
WHEN NEWS REPORTERS DECEIVE: THE PRODUCTION OF STEREOTYPES

By Dominic Lasorsa and Jia Dai

News stories and news columns revealed as deceptive were more likely than presumably authentic ones to treat members of social groups as identical, especially when referring to nationalities (e.g., Iraqis) and regions larger than a nation (e.g., Europeans). Deceptive articles also were more negative in overall tone. Findings support the theory of automaticity of stereotyping—unless a perceiver is able and motivated not to stereotype, stereotyping tends to occur. Implications for journalists are discussed.



Stereotyping in news has long been of interest to communication scholars, an interest rooted in concerns that stereotyping contributes to distorted perceptions. Stereotypes are category-based reactions to people from groups perceived to differ significantly from one's own.¹ A variety of theoretical perspectives has guided the study of why reporters stereotype.

A sociological perspective suggests that journalists typify events both to decide how to carry out their work and how to expect which characters and plots likely will be involved.² A cultural perspective suggests that reporters stereotype when events are unfamiliar and thus hard to comprehend, and to make stories resonate with audience expectations.³ A psychological perspective suggests that job demands impose on the journalist's ability to process information, and cognitive bias occurs when the journalist sorts a story into a prototype and then develop a theory about it to explore.⁴ All these perspectives suggest that in the presence of a mass of potential facts, stereotyping tends to occur to streamline work and ease the perceiver's discrepancy between what is expected and observed. Unless a perceiver is able and motivated not to stereotype, stereotyping is likely to function by default, a process psychologists call *automaticity*.⁵

Reporting scandals in journalism provide an opportunity to explore the automaticity of stereotypes. Because both authentic and deceptive news stories written in the same newsrooms are produced

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under the same general conditions,⁶ it is possible to explore whether stereotyping occurs in deceptive news over and above the level of stereotyping that occurs in the routine production of news. Specifically, the argument is made here that because deceptive reporters are not motivated to produce accurate stories they automatically tend to fall back on stereotypes. By comparing deceptive news stories to presumably “authentic” ones⁷ from the same news organizations, this study explores whether stories written under similar conditions differ in their amount of stereotyping, depending upon whether they are the work of a reporter motivated to produce a fair and accurate news story or a reporter not so motivated.

Auto- maturity of Stereo- typing

Much is known about the production of stereotypes generally. Stereotypes arise from the need for a positive social identity with an ingroup which identifies an outgroup with a relatively devalued contrast.⁸ Mass communication is implicated in how social groups are labeled and framed.⁹ Before children personally are able to evaluate a stereotype, they learn it from authority figures, peers, and mass media, whose acceptance for expressing a stereotype reinforces it.¹⁰ Information processing in favorable conditions and through extensive practice becomes automatic, that is, without intention or conscious awareness.¹¹ Repeated encounters in different contexts allow a stereotype to become activated automatically.¹² After the initial automatic activation, low-prejudiced people make their subsequent responses fall in line with their unprejudiced standards.¹³

However, there is a cost. Suppression of stereotypical cognitions is an effortful process.¹⁴ Stereotypes economically enable a perceiver to use stored knowledge in place of incoming information.¹⁵ Allport likened stereotypes to paths in a forest that give order to life. He said, “The principle of least effort inclines us to hold to coarse and early-formed generalizations.”¹⁶ It is the conciseness and unambiguity of stereotypes that make cognitive processing easier.¹⁷ When Lippmann sought a label for this idea, he turned to a printing press component. The stereotype mold allowed fast and easy reproduction, the distinguishing characteristic of stereotypes. Lippmann called the attempt to see all things freshly and in detail rather than as types and generalities “exhausting.”¹⁸ In contrast, relying on stereotypes which our culture has defined for us is economical. Stereotypes are “energy-saving devices.”¹⁹

Dual information processing models build on these ideas. Sometimes people process information elaborately, other times heuristically.²⁰ Goals contribute to the choice of modality. Stangor and Ford identified two information processing goals, *accuracy-oriented* and *expectancy-confirming*.²¹ Brewer called the mode of impression formation utilized to obtain accuracy the *personalized* mode, and labeled the other *category-based*.²² As Fiske put it, “category-based cognitive representations are picto-literal prototypes (‘pictures in our heads,’ in Lippmann’s felicitous phrase), whereas personalized representations are networks of attributes linked to a single person.”²³ Rather than trying to collect information

about an unfamiliar candidate, perceivers might use party affiliation as a heuristic. “If she is a Democrat, they endow her with their stereotypical view of the qualities of Democrats; if she is a Republican, that heuristic leads to the Republican stereotype.”²⁴

Thus, humans process information with the aid of stereotypes unless compelled by goals, motives, needs, or environmental forces to engage in elaborate thinking.²⁵ Critical cognitive and motivational factors that lead to elaborate processing include spare intentional resources, self-involvement, outcome dependency, and accountability.²⁶ In these conditions, people allocate attention and use inferential strategies that involve extensive consideration of a range of information and careful attention to its implications.²⁷ Absent such conditions, perceivers economize cognition through stereotyping.²⁸ Furthermore, this occurs in the absence of a perceiver’s explicit intention to activate stereotype-based thinking.²⁹ Elaborate impressions of others are not necessary in most social situations and, therefore, “it is easy to see why stereotypical thinking tends to be the rule rather than the exception.”³⁰

Implications of the automaticity of stereotyping for journalism are clear. If humans generally stereotype unless able or motivated otherwise, then journalists should be aware of the risks. Journalism education claims to address the importance of avoiding stereotypes. Students are to learn to interview credible sources, make pertinent first-hand observations, get multiple sides of a story, rely on verifiable facts, and avoid personal opinions—to engage in professional norms designed to guide them toward an accurate and fair story.³¹ The General Semanticists identified stereotyping as one of four major “misuses of language” and recommended ways for journalists to resist it.³² News writing textbooks caution reporters to mention a person’s race or ethnicity only when pertinent to a story.³³ In a review of American journalism textbooks, Brennen said, “Students are encouraged to attempt to reverse gender, racial, and lifestyle stereotypes by eliminating social identities and limiting unwarranted conclusions.”³⁴

Yet, news media regularly are accused of stereotyping.³⁵ This is because motivation is only half the story. The use of stereotypes by journalists runs along two dimensions, first, the extent to which the reporter is apathetic (the motivation dimension) and, second, the extent to which the reporter is unengaged because of job demands (the ability dimension). Even if a reporter is trained and motivated to process information elaborately, the reporter may not be able to do so. Demands on time and skill may keep reporters from effectively engaging the community under observation.

Of particular interest in this study are situations where reporters are not motivated to avoid stereotyping. Unlike reporters who try to write “authentic” stories (stories written under established professional standards designed to produce as fair and as accurate a journalistic story as possible), deceptive journalists—those

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who fabricate, plagiarize, or otherwise deceive their readers—save time and effort by making things up and stealing the words of others. As noted earlier, automatic activation of stereotypic thoughts does not necessarily lead to their expression, since impulsive impressions can be monitored and curtailed.³⁶ Of particular relevance here, cognitive impulsiveness has been found to be related to deception. In the only study of which we are aware that explicitly connects deception to the kind of peripheral thinking that generates stereotypic impressions, a lack of cognitive reflection in making decisions was a significant predictor of cheating.³⁷

Anecdotal evidence also connects deceptive news to stereotyping. The *Boston Globe's* Mike Barnicle accused Alan Dershowitz of stereotyping, but the high-profile lawyer settled for \$75,000 after he sued Barnicle for putting a racist stereotype in *his* mouth: "I love Asian women, don't you? They're—they're so submissive."³⁸ Speaking of Stephen Glass, *New Republic* editor Charles Lane said "many of his stories revolve around stereotypes.... They fit into the preexisting... things we think or are predisposed to believe are true."³⁹ *USA Today* said of Jack Kelley's work, "Kelley often offered readers a version Hollywood might favor: a drama packed with action and poignant dialogue."⁴⁰ *Salon's* John Gorenfeld said that "what stands out in Kelley's phony oeuvre is the way he trafficked in particularly explosive stereotypes.... Kelley told a lot of people what they expected to hear."⁴¹

In addition, regardless of whether deceptive reporters stereotype more than authentic ones, they may differ in the targets of their stereotyping. Stereotypes are based on gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and other social characteristics. When reporters deceive, do they target certain social groups? Does deceptive and authentic news differ in the types of social groups they stereotype?

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that stereotypical news stories also are more negative in tone. Stereotypes usually are disparaging of those stereotyped. A recent study found a correlation between how stereotypical news stories are and how negative they are.⁴² This jibes with *USA Today's* assessment that Kelley's deceptive stories were "drenched in human suffering"⁴³ and Lane's observation that Glass not only stereotyped people but also routinely depicted them in "a very, very negative way, and quite inaccurately and meanly."⁴⁴ If deceptive news stories are more stereotypical than authentic ones, then they also may be more negative in overall tone.

Hypotheses and Research Question

Based on these ideas, the following hypotheses and research question were proposed:

H1: Deceptive news stories contain more stereotypes than authentic news stories.

H2: Deceptive news stories are less positive in tone than authentic news stories.

RQ: Do deceptive and authentic news stories differ in the types of stereotypes they contain?

Method

To locate all known cases of journalistic deception at major U.S. news organizations in recent years, accounts of news deception in newspapers, magazines, academic journals, trade organizations, and Web sites were searched using four online full-text databases (Academic Search Premier, Expanded Academic ASAP, Factiva, and Lexis-Nexis) and a general online search engine (Google). Search terms included the words *news*, *journalist*, *reporter*, *deception*, *fabrication*, and *plagiarism* (and their cognates such as *fabricate*). The period 1998-2004 was chosen because these years saw relatively more deceptive scandals than other times and six years was deemed long enough to capture an array of different types of deception from different news organizations. The search found close to 50 reporters who during that period wrote deceptive news stories.

In many cases, however, news organizations revealed little about the deception. Therefore, for analysis purposes 10 reporters were selected for analysis were the 10 reporters about whom the greatest amount of information was available. These 10 reporters worked for only five news organizations, the Associated Press (Christopher Newton), the *Boston Globe* (Mike Barnicle and Patricia Smith), the *New York Times* (Jayson Blair, Rick Bragg, Michael Finkel, and Charlie LeDuff), *USA Today* (Jack Kelley), and the *New Republic* (Stephen Glass and Ruth Shalit).

Because these are among the nation's most prestigious news organizations, they may have been more willing to reveal more fully their internal scandals, with an attempt to repair their own particular image and maintain the journalistic paradigm generally.⁴⁵ Also, scandal at better-known organizations tends to generate more information from others, including competitors, than does scandal at lesser-known organizations.⁴⁶

Analyzed were all 183 stories published by these 10 reporters which were found to be deceptive (*USA Today*, 56; *Times*, 48; AP, 43; *New Republic*, 31; *Globe*, 5). The 183 stories represent a virtual census of known deceptive stories by the 10 reporters because all clues that could be found from published mentions of deceptions were exhausted, including corrections appended by the organizations themselves, publication of scandal information by other media, and discussions of the scandals by industry publications.⁴⁷ Other mentions of deception were sporadic but led to more deceptive articles by providing details of various cases from which it was possible to develop precise search terms for each of the 10 reporters.

This census of deceptive news stories was compared to a random sample of ostensibly authentic news articles from the same five news organizations. Following standard content analysis sampling guidelines,⁴⁸ a constructed two-week sampling scheme was adopted for the seven-day newspapers, the five-day newspaper, and the wire service for

TABLE 1
Mean Number of Stereotypes by Story Authenticity

	Authentic (N=128)	Deceptive (N=183)
Per Story	.77**	1.24**
Per 1,000 Words	.99*	1.45*

** $p < .001$, * $p < .01$ (one-tailed independent t -test).

each of the years 1998 and 2004. For the newsweekly, content analysis guidelines recommend randomly sampling one article from one issue from each month for each year.⁴⁹ The resulting sample consisted of 128 presumably authentic news stories (*Times*, 28; *Globe*, 28; *USA Today*, 20; *New Republic*, 24; AP, 28).

At least two trained persons coded each story, which was stripped of identifying information, including bylines. Coders were told that the stories appeared in recent years in major U.S. news publications. They were not told that some stories were deceptive. Coders were instructed to read each news story solely to find stereotypes.⁵⁰ For example, "Latinas learn early how to get and keep their man" is a stereotype for Latinas, because it is categorical thinking, making a blanket statement that all Latinas are alike. Likewise, "Hollywood treats Latinas either as madonnas or whores" is a stereotype for Hollywood films. However, a sentence such as "New Yorkers are often deemed to be arrogant" would not be coded as a stereotype because it does not imply an unconditioned judgment to all New Yorkers.

Consequently, with this restrictive definition of stereotype, only truly blatant stereotypes were captured. This restrictive definition was adopted because earlier efforts to use a less restrictive definition proved unreliable. Coders could not agree on whether statements contained a stereotype unless the definition of a stereotype was constrained to the relatively clear case where *all* members of a social group were stigmatized. When the coders found a stereotype, they then recorded the type of stereotype, that is, the social group targeted by the stereotype.⁵¹

Intercoder reliability was measured by both simple percent agreement and Cohen's kappa, a more robust measure that accounts for agreement occurring by chance. For the number of stereotypes, intercoder reliability was .90 by simple agreement and .81 by Cohen's kappa. For type of stereotype for the first two stereotypes in each article, intercoder reliability was .93 by simple agreement and .86 by Cohen's kappa. Cohen's kappa could not be calculated for more than the first two stereotypes in a story because too few stories contained more than two stereo-

TABLE 2
Story Tone by Story Authenticity

	Authentic (%) (N=128)	Deceptive (%) (N=183)
Negative	46.1	60.7
Neutral	38.3	33.3
Positive	15.6	6.0
TOTAL	100	100

χ^2 (df=2) = 10.43, $p < .01$.

types.⁵² Cohen's kappa scores of .81 or higher indicate substantial agreement.⁵³

The overall tone of a story was measured using Rodgers and Thorson's method of coding each sentence in a story as positive, neutral, or negative.⁵⁴ Coders were instructed to read each story solely for story tone. Stories with more positive sentences were labeled as having an overall positive story tone. Stories with more negative sentences were labeled negative in tone. Stories with more neutral sentences were labeled neutral in tone. In the case of a tie, the story was labeled neutral in tone. Inter-coder reliability of story tone was .93 as measured by simple agreement and .88 as measured by Cohen's kappa.⁵⁵

Results

As hypothesized in **H1**, the deceptive news was more stereotypical (see Table 1). The deceptive stories had an average of 1.24 stereotypes (sd = 1.66), compared to an average of .77 stereotypes (sd = .99) in the authentic stories (t (302) = -3.08, $p < .001$, one-tailed t -test). (See Table 1.)

However, since the number of stereotypes could depend upon story length, and since deceptive news stories could be longer on average than authentic ones, stereotypes per 1,000 words were calculated in addition to stereotypes per article.⁵⁶ Deceptive stories had an average of 1.45 stereotypes per 1,000 words (sd = 2.17), compared to an average of .99 stereotypes per 1,000 words (sd = 1.47) for the authentic stories (t (301) = -2.703, $p < .01$, one-tailed t -test). Thus, even when controlling for story lengths, the deceptive news was more laden with stereotypes. **H1** was supported.

TABLE 3
Types of Stereotypes by Story Authenticity

	Authentic (%) (N=128)	Deceptive (%) (N=183)
Occupation	23.5	21.5
Nationality	18.5	35.4
Region within a Nation	14.8	11.6
Other	12.3	7.2
Social Class	12.3	4.4
Gender	9.9	6.1
Race/Ethnicity	7.4	7.2
Religion	1.2	2.2
Region Larger Than a Nation	0	4.4
TOTAL	100	100

The deceptive and authentic stories also differed in overall tone (see Table 2). Whereas a third of the deceptive stories and slightly more than a third of the authentic stories were neutral in tone, a chi-square test revealed differences in the proportions of positive and negative stories. While 15.6% of the authentic stories had a positive tone, 6% of the deceptive stories had a positive tone. In contrast, 60.7% of the deceptive stories had a negative tone, compared to 46.1% of the authentic stories. (See Table 2.) **H2** was supported.

Also addressed was the question of whether deceptive and authentic news stories differ in the social groups targeted. First, the proportion of different types of stereotypes among the total number of types was examined. Table 3 reports the percentage of each type of stereotype, and shows that for each social group there is a different share between authentic and deceptive news. For example, of the stereotypes found in the sample of authentic stories, 23.5% were of occupations and 18.5% were of nationalities. Of the stereotypes found in the sample of deceptive stories, 21.5% were of occupations and 35.4% were of nationalities. There were no instances of sexual orientation stereotypes in either the deceptive or authentic news, so that category was not included in the tables.

TABLE 4
Mean Number of Types of Stereotypes by Story Authenticity

	Authentic (%) (N=128)	Deceptive (%) (N=183)
Occupation	.17	.25
Nationality	.14**	.40**
Region within a Nation	.11	.16
Other	.10	.11
Social Class	.10	.06
Gender	.07	.07
Race, Ethnicity	.06	.08
Religion	.02	.03
Region Larger Than a Nation	.00*	.06*

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (two-tailed independent t -test).

To determine the significance of these differences, an independent t -test was run on the mean number of each type of stereotype in the deceptive and authentic stories. As Table 4 shows, the authentic and deceptive news stories differ in the occurrence of two types of stereotypes—nationalities and regions larger than a nation. For example, stereotypes of nationalities occurred almost three times as often in deceptive stories ($M = .40$) as in authentic ones ($M = .14$).

Compared to authentic news, why would deceptive news contain an inordinate number of nationality-related stereotypes? Part of the explanation may lie in the relatively large number of deceptive stories with international datelines. For example, most of Kelley's deceptive stories were written overseas, and dealt with such topics as suicide bombings in Jerusalem, terrorist training camps in Pakistan, and ethnic cleansing in Yugoslav. Tracking down sources in foreign countries—especially in war-torn lands and for stories on volatile topics such as these—might not be as easy as locating sources for domestic, less precarious news stories. Might this contribute to the finding that deceptive stories have more nationality-related stereotypes? An analysis was con-

TABLE 5
Mean Number of Stereotypes by Region

	Authentic (N=128)	Deceptive (N=183)
International	1.00	1.90*
National	.80	.95*
Metro/State/Regional	.52	.62*

* $p < .001$ (2-tailed ANOVA test).

ducted of stereotyping by geographic scope of the story, or region, which refers to each news organization's online database categorization of the story as either international, national, or metro/state/regional. A one-way analysis of variance revealed that the number of stereotypes was not significantly different across the three regional categories ($F(2, 124) = 1.38, ns$) in the authentic news. That was not the case, however, with deceptive news, where there were more than twice as many stereotypes in international stories as in national stories and more than three times as in metro/state/regional stories ($F(2, 180) = 8.88, p < .001$). The deceptive news stories contained relatively more stereotypes of both nationalities and regions larger than a nation and, when international in scope, the deceptive stories contained particularly large numbers of stereotypes.

Discussion

All the news stories studied here were written by trained reporters with their own personal characteristics (e.g., gender, race); employing the same media routines (e.g., story structures, deadlines); situated in the same organizational cultures (e.g., corporate profits, newsroom diversity); constrained by the same extra-media dynamics (e.g., competition, community relations), and within the same ideological environments (e.g., capitalistic system, two-party political system).⁵⁷ Since both authentic and deceptive stories written within a newsroom are produced under these same general conditions, any observed differences in content must be due to other considerations. What might account for differences in the levels of stereotyping in authentic and deceptive news?

We have proposed that stereotyping in deceptive news, over and above that found in authentic news, is due primarily to the automaticity of stereotyping. Not motivated to produce accurate and fair stories,

deceptive reporters unintentionally generate stereotypic impressions and judgments. Deceptive reporters, it would seem, are cognitively lazy.

Other explanations, however, are possible. First, stereotyping by deceptive reporters could be intentional. For example, a reporter who places fame above integrity might notice that stories containing stereotypes tend to receive greater recognition and prominence. She therefore purposely writes stereotypic stories to further her career. Deceptive news does contain more sources and more racially and ethnically diverse sources, and appears more frequently on the front page or newsmagazine cover.⁵⁸ A reporter motivated to produce captivating stories rather than accurate ones might advance her stories by offering “impressive” sources who say just the “right” thing, thereby helping catapult her stories into prominence. Alternately, a reporter might be motivated not so much by fame but by mission. He might see himself as an advocate for a cause greater than professional ideology. He therefore methodically plants stereotypic ideas in his stories to advance that cause. Another possibility is that a reporter is motivated neither by celebrity nor cause but by contempt. Feeling disdain toward the profession or the public, she contemptuously includes stereotypes in stories as a form of mockery. Finally, stereotyping in deceptive news could be unintentional, but is the cause of deception rather than its effect. A reporter might perceive the world as inordinately more stereotypic than most people do. Because he sees the world stereotypically, his stories unavoidably contain more stereotypes. Such a reporter would not necessarily be deceptive but it could be a matter of reverse causality: reporters who perceive the world in stereotypic terms then become deceptive.

The evidence presented here cannot determine to what extent any of these explanations accounts for the preponderance of stereotypes and negativity in deceptive news. We think, however, that automaticity is the most plausible reason. That deceptive news tends to be more stereotypical and more negative in tone than authentic news supports the current view in psychology that stereotyping tends to occur in the processing of information unless the perceiver is both able and motivated to avoid it. The inclination to stereotype may be enhanced when journalists are motivated to produce notable and impressive stories rather than accurate and fair ones.

While the empirical research supporting this position has come exclusively from laboratory experimentation, this study derived these results in a real-world setting. The reporters studied here deceived readers in a variety of ways, but all their deceptions removed them from personal contact with reality, leading them to make assumptions that often were stereotypical. Deceptive reporters often conjure characters who say and do just the perfectly predictable thing. Smith created the epitome of a grumpy old man. Finkel created the personification of an African child slave. Newton created the embodiment of an ivory-tower professor. Kelley created the archetypal Muslim terrorist. Glass created the quintessential child predator. Deceptive reporters sometimes got

caught because they jumped to reasonable but wrong conclusions. For example, Blair lifted material from a news story that mentioned patio furniture. Blair made the seemingly innocent assumption that such furniture would be on the patio. That, however, led to Blair's downfall when the story's author got suspicious about where Blair had wrongly placed the furniture in his version.⁵⁹ In a stereotypical world, patio furniture is on the patio. In the real world, things are not so simple. Stereotypical thinking occurs in the absence of active personal observation.

Worth further exploration is the overabundance of nationality-related stereotypes and international datelines in deceptive stories. Do deceptive reporters find it more tempting to stereotype while abroad, away from the watchful eyes of editors? Do they find it easier to stereotype those with whom they are less familiar? Do they win overseas promotions because of "outstanding" work at home and end up doing dirty work on foreign soil? What explains the preponderance in deceptive news of stereotypes of nationalities and regions larger than a nation, and of stereotypes in international stories?

Equally intriguing is that deceptive news is negative in tone. This further indicates that stereotyping is a category-based reaction to people from groups perceived to be not only *different* from, but also *inferior* to one's own. Assumed superiority of one's own group identity can lead to disparaging descriptions of others. It has been found that the more unlike themselves journalists consider a group to be, the less favorable coverage they give to that group.⁶⁰ More research attention might be given to how journalists identify themselves, how they perceive their differences from others, and the consequences of this to their reporting.

While the ostensibly accurate news stories were less stereotypical than the deceptive ones, they were not devoid of stereotyping. Surprisingly, in the authentic news stories the social categories given the greatest amount of attention both in the research literature and journalism education—gender, race, and ethnicity—were stereotyped less than some other social categories. Perhaps the attention given in journalism training to these types of stereotypes is reaping benefits. In addition, that no sexual orientation stereotyping was found in the authentic news seems an encouraging sign. Somewhat surprising is the large number of stereotypes of occupations and social class. Perhaps journalists and educators could pay greater attention to avoiding these categories of stereotypes.

Since this study is limited to the analysis of 10 deceptive reporters working for five large news operations in one country, future studies might examine how well the results apply to less "high-profile" reporters, those working for less prestigious news organizations and to reporters in other countries and press systems. One might speculate, for example, that reporters at smaller newspapers stereotype more than those at larger ones. Inferior training and experience, lower organizational investment in fact checking as a result of weaker financial support, and less external scrutiny due to

lower organizational prominence all could encourage more deceptive and stereotypical reporting.

This study presumes that writing deceptive news is less cognitively challenging than writing accurate news. While the deceptive reporters tend to sidestep hard work, they do engage in at least two cognitive tasks that authentic reporters avoid. They must consider how to elude detection and they have to fill in the gaps created by their lack of reporting. For example, they use hard-to-trace sources—anonymous persons, passing-through visitors, and persons in remote, hard-to-reach locales. A correlation was found between the number of stereotypes in a story and the number of hard-to-trace sources ($r = .19, p < .05$). As for filling in the gaps, the evidence supports the notion that sometimes the gaps are filled with stereotypes. While it is true that creative energy must go into such deceptive tasks, the cognitive costs are negligible compared to those of actually finding and interviewing a credible source who then offers relevant information that ultimately helps make a news story more accurate and fair.

Overall, this study supports the conceptualization of stereotyping as likely to occur unless cognitive action is taken against it. The study offers, as well, a lesson for working journalists and journalism educators. If stereotyping is to be avoided in news coverage, then it will take reporters who have both the ability and motivation to avert it.

NOTES

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6. Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content* (New York:

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7. By "authentic" is meant news stories produced using established professional news norms, in contrast to their deceptive counterparts, which violate those norms. The label is used mainly as a convenience and is not meant to imply that news stories produced by major American news organizations are mirror representations of an objective reality.

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12. Patricia G. Devine, "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56 (January 1989): 5-18.

13. Fiske, "Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination," 360.

14. Galen V. Bodenhausen, Geoffrey P. Kramer, and Karin Susser, "Happiness and Stereotypic Thinking in Social Judgment," *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 66 (April 1994): 621-32.

15. The theoretical mechanisms by which stereotypes are stored in memory have been conceptualized in terms of associative networks, schemas, scripts, frames, prototypes, exemplars, and connectionist models, as well as other forms of mental representation. For example, stereotypes often have been viewed as associative links between a node representing a social group and various evaluations or traits. The link allows for the spread of activation. Semantic priming can activate the stereotypic evaluations whenever a group member is thought about or encountered. For additional information on the mental representation of stereotypes, see Eliot R. Smith, "Mental Representation and Memory," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology* 1, ed. Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske, and Gardner Lindzey (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 391-445.

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46. Coincidentally, the 10 cases studied here represent the same ones identified as the 10 "key scandals" in journalism by Callahan in *The Cheating Culture*. David Callahan, *The Cheating Culture: Why More Americans Are Doing Wrong to Get Ahead* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2004).

47. For example, the *New York Times* published a list of 38 deceptive articles written by Blair (May 11, 2003, "Correcting the Record," *New York Times*) and the Associated Press published a list of 39 deceptive stories written by Newton ("AP identifies stories with attribution that cannot be verified," October 22, 2002, *Associated Press*).

48. Daniel Riffe, Stephen Lacy, and Frederick G. Fico, *Analyzing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*, (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998). See, in particular, Table 5.1 page 97, "Efficient Stratified Sampling Methods for Inferring to a Year's Content." To conserve resources, unusually long stories (more than 3,000 words) were not included in the sample of authentic news

stories.

49. Riffe, Lacy, and Fico, *Analyzing Media Messages*.

50. The definition of a stereotype employed in this study is restrictive: the portrayal of a person or persons as possessing a characteristic associated with a group to which the person belongs (or is assumed to belong). In some cases, a person or persons may actually possess the characteristics but, by highlighting it, an author nonetheless promotes the idea that members of the group are all alike. A stereotype is a form of overgeneralization of a social group while ignoring individual differences. Therefore, the coders were told that for a statement to be regarded as a stereotype it must state or imply that *all* members of a social group are alike. Statements implying that some, most, or even nearly all members of a social group are alike were not categorized as stereotypes.

51. Categories included: Gender, words referencing a specific gender (e.g., *girl*). Race, words referencing a specific race or ethnicity (*Asian*). Nationality, words referencing a specific nationality (*Mexican*). Region within a nation, words referencing a region within a single nation (*Midwesterner*). Region larger than a nation, words referencing a region larger than a single nation (*South American*). Occupation, words referencing an occupation (*lawyer*). Religion, words referencing a religion or religious group (*Buddhist*). Included here also are references to atheists and agnostics. Social class, words referencing a social class (*homeless*). Sexual orientation, words referencing sexual orientation (*lesbian*). Other, words referencing a social group not fitting into another category.

52. The intercoder reliability for the first stereotype per story was .899 as measured by Cohen's kappa and, for the second stereotype, .816, yielding an overall average of .86.

53. For additional information on the interpretation of Cohen's kappa, see Anthony J. Viera and Joanne M. Garrett, "Understanding Interobserver Agreement: The Kappa Statistic," *Family Medicine* 37 (May 2005): 360-63.

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55. When coders disagreed on either type of stereotype or story tone, a third coder was employed and the majority ruled. In no case was it necessary to go beyond three coders. When coders disagreed on the number of stereotypes, the mean was utilized.

56. Since the sample of authentic stories was restricted to those of no more than 3,000 words, in the analysis of story lengths, deceptive stories over 3,000 words ($N = 8$) were omitted as outliers in order to conform to an assumption of the equal-variance t -test. The deceptive news stories were on average a third longer ($M = 1,212$ words) than the authentic ones ($M = 823$) ($t(302) = -3.61, p < .001$, one-tailed t -test).

57. Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content*.

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Practice 1 (June 2007): 159-74.

59. Macarena Hernandez, "What Jayson Blair Stole from Me and Why I Couldn't Ignore It," the *Washington Post*, June 1, 2003, sec. B, p. 5.

60. Pamela Shoemaker, "Media Treatment of Deviant Political Groups," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (spring 1984): 66-75.