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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE MEDIA'S FRAMING
OF THE ILLEGAL STREET RACING ISSUE**

by

KEVIN ANDREW IGASAKI

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
University of San Diego

May 2005

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

For the last sixty years, the legal community and public policymakers have assumed that illegal street racing has appealed to a single portion of the driving population – young adults driving modified vehicles. However, this assumption has been based solely on anecdotal information and has never been empirically investigated in the literature. To remedy this situation, this mixed methodology study examined whether this narrow framing of the illegal street racing issue was present in two southern California newspapers and two nationally circulated magazines over a three-year time period. Specifically, this study examined the way in which this issue was framed in daily issues of the *San Diego Union* and *Los Angeles Times*, as well as in monthly issues of *Car and Driver* and *National Geographic* between January 1, 2001 and January 30, 2004, a three-year period framing two films incorporating a street racing theme, “The Fast and Furious” released in 2001, and its sequel, “2 Fast 2 Furious” released in 2003.

During this time period, a total of 150 street-racing related newspaper articles and 21 street-racing themed advertisements were published in the sampled media. Descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests designed to test for differences between the two media portrayals were utilized. Specifically, each article or advertisement was coded on a number of dimensions, including participant age and vehicle type, and then mapped onto a set of numerical variables that allowed for a comparison of the mean scores by media type. The results of this analysis indicated that over the three-year time period, the newspapers consistently failed to acknowledge and/or explore the issue’s complexity, portraying it as an issue that appealed narrowly to young adults driving modified cars and

needing to be remedied with criminal justice interventions. However, the advertisements consistently portrayed illegal street racing in a positive manner, framed largely as an acceptable and even desirable activity for individuals of all ages driving a variety of vehicles. And although this analysis was limited to Southern California, the results of this study suggest policymakers need to significantly widen their perspectives in order to understand and impact this complex phenomenon.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Catherine, and our kids, Maximilien and Samantha, whose vacations and weekend activities often did not include my presence, thank you for your patience, support, and love. Additionally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my grandparents and parents, whose love of family and friends will forever resonate through my being.

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Professors Monroe and Donmoyer, thank you for the lessons on framing issues and understanding the complexities of social realities.

To my dissertation chair, Fred Galloway, whose unwavering support during the development and completion of this dissertation is truly, truly appreciated. Your insights and your dedication to students are both inspiring. Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

Overview

Street racing is a problem that must be addressed. Thus, the public allows politicians, enforcement agencies, and other organizations, to initiate and implement initiatives designed to reduce, if not eliminate, the behavior. The scenario appeared logical enough. However, the data used to determine how street racing was framed and what populations were targeted for interventions appeared subjective and driven not by a resolve to understand the fundamental issues involved, but rather by an incomplete social reality that, over time, became accepted as the whole truth. By examining two sources of data on street racing, newspaper articles and automotive advertising, the investigator believed unexamined aspects of the issue may be revealed.

The investigator theorized that, in this particular case, an incomplete framework successfully permeated public opinion and that discussions of its accuracy were virtually nonexistent. As a consequence, little pressure existed to further explore the subject despite the expenditure of fiscal and human resources. In the case of street racing, those resources have been substantial. For example, grants issued by one agency, the California Office of Traffic Safety totaled \$1.3 million, including a \$200,000 grant to the City of Carson to fund overtime pay for deputies to crack down on street racers (City of Carson, 2001), a \$400,000 grant for the San Diego police department to form a street racing task force ("Police form new unit to target illegal street racing," 2001), and a \$700,000 grant to RaceLegal.com, which established a legal drag racing facility in the City of San Diego (Liu, 2001). This was in addition to the time lawmakers spent debating and enacting

street racing laws and ordinances (Towns, 2002; Huard, 2003), and the political capital spent supporting interventions (California Speedway, 2001). However, it was possible that intervention efforts were not addressing the breadth of the behavior; rather, they were focused on the socially-accepted definition of street racing participants, thereby ignoring others exhibiting or admiring analogous behavior but who belonged to non-targeted populations. Perhaps Post's description of how the press described hot rodders in the 1940's and 1950's gives us some insight into what may be a case of socially constructed reality. Post stated that "the press relentlessly flaunted an image of the hot rodder as 'a deliberate and premeditated lawbreaker,' " and that "the 'hot rod menace' was overdrawn in the newspapers" (Post, 2001, p. 6). If Post was correct, the idea of a 'hot rod menace' has likely affected the framing of the street racing issue as well, since modified vehicles and street racing have been interconnected in the public's perception.

Research examining street racing seemed overdue since the behavior has been deemed by some to be part of American culture.

Street racing "is as integral to the American car culture as gas stations and law enforcement," says the editor of edmunds.com, an automotive information site. "It has been going on since the first four-wheeled machine encountered another four-wheeled machine on the same stretch of road." (Dobner, 2001)

Additionally, the behavior has spread to a number of countries. Interestingly, the interventions utilized and the discussions that have occurred abroad follow patterns established in the United States. For example, in the United States, Tom Compton, president of the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA), said in 2001, "the NHRA was formed in 1951 by Wally Parks to take hot rod enthusiasts off the streets by providing

racing opportunities at organized venues” (National Hot Rod Association, 2001a).

Similarly, Andrew Leigh wrote in 1995 that building legal drag strips should solve the illegal street racing problem in Australia.

A desire to race stems from the symbolic power of masculinity, cars and motor sport. When this desire is blocked by an absence of legal racing venues, young men instead turn to racing on the street. (Leigh, 1995)

Likewise, legal drag strips were predicted to reduce street racing incidents in Germany.

...Operation Street Legal is trying to make a difference - by organizing racing events for the general public, keep people from doing illegal racing on streets, and getting them to run their cars on closed tracks, reducing risks and providing a fun environment for both racing and information exchange. (Rowe, 1991)

Other interventions utilized in American cities have also been employed in other countries. In Germany, like in some American cities, politicians substantially increased fines for those convicted of illegal street racing ("Raser sollen hoehere Bussgelder zahlen," 1997). In the Russian city of Moscow, the police began utilizing crackdowns and patrols, which have long been used by a number of American police departments to reduce the occurrence of street racing (Whalen, 2002). In 2003, New Zealand's parliament passed vehicle seizure laws similar to those in San Diego and several Los Angeles-area cities that allow enforcement agencies to seize vehicles used for illegal street racing ("Boy-racer bill rushes through," 2003).

Although the research concentrated on Southern Californian newspapers and magazines that target the American market and might therefore not be generalizable to other regions of the United States or other countries, the data will be useful in

establishing a foundation for further research on street racing policies, regardless of the region involved.

Background

During the late 1930s through the 1950s, a number of interventions designed to reduce or eliminate the rising problem of street racing on public roads became widely used. The motivation for the tactics, as Edward Lawrence stated in 1941, was that as far back as 1927 Southern California had experienced “wild model T’s”, and “hopped-up jalopies” speeding on city streets (Lawrence, 1941). Several factors are said to have contributed to the situation, among them the rising concentration of populations in cities and the growing availability of and dependence on the automobile as a major mode of transportation. Taken together, they made street-racing behavior more visible and almost certainly more prevalent.

Four categories of street racing interventions have been identified by the investigator: alternative venues, educational programs, punishment, and enforcement. Alternative venues were arranged and coordinated by organizations such as the Southern California Timing Association (SCTA), which in 1938 began organizing time trials on dry lake beds to deter racing on public streets (Lawrence, 1941). Similarly, the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) was founded in 1951 to “entice illegal street racers onto dry lakes and abandoned runways where more organized competition could be staged” (National Hot Rod Association). Indeed, a number of the NHRA’s competitors began racing on the streets before racing legally. Don Garlits, who eventually won 144 major events and 17 national championships driving top fuel dragsters, street raced in his home

state of Florida before turning professional (National Hot Rod Association, 2001b) (Post, 2001, p. 83). “Dyno Don” Nicholson, who began racing legally in the 1950s and won the NHRA Pro Stock championship in 1977, earned a reputation as a street racer in Pasadena, California before racing professionally (*The fast lane: The history of NHRA drag racing*, 2001, p. 108). Thus, this particular intervention strategy has enjoyed some success.

Educational programs were likewise employed to decrease street racing behavior. An article in a 1949 issue of *Life* magazine stated that 6,000 high schools across the nation offered driving courses because “... youngsters have organized to toy with suicide,” and lessons in safe driving would improve their behavior behind the wheel. Similarly, a Los Angeles car club called “The Gents” adopted safety rules and required “applicants to sign pledges to promote safe driving” after one of their members was killed in a crash (“The “Hot-Rod” problem: Teen-agers organize to experiment with mechanized suicide,” 1949). Some educational programs have used actors who appealed to the teen/young adult demographic. The message, of course, was that driving safely was the fashionable, intelligent choice. One of those programs involved James Dean, who on September 17, 1955, was interviewed as part of a segment for the Warner Brothers’ television program “Warner Bros. Presents” (“Interview with James Dean,” 1955). During the interview, Dean, when asked, didn’t forcefully deny participating in street racing, although the host of the show, Gig Young, said of Dean, “No, Jim races in the tradition, you might say. Real racing cars, real tracks.”¹ When asked how he felt about driving fast on the highway, Dean replied:

¹ After the Warner Bros. studio completed “Rebel without a Cause,” they produced at least three interviews for the “Warner Bros. Presents: Behind the Cameras” television series, which ran on ABC in 1955-56. (Museum of Broadcast Communications) The films, featuring interviews with three of the stars in the movie, Natalie Wood, Jim Backus, and James Dean, were hosted by Gig Young. Each of the segments

... I used to fly around quite a bit. You know, I took a lot of unnecessary chances on the highways, and [then] I started racing [legally]. And, uh, now I drive on the highways, I'm, uh, extra cautious. ("Interview with James Dean," 1955)

Ironically, when Dean was asked if he had any advice for young drivers, he replied:

Take it easy driving. The life you might save, might be mine, you know.

The advice is ironic because 13 days after filming the interview, Dean, driving a Porsche Spyder 550 he had picked up earlier that day, was killed in a collision a few hours after receiving a speeding ticket (JamesDean.com | Chronology 1955). Unfortunately, the effects of educational programs on behavior have not been clearly established. The situation is made all the more difficult to explore since the behavior is both illegal and involves artifacts used daily by a large percentage of the American population for both business and pleasure.

Some agencies have used enforcement against a very conspicuous aspect of street racing 'culture' by discouraging the periodically large gatherings at street races. Most commonly, raids or 'sweeps' of illegal street races were organized by police departments to detain and/or arrest street racers and spectators. For example, Wessel Smitter, writing in Collier's Magazine in 1947, described how California "traffic officers, police, and county deputies managed to nab 75 young culprits," 'kids' who had congregated for a 'drag meet' on a public street (Smitter, 1947). The reader should recognize that the first

began with an explanation of some aspect of the filmmaking process at Warner Bros., and ended with Gig Young conducting an interview with one of the actors.

The interviews are interesting artifacts for several reasons. First, the interviews appear very scripted and planned. Secondly, during their interviews, Natalie Wood and Jim Backus were asked about their backgrounds, including how long they've been acting. James Dean, on the other hand, was asked about street racing, his cars, and his driving habits.

legal drag race in the United States was not held until two years later in 1949, in the City of Goleta, just outside of Santa Barbara. And it was not until 1950 that the first permanent drag race facility was established on an abandoned taxiway at the Santa Ana Airport in California ² (Batchelor, 1995, p. 161). Yet even after legal drag strips were established, police had to disperse illegal racers from the paved basin of the Los Angeles River, which had become a popular location for illegal racing ("The drag racing rage," 1957).

When all else fails, and drivers still participate, then punishment is utilized. In 1949, for example, a Los Angeles judge incarcerated six street racers caught racing on public streets ("Six speedsters sent to jail for racing autos in street," 1949). Two years later, the Riverside Police Department in California ordered a street racer to either sell his vehicle or have it impounded after he was caught street racing several times (Batchelor, 1995, p. 73).

Six decades later, the same range of interventions, sometimes in combination with one another, are forecasted by many to be the solution(s) to street racing. The NHRA, which continues to have the support of politicians, law enforcement representatives, and others as a viable intervention,³ claims to be "the world's largest motorsports sanctioning body with 80,000 members, 140 member tracks, more than 35,000 licensed competitors, and more than 5,000 member-track events," Much of the support they receive from politicians is for offering alternative legal venues designed to attract street racers away from illegal racing (National Hot Rod Association, 2003).

² The first drag race at the facility, which is now part of John Wayne International Airport, was staged on July 2, 1950.

³ When the California Speedway opened a drag strip in 2001, Dave Eshelman, the Mayor of Fontana, Bill Alexander, the Mayor of Rancho Cucamonga, and Lt. Paul DePeola, from the California Highway Patrol all spoke about the drag strip's usefulness in combating illegal street racing. (California Speedway, 2001)

Educational programs also continue to discourage street racing. For example, in 2001, the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), a trade association for aftermarket and specialty automotive parts and accessories, assumed control of Racers Against Street Racing (RASR) (Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), 2001). By enlisting a number of well-known personalities from a variety of motorsport genres to serve as spokespeople, RASR has conducted a public relations campaign to educate street racers about the dangers of the illegal behavior and the advantages of legal racing.⁴

Punishment and enforcement programs persist at local or regional levels, although national ordinances have yet to be approved. For example, the City of San Diego voted in favor of forfeiture laws in 2003 that allow the police department to seize and sell vehicles used for street racing (Gwinn, 2003). In Monterey, California, street racers might serve terms up to 90 days if caught racing on public roads ("Apply the brakes to illegal street racing," 2001). And finally, to disperse the large crowds that had been gathering at illegal street-racing events, the City of San Diego enacted spectator ordinances in 2002 allowing police to issue citations to spectators at illegal street races. If convicted, spectators face fines of \$1,000 and jail sentences (KFMB, 2002). The investigator theorizes that punishment has become increasingly harsher and more severe because frustrated constituencies and policy makers struggle to control an apparently irrepressible behavior.

In summary, the aforementioned interventions, i.e. alternative venues, education, punishment and enforcement, have been employed over six decades by those attempting

⁴ Moreover, RASR serves as a buffer for SEMA trade association members against the criticism of those who believe the specialty automotive industry is promoting street racing behavior. SEMA represents 4,500 member companies in the \$27 billion specialty automotive industry that provide "appearance, performance, comfort, convenience and technology products for passenger cars, minivans, trucks, SUVs and recreational vehicles." (Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), 2003)

to eliminate or decrease the incidence of street racing. However, as will be shown in the following section, although the interventions per se are not problematic, how the behavior had been framed appeared inaccurate, possibly leading to false expectations of interventions and focusing attention on only a narrow portion of a much broader challenge.

Statement of the Problem

The investigator hypothesized that the framing of street racing behavior was flawed, and that policymakers and others were targeting a small portion of the population exhibiting and/or celebrating the behavior, rather than the total population. Thus, policymakers were theorized to be overlooking unidentified intervention opportunities.

The research goal was not to determine whether illegal street racing was dangerous, which it certainly is, or to condemn or praise the participants, but rather to research how the behavior was framed in the media during a specific time period. The investigator examined how the behavior was presented in two print media, i.e. newspapers and magazine advertising. Two major metropolitan newspapers, the *Los Angeles Times* and *San Diego Union Tribune*, as well as two popular magazines, one an automotive enthusiast's publication (*Car and Driver*), and another magazine focusing on cultural and environmental issues (*National Geographic*), were used to gather information such as the characteristics of depicted participants and the frequency of the ads. The investigator hypothesized that street racing was artificially defined in the news media as a behavior confined to and admired by the teen or young adult population. Thus, it began as and remained a subcultural activity with little connection to mainstream

culture. It was further theorized that magazine advertisements illustrated admiration of street racing behavior by a very different demographic. If the hypotheses were true, journalists and intervention advocates may have been overlooking street racing's veneration by a broader demographic than was normally acknowledged. In turn, if the framing was inaccurate, the interventions based on the incomplete information may have been directed at a fraction of those exhibiting or admiring the targeted behavior. For example, prosecutors may be affected by the notion that street racing is a youth-only problem, thus focusing on a subset of drivers exhibiting the behavior. Such seemed to be the case when 12 adults, ages unknown, received notice that their street racing citations were dismissed, while five juveniles issued citations at the same street racing event were left facing charges (Botonis, 2001). Other factors may have been involved in this specific case, but it does raise the question of whether stereotypes of street racing participants have developed that falsely inform intervention efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research was to examine the validity of the hypothesis that street racing was defined in the news media, as represented by newspaper reports, in a narrow fashion that consistently failed to acknowledge and/or explore the issue's complexity. Additionally, although useful for generating awareness of the behavior, an artificially-limited discussion has done little to effectively inform the policy-making process, which may be influenced by what appeared to be a socially-created reality.

To empirically establish whether competing and complementary portrayals existed, the investigator ascertained how street racing and its participants were depicted

in advertisements from two widely-distributed magazines and determined the frequency of those advertisements over a three-year time period. As will be discussed in the literature review, automobile manufacturers have portrayed their products as victorious in 'street racing'-type activities, such as impromptu stoplight-to-stoplight acceleration contests on public roads. While the advertisements are not evidence that street racing behavior was exhibited by their target customer demographic, analyzing the visual and textual content allowed the investigator to determine who was portrayed as participating, and thus allowed for a comparison with the newspaper articles.

Description of Street Racing

For the purposes of this investigation, street racing is defined as an illegal, straight-line, one-way acceleration contest between two or possibly more vehicles on paved public streets over a mutually agreed-upon distance. While the standard distances for legal drag racing events are either a quarter-mile (1,320 feet) or an eighth-mile (660 feet) (International Hot Rod Association, 2000), illegal street race 'courses' are not standardized and therefore vary in length. Races are held on public roads or streets, and commonly started by hand signals, traffic signals, flashlights, or a flag being waived or dropped. The vehicles typically start from a standstill, i.e. not moving until the start signal. However, handicap systems are sometimes utilized to more equally match vehicles of unequal performance. For example, a staggered start may be agreed upon, permitting the slower vehicle to be several car lengths ahead of the other before the start signal is given. Another staggered start system permits the slower vehicle to drive past the faster vehicle before it (the faster vehicle) is allowed to move.

Once a race begins, the first vehicle across the designated finish line wins, unless established guidelines were violated. For example, perhaps both drivers agreed not to use particular performance enhancing systems such as nitrous oxide injection. If its utilization is suspected, the outcome of a contest may be invalidated or contested. The race can be either spontaneous, as in the stoplight-to-stoplight competitions that involve only one pair of vehicles or prearranged, with events involving numerous vehicles under semi-organized conditions.

Not under investigation are activities that include weaving in and out of traffic or other forms of aggressive driving. 'Participants' are defined as those who directly participate in or help organize the activity, i.e. knowingly drive or ride as a passenger in vehicles, act as starters for races, mark the course, act as lookouts, etc. The term 'spectators' is used to signify those who knowingly watch street races but do not participate by racing themselves.

Research Questions

Three research questions were investigated during this research:

1. How is the issue of street racing portrayed in two large metropolitan newspapers in Southern California?
2. How is street racing portrayed in the automotive advertisements found in two popular magazines?
3. How do these portrayals differ from one another, if at all?

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The researcher recognized several major limitations. The experience of the researcher posed a potential limiting factor. The investigator has been a participant in legal drag racing events, was an NHRA-licensed driver, and has spectated at both legal drag racing and illegal street racing events. While these experiences certainly cause bias, I believe the reader will decide that any conclusions have been supported with adequate evidence.

The researcher did not pursue a number of topics related to but outside the scope of this inquiry. For example, the efficacy of street racing interventions, i.e. the number of arrests, participants, injuries or deaths caused by street racing, is not under investigation. Although the depiction of participants was scrutinized, the author did not pursue a demographic analysis of actual participants. Given the illegal nature of the activity, gathering accurate self-reported data proved difficult, and relying on public records presented its own set of difficulties. As one leading researcher suggested, data such as police arrest records may reflect the political interest or bias of the agencies conducting and/or influencing enforcement activities (Best, 2001, p. 102). Additionally, no independent source of comparable data was available, rendering verification impractical. Thus, the unavailability of reliable and verifiable information and/or representative populations to survey, led the investigator to change the focus of the research to an empirically acceptable research topic using the proxy variables chosen, i.e. newspaper articles and magazine advertisements, to generate reproducible, verifiable samples.

Additionally, because the time period studied framed two controversial street-racing themed films, the number of articles and interest in street racing was heightened and in all probability produced data that should not be considered typical. However, the increased focus on the issue should have stimulated more empirical research and increased in-depth coverage. Relatedly, the current atmosphere appears to represent the latest oscillation in the fluctuating journalistic and political interest in street racing activity.

Lastly, the investigator is fully aware that the sources of data differ in at least one major aspect. While the newspapers chosen are written for audiences in specific cities, i.e. Los Angeles and San Diego, the sampled magazines target a national American audience. While this may appear problematic, it seems to reinforce the investigator's hypothesis that the issue is more complex than has been acknowledged. While magazine advertisements appear in national magazines, interest in street racing has not gathered the type of national interest as have other issues, e.g. illegal drugs. For example, as of February 2005 no federal ordinances or policies concerning street racing have been enacted. In comparison, national laws and studies concerning illegal drugs have, for decades, made headlines. Prohibition of alcohol, national marijuana laws, and the "War on Drugs" of the 1980's are a few examples of discussions, analysis, and policies at the national level. In contrast, street racing has not traditionally been a national issue, thus nationally-focused newspapers, such as *USA Today*, have rarely carried street racing articles. Automotive manufacturers, however, market their products to national markets. Thus, marketing campaigns are customarily designed to be national in scope rather than local, while the majority of newspaper articles dealing with street racing appear locally.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

First, connections between street racing and several aspects of mainstream culture are established. Although not a specific body of literature or field of study, establishing the boundaries of the subject was necessary because the investigator believed the breadth of the topic had not been explored. Thus possible frameworks were established that, while not exploring every aspect of the issue, confirmed ties between street-racing activity and mainstream culture.

Secondly, academic literature exploring street racing is considered. In view of the amount of interest generated by the activity and its sixty-year history surprisingly little empirical research examining illegal street racing has been conducted.

Additionally, the investigator researched the structural components of the news media that possibly influence and shape the portrayal of issues in the news. This background information was critical since understanding the news media's interest and role in defining the news appeared related to the lack of in-depth journalistic interest in street-racing behavior.

The final area of literature reviewed was perhaps the most fundamental. Why does the definition or framing of the street-racing issue matter? For many authors, framing an issue determines the types of discussions that occur and likely limits the solutions or interventions that are considered. Thus, until the framing of the issue is explored, the limits of previous public policy discussions remain unknown.

Connections to Mainstream Culture

Transportation

The principal issue within which this research is framed is how society deals with the transportation of people. According to the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, "... transportation remains the leading cause of accidental deaths and injuries in the United States. Roughly 95 percent of transportation fatalities and an even higher percentage of injuries occurred on the nation's roadways" (Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2002). In 2000, the number of highway fatalities was 41,821. To put the number of highway deaths in perspective, the United States lost 1,004,590 personnel in wars from the Revolutionary War in 1775 through the U.S. intervention in Haiti that ended in 1996 (Directorate For Information Operations and Reports, 2003). Highway deaths from 1913 through 2002 totaled 3,396,753, more than 3.3 times the number of deaths in less than half the number of years.⁵ While there is no denying that vehicles are an important economic force and a principal component of American culture, they remain a deadly form of transportation. Although it has not been previously discussed in the context of street racing, the issue of mass vs. personal transportation appears particularly relevant, since eliminating personally-controlled vehicles would eliminate all street-racing incidents and associated behaviors.

The impracticality of eliminating personally-controlled vehicles is revealed by the significant number of drivers in the United States. The resident population of the U.S. in 2002 was 288,368,698. Of that population 194,295,633, or 67.4%, were licensed drivers who drove 2,855,756,000,000 miles, or an average of 14,698 miles per driver (National

⁵ Highway deaths statistics derived from the following sources: 1913 – 1965 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1975), 1966 – 1999 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 2001), 2000 – 2002 (National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA), 2003)

Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 2004). If the estimated population aged 14 and under are deducted (60,025,391), yielding a population of 228,343,307 individuals, then 85% of the resident population over the age of 14 had a driver's license (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002a). Considering the size of the challenge, it is understandable the suggestion has not been previously introduced in discussions of street racing.

However, the investigator believes these numbers are relevant when policymakers speak of 'eliminating' or 'waging war' on specific driving behaviors, in this case street racing. Can such a large driving population be completely controlled? Perhaps policymakers, when discussing street racing, should consider how integral an aspect speed has been in the transportation of people.

As a commodity speed has been coveted in virtually every form of transportation invented. Manufacturers, owners, and operators of vehicles were often rewarded and/or praised for being the fastest from point A to point B. For example, captains of the steam-powered Mississippi River riverboats in the mid to late 1800s sought to have a "hot engineer" in the engine room, an engineer willing to push the machinery to its limits. Often this meant rendering the safety valves on the boilers inoperative to increase the pressure in the engine, and thus boost the speed of the boats. The captains' goal was to have the fastest ship on the Mississippi; however, the practice occasionally led to ships exploding, thus killing and injuring a number of passengers and disrupting river traffic. Ironically, the public, rather than avoiding the danger, patronized the faster ships, thus supporting rather than reforming the system. Consequently, aggressive engineers were in high demand (Hunter, 1949, pp. 298-301). Even ocean liners were not immune from competition. In the decade before World War II, the prize for the fastest Atlantic

Crossing, the Blue Riband, was held by five different ships: the Bremen, the Europa, the Rex, the Normandie, and the Queen Mary. Several passenger trains, including France's TGV, Germany's ICE, and Japan's Bullet Train, the Shinkansen, became celebrated not for their luxury but the high speeds they achieved. Passenger planes too have been locked in competition. The recently retired French Concorde was celebrated as the only commercial passenger plane to fly faster than the speed of sound. Perhaps machines have become, as Michael Adas stated in the title of his book, a "measure of man" (Adas, 1989). One of those measurements has been and continues to be the maximization of a vehicle's straight-line performance.

The Incorporation of Street Racing in the Media

Beyond the general veneration of rapid transportation, a number of specific examples from the media seem to indicate automobiles that accelerate quickly are desirable, venerated, and sell, and that street racing is recognized as a legitimate way to establish who possesses the quicker vehicle. The examples cited in this subsection are not considered representative of their particular genre. Rather, relevant examples were chosen because they facilitate setting the context within which the research will occur.

Entertainment (video games, movies, and music)

A number of video game titles have been released with street racing as their main theme. As the title suggests, street racing is the main selling point of "Midnight Club II: The Future of Illegal Street Racing," published by Rockstar Games (*Midnight Club II: The Future of Illegal Street Racing*, 2004). The "Need for Speed: Underground,"

published by Electronic Arts, has drag, drift, and circuit modes, all of which feature illegal racing on public streets ("Need for Speed: Underground," 2003). Although costs for game development are usually not disclosed, the bankruptcy of 3DO in 2003, gave the investigator a glance into the willingness of video game publishers to invest in games with street racing as a theme. When 3DO auctioned its video games as part of its bankruptcy proceedings, Namco, another videogame publisher, won the auction for "Street Racing Syndicate," paying \$1.5 million for the title ("Microsoft, Namco win 3DO auction," 2003). Obviously, Namco believed the popularity and potential profit from the game was substantial enough to justify investing in the title.

The demographic targeted by the game publishers appears to be gamers under the age of 25 who like the street racing 'scene,' since most of the cars featured in the game are flashy, highly-modified, sport compact cars, and the music is a mix of hip-hop, house music, and rap.

Movies represent another form of entertainment that have featured street racing. In fact, it is said by some that these movies heavily influence the behavior of audiences.⁶ "The Fast and Furious" released in the summer of 2001, and its sequel, "2 Fast 2 Furious" released in summer 2003, feature characters who appear to be under the age of 25 and street race for a variety of reasons (Brandt & Haas, 2003; Thompson, 2001). For some, meaningful employment opportunities are unavailable, and the movies' characters are using street racing to cover or finance other criminal activities. Others just love the thrill. Although we do not receive background information on the majority of participants, they appear to be heavily involved in the street racing 'scene' and its artifacts, including the

⁶ "It's a no-brainer that we did not have any street-racing deaths before the movie came out and now we have at least three deaths directly attributed to street racing since the movie's release," said Los Angeles Police Department Capt. Greg Meyer, head of the Valley Traffic Division. (Krikorian, 2003)

modified automobiles, large gatherings, and music. Although these films were controversial because of their street racing, they were not the first movies to feature the behavior as a thematic subject matter. "Grease," a 1978 film starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John, featured a race in the concrete riverbed of the Los Angeles River (Carr, 1978). Although technically not a 'street race' since the participants completed a U-turn during their race, the artifacts and culture mimic the stereotypical teenage drag race movies from earlier decades. Both of the characters involved in the race appeared to have working-class, non-professional backgrounds, are under the age of 25, and have only minimal educations. "American Graffiti," released in 1973, revolves around Southern California's teenage car culture and features a street race between Paul Le Mat in a 1932 Ford and Harrison Ford in a 1955 Chevy on a deserted highway (Lucas, Katz, & Huyck, 1973). Harrison's character appears to be under the age of 25. Other data, such as his education, background, and work opportunities are unspecified. Le Mat's character, on the other hand, like those in "Grease," appears to have a working-class, non-professional background, is probably under the age 25, has a high school education, and few career opportunities. In the 1956 film "Hot Rod Girl," Chuck Connors plays a police officer attempting to organize legal racing events in order to stop teenagers from street racing. In his words, "More kids on the drag strip means fewer kids on the street" (Gordon & McGreevey, 1956). Unfortunately minimal character development occurs, thus little information is given about the street racing characters, with the exception of their ages.

In each of the feature films mentioned street racers are depicted as ‘kids’ or young adults who drive modified vehicles typical of the era portrayed and seem to have few educational or career opportunities.

Although rarely mentioned in the context of street racing, a number of popular or rock-and-roll songs targeting the teen/young adult demographic contain graphic accounts of street racing behavior. For instance, in 1959 Leon Smith recorded “Little Forty Ford,” a song that unmistakably describes an illegal acceleration contest on a public street.

Big Impala and my little forty Ford...
Just mash on the gas at the drop of the hat.
See them taillights going down the road.
Big Impala and my little forty Ford. (Marshall, 1959)

The lyrics for other songs unquestionably draw on the vocabulary and challenges typical of illegal racing. For example, The Beach Boys hit “Little Deuce Coupe” contains the lyrics:

... I’ve got the fastest set of wheels in town.
When something comes up to me he don’t even try
’Cause if I had a set of wings man I know she could fly.
She’s my little deuce coupe.
You don’t know what I got. (Christian & Wilson, 1963)

If the Beach Boys were alluding to legal drag racing, the reference to a ‘town,’ which evokes the image of public streets, would probably have been changed to ‘track’ or ‘strip,’ either of which would have suggested a legal racing venue. Furthermore, “You don’t know what I got” alludes to street racers hiding the potential of their vehicles in order to lure opponents into a race. At a legal drag strip, technical inspections would have

revealed the potential speed of any participating vehicle and prevented any “cheating,” i.e. undisclosed or banned modifications.

A Jan and Dean song from 1964, “The Little Old Lady from Pasadena,” probably best reflects the assumption in the 1960s that street racers were young males driving highly modified vehicles. From the lyrics it is obvious that Jan and Dean’s “The Little Old Lady from Pasadena” is racing on public streets, and that the behavior she is exhibiting is street racing. The investigator is well aware that females participate and are successful at both legal and illegal racing events; however, the humor in this fictional depiction of a street racer is the fact that she is a seemingly conservative, older adult female, the apparent antithesis of the stereotypical teenage street racer.⁷

She's the terror of Colorado Boulevard
It's the little old lady from Pasadena...
The guys come to race her from miles around,
But she'll give 'em a length, then she'll shut 'em down. (Altfeld & Christian, 1964)

The venue mentioned in the song, Colorado Boulevard, is the street in Pasadena, California along which the annual Rose Parade travels, thus setting the context as a public street. Furthermore, giving someone a ‘length’ refers to how opponents line up their cars for an illegal contest. Rather than starting in a parallel fashion, a staggered start is employed in which one vehicle is moved a car length ahead of the other, thus shortening the distance to the finish line for one opponent. Therefore, negotiations before

⁷ Female racers have won 36 national NHRA events as of April 28, 2004. The first to win a national title was Shirley Shahan, who won in 1966. Some of the winners since then include Judi Boertman, Judy Lilly, Shirley Muldowney, Amy Faulk, Angelle Savoie, and Karen Stoffer. (Geiger, 2004) Peggy Hart, wife of racing pioneer C.J. Hart, often won events at the Santa Ana Drag Strip in the 1950s. (Burgess, 2004)

the race must have occurred, making it apparent the exhibited behavior was not spontaneous.

Songs with lyrics about street racing did not disappear when the surfing/hot rod era of the 1960's ended. In 1978, Bruce Springsteen released "Racing in the Street."

When the strip shuts down we run 'em in the street
From the fire roads to the interstate...

Some guys come home from work and wash up,
And go racin' in the street. (Springsteen, 1978)

What is noteworthy about Springsteen's lyrics is that they refer to participants engaging in street racing after having raced at a legal venue, behavior that probably occurs but is rarely discussed in balanced terms.⁸

The abovementioned examples of songs reveal two tendencies. First, the musicians' and/or consumers' veneration or recognition of street racing is undeniable. Additionally, the songs mentioning street racing target primarily the youth demographic or those nostalgic for their youth. Over time, the original fan base ages, thus broadening the music's demographic appeal. Initially, however, the marketing is essentially limited to the youth market.

Advertising

Regardless of whether one argues that advertising is a reflection of society or seeks to affect consumers' purchasing behavior, it is apparent that several automobile manufacturers have been willing to invest substantial amounts of money in advertising

⁸ In 1962, O.D. Shipley referred to drag strips as training grounds for maniacs. (Shipley, 1962) Similarly, as far as the investigator is aware, the NHRA has not acknowledged that they may be creating more street racing enthusiasts by offering legal venues where vehicles can be tested before street races.

campaigns, risk vehicle sales and their reputations with marketing materials that portray their vehicles as instruments successfully used in street racing- type behaviors.

In 2003, Dodge ran a series of television commercials for the Dodge Ram series of pickups with Hemi engines. The first commercial in the series featured a Dodge pickup pulling a 1960's-era Dodge car on a trailer. At a red light, the driver of the pickup, a middle-aged male wearing a baseball cap and a flannel shirt, is asked by the unkempt, apparently not very intelligent passenger in a 1970's-era Plymouth coupe that pulled up alongside whether "That thing got a Hemi?," at which point the driver of the Plymouth coupe begins to rev his engine. When the traffic signal turns green, the two vehicles accelerate, with the truck out accelerating his opponent. At the next red traffic light, the driver of the truck, feigning ignorance, asks whether the question was about the car on the trailer, which the driver of the truck states also has a Hemi.

The second commercial in the series begins with the same driver in a Hemi-equipped pickup at a red light. Another vehicle, a 1960's-era dragster driven by the same actor who played the passenger in the first commercial, stops in the lane next to the pickup. The driver of the dragster says, "That thing got a Hemi, right?" and then states he has a Hemi in his dragster. When the light turns green, the pickup truck out accelerates the dragster, and the driver of the pickup is shown smiling and driving away.

The third commercial begins with the same driver in a Dodge pickup at a stoplight. An apparently identical pickup pulls up alongside the first. When the light turns green, the second pickup begins to out accelerate the first, and arrives at the next stop light ahead of its rival. At the conclusion of the race, roughly a dozen young, tall, blond women in shorts begin wildly cheering the winning driver. It then becomes apparent that

the scenario is merely the fantasy of a young male working at a fast food restaurant. The scene ends with a voiceover saying, "Dodge Ram with the legendary Hemi. Loved by those who have one, dreamt about by those who don't." Interestingly, these television commercials elicited no widespread protests from the public, despite appearing over a period of months.

In a Web-distributed film by BMW, advertising the 2003 Z-3, a luxury two-seat sports car, the theme of street racing was clearly identifiable (Carter, Hahn, & Ngo, 2002). James Brown, depicted as an aging performer who as a young man traded his soul for fame and fortune, enters a wager with the Devil, played by Gary Oldman. The wager is that if James Brown's driver, played by Clive Owen driving the BMW Z-4, beats the Devil's driver in a drag race on the Las Vegas Strip, James will win back his youth. If Brown loses, the soul of his driver, Clive Owen, will be given to the Devil. The race concludes with the Devil wrecking his modified Pontiac Trans Am. Thus the BMW is victorious, and Brown regains his youth.

A billboard erected along the 405 freeway in Carson, California in June 2003, advertised the "all-new Acura TSX," a luxury, midsize, four-door sedan. The ad featured a picture of the sedan with the caption "Wall Street Racer," a blending of the terms "Wall Street" and "street racer" designed probably to appeal to those admiring Wall Street and suggesting if owners drive in a particular manner, they too may become successful.

Print ads incorporate similar messages. In a February 2003 issue of *BusinessWeek* and in the January 2003 issue of *Scientific American*, an ad appeared with a picture of the Infiniti M45, a four-door luxury sedan costing approximately \$45,000, on a public street. The Infiniti was a half-car length in front of a 1960s-era Dodge car. A street sign posted

for traffic in the opposite direction states "Speed Limit 50," making it obvious this occurred on a public street. The caption on the advertisement reads:

The muscle car with brains. Remember wishing every stoplight was a starting block? Remember when an accelerator lived up to its name? Remember? You will. Only this time, from a climate-controlled driver's seat. ("Infiniti M45: The Muscle Car with Brains," 2003a; "Infiniti M45: The Muscle Car with Brains," 2003b)

A two-page ad for the same vehicle in the December 2003 issue of *Car and Driver* shows a rear view of the car at a red light in a downtown area with the following caption:

It tests your ability to be a gentleman. Sitting within the lap of luxury, surrounded by climate-controlled front seats and DVD navigation. You are a gentleman indeed. But with 340 hp tucked under the hood, the only thing you really want to do is blow the doors off the guy next to you. ("Infiniti M45," 2003)

So the consumer of this vehicle is a male who still enjoys blowing "the doors off" the driver next to him, i.e. drive past another vehicle so quickly that its doors are figuratively blown off. However, that same driver is successful enough to purchase a vehicle with "climate-controlled front seats and DVD navigation."

Several common characteristics of these advertisements are apparent. First, street racing is shown or strongly implied. Secondly, the demographic appears older than the stereotypical teenage street racer common in the other sampled media. Thirdly, the vehicles advertised are not typical vehicles for teenagers.

Summary of the Connections to Mainstream Culture

In examining the connections street racing has to mainstream culture, it has been shown that automobiles are a deadly form of transportation, and that speed is admired in

a number of transportation modes, if not every form yet invented. Street racing as a fictional theme in video games, music, and movies appears geared toward teens and young adults, while automotive advertising from several automotive manufacturers appears to target an older, affluent demographic. This duality, taking the perceived realities of entertainment on the one hand against advertising on the other, appears to efficiently exemplify the compartmentalized relationship American society seems to have with street racing behavior. Moreover, several manufacturers, namely Dodge and Infiniti, used the street racing theme over a period of time, indicating that the marketing campaigns achieved their goals and did not generate negative publicity for the companies.

In examining these four media genres, it is evident that street racing is a recognized way to prove the worth of one's car and, effectively, of oneself. To reiterate, the investigator sought evidence that street racing references were employed in a variety of media. He is not purporting to have sampled the population of media genres randomly, nor identified every example that may be relevant. However, the identified samples contain sufficient data to set the context for the research.

Street Racing

Despite the substantial amount of media attention the behavior has received, only three scholarly books could be identified that mention or examine the activity of street racing.

Robert C. Post, a past president of the Society for the History of Technology, and curator emeritus at the National Museum of American History, made reference to illegal street racing in his book *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing*

1950 – 2000 (Post, 2001). Although the vast majority of Post's work focused on the development of professional drag racing's two premier classes, top fuel dragster and top fuel funny car, illegal street racing is mentioned in several contexts. First, Post stated that "the press relentlessly flaunted an image of the hot rodder as 'a deliberate and premeditated lawbreaker,' " and that "the 'hot rod menace' was overdrawn in the newspapers" (p. 6) If Post's assertion about hot rodding's portrayal in the press is correct, it raises fundamental questions about how reports on the hobby of modifying vehicles, and its consequences, were and possibly continue to be, generated. During the 1950's, the timeframe to which Post is referring, newspaper articles about hot rodding often cited street racing as a consequence of owners modifying their vehicles, i.e. hot rodding. Furthermore, accidents and deaths were evidence that teenagers were organizing "... to experiment with mechanized suicide." ("The "Hot-Rod" problem: Teen-agers organize to experiment with mechanized suicide," 1949).

Another author, Michael L. Berger, at the time Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Arcadia University, wrote an extensive annotated automotive reference guide that "links together a multiple number of books in a sequence of narrative essays," thus it examines both scholarly and non-academic works from an automotive studies perspective (Berger, 2001, p. ix). Commenting on the "hot rod vehicle" and drag racing, Berger stated that "there has been comparatively little serious scholarly study of the psychological and sociological factors involved in this phenomenon" (Berger, 2001, p. 152). The single resource mentioned as pertinent to illegal drag racing is H. F. Moorhouse's book, which is reviewed below. Berger, however, evaluated the work as "a disjointed amalgam of sociology and history," which focused primarily on "the evolution,

commercialization, and eventual professionalization of the hobby/sport.” (p. 152).

In *Driving Ambitions: An Analysis of the American Hot Rod Enthusiasm*, H.F.

Moorhouse (Moorhouse, 1991), studied the meaning of hot rodding and street racing in the United States by examining a number of magazine and newspaper articles. However, he restates data that has been generated or used by organizations to justify interventions, and, therefore, may be presenting biased information. For example, the following quote appears to lend credence to the contention that illegal street racing is a deadly problem affecting a large percentage of young drivers:

In 1966 drivers under 25 made up less than 20 per cent of licenced drivers but accounted for over 33 per cent of drivers killed in accidents. Or, to make another deadly contrast: ‘Between 1961 and 1966, motor vehicles killed nearly four times as many servicemen - most of them on our own roads - as the Viet Cong killed in Vietnam.’ (Moorhouse, 1991, pp. 190-191)

However, the data is confusing for several reasons. First, to infer a majority of traffic fatalities for this age group are street racing related is empirically incorrect. While drivers under 25 have more accidents statistically than other age groups, the percentages Moorhouse quotes are for overall traffic death rates, not those resulting specifically from street racing. Secondly, by citing these statistics, Moorhouse is maintaining the popular perception that those over the age of 25 do not participate in the behavior. Since the data Moorhouse quotes is probably accurate, but misleading in this particular context, the question is why the data was cited in his book and in the original articles he referenced. One possible answer is that statistics have become a device in defining a problem. In *Damned Lies and Statistics*, Joel Best wrote:

Statistics, then, can become weapons in political struggles over social problems and social policy. Advocates of different positions use numbers to make their points ("It's a big problem!" "No, it's not!"). (Best, 2001, pp. 10-11)

Best cites several instances of governmental agencies and activists using either under- or over-inflated numbers to bolster their respective arguments. In contrast to the competing statistics scenario Best outlines, policymakers and/or implementation agencies are often the sole sources of statistics for illegal street racing, numbers that are regularly repeated by journalists, and sociologists without question. Unfortunately, no independent group has produced statistics on the demographics of participants or accidents that can be attributed to street racing.

In another section of his book, Moorhouse characterized adult street-racing participants as poor and using the activity to generate income. However, little is known about the socioeconomic background of street racing participants or the reasons why they participate. Disconfirming Moorhouse's hypothesis is the case of nuclear researcher Paul Brown, Ph.D., founder, president, and CEO of Nuclear Solutions, Inc., a publicly-traded company exploring nuclear waste remediation solutions. Brown was killed while street racing against a friend in Idaho on April 7, 2002 (The Associated Press, 2002). His highly modified Mazda, which he raced legally as well, had been officially timed in 2000 covering the quarter-mile in 7.977 seconds at 174.21 mph (Orlando Speed World Dragway, 2000), making it one of the fastest street cars in the United States. Brown's case reveals the behavior is not exclusive to one socioeconomic segment of the population, nor are motivations purely economic.

In a review of *Driving Ambitions*, Rudi Volti stated that Moorhouse "fastens on

the hot rod and its subculture as a source of community, learning, craftsmanship, involvement, and creativity” (Volti, 1993, p. 420). He writes that the majority of the book constitutes “a thoroughly competent narrative of the development of hot rodding, but contributes only marginally to the [theoretical] issues introduced in the first chapter.”

This lack of fit between the theoretical concerns initially addressed in the bulk of the book’s content is *Driving Ambition’s* greatest shortcoming. Most readers attracted to the sociological issues introduced in the opening chapter will have little interest in the controversy over the use of exotic fuels by dragsters, while those interested in hot rodding per se will find the theoretical orientations at best irrelevant and at worst incomprehensible. (p. 420)

Moorhouse is to be commended for an initial attempt at empirically exploring a rich and complex issue; however, fundamental questions about his research temper the strength of his conclusions.

Interviews and an exhaustive search of academic databases over a 20-month period have not revealed any studies examining the role of the press or the media in representing, interpreting, and/or evaluating illegal street racing. Thus, the investigator believes that no comprehensive body of knowledge exists that addresses the complexity of the subject, and that the proposed research should be considered exploratory in nature.

Media Studies

As Jensen and Jankowski noted, the study of news organizations, rather than individual reporters or editors, began in the 1960s during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the civil rights movement, and the Vietnam War. Several of the studies Jensen and Jankowski analyzed examined how news organizations determined what is “fact” (Jensen

& Jankowski, 1991, p. 83). Jensen and Jankowski found that “news organizations necessarily developed special ties to legitimate and centralized sources of information” (p. 87). The effect of repeatedly using the same sources who define the issue in a particular way, in effect “frames” the topic, giving it a particular cultural meaning (p. 89).

This structural examination of news organizations, including their reliance on particular sources for newsworthy stories was also investigated by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky. They examined what they defined as the political economy of news organizations. Formulating an analytical framework called the “propaganda model,” they attempted to explain the performance of the “U.S. media in terms of the basic institutional structures and relationships within which they operate” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xi). Their theory addresses several issues, namely who defines the news, who explains what it means, and what mechanisms are used to control the process. Of particular interest to the investigator are the structural factors the two authors identified.

Structural factors are those such as ownership and control, dependence on other major funding sources (notably, advertisers), and mutual interests and relationships between the media and those that make the news and have the power to define it and explain what it means. The propaganda model also incorporates other closely related factors such as the ability to complain about the media's treatment of news (that is, produce “flak”), to provide experts to confirm the official slant on the news, and to fix the basic principles and ideologies that are taken for granted by the media personnel and the elite, but are often resisted by the general population. (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xi)

Some of the factors listed by Herman and Chomsky might be applicable to the reports on illegal street racing. For example, much of the information reported in the

news about the behavior appears generated by one of four entities: enforcement agencies, politicians, and either publicly-funded or commercial organizations offering legal racetracks to street racers (California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), 2000); California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), 2000; Kelley & Cuevas, 2001), all of whom have a vested interest in producing information beneficial for their particular causes. Several of the aforementioned entities are both the generators, as well as the custodians of the data used to produce the reports. One entity, the police, generates the data, e.g. the number tickets issued, arrests, and seizures, that often justify public expenditures on task forces, special divisions, massive police sweeps, or new laws and regulations. However, several sociologists have questioned the accuracy of police statistics (Best, 2001, p. 102). By reporting an outbreak of street-racing-related crashes, the public may believe a higher percentage of accidents are caused by street racing than other more prevalent causes of highway injuries or deaths. This in turn prompts public agencies to fund initiatives designed to counter the problem. Often, the agency receiving the funding is the same organization that generates the statistics and the reports on the behavior, thus creating a possible conflict of interest and preventing a fundamental examination of the behavior.

The press plays a role in the scenario in several ways. First, it seems they often report the information produced by the police departments or other programs without questioning the validity of the claims or comparing the data to other behaviors, such as aggressive driving, perhaps because these other behaviors are ubiquitous and therefore deemed not as 'newsworthy' an activity as one that has been associated mainly with young males and cars. It might be that news organizations, in order to continue to obtain

'newsworthy' police stories and continue its access to police 'experts' choose not to question what seems to be an official perspective.

Additionally, the role of advertising in the media should not be overlooked.

Although it is speculation, the substantial amounts of money spent by the automotive sector in the form of advertising or sponsorship may affect the motivation of the various news-producing organizations to delve deeply into the behavior. In 2002, for example, U.S. automotive dealers spent \$4.4 billion dollars on advertising (Washington, 2003). Several manufacturers spent the following sums in 2002 advertising in the U.S.: General Motors \$2.338 billion, DaimlerChrysler AG \$1.167 billion, Toyota Motor Corp. \$854 million (Nielsen Media Research, 2003). Honda is reported to have spent \$1.193 billion, Nissan \$967 million, and Volkswagen \$602 million (AdAge.com, 2003). For comparison, Wal-Mart spent \$618 million during the same period on advertising in the U.S. (AdAge.com, 2003). So G.M. spent nearly 3.8 times more advertising dollars in the United States than the world's largest retailer. Worldwide in 2002, General Motors Corporation spent \$4.6 billion on advertising (General Motors Corp., 2003). In short, magazines, newspapers, and television stations generate a substantial amount of revenue by accepting car manufacturers' advertising. One California newspaper, The Sacramento Bee, reported that General Motors was its largest advertiser (Nicholson, 2000). While the amount spent on advertising alone does not prove content is affected, a letter sent by the Chrysler's advertising agency, PentaCom, to a number of magazines in January 1996, including Esquire Magazine, may highlight the substantial influence automotive manufacturers wield:

In an effort to avoid potential conflicts, it is required that Chrysler Corporation be alerted in advance of any and all editorial content that encompasses sexual, political, social issues or any editorial that might be construed as provocative or offensive. Each and every issue that carries Chrysler advertising requires a written summary outlining major theme/articles appearing in upcoming issues. These summaries are to be forwarded to PentaCom prior to closing in order to give Chrysler ample time to review and reschedule if desired. . . As acknowledgement of this letter we ask that you or a representative from the publication sign below and return to us no later than February 15. (Baker, 1997)

Mike Aberlich, at the time Chrysler's manager of consumer media relations, stated that every publication or parent company of the publications that received the letter agreed to the rules. While some fear corporate censorship, the "real danger here is not censorship by advertisers. It is self-censorship by [magazine] editors. On one level, self-censorship results in omissions, small and large, that delight big advertisers" (Baker, 1997). While the medium being discussed is magazines, similar pressures may exist for news organizations, both print and television. Several examples illustrate the point. In August 2001, AOL Time Warner, a company that owns a number of news magazines and cable news outlets, agreed to promote the Toyota Camry in its magazines, cable-television channels and Web sites. Considering that agreement, it is unlikely that CNN, one of the AOL Time Warner companies, would be able to freely engage in a discussion of the advertising or marketing practices of the automotive industry. Another example further illustrates the point. Hearst, which owns magazines and other media outlets, signed a contract with DaimlerChrysler to promote Chrysler division vehicles in Brookstone stores, Hearst-owned magazines, and A&E Television Networks, which is co-owned by Hearst, ABC, and NBC (Rose, 2001). Theoretically, the acceptance of automotive advertising may influence content in the following manner. In 2000, the A&E

Network produced and aired a documentary on street racing called "Street Racing: The Need for Speed" (Bicknell, 2000). The program followed police efforts to enforce street racing regulations and the street racers attempting to elude the police, yet did not examine the larger issues possibly affecting the situation, such as the influence of advertising by auto manufacturers affecting the content of news, the apparent veneration of street racing behavior by mainstream society, or auto manufacturers offering vehicles modeled after a certain type of street racing vehicle, i.e. modified sport compacts. Instead, the program reported the shared common knowledge about street racing without examining the legitimacy of how the issue is framed or defined. While the framework may not be related to the advertising carried by the network or its parent companies, it does call into question the independence of the reporting.

Another example likewise calls into question the news media's independence from advertisers' influence. A number of auto manufacturers currently offer factory high-performance models or provide as options for their compact vehicles, the body kits, supercharged and intercooled engines, sport seats, sport suspension, larger rims and low-profile tires, which are believed, correctly or incorrectly, to be closely associated with vehicles street racers drive ("Local checkpoint combats street drag racing craze," 2003). Therefore, the artifacts law enforcement agencies previously viewed as indicators of possible street racing behavior are being purchased by a broad population of consumers. Consumer Reports, for example, reported that:

For years, young buyers have been giving small, inexpensive cars a sportier look or better performance by spending sometimes thousands of dollars on aftermarket parts and other modifications. Now, some automakers are selling small cars that are already modified, with some competing head to head with dedicated sports cars. ("A new formula for

fun," 2003)

In a similar vein, Popular Science reported that:

... it was just a matter of time before Ford and Honda looked at the growing numbers of buyers modifying their products and wondered: 'How can we get a piece of that?' The answer is the Ford focus SVT and... the Honda Civic Si, entry-level cars kicked up with performance enhancements by in-house teams of engineers. The goal: Offer one-stop shopping to those who want the high performance of an aftermarket mod without the hassle of turning a wrench. (Carney, 2002, p. 102)

To summarize, the owner-modified vehicles that some law enforcement agencies define as indications of street racing activity are similar in appearance and performance to popular mass-produced automobiles advertised in the media that disseminate the news.

To reiterate, no connection has been established between the generation of crime news, the media's relationship with law-enforcement experts/information providers, the influence of advertisers, and the structure of media organizations. However, the theoretical framework seems applicable, and may, with further research, provide some insight into a complex issue.

While Herman and Chomsky addressed the structural shortcomings of the media that may affect the overall accuracy of the news, Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts addressed the process of focusing the news on a specific category of crime in an article titled *State Managers, Intellectuals, and the Media* (Welch, Fenwick, & Roberts, 1998). The authors outlined three stages in the social construction of crime.

First, crime is selected from among many available social issues (e.g., education, employment, poverty) and advanced to the status of a problem requiring serious policy consideration. Second, the crime problem is sufficiently narrowed..., thereby neglecting other types of lawlessness and harm (e.g., corporate violence).

In the final stage, crime is defined as a criminal justice problem..., and it is this particular image of crime that typically takes the form of crime news. (Welch et al., 1998, p. 87)

Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts wrote that state managers, i.e. political leaders and law enforcement officials, are able to promote and legitimize a crime control agenda that emphasizes the effectiveness of the criminal justice system (enforcement and the courts) by using the media as a tool to disseminate a specific viewpoint. In essence, state managers are determining what is “socially thinkable.” For example, to draw a possible comparison, an analysis of data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration by Reader’s Digest magazine isolated dangerous roads and intersections as a factor in 24,000 deaths over a four-year period (6,000 average per annum) (Williams, 2003). The dangerousness of roads is rarely discussed in the news, although street racing, which has probably not caused as many highway fatalities, receives much more attention. Has the media concentrated on street racing because it has been defined as a criminal justice problem? Perhaps, but as Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts correctly indicated, “it is crucial to emphasize that not all crime news is the product of conscious attempts at propaganda; nevertheless, many distortions of crime are generated by propaganda tactics deeply institutionalized and widely routinized within the media and the government” (p. 89).

The Importance of Framing

Why does it matter whether specific media and/or individuals have played a role in framing street racing in a particular fashion? It matters because, although the media constitute only one of numerous informational sources, they “often serve to legitimize and frame what constitute the character and nature of the problem” (Conrad, 1997, p.

139). The framing or portrayal consequently affects our reaction to the situation, e.g. how much attention issues receive as a public policy matter. Furthermore, as Conrad states, "Perhaps more significantly, how we frame a problem often includes what range of solutions we see as possible" (p. 140). If street racing, like the illegal drug issue, has been framed as a law enforcement matter, the proposed solutions will likely be enforcement and punishment based.

Although he did not call it framing, Charles Schultze (Schultze, 1968) wrote of the importance of analysis in public policy, and the frustration of many politicians.

The most frustrating aspect of public life is not the inability to convince others of the merits of a cherished project or policy. Rather, it is the endless hours spent on policy discussions in which the irrelevant issues have not been separated from the relevant, in which ascertainable facts and relationships have not been investigated but are the subject of heated debate, in which consideration of alternatives is impossible because only one proposal has been developed, and, above all, discussions in which the nobility of aim is presumed to determine effectiveness of program. (Schultze, 1968, p. 75)

Although street racing has probably not been the topic of heated political debates, the justifications for interventions seems to have centered around 'nobility of aim' rather than producing a comprehensive understanding of the issue, which would contextualize the effectiveness of any given intervention effort. As stated earlier, few politicians or private citizens have criticized efforts to curtail specific interventions because they support the overall goal of stopping street racing. For example, when the investigator stated he was exploring the framing of street racing, he was often asked whether he supported street racing or wanted to stop the interventions. Although neither is the case, the assumption is that anyone analyzing the issue must disagree with the aim of the policy.

In their book on reframing organizations, Bolman and Deal (Bolman & Deal, 1997) named four types of frames individuals often use to interpret situations: the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. According to the authors “mental maps influence how we interpret the world” (p. 31). Their contention is that issues may be interpreted through any of the four lenses individually or in combination with one another to produce an interpretation that affects our thinking, actions, and expectations. Overemphasizing or ignoring any single frame may hinder managers’ and leaders’ abilities to develop a holistic framework that produces effective actions and helps avoid the Pygmalion effect or self-fulfilling prophesy, i.e. what we expect is what we get.

Although not directly called “framing,” Argyris and Schön (Argyris & Schön, 1974, pp. 21-35) described a system of “evaluating theories in action” for how people view and interact with the world around them. For many individuals, a set of governing variables (a type of framing) defines two parallel theories, an “espoused theory” and a “theory-in-use.” The difference is that the theory-in-use is used to define possible actions or strategies that can be set in motion, while the espoused theory remains theoretical. Once a strategy is chosen, its effectiveness in the “behavioral world” produces a value, which can then be compared to the original theory-in-use. If the results support the theories, then the governing variables are valid. However, if the results are inconsistent with the governing variables for the theories, the variables should be modified and the strategies of the action modified accordingly, which should produce different results that support the new variables. In the case of street racing, since the same definitions of the behavior and a specific set of strategies with similar results had reoccurred over a period

of six decades, the investigator hypothesized that the governing variables defining the issue had not been re-examined or modified to incorporate real-world results. Thus inconsistencies developed that were not reconciled with the theories that produced intervention strategies.

Deetz, Tracy, and Simpson (Deetz, Tracy, & Simpson, 2000) , who explored the centrality of framing in determining how people respond to particular words or events, wrote that:

The most basic process of managing meaning is called *framing*. Framing refers to the ways leaders can use the language to shape or modify particular interpretations of organizational events thereby directing likely responses. (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 67)

The assignment of meanings to words and events is a discursive cultural interpretation process that is often driven by individuals but can affect whole organizations. A number of discursive tools or instruments are available to employ in defining words and events: metaphors, stories (myths and legends), traditions (rites, rituals, and ceremonies), artifacts, contrast, spin, slogans, jargon and catchphrases. Although the authors do not state this, the tools themselves are void of either negative or positive values. The value comes from the purpose and impact the use of the tool elicits. John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Adolf Hitler all successfully used the tools to achieve goals, albeit with very different outcomes. What is common in all three cases is the awareness that a mutual understanding of the world was achieved through framing, i.e. assigning meanings to events and words such as 'a nation' and 'a dream.' While Deetz, Tracy, and Simpson wrote about leaders using these tools in guiding organizations through transitional periods, their description of framing as an interpretive device can be applied

to anyone making public statements, such as journalists or those making statements about street racing.

Summary

Before conducting a literature review, the investigator had to first establish the breadth of the issue, as well as identify existing street racing literature. Reviewing street racing's connections to mainstream culture and the inclusion of street racing themes in a variety of media informed the investigator's decision to focus on the media as the main area of research.

Although research examining street racing is sparse, several media studies models form a framework within which this research project can be situated. The media-studies models cited, i.e. Herman and Chomsky's, Jenson and Jankowski's, and Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts', examine the structure of news organizations, and allow for the examination of news organizations as a component of the mechanism defining street racing behavior. Additionally, as the articles written by Baker (1997) and Rose (2001) have shown, automotive manufacturers may, because of the considerable amounts of money they spend on advertising, have a substantial influence on the media.

The importance of, mechanisms used for, and affects of framing issues have been examined by Conrad (1997), Schulze (1968), Bolman and Deal (1997), Argyris and Schön, and Deetz, Tracy, and Simpson (2000). Each of these examinations lends credence to the author's contention that the framing of the street-racing issue is a fundamental question. If the shared knowledge used by mainstream society to coordinate

its behavior towards street racing has been provided by a compromised mass media infrastructure, critical inquiries about framing the behavior, including the effectiveness and purpose of interventions, in effect of leadership, may be difficult to initiate but need to be considered when forming effective public policy. Thus, the investigator's goal was to begin an analytical process that informs the policymaking process by exploring street racing's inferred boundaries.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

This chapter details the research methodology employed. First, the items to be analyzed and the sampling methods are specified, followed by the research questions and the categories of possible responses. Then, the method of data collection is explained. Each of these points is explained for both the newspaper articles and magazine advertisements.

Material to be analyzed

Newspaper Articles

The analyzed news articles were published between January 1, 2001 through January 30, 2004 inclusive, a three-year period framing two popular and controversial films incorporating a street racing theme, “The Fast and Furious” released in the summer of 2001, and its sequel, “2 Fast 2 Furious” released in summer 2003 (Brandt & Haas, 2003; Thompson, 2001). The timeframe’s beginning and end dates represent a period beginning approximately 6 months before the first film and ending approximately 6 months after the release of the second film.

The articles were published in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times* from January 1, 2001 through January 30, 2004 inclusive. Since these large metropolitan newspapers report news from the Mexican border to the San Fernando Valley, an accurate depiction of street-racing coverage in the Southern California region was collected. The *San Diego Union-Tribune* was chosen for two reasons. First, it is

published in San Diego, a city that has utilized a number of interventions to reduce street racing activity. Secondly, it has the largest newspaper circulation in San Diego County with paid subscriptions of between 385,000 (Monday-Saturday) and 459,000 (Sunday) (*Bowker's News Media Directory: Newspapers*, 2003, p. 19). The population of San Diego County in 2002 was estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau to be 2,906,660 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002c). Thus, the paper was subscribed to by between 13.2% (Monday-Saturday) and 15.8% (Sunday) of San Diego County's population. The *Los Angeles Times* was chosen because Los Angeles, like San Diego, has experienced a number of street racing incidents and interventions. Additionally, the *Los Angeles Times* was "the largest metropolitan daily newspaper in the country and the winner of 35 Pulitzer Prizes" ("Los Angeles Times reports March circulation," 2004). Its Monday through Saturday subscription is 1,153,706, and its Sunday edition subscription was 1,388,727 (*Bowker's News Media Directory: Newspapers*, 2003). The population of Los Angeles County in 2002 was estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau to be 9,806,577 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002b), so the paper reached at least 12-14% of the Los Angeles County population. The circulation figures given for each of the newspapers does not include newsstand sales or reflect multiple readers in a household. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that the percentage of the populations reached by both papers was higher than their respective circulation numbers indicate.

Magazine Advertisements

Two monthly magazines were chosen for this study: *Car and Driver* and *National Geographic*. *Car and Driver* was chosen for several reasons. First, it is an automotive

enthusiasts' publication that contains a variety of advertisements and reports on diverse automotive issues, such as testing family vehicles and high-performance automobiles, a purpose reflected in part of its mission statement:

Each month, *Car and Driver* presents the latest new cars, vans, SUV's, and pickups – imports and domestics – with an emphasis on those cars heaven-sent for the man or woman who knows the rewards that an outstanding automobile can confer on its driver. We examine in detail new technology, new directions, and new ideas put forth by the automobile industry. (Car and Driver)

Secondly, the magazine had the largest paid circulation in 2003 among automotive magazines in the United States, which as of December 2003 was 1,369,286 (Car and Driver, 2004a). Lastly, the demographics of its readership differed from the hypothesized stereotype of the 'teen street-racer.' The median age of its readership was 32.2, the median household income of its readership was \$60,756, and 57.3 percent of its readers have attended college (Car and Driver, 2004b).

National Geographic was chosen as the other periodical because its demographics and mission differed in several ways from both the hypothesized stereotypical street racer and the automotive enthusiasts represented by *Car and Driver*. The National Geographic Society, producer of *National Geographic Magazine*, had a mission much different than *Car and Driver*, as is apparent by the following quote:

“National Geographic Society has always explored and celebrated the earth. Now we are placing more emphasis on preservation, seeking a sustainable relationship with our planet, and promoting greater public understanding that will lead the way to global balance.” John Fahey, President (NationalGeographic.com, 2004)

In light of its mission, the investigator did not expect to find automotive advertisements in this publication containing street racing as a theme. Demographically, its readers' median household income figure was slightly lower at \$60,078 (vs. \$60,756 for *Car and Driver*), the median age of its readership was 12.4 years higher at 45.6 (vs. 32.2 for *Car and Driver*), and 66 percent of its readership had attended college (vs. 57.3 percent for *Car and Driver*). *National Geographic* also had a substantial national circulation of 5,200,055 (National Geographic, 2003). Theoretically, advertisers, aware that *National Geographic's* subscribers were well-educated, mature, and interested in environmental and cultural issues, would refrain from using advertisements with themes unappealing to this demographic. Furthermore, if street racing was used in advertising, and the behavior considered inappropriate, the investigator expected enough criticism from *National Geographic's* readership to discourage future advertisers from repeating an apparent marketing faux pas. Since the publications are monthly, 36 issues of each magazine were sampled, for a total sample of 72 magazines.

Sampling strategy for materials

Newspaper Articles

Newspaper articles referencing street racing were identified using ProQuest, a database that archived full-text versions of the newspapers being sampled for this investigation. Using the search term "street rac*", all articles referring to street racing in either the title and/or the text of the articles were identified. In ProQuest, "*" is a right-

handed truncation character used to find all forms of the truncated word or word string. For example, “**street rac***” found “**street racer**,” “**street racing**,” “**street race**,” “**illegal street racing**,” and “**street races**.” Although other terms, such as “drag racing” or “illegal drag racing,” were used in the past to describe the behavior, street racing was the most widely accepted and applied term during the time period under investigation. Material in the original sample considered outside the field under investigation was removed, leaving articles that referenced only the behavior under investigation.

A search through ProQuest using the term “**street rac***” in either the title or text of the articles, located 111 articles in the San Diego Union Tribune and 175 articles in the Los Angeles Times for a total of 286 articles. A preliminary scan of the articles indicated a majority contained data pertinent to the research questions. Some articles, however, were not related to the topic and were purged. For example, an article on “a Formula One **street race**” matched the search criteria, but was not related to the research topic, referring instead to a legal race conducted on public streets blocked off to normal traffic. Additionally, opinion/editorial pieces either from the public or reporters were not included in the sample. By excluding “op/ed” items, the investigator hoped to avoid reflecting merely the opinions of readers and journalists in the analysis, concentrating instead on the information provided in articles informed by experts and hopefully containing information from multiple sources. Additionally, newspapers sometimes ran the same story in multiple editions or in different geographical regions under a slightly altered title. In such cases, the various versions were included and analyzed only if the information in the articles differed. If the text contained in the articles was identical, then only one version was included for analysis. If street racing was suspected, as in the case

of a single vehicle accident, but not conclusively proven, those articles were included in the sample since the descriptors refer to the behavior under investigation. Once the selection criteria was applied, 150 articles remained ($N = 150$), 81 articles in the San Diego Union Tribune and 69 articles in the Los Angeles Times for a total of 150 articles.

Magazine Advertisements

Although the time period January 1, 2001 through January 30, 2004 inclusively, was used for sampling the newspaper articles, the investigator shifted the dates for sampling the magazines by two months. Rather than beginning in January 2001 and ending with January 2004, the dates for the magazines sampled were March 2001 through March 2004. As those familiar with periodicals are aware, cover dates and newsstand dates differ. In the case of both *Car and Driver* and *National Geographic*, newsstand appearance dates preceded cover dates by approximately two months. Thus by incorporating this shift in the sampling methods, the actual publication timeframes for the newspapers and the magazines more closely resembled one another. Since both magazines are monthly publications, 36 issues for each magazine were sampled, equaling a total of 72 issues.

Several criteria were used to determine the advertisements included for analysis. First, only advertisements from major vehicle manufacturers were sampled. Therefore, no advertisements from aftermarket companies were included, nor were advertisements from specialty manufacturers. This ensured *National Geographic*, which contained few if any automotive aftermarket advertising, could be reliably compared to the advertising in *Car and Driver*. Only automotive and motorcycle ads were included, which excluded ads for

vehicles such as personal watercraft, aircraft, and boats. Additionally, the advertising by several automotive manufacturers that did not specifically name or feature specific vehicles were not included since the investigator viewed them as part of a public relations campaign by the companies rather than advertisements for vehicles.

Each advertisement was examined for two types of indicators to determine whether street racing appeared as a theme. First, visual information was examined. For example, if two vehicles were engaged in an acceleration contest on what appeared to be a public road/area, it was included and analyzed. Secondly, textual references to street racing behavior were also considered. This included reference to a driver's ability to out accelerate other drivers or vehicles. In order to be viewed as a street-racing themed advertisement, the ad had to have at least one type of clear indicator. However, if an ad's visual or textual clues were not clear indicators of a street racing theme, but examined together clearly alluded to the behavior, it was accepted for inclusion in the sample. Because the ads may allude to the behavior, it was not always necessary that both vehicles appeared or were being driven. In an advertisement for the Honda Civic Si, only one vehicle is moving while other vehicles that appeared in the ad were stationary ("Honda Civic Si," 2002). However, the doors of the vehicles that were stationary were lying on the ground. This visual alludes to the phrase "Blow someone's doors off," meaning to go by someone so fast that the doors of the competition are torn off by the force of the wind created by the faster vehicle. Of the total 910 vehicles advertised in *Car and Driver*, 16 were identified as being in street-racing themed ads. *National Geographic* had advertisements for 240 vehicles with 5 vehicles featured in street-racing themed ads. So out of 1150 vehicles appearing in ads in both magazines, a total of 21

vehicles were in street-racing themed ads. Please note that the numbers reflect the number of vehicles advertised and not the number of ads, this fact is pertinent since several ads featured multiple vehicles.

Method for Data Collection

Newspaper Articles

The type of analysis conducted is best described as an attribution analysis, since the investigator scrutinized the portrayal of street racing in newspapers by examining the attributes assigned to the behavior and its participants. That portrayal was examined by applying eighteen questions to the sample of newspaper articles. For each of the questions, an initial list of responses was determined a priori. However, the investigator also introduced additional categories to produce more discernible data (Appendix A). When categories were added, the articles previously analyzed were re-analyzed for relevant information. Each article was analyzed at least twice. The data was entered into a spreadsheet identifying the article and the relevant pertinent data. If multiple articles referred to a specific incident, the incident was given a unique numerical identifier, which allowed the investigator to, for example, track investigations resulting from one specific street-racing incident.

Magazine Advertisements

The advertisements were analyzed for both textual and visual attributes. Two databases were used to collect the information. The first database tracked the total

number of vehicles advertised in each magazine issue (Appendix B). General information about the advertisements was collected, such as the type(s) of vehicle advertised, and whether street racing was discernable as a theme. The second database was used to collect information about the ads containing street racing indicators (Appendix C). Those ads were analyzed for several criteria, such as the apparent age and income level of participants, the type of vehicles involved, and the consequences of the behavior. Each ad was archived for later reference.

Coding of Material

Newspaper Articles

Six aspects of the sampled articles were examined: the definition of the street racing issue, the behavior's connection to mainstream society, the type and level of threat the behavior represented, participant descriptions, and finally, the consequences of the behavior as portrayed in the article. To collect the desired information, two to five questions were formulated for each aspect. Exploring each of the six aspects was central to ascertaining an understanding of the framing of the street racing issue in the media.

Some of the questions had predetermined scales or responses, which were modified as needed to incorporate new data. Other questions required a 'yes' or 'no' response and further clarification.

Each of the six aspects explored a central aspect of street racing's framing by the news media. For example, several questions were designed to examine the populations reported to be involved in street racing, while others examined the sources providing information used in the articles. The resulting data enabled the investigator to draw

conclusions about the framing of the street racing issue. More importantly, the data will move future discussions closer to a more empirically-informed understanding.

Magazine Advertisements

The examples of advertising incorporating street racing were analyzed in a manner similar to that used for the newspaper articles. However, the majority of questions were modified or eliminated to better reflect the information contained in advertisements, as well as the estimations the investigator made since exact demographic information, e.g. income levels and age of those depicted in the ads, were not specified. Furthermore, the drivers/owners of the vehicles were often not visible or described, although his/her demographic information was implied, thus the investigator had to estimate the ages of the target demographic for the ad.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis

The goal of the analysis was to establish how street-racing behavior, and possibly its participants and artifacts, were portrayed during a specific 3-year period in both the sampled newspaper articles and the magazine advertisements. To accomplish that, a three-part examination, following the sequence of the research questions, was employed to analyze the categorical data gathered from the samples. In the first section of the chapter, an analysis of the sampled newspaper articles was carried out by examining the frequency of descriptors used to portray the behavior. Next, the data generated by sampling the magazine advertisements was analyzed, again by frequency. By examining several aspects of the behavior, e.g. the overall portrayal of the behavior, the types of vehicles involved, and the number of ads in each magazine, the investigator arrived at the general portrayal found in the advertising. Finally, to address the third research question, each article and advertisement was coded on a number of dimensions, including participant age and vehicle type, and then mapped onto a set of numerical variables that allowed the use of independent samples t-tests to test for significant differences between the two media types. In conducting these tests, the more stringent assumption of unequal variances was used to generate the most robust results possible. All values, except the significance, are reported rounded off to the nearest hundredths value.

Rather than reporting on every possible statistical comparison, the investigator chose to present information that appeared both interesting from a research perspective and represented a substantive, justifiable empirical position.

The Portrayal of Street Racing in Southern Californian Newspapers

The investigator found that the two large Southern Californian metropolitan newspapers sampled framed street racing as a criminal justice issue that should be treated by interventions such as strong traffic ordinances, enforcement and prosecution. To elaborate, in the 150 sampled articles, a total of 165 terms were identified as characterizing the issue in some fashion. Of the 165 terms, sixty-seven percent (110 instances) dealt with some criminal justice aspect of the behavior, such as the announcement of new ordinances or laws, criminal trials, accidents, or task force announcements. Within this group, the most frequently employed terms dealt with the announcement/support of new ordinances/laws and accident/crime reports, 25% (41 instances) and 21% (35 instances) respectively, which together represent 46% of the terms. Legal venue announcements/support occurred in 15% (25 instances) of the terms. A small percentage of the terms, 7% (12 instances) dealt with aspects of the behavior or its consequences from a human interest or cultural studies perspective.

Several other findings reinforce the investigator's conclusion that the articles were dominated by a criminal justice framing of the issue. As described in the literature section, journalists and newspaper editors often rely on knowledgeable individuals for both stories and information about particular subjects. Such experts were cited or quoted in 142 of the 150 sampled articles a total of 347 times. As a percentage, law enforcement representatives were cited or quoted more than any experts with 31% (109 instances). This percentage increased to 51% if all those connected with the criminal justice system,

i.e. prosecutors (35 instances), authorities (17 instances), defense lawyers (11 instances), and judges (6 instances), were included. As with other subjects that have become criminal justice issues, e.g. drugs and immigration, political figures were often quoted or cited as well, in this case 16% (55 instances). Unlike issues that have garnered national attention, statements about street racing have been limited to local or state politicians, such as mayors and district attorneys.

Further strengthening the view that a criminal justice framing dominated the newspaper coverage of street racing were the types of solutions proposed to combat/rectify the behavior. Eighty-three percent of the solutions proposed (338 of 405 instances) involved the criminal justice system. Punishment was the most frequently named with 99 instances, followed by enforcement with 89 instances, and legislation with 58 instances. Although non-criminal justice solutions were proposed, their numbers were much smaller. Legal alternatives were mentioned 12% of the time (49 instances), and education was specifically mentioned 4% of the time (16 instances).

Although death, accidents, and the threat to society were often alluded to as the justification for making street racing a criminal justice issue, statistics related to the behavior were cited in only 44 (29%) of the 150 articles sampled. Of the 62 figures given in the 44 articles, the statistic cited most often, with 41 instances, was the number of deaths caused by the behavior, followed by injuries, 8 instances, and participation, 7 instances. The investigator expected to find a high number of articles relating the consequences of street racing behavior to other driving behaviors, e.g. DUI, aggressive driving, or speeding; however, only one article referenced statistics for any other driving behavior. The lack of comparative statistical support was surprising since a high majority

of the articles, 91% (136 of 150 articles), named negative consequences that resulted or may result from the behavior. In those articles, the 324 negative consequences named were, in percentage order, accidents 27% (87 instances), arrest 25% (82 instances), injuries/death 19% (63 instances), impound of vehicle 16% (51 instances), and citation 12% (38 instances). Three other negative consequences were named, but were statistically insignificant.

Although a variety of connections were explored in the background section of this dissertation, few articles contained references to any links street racing has to mainstream society. In comparison to the 68 incidents of street racing referred to as a distinct culture, only 6 references related the behavior to mainstream society. Perhaps attributing the behavior to a subculture or distinct culture made defining participants and justifying the merit of interventions to the public much less complicated than would otherwise have been the case.

One way of establishing a public perception that the behavior is attributable to a distinct subculture is to stereotype participants, which appears to have occurred with street racing. To test this hypothesis, the investigator examined the broad terms used to describe the stereotypical populations thought to participate in street-racing behavior. In 49 of the 150 sampled articles, a total of 72 descriptors were used to describe the stereotypical street racing participant. Of the 72 descriptors, 41 (57%) were age-related descriptors, i.e. kids (14), teenagers (8), youth and young people (19). Since no other age-related generalizations were given, 100% of the age-related descriptors referred to young participants. Once the 41 descriptors for age, which will be discussed as part of the inter-media analysis, were removed, 31 descriptors remained. Of those, two categories of

stereotypical street-racing participants were named in significant numbers. In 14 instances (19% of the total number of descriptors), it was stated that participants attend street races or were motivated to race when audiences were present. The implication is that by stopping the large street-racing events, street racing will stop. What was further implied is that street races, outside the large gatherings and without audiences, did not occur. The second category, named 8 times (11% of the total number of descriptors), consisted of auto enthusiasts and owners of modified vehicles, implying that non-enthusiasts and owners of unmodified vehicles did not participate.

Street Racing's Portrayal in Automotive Advertisements

Three years of each magazine were sampled, 36 issues each of *Car and Driver* and *National Geographic*, for a total of 72 issues in which 1,150 vehicles were advertised. Of that number, 21 vehicles were judged as being in street-racing themed advertisements. This equates to 1.8% of the vehicles advertised using a street-racing theme. Temporally, the magazines' publication dates paralleled that of the newspaper articles.

Overwhelmingly, street racing was portrayed in the sampled magazine advertisements as an acceptable activity that effectively demonstrated the superiority, e.g. quicker acceleration and higher horsepower, of one model or make of vehicle over another. Phrases such as "For those who see power as the ultimate luxury," ("Mercedes Benz C 230," 2003) or "You are a gentleman indeed. But with 340 hp tucked under the hood, the only thing you really want to do is blow the doors off the guy next to you"

("Infiniti M45," 2003) demonstrated the openness with which street racing was discussed in the text of the ads. Just as unambiguous were the visuals used in a number of the ads, which often showed vehicles pulling ahead of other vehicles by out accelerating them, often on public streets. The term "acceptable" is used because no negative consequences, e.g. citations, accidents, deaths, etc., were mentioned in any of the ads, while a number of positive benefits of owning a quick-accelerating vehicle were identified, e.g. "Follow The Leader is only fun, if you're the leader," ("Jaguar S-Type," 2001) or "May promote feelings of superiority" ("Nissan Altima," 2002). Since advertising is meant to evoke positive associations with a product, the absence of negative consequences was not surprising.

Additionally, a variety of vehicles were advertised using street-racing themed ads. Of the 21 vehicles, luxury automobiles, such as the Mercedes-Benz "C 230" and "S-Class," Infiniti "M45," and Jaguar "S-Type," accounted for the highest frequency with 7 examples. A midsize and mid-priced 4-door sedan, the Nissan Altima, was the most frequently advertised vehicle, appearing 6 times, 3 times in each of the magazines. Sport compacts, cited second most often behind modified vehicles in the newspaper articles as being utilized for street racing, appeared 3 times, less than half the number of appearances by luxury vehicles. Sports cars and sports sedans appeared once each, notable since their performance was usually heavily emphasized, and the investigator assumed claims of superior acceleration over similar vehicles would have led manufacturers to feature street racing much more prominently than was the case. Trucks were featured in 2 of the ads, and an SUV in one. The investigator felt the breadth of vehicles was significant, and that the frequency with which luxury vehicles and 4-door

sedans appeared showed, quite explicitly, that street racing is admired by a wide socioeconomic demographic, including those who purchase luxury vehicles, 4-door sedans, trucks, and SUVs, as well as sport compacts. All of the vehicles appeared stock, meaning they were not modified since leaving the factories of the original manufacturers.

In analyzing the number of vehicles advertised, an interesting statistic emerged. The percentage of vehicles advertised in street-racing themed ads in each magazine was very similar. The three-year sample of *National Geographic* contained a total of 240 advertised vehicles, 5 of which were in street-racing themed ads, which equates to 2.08% of the total number of vehicles advertised. In *Car and Driver*, of 910 advertised vehicles, 16 were in street-racing themed ads, which represents 1.76% of the vehicles advertised in that publication. The investigator's assumption that a higher percentage of vehicles advertised in street-racing themed ads street would be found in the automotive enthusiasts' magazine, *Car and Driver*, was incorrect. Although fewer advertised vehicles were found in *National Geographic*, a slightly higher percentage of them were in the street-racing themed advertisements than was true for *Car and Driver*. This would seem to indicate that the activity is admired behavior among both magazines' readerships. If not, the advertising would not have appeared, would have been found to be ineffective, and/or generated enough negative comments or protest from the readership that the manufacturers would have discontinued this type of advertising. However, none of these scenarios appears to have occurred. The advertising campaign for the Nissan Altima supports this hypothesis. A midsize and mid-priced 4-door sedan, the Altima appeared in a street-racing themed ad in 6 different issues, 3 times in each of the sampled magazines, over a 14-month period from November 2001 to September 2002. The

frequency and longevity of the ad led the investigator to conclude the ad was effective and that no large and/or effective protests against the ad were undertaken.

The income demographic targeted by the ads was skewed towards the middle and higher income ranges with 12 vehicles (57%) advertised to middle-income potential buyers, 8 to high income buyers (38%), and 1 (5%) to working-class, non-professional buyers. Admittedly a subjective estimation based on the text, visual cues, allusions to particular activities, and the vehicle advertised, the findings support the conclusion that, in this sample, quick straight-line acceleration was used to appeal to the middle- and high-income demographics quite openly.

Lastly, no spectators or crowds appeared in the ads. Other than the drivers and a few other participants, e.g. a flagger starting a race and a pit crew of 8 working on a vehicle, there did not appear to be any spectators or people watching the competition taking place. Because of the tinted windows or camera angle, the investigator could not determine if any passengers were in the vehicles with the drivers. Also absent were any visible spectators in any of the ads. In one ad, a couple was in the background, strolling down the sidewalk in the area where a vehicle was apparently being prepared for a race, but they were visibly unaware of the activity ("Mercedes Benz C 230," 2003).

The Differences Between the Media's Portrayals

Cultural Connection

One of the differences between the newspaper articles and magazine advertisements was their treatment of street racing's cultural connection to or disconnect from mainstream culture. While a few references in the newspaper articles (6 instances)

indicated street racing had a connection to mainstream society, in 68 instances it was clear that street racing was considered a distinct culture. The position in the advertisements appeared quite different. All the advertisements referenced or implied the fact that dominating the competition, i.e. other drivers, vehicles, and/or the road, was the goal of those within mainstream society, not those belonging to a subculture or distinct culture. The investigator is comfortable stating that it was implied that everyone in society was involved in the competition, and that those unable to afford or not desiring the advertised vehicles would be, either literally or figuratively, left behind. Thus, the cultural connections as depicted in the newspaper articles and advertisements, while not completely complementary, showed a distinct divergence.

Age

Another proposed area for comparison between the media was age. To examine the age variable, the investigator chose to use a statistical analysis application, SPSS, to test the null hypothesis (H_0) that there was no difference in the mean ages of the two media (newspaper articles vs. advertisements). To prepare the data for a t-test for independent groups, every instance of an actual or stereotypical age in the newspapers was assigned a value as follows:

- 1 = ages 26 or under
- 2 = ages 27 to 50
- 3 = ages 51 or above

Since several of the newspaper articles contained multiple actual and/or stereotypical ages of participants, each age was given a value and then averaged. For example, if the

ages of two participants were 19 and 21, the article would be assigned a 1, since both were under the age of 26. However, if a stereotype of 'kids' was used and a participant was aged 34, a value of 1.5 was given, since that is the average of the values assigned, i.e. a 1 and 2 respectively. As not every newspaper article contained age-related data, only the 89 articles that did were used, rather than 150 (the total number of articles sampled). For the advertised vehicles, the values were assigned to the demographic to which the vehicle was being advertised. This was done since the ages of drivers or possible passengers were not given, and the participants were not visible for the investigator to make an estimate. For the advertised vehicles, the investigator was able to establish the targeted demographic for every instance, so all 21 ads were used in the analysis. Vehicles were used to determine the sample size, as opposed to the ads since several of the ads contained multiple vehicles and the vehicles were marketed to different demographics.

As can be seen in Table 1, a difference in the means is evident but it is not apparent that the difference is large enough to be considered significant. However, as shown in Table 2, the differences in ages were statistically significant ($p = .000$), and the assumption of unequal variances was also confirmed ($F = 6.65$, $p = .011$). As such, it appears that the newspaper articles, with a means of 1.15, were slanted toward a younger age than the magazine ads with a mean of 1.95. Again, the more rigorous results for unequal variances were used in order to avoid any false interpretations of the F and P -values for Levene's Test for Equality. All values, except the significance, are reported rounded off to the nearest hundredths value.

Table 1. Group statistics.

Media_Type		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Combined Average Age	Newspaper Article	89	1.15	.36	.04
	Advertised Vehicles	21	1.95	.67	.15

Table 2. Independent samples t-test for age variable.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Combined Average Age	Equal variances not assumed	6.65	.011	-5.32	22.88	.000

Type of Vehicle(s) Involved

A second area requiring statistical analysis was the type of vehicles presented in the newspaper articles and the magazine advertisements. Although the investigator searched for 12 vehicle types in both the magazine articles and magazine ads, the following three examples offer the strongest statistical evidence of differences and correlation between the two media. The 3 examples that follow show that one type of vehicle had a higher mean in the newspaper articles, a second type a higher mean in the magazine ads, and a third vehicle showed no significant difference in the mean between the two media. As with the age variable, t-tests for independent groups were utilized. Each of the vehicle types was set up as a separate variable in the database. When an instance of the vehicle was noted, a 1 was entered. When no instance was noted, a 0 was

entered. The mean was then determined by totaling the 0's and 1's and dividing by the sample size; therefore, the mean is smaller than 1.

Luxury Vehicles

The first vehicle type, luxury, appeared only in the magazine ads. In examining the group statistics in Table 3, this is clear since the variable's mean for the newspaper articles is .00. In Table 4, the probability (2-tailed significance) for the unequal variances at .005 was smaller than the acceptance threshold of .05. Thus the H_0 was rejected and H_a , indicating a significant difference in means exists, was not. To summarize, there was a significant difference in the means of luxury vehicles, with the mean for the magazine advertisements significantly higher than for the newspaper articles.

Table 3. Group statistics for luxury vehicle variable.

	Media_Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Luxury	Newspaper Article	150	.00	.00	.00
	Magazine Ad	21	.33	.48	.10

Table 4. Independent samples t-test for luxury vehicle variable.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Luxury	Equal variances not assumed	1185.97	.000	-3.16	20	.005

Modified Vehicles

Whereas luxury vehicles appeared in the magazines ads, but not in the newspaper articles, the reverse was true for modified vehicles, which appeared only in the newspaper articles. This type of vehicle is not a class of vehicle per se, like luxury or sports car; however, modified vehicles were said in the articles to often take part in street races and, as such, were viewed as artifacts signifying the illegal behavior. With 36 instances, they were the most frequently named type of vehicle. Therefore, the investigator believed it merited its own descriptor. Although the newspapers contained little detail whether the modifications were to a vehicle's exterior or its drivetrain, e.g. paint, body kits, motor, exhaust, or transmission, the category still appeared notable. In Table 5 listing the group statistics, a difference in the means is apparent but significance is not clear. In Table 6, the probability (2-tailed significance) for unequal variances is .000, which is smaller than the acceptance level of .05. Thus, H_0 was rejected and H_a , indicating a significant difference in means, was not. Again, the mean for modified vehicles was significantly higher in newspaper articles than in the magazine ads. This result is significant because, at least according to vehicle type, several different realities of street racing are becoming apparent. According to the manufacturers, luxury vehicles can be easily utilized for street racing, but were not mentioned by experts, nor were they referred to in the sample of newspaper articles. Modified vehicles, on the other hand, were often cited by experts as being used for street racing but, according to the manufacturers, are not necessary since factory vehicles are capable of quick straight-line acceleration.

Table 5. Group statistics for modified vehicles.

Media_Type		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Modified	Newspaper Article	150	.24	.43	.04
	Magazine Ad	21	.00	.00	.00

Table 6. Independent samples t-test for modified vehicles.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Modified	Equal variances not assumed	56	.000	6.86	149	.000

Sport Compacts

The t-test conducted for the sport compact variable produced a probability too large to reject the H_0 , meaning there was not a significant difference between the means in the newspaper articles and the magazine advertisements when it comes to the sports compact variable. As can be seen in Table 7, the probability level of the unequal variances is .779, which does not meet of acceptance level of .05, thus the results indicate that H_0 will not be rejected. Therefore, the means did not differ significantly and that sport compact vehicles appeared, on average, as often in the newspaper articles as in the magazine advertisements.

Table 7. Group statistics for sport compact variable.

Media_Type		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sport Compact	Newspaper Article	150	.17	.37	.03
	Magazine Ad	21	.14	.36	.08

Table 8. Independent Samples t-test for sport compact variable.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Sport Compact	Equal variances not assumed	.39	.57	.28	26.47	.78

Summarizing the results of the t-tests for vehicles in the media, the investigator presented three scenarios: a type of vehicle with a significantly higher mean in the newspaper articles, a second vehicle type with a significantly higher mean in the magazine advertisements, and a third vehicle demonstrating no difference in the means for the two media.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

Conclusions

While the analyses validated several of the original hypotheses, several unexpected results underscored just how incomplete the traditional news perspective was during the time period studied. Specifically, few, if any, of the links the investigator outlined in the literature review were dealt with in the 150 sampled articles. Furthermore, the true richness of the issue as an area for scientific inquiry that can directly impact public policy development and leadership is becoming clear. Paralleling the organization of the analyses, conclusions are arranged in the following order: newspaper articles, magazine advertisements, and the inter-media comparisons.

Newspaper Articles

From the analysis, it is evident that the two sampled Southern Californian metropolitan newspapers framed street racing as a criminal justice issue that should be treated with traditional interventions, i.e. strong traffic ordinances, enforcement and prosecution. It is apparent this criminal justice framework was perpetuated to the exclusion of other theories, which seemed overwhelmed by the high percentage of criminal-justice related reports. The popularity of this framework may be the result of several factors. Relationships with criminal justice experts already exist, and those relationships are, to a certain extent, symbiotic. Journalists require stories and have a ready source in experts, many of whom are in law enforcement, politics, or are

financially dependent upon public funding and/or sponsorship. Without generating positive publicity, their causes may suffer negative consequences, e.g. less or no funding. Considering over 66% of the experts cited or quoted were associated with the criminal justice system or politicians justifying their decisions, the space for other perspectives was limited. A framework for understanding this relationship was forwarded by Jensen and Jankowski, who wrote, “news organizations necessarily developed special ties to legitimate and centralized sources of information” (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991, p. 87). This relationship, in effect, “frames” the topic, determining how it should be viewed. Further developing this view, Herman and Chomsky believed structural factors related to media ownership, funding (advertising or donors), and mutual relationships, determines what becomes news and what the news means (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xi). As formulated in the literature section, this theory seemed to be at play in the reporting of street racing. For many enforcement units, substantial funding is at stake, which may pressure agencies to generate certain types of stories to gain support for their causes. Politicians may be seeking support for their re-election or announcing popularly-supported criminal-justice expenditures to their constituencies. For commercial media, including the sampled newspapers and magazines, the large amounts of money automotive manufacturers spent on marketing cannot be ignored. Although the following figures are listed in the literature section, they are relevant. In 2002, the following sums were spent on advertising in the U.S. by auto manufacturers: General Motors \$2.338 billion, DaimlerChrysler AG \$1.167 billion, Toyota Motor Corp. \$854 million (Nielsen Media Research, 2003). Honda is reported to have spent \$1.193 billion, Nissan \$967 million, and Volkswagen \$602 million (AdAge.com, 2003). Worldwide in 2002, General

Motors Corporation spent \$4.6 billion on advertising (General Motors Corp., 2003). The role of advertising in defining issues may be substantial.

The investigator contends the lack of statistics and comparative data is evidence that the public accepts the general premise that street racing is a criminal justice issue. Although the negative consequences of street racing, especially death, were referenced in 91% of the articles, a majority of the sampled articles, 71%, contained no statistics, and only one contained data about any other dangerous driving behaviors for comparison. This seems to indicate that the specificity of effects caused by the behavior or relational/comparative data is not necessary for interventions to be supported and funded. For example, as the investigator pointed out in the literature section, driving is inherently a dangerous activity. A total of 3,396,753 highway deaths were recorded from 1913 through 2002, which is 3.3 times the number of deaths the United States suffered in wars from 1775 through 1996. One could argue that the controversy Steve Levitt created several years ago drew attention to a similar situation. In his 2001 article, Levitt insisted that, according to the number of annual deaths, swimming pools were more than 100 times more deadly for children than guns, meaning 100 times more children die by drowning in pools annually than by gun shots (Levitt, 2001). Yet, no campaigns to outlaw swimming pools were undertaken while gun bans and laws were heavily championed and funded to protect society as a whole, and children specifically. It seems obvious that the issue was about more than just statistics, yet guns remain controversial while swimming pools are not. The investigator is not stating that guns are safe or shouldn't be controlled. However, examining only the statistics it is not clear why the statistically lesser significant issue received more attention.

Advertisements only

It struck the investigator that the seeming normalcy of street racing in the magazine advertisements was significant. If a reader was not familiar with the controversy surrounding the issue, it appeared to be a perfectly acceptable, even desirable, behavior to exhibit if one is to be successful or dominant in a society that respects being first. An example of this is the Mitsubishi ad that stated, almost lightheartedly, that street racing is still illegal, and discussed how well suited the vehicle was to carry out the activity ("Mitsubishi Lancer Ralliart," 2003). The ad didn't discuss any negative consequences, much like cigarette ads before the mid-1960s when health warnings and ad bans were being discussed and implemented. One difference, of course, is that the vehicle ad referred to the illegality of the behavior.

Another sign of the behavior's normalcy is the percentage of ads in each magazine, as well as the types of vehicles advertised. As discussed earlier, *Car and Driver* and *National Geographic* have very different missions and were designed to appeal to different readerships. Despite that, the percentage of street-racing themed ads contained in each varied only slightly. One explanation for the seeming normalcy of the portrayal is that it is not as hidden or as confined to a subculture as experts believe or assert. Assuming that is true, this seems further corroboration that additional issues, beyond public safety, need to be explored and understood before stating how widespread the behavior is, and before predicting the effectiveness of interventions. Especially relevant is the admiration of speed and its treatment as a commodity in many forms of

transportation. Adas' writings on how machines have become a "measure of man" (Adas, 1989) may help to explain or understand this normalcy.

Television commercials that were not included in the sample, but were similar in their portrayal of the behavior, lend further support for the normalcy theory. Specifically, the Dodge RAM pickup commercials that aired in 2003, and which were described in the literature section under "Advertising," showed an apparently middle-class, middle-aged male driver not only participating but winning a street race without any negative consequences. In fact, at the end of the commercials, he drove away smiling at his apparent dominance of the losing driver.

Inter-media Comparison

Cultural Connection

The articles' lack of discussion of the seemingly obvious cultural connections street racing has to mainstream culture is noteworthy given the positive portrayal street racing received in the advertisements. Although seemingly minor, the aspect of cultural connections or disconnections is central to the philosophy of how to deal with participants. If street-racing and competitions on public streets are outside of mainstream society, there is little change that society will need to undergo in order to eliminate the behavior. Dealing with the issue becomes a matter of law enforcement and socializing participants to become upstanding citizens. On the other hand, if the behavior is a part of mainstream society, addressing the issue becomes complex and multifaceted, since a continuum of individuals, including both upstanding, successfully socialized individuals, as well as social deviants, must be dealt with if the behavior is to be successfully

eliminated or controlled. The normalcy with which advertisements portray street racing is a sign, however, that this connection is hard to deny. Furthermore, because they do not seem to be targets of enforcement, there is little danger of being caught in a stock appearing vehicle.

Age

The difference in means found in the age variable between the two media may mean that the experts and journalists contributing to the newspaper articles were underestimating the participation and/or appeal of street racing to a variety of age demographics. For example, are young people more prone to participating in street racing behavior or are interventions, e.g. enforcement and prosecution, becoming self-fulfilling prophecies, meaning because young people are targeted, they were caught and prosecuted more often. If the reader believes chronological maturity increases self-control, it should be asked why street racing would still appeal to mature adults. If street racing is no longer admired by those aged 27 and over, would manufacturers risk product sales showing the behavior in their advertising? While some might argue that advertising is not reality, to a certain degree it seems to reflect mainstream thinking. The data leads to interesting speculation about the behavior and its acceptance by and influence on mainstream society, neither of which has been dealt with empirically.

Type of vehicle(s) involved

As the analysis revealed, the likelihood of appearance for certain types of vehicles was significantly linked to the media being sampled. However, some vehicle types were

as likely to appear in one media as the other. If graphically represented in a Venn diagram, the media would show overlap with sport compact vehicles, but none for modified or luxury vehicles, which appeared exclusively in one or the other media. The vehicle variable is a valuable research area because particular interventions are based on specific vehicle types. One example of that was a checkpoint set up in 2003 in Coronado, a city in San Diego County. The goal was to decrease street racing in San Diego County. The intervention mechanism was a checkpoint that "... was set up to identify and inspect vehicles that might be illegally modified for street racing" ("Local checkpoint combats street drag racing craze," 2003). Thus, vehicles that appeared modified were stopped and checked for illegal modifications. The presumption was that vehicles used in street racing are illegally modified and were thus targeted while stock appearing vehicles were not. While it may be true that a certain percentage of modified vehicles are used for street racing, the correlation of vehicle to behavior has not been researched. It may be equally true that a certain percentage of unmodified vehicles or legally modified vehicles are also used for the behavior. Because of their greater numbers, it may be that, although a lower percentage of stock vehicles are used for street racing, the overall number of stock vehicles used for the behavior is much higher than the number of modified vehicles used in street racing.

The generalizations used in the newspaper articles to describe the stereotypical ages for participants and the types of vehicles used in street racing, seem to permeate the entertainment media as well. For example, street-racing themed video games, movies, and music, all portray street racers as mostly young males driving modified vehicles. The "Need for Speed: Underground," a video game published by Electronic Arts, features

mostly young males participating in illegal racing on public streets using heavily modified vehicles ("Need for Speed: Underground," 2003). "American Graffiti" revolved around Southern California's teenage car culture and featured a street race between Paul Le Mat in a 1932 Ford and Harrison Ford in a 1955 Chevy on a deserted highway (Lucas et al., 1973). Both vehicles were heavily modified, and both drivers were young males. The Beach Boys hit "Little Deuce Coupe" described a modified 1932 Ford that was "...the fastest set of wheels in town" (Christian & Wilson, 1963). Although the driver was not described, it can be safely assumed that he was a young male. There are some exceptions, such as Jan and Dean 1964 hit, "The Little Old Lady from Pasadena" (Altfeld & Christian, 1964). However, the humor in this fictional depiction of a street racer was the fact that she was a seemingly conservative, older adult female, the apparent antithesis of the stereotypical teenage street racer.

To summarize, the analyses combined with the information gathered through the literature review, allowed the investigator to draw conclusions about the portrayal of illegal street racing in both the newspaper articles and the magazine advertisements that are reasonable and defensible. It appears there may be identifiable structures or rationale why both the newspaper articles and magazine advertisements portrayed the activity of illegal street racing using specific constructs.

Suggestions for Further Research

Several issues were recognized once the research was concluded. As the investigator forewarned, the generalizability of the research conclusions is limited.

Personal transportation is probably more central to one's identity and life in Southern California than almost anywhere else in the world. Therefore, the amount of attention focused on cars in general and specifically on street racing in that region may be an anomaly, rather than the rule. To determine whether that hypothesis is valid, regional, inter-state, and inter-national studies comparing newspaper coverage may reveal whether different areas, regions, or countries portray/treat the behavior similarly or differently. Relatedly, a higher number and wider variety of magazines or other advertising venues should be examined for information related to street racing behavior to generate more robust sample sizes.

If further research supports the conclusions reached in this study, the political/economic factors impacting the media's interest in the behavior may be a productive area to examine. Is the level of activity or the framing of the activity dependent upon the economic situation of a country? For example, the United States experienced an economic boom after World War II, during which time street racing seemed to flourish. Do counties that have experienced economic booms all share this phenomenon? Germany experienced the economic miracle in the 1950's. Did street racing also mushroom? If not, what was different? A cursory examination of street racing articles published since the 1940's, reveals the behavior and/or interest in the activity may be cyclical in nature. If so, identifying possible fluctuations in interest or activity and their possible relationships to political, economic, and/or other social triggers may clarify some of the framing processes in operation, as well as a temporal understanding of activity level.

Another question that has not been discussed is how the behavior is perpetuated. For example, does an inter-generational transmission of the behavior occur or is the transfer mechanism societal? The behavior seems to carry with it some social meaning and purpose that bridges generations, vehicle types, and geographical regions. The question is why the behavior continues, and how its meaning is passed from generation to generation, area to area, or country to country.

Finally, the relationship of the illegal behavior to the legal sport, and to the overall role of competition in the transportation of people are two further areas of investigation that will yield valuable information.

Closing

In closing, the investigator believes the issue of street racing is an ideal example of how public policy issues may be framed in the media in a particular manner and how sources of information may be found that provide evidence that challenges the traditional framing of an issue. Furthermore, the process of forming public policy, including interventions, should remain open to analysis and change if necessary. In this particular instance, after six decades of both fiscal and political investment into a variety of interventions, perhaps the continuation, admiration, and role of street racing should be examined if we are to further establish where the portrayals of the behavior are complementary, overlap, or incomplete. Furthermore, since the behavior has become a global phenomenon, spreading well beyond the borders of the United States, the amount of evidence available for examination and the potential impact of research are growing exponentially.

The investigator's objective was not to criticize those associated with the various intervention programs, who should be congratulated on their successes, thanked for their work in the community, and commended for bringing attention to a complex behavior. The goal, as stated previously, was to inform the public policy process using research methods designed to explore the inferred parameters of street racing behavior, and the context within which the interventions occur.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Newspaper Article Coding Sheet

1. General information
 - San Diego Union Tribune
 - Los Angeles Times
 - Name of Item Analyzed
 - Month/Day/Year
2. Stories related to same incident - use number beginning with 001
3. Type of column
 - Crime / Accident Report
 - Trial Coverage
 - Human Interest
 - Crime / Accident Investigation
 - Culture Study
 - Report on Achievement
 - Announcement of Task Force
 - Legal Venue - Announcement/Support
 - Ordinance/Law Announcement / Support
 - Other
 - Examples
4. Social connections
 - Connection to Mainstream Society
 - Distinct Culture
 - Unable to Determine
 - Examples
5. How large a threat is street racing said to be?
 - Non-existent
 - Small
 - Medium
 - Significant
 - Extreme
 - N/A
 - Examples
6. The threat is said to be:
 - Declining
 - Stable

Growing
N/A
Examples

7. Are experts quoted, mentioned, or cited in the article?

Yes
No

If yes, what types of experts are named?

Law Enforcement
Political Figures
Judges
Prosecutors
Defense Lawyers
Sociologists
Legal Venue Operators / Managers / Etc.
Participants
Former Participants
Parent(s)
Civil Rights
Authorities
Health Care Officials
Grant Organization
Other
Examples

8. Are numerical statistics given that are directly related to street racing, e.g. participation, accidents, deaths, etc.?

Yes
No

If yes, which statistics are given?

Participation
Accidents
Injuries
Deaths
Incidents
Other
Examples

9. Are statistics given about any other behaviors, e.g. other driving behaviors, drug abuse?

Yes
No
Implied

If yes, what behaviors are named?

10. Are specific populations stereotypically said to participate in the behavior? (Do not list individuals, but rather generalizations about groups either in title or body of text.)

Yes
No

If yes, what populations are named?

11. Are the specific ages of any participants in illegal street racing given? (Do not list generalizations, i.e. teens, etc., but rather specific individuals either in title or body of text.)

Yes
No

If yes, what are their ages?

12. Are any participating individuals described, other than age? (If yes, please include descriptions here.)

Yes
No

If yes, include information here.

13. What solutions are used/proposed to combat/rectify the behavior?

Legal Alternatives
Enforcement
Arrest
Punishment
Citation
Impound / Seizure of Vehicle
Education
Legislation
None

Other
Examples

14. Types of vehicles identified as involved in illegal racing (Identify all cars mentioned)

Economy
Sport Compact
SUV
Muscle Car (1960-70)
Luxury
4 Door Sedan
Truck
Sports Sedan
Sports Car
Modified
El Camino
Motorcycle
Unable to Classify
None
Other
Examples

15. Are there negative consequences cited which result or may result from the behavior?

Yes
No
If yes, what consequences are named?
Accident
Injuries
Death
Arrest
Impound/Seizure of Vehicle
Citation
Punishment
Blocking Hindering Public Services
Other
Example

16. Are there positive consequences cited which result from the behavior?

Yes
No

If yes, what consequences are named?

17. Are specific causes of the behavior named?

Yes

No

If yes, what causes are named?

18. How many participants, spectators, or others shown/depicted/implied as taking part in the behavior?

Participants (Drivers, Passengers, Flaggers, Etc.)

Spectators

Combined

Others

None

Examples

Appendix B

Total Number of Automotive Advertisements

1. Magazine
 - Car and Driver
 - National Geographic
2. Month/Year
3. Volume and Issue
4. Number of ads by general type of vehicles
 - Car
 - Truck
 - SUV
 - Used
 - Motorcycle
 - Other
5. Total number of ads
6. Street racing themed ads
7. Street racing not apparent, but ad related to research
8. Notes

Appendix C

Magazine Advertisement Coding Sheet

1. Street Racing Themed Ad
 - Yes
2. General information
 - Car and Driver
 - National Geographic
 - Page Number(s)
 - Month Year
3. Same ad appearing in multiple issues - Use number beginning with 001
4. Apparent age of driver
 - Young Adult (under 27)
 - Middle-aged (27-50)
 - Mature (over 50)
 - Unable to Determine
 - Example
5. Implied income of owner/potential owner
 - Low
 - Medium
 - High
 - Other Characteristics of Drivers/Owners
6. How many participants, spectators, or others shown/depicted/implied as taking part in the behavior?
 - Participants (Drivers, Passengers, Flaggers, Etc.)
 - Spectators
 - Combined
 - Others
 - None
 - Examples
7. What type of vehicle(s) is/are being advertised?
 - Economy
 - Sport Compact

SUV
Muscle Car (1960-70)
Luxury
4 Door Sedan
Truck
Sports Sedan
Sports Car
Modified
Motorcycle
Unable to Classify
None
Other
Examples

8. Are there negative consequences cited/implied which result or may result from the behavior?

Yes
No

If yes, what consequences are named?

9. Are there positive consequences cited/implied which result from the behavior?

Yes
No

If yes, what consequences are named?