

Analyzing two news sources on obamas plan for police body cameras over ferguson a...

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The shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson has been one of the biggest news stories of 2014. It has led to protests all across the United States and global media has covered it extensively. The case goes beyond Michael Brown's death, and has struck a nerve about what has become a very sensitive and charged issue. Americans are polarized on it, some have used it to demonize police in general, but the discussion on it has led to bigger questions about systematic failures and racial discrimination in United States police forces. One of the emerging issues of police reform has been 50, 000 body cameras that President Obama has advocated as a way to prevent ambiguities that resulted in conflicting stories as to what led to the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson Missouri. This essay analyzes Obama's plan to equip officer with body cameras as covered on Fox News and CNN. As will be explored, there seems to be clear biases regarding how these news outlets have chose to report on this issue. Fox News is against Obama's plan for body cameras and CNN is in favor of it, while both sources do not admit these biases but instead present their stories as news.

Fox News leads with a headline that already indicates the source bias with a headline that reads, " Ferguson: Obama continues to undermine police departments around the country." While such a headline like this might be appropriate in the opinion section, this article appeared in their general news section. This headline appears in a charged language context. There is also a slanting of the information here. The writer of the article, " Dr. John R. Lott Jr writes in the lead paragraph, " the president's proposal plays into the hand of those who blame the police" (Lott, n. p.). This is a matter of opinion, but it is presented as fact. The opposite could also be said, that this proposal was

in support of the police because had there been a camera there would be no ambiguity. The second paragraph leads with, " President Obama has continually undermined police departments around the country, and his demand for more training fits that pattern" (Lott, n. p.). The evidence that Lott offers that Obama has established a pattern of continually undermining police departments across the country comes from a 2009 statement in which Obama said that black's distrust of police is " rooted in realities." Implicit in this statement is that the distrust is rooted in fiction.

But the sources offered as evidence are presented as facts, though each of them is merely an opinion masquerading. The emphasis is on the police undermining that the president is doing instead of developing or even explaining why Obama and his staff think that this is a good proposal. The source is slanted, clearly in favor of the police who do not believe there are systematic problems of police in American and written in a way that portrays the president as a villain. In this charged language context, the plan of body cameras is not explored or addressed, though in the headline it would seem that this was the focus of the story. The focus is on how Obama is working not with police forces, but siding with protestors to work against them.

CNN covers the same story with a headline ' Ferguson is everywhere': More crowds demand action as Obama lays out plan" The writer Holly Yan presents Obama's plan for police body plans as a the effect of the cause of citizens demands. Under this conceptual context, body cams are something that citizens demanded and the body. If the Fox News story can be seen as a negative take on the body cams, then Yan's article is a positive take on it. She leads by writing about people across the country demanding a plan that

Obama provides with his plan to outfit police with body cams. The first paragraph includes the facts of protestors and presents them in solidarity with the president's plan. Yan writes, " From Harvard to Texas A&M to Stanford, college students nationwide have walked out of classes or staged " die-ins" to decry police violence and racial profiling" (Yan, n. p.). In this article, racial profiling, the same assertion that was controversial in the Fox article is presented as a known fact.

While there is not so much charged language context in this article, there are choice selections of people interviewed that all believe the problems on police forces are systematic. One person interviewed (whose name is not cited) is quoted saying that " Ferguson is everywhere"—the quotation that was used for the headline. While the Fox News article posits that Obama is working against law enforcement, this article presents him as working for them. His plan is the result of taking their advice. " After meeting with law enforcement officials and activists Monday, President Barack Obama outlined several new efforts" (Yan, n. p.).

CNN does not indicate that there is any controversy in the president's plan and he is presented as working hard with groups who are informing his decisions rather than acting alone. The author writes, " The president also announced a new task force, chaired by the Philadelphia police commissioner and a criminology professor, that will reach out to law enforcement, community activists and other stakeholders to come up with best practices on creating accountability and trust between communities and police" (Yan, n. p).

Both the Fox News Article and the CNN article on this issue present the

findings in their articles as news. But both have biases. Fox News portrays Obama as working alone and against police departments all across the country. CNN presents Obama as working for and with police departments and "task forces" in order to be inline with what professionals on the issues believe. In presenting these stories, but authors make assumptions and have opinions about whether or not the body cameras are a good idea. Yet neither seems to really explore that issue and it seems from reading and analyzing these articles that the authors are in support or against body cameras depending on whether or not they support or are in favor of the president.

Works Cited

Lott Jr., Dr. " Ferguson: Obama Continues to Undermine police Departments around the Country." Fox News. FOX News Network, 3 Dec. 2014. Web. 10 Dec. 2014. .

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