of the incidents did reveal a tendency to cast particular victims (Blacks) of police shootings as physical and social threats. While this tactic demonized Blacks, it did not necessarily serve to glorify police violence. In fact, it encouraged the perception that police were discriminatory and thereby had the potential to foster tensions between police and the Black community. The over-arching message was that police were indeed targeting Blacks for extermination.

CONCLUSION:

The Significance of Ideology

Discourses are juxtaposed against the role the media plays in the dialectical interplay between colour and crime, the tensions and contradictions of criminal justice and the possibilities of its transcendence. By focussing on the tensive interplay between policing and racism, this study further highlights conceptually the inextricable relationship between media discourse and ideology. The media plays an important role in the transmission of the dominant ideology. Conceptually, media depictions exist in

reference to well- established, even if poorly understood, impressions grounded in the canons of orthodox ideas and ‘common’ experiences. ‘Coated’ images and coded representations of knowledge, personified categories and empirically verifiable ‘facts’ of crime are always circulated. These interpretations, respected as self- evident truths, succeed in disciplining understanding by compelling comfortable, if not convenient compliance. Specifically, the dominant culture creates ideologically appropriate subjects in crime discourses. Given the public “buy in”, media practices control individual and collective insights by defining, moralizing, pathologizing and finally criminalizing differences. Underwriting the complex web of social, political, and economic connections, criminality becomes shaped within a media saturated environment and judged according to mediated forms of presentation and representation. The reporting of crime is inseparable from its creation (Visano 2006:109) and remains consistent with and derivative of dominant ideologies.

Ideologies, as sets of beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and values, provide members of a group with an understanding of an explanation of their world, and also serves as a framework for “organizing, maintaining and transforming relations of power and dominance in society” (Fleras and Elliot 1992: 54). Racist ideology organizes, preserves, and perpetuates the power structures in a society. Moreover, it preserves a system of dominance based on race and is communicated and reproduced through agencies such as the mass media. Notwithstanding the appearance of the dissemination of information, crime reporting is a shallow gesture designed to placate

only for the turbulent moment the curiosity of a general public that is periodically aroused and continually manipulated by the crass media (Visano 2002).

As with *The Toronto Star*, when race is identified with identity and culture, careful language enables people to speak about race without mentioning the word (Gilroy 1987: 53). Language creates social meanings and has power embedded in it that defines others. Since language is used to convey a set of meanings and since it provides a bridge between individuals and the social world, it is important to know in any given context who is saying what and why they are saying it. Language articulates by drawing upon the prevailing cultural and economic influences as well as upon myths and fantasies prevalent in the culture. Thus, it is never neutral, objective, or detached. The social meanings of labels are often politicized and when they are challenged, reveal the embedded concepts of power that reflect the interest of the dominant White society (Agnew 2007: 7).

In brief, hegemony at the everyday level of media crime production is examined in terms of the relational nature of White identity (Visano 2002). As this study has demonstrated, there were two primary means by which dominant groups maintained their hegemonic position over subordinate groups: the threat or actual exercise of naked force (police brutality) and/or control over ideology social discourse (racist discourse in print media). Of these two mechanisms, control over ideology became the more acceptable means of dominance and this is why the newspaper and the mass media in general were able to get away with producing racial discourse that portrayed Blacks as culturally different and inferior and thus contributed to the power

difference between the races. Rather than resorting to naked force, group-based social hegemony was efficiently and safely maintained by the exercise of power over ideology and discourse. A racist ideology justified and condoned inequality and marginalization. In essence, it justified group dominance. Taken in its totality, racial discourse in print media was a very destructive force that contributed to the oppression of Blacks in Canadian society. As such, continued vigilance of racial discourse in print media remains paramount. At the same time however concern for future remedies must be sought. Canada needs to find ways to improve relations between Blacks and the dominant White society.

A Remedy for Changing the Status Quo

Black problems today are structural (i.e. rampant housing segregation, poverty, job discrimination, poor education, massive imprisonment, etc.) and these structural barriers are the result of centuries of slavery and segregation. They are deeply embedded within most institutions in Canadian society. The task of correcting these problems will be extremely difficult, but not impossible. The plan should begin with helping institutions to develop practices that encourage routine intergroup contact in order to aid in the reduction of stereotypes and associated negative beliefs that produce power differentials between Blacks and Whites.

Indeed, there is a resistance to changing the status quo because the dominant White society does not want to give up its privilege. That is, Whites benefit from the present social order. The solution therefore may lie in changing the attitudes and beliefs of the dominant White society.

Numerous research studies have demonstrated that meaningful contact between the races viewed as fundamental to each individual motivates people to connect with each other in a way that reduces the automatic activation of stereotypes. This intergroup contact encourages the conditions of equal status allowing for more cooperation between individuals (Dovidio et al. 2010: 609). Creating conditions in which individuals cannot reach desirable goals as easily on their own as they can in joint cooperation with others is vital to reducing prejudice and discrimination which contribute to racism. Indeed, this will be applicable to all institutions including the criminal justice system and the mass media. Research in psychology has begun this effort, but a broader look at persistent structural inequality is required. Future research in sociology will be vital in this regard.

Dedication: In Memory of Albert Johnson

Inspiration for the writing of this thesis is dedicated to the memory of Albert Johnson, a victim of police shootings. This case was a special one for me because I knew Albert. When I first came to Canada at the age of 7 and lived on Ossington Ave, I had to pass Albert's house when I travelled to and from school by myself each day. Albert always called out to me with a greeting. I don't know if it was because he knew that I was a recent immigrant to the country or he simply liked my quiet demeanor, but he always had something pleasant to say to me that reminded me of the country I longed for. I truly cannot remember what he used to say to me, or what our brief conversations were about, but I knew that there was a connection between us because of our common Jamaican background.

Indeed, Albert was a very loud individual but amicable just the same. I never feared passing his house and seeing him on the veranda. In a way, it felt as though I had a guardian angel watching out for me as I traveled to and from school. It is understandable that his loud speech may have been somewhat disconcerting for those who did not understand our cultural background, but underneath it all, I knew that Albert was a gentle spirit. Some may have characterized it as a form of mental illness, but I believe Albert was just a man full of life who could see the sunshine even on a cloudy day.

I was saddened the day I heard that he had been killed by police. I did not fully understand the impact of the incident at the time (being only 10 years old), but I did realize that I had lost a friend. I had thought about him from time to time over the

years and recently in grad school I came upon a picture of him in the newspaper. The warm memories came flooding back. Our spiritual connection had drawn us together again. I felt that this thesis was a fitting tribute to that wonderful smile that always greeted me everyday to and from school – a newly arrived immigrant myself, facing a difficult adjustment to the new culture, and the constant harassment I received at school because of my Jamaican accent. That was a long time ago, and the accent is now gone, but the memories still remain (prejudice and racism hurts even children). I am grateful to Albert for having been a ray of sunshine in my life in those difficult years. God bless his soul!

Appendix A

This appendix includes criteria used in the analysis of the following themes:

1. List of Victim Names Used in this Study
2. Listed Names of Shooting Officers
3. Framing Strategies (agenda setting - newspaper angle)
4. Demonizing Victims (how) - newspaper angle
5. Demonizing Officer (how) - newspaper angle
6. Protection Strategies (for police)
7. Controversial Aspect (of individual cases)
8. Example of First Page Stats on a Victim
9. Example of Second Page Stats on a Victim

Victim Names Used in This Study

	<u>18 BLACKS</u>	<u>10 WHITES</u>
•	Royan Bagnaut	Alan Boyarski
•	Tommy Barnett	John Anderson Braithwaite
•	Andrew Bramwell	Ernest Charles Cubitt
•	Sophia Cook	Zdzislaw (Gerry) Falkowski
•	Ian Clifford Coley	Gregory Ianson
•	Hugh George Dawson	Daniel Logan Power
•	Lester Donaldson	Dominic Sabatino
•	Earl Edwards	Glenn Stanley Thompson
•	Vincent Gardner	Derek Ronald White
•	Anthony Griffin	Bernard Bastien
•	Jonathan Phillip Howell	
•	Albert Johnson	
•	Raymond Constantine Lawrence	
•	Michael Wade Lawson	
•	Albert Moses	
•	Marlon Neal	
•	Wayne Rick Williams	
•	Youth Not Named	

Names of Shooting Officers

Black Victim Cases

Robert Rice	Cameron Durham
David Deviney	Brian Rapson
Kenneth Harrison and Gordon Hayford	Richard Moore (* Black)
William Inglis and Walter Cargnelli	John Monette
Rick Shank	Carl Sokolowski
Rick Shank	Andy Kis
Arno Giek	Jeffrey Vance
Anthony Melaragni and Darren Longpre	Benedetto Troina
Douglas Lines	Allan Gossett

White Victim Cases

Peter Zemeckas	Martin Stephen Rukavina
Gunnar Kloetzig	Gary Vincent DeFoe
Guy Woolhead	Chi Ma (** Asian)
Kory Judge	Peter Donaldson
Kenneth Harrison	Robert Fleming

Framing Strategies (agenda setting - newspaper angle)

1. priming -----
2. sandwiching -----
3. privileging official sources -----
4. discrediting layperson witnesses -----
5. photograph -----
6. labelling -----
7. word choice -----
8. headlines -----
9. instil fear (moral panic) -----
10. unchallenged assumptions -----
11. placement of articles (A1 - A5) -----
12. identifying cultural difference -----
13. stereotyping -----
14. suggesting anomaly -----
15. mentioning race in article -----
16. mentions race in title -----
17. identifying nationality -----
18. highlighting criminality -----
19. black problem -----
20. glorify officer -----
21. demonize suspect -----
22. protest activity for equity -----
23. police discriminatory toward Blacks -----
24. political (govt) involvement -----
25. obscure language -----
26. rationalize police conduct -----
27. repetition of articles -----
28. victim portrayed as victim-----
29. police discredited -----
30. no elaboration of controversy -----
31. no airing of 'dirty laundry' -----
32. privilege layperson witness -----
33. make negative into positive -----
34. placement of articles (beyond B) -----

Demonizing Victim (how) - newspaper angle

Criteria Used in the Analysis

mentally ill

- 1) - schizophrenic -----
- 2) - stopped taking meds (suggesting deviance) -----
- 3) - mentally ill (cast as uncontrollable) -----
- 4) - cast as eccentric -----

violent

- 5) - violent -----
- 6) - physically threatening toward police -----
- 7) - ignored police warnings --- -----
- 8) - difficult to subdue or control (physically aggressive)
- 9) - confrontational -----

weapons

- 10) - weapons - possession -----
- 11) - using a weapon against officer -----

general criminality

- 12) - involvement in drug dealing -----
- 13) - suggesting drug addiction -----
- 14) - involvement in illegal activity -----
- 15) - exposing past criminal record -----
- 16) - escape custody -----
- 17) - try to evade police --- -----
- 18) - gang involvement -----

lack of personal integrity

- 19) - being untruthful -----
- 20) - verbally disrespectful toward authority -----
- 21) - association with others who commit crime -----

cultural difference

- 22) - cultural difference -----
- 23) - illegal status in country -----
- 24) - grouped as problematic people -----
- 25) - creates aftermath of wanting to alter status quo (protest activity)
- 26) - belonging to an underclass (the lowest social class) ----
- 27) - out-group affiliation (Black) -----

family

28) - belongs to dysfunctional family -----

29) - suggesting poor family values -----

30) - living arrangements (no fixed address) -----

31) - airing dirty laundry --- -----

not applicable

32) - not enough info provided-----

33) behaviour rationalized-----

34) - not demonized-----

Demonizing Officer (how) - newspaper angle

Criteria Used in the Analysis

newspaper strategies

1) highlight protection strategies that favour police-

2) highlight police brutality -----

3) reveal officer's history of abuse -----

4) question officer's integrity --- -----

5) highlight suspicion of corruption -----

6) highlight officer's incompetence --- -----

officer's conduct

7) shoot unarmed suspect -----

8) shoot fleeing suspect -----

9) shoot victim in the back -----

10) shoot victim despite victim's compliance ----

11) fire more than one shot at a suspect -----

12) delay SIU investigation -----

13) abuse authority (humiliate, harass) -----

14) shoot non-confrontational suspect -----

other influences

15) official exonerates officer before investigation-----

16) official shows favour toward officer in controversial shooting----

17) information leaked to media -----

not demonized

18) little to no demonizing-----

Protection Strategies (for police)**Criteria Used in the Analysis**

Uncooperative with SIU -----

Press Release Discredits -----

Exoneration -----

Officer Not Reprimanded -----

Judicial Leniency -----

Police Autonomy / Discretion -----

Controversial Aspect in Articles

Gun Use Reform -----

SIU Issues -----

Police Brutality -----

Allegations of Racism -----

Police Protection Strategies -----

Legislations -----

Court Proceedings -----

Example of First Page Stats on a Victim

FULL SUMMARY

Name --- Raymond Lawrence

age --- 22
 race --- black
 alleged offence --- suspected drug dealer
 police record --- no
 allegations of racism --- yes

Shooting Date --- May 2, 1992

location of shooting --- Bloor St and Lansdowne Ave
 weapons --- knife (alleged)
 confrontation --- ignored warnings to drop knife (chased)
 diffusing strategy --- unknown
 outcome --- fatal

Shooting officer --- Robert Rice

charges laid --- no
 type of charge --- NA
 outcome --- cleared by SIU
 officer ID --- undercover

SIU Officer Cooperation --- delay by SIU and possible interference by police
 detectives

Subsequent Inquest --- yes

Summary --- victim

number of shots (contact hits) --- 2
 body part hit --- chest
 mental illness --- no

Supported Framing --- newspaper angle

victim --- demonized
 how --- drug dealer, immigrant, Jamaican, Black
 officer --- praised by colleagues
 how --- doing his duty, privileging police and official sources

Total # Articles --- 44

**Example of Second Page Stats on a Victim
DETAILS**

Raymond Lawrence
(Yes or No Answers)

- 1. Themes** --- mental illness
 --- Black problem -----yes
 --- mistaken identity
 --- victim of circumstance
 --- police brutality -----yes
 --- culturally different
 --- racism-----yes
 --- violence
 --- criminality -----yes
 --- drugs -----yes
 --- policy reforms-----yes
 --- fear
 --- weapons
- 2. Mentions Nationality** -----yes (Jamaican)
- 3. Witnesses (layperson)** --- no
- 4. Officer Shows Remorse** --- no
- 5. Foot Chase** -----yes
- 6. Vehicle Involved** --- no
- 7. Involves Advocacy Group** -----yes

- 8. Confirmation of Racial Identity** --- photo and article
- 9. Lawsuit (settlement and Amount)** --- no
- 10. Where is Blame Attributed** --- victim
- 11. Indication of Bias (where)** --- SIU investigation (corrupt)
- 12. Suspect's Crime** --- drug dealing
- 13. Officer's Years of Service** --- 4-year veteran
- 14. Police Surveillance or Reported or Chance Encounter** --- surveillance

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