

Depictions versus Reality: Countering the television mediated narratives of Black teachers in
Baltimore.

by

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ABSTRACT

Depictions versus Reality: Countering the television mediated narratives of Black teachers in Baltimore.

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This dissertation explores the stories of twenty (20) Black public-school teachers (K-12) from the Baltimore City public school system and their perceptions of the mediated images of their teaching experiences found in local television news segments. Media platforms such as the local television news help to shape public perceptions of and discourses about teachers (Goldstein, 2011). These interactions and framings may also play a role in shaping public policy related to teachers and public-school education (Garcia, 2015). This research project sought to counter the framings put forth about public-school teachers in the media by gathering the real-life experiences of actual teachers from a cross-section of schools in the district.

This multi-method qualitative case study relies on a critical race theory (CRT) framework to highlight the experiences of Black teachers in the school system in an attempt to counter the mainstream narratives of public-school teacher experiences that too often rely on white teacher voices. Data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with each teacher participant, all of which were informed by critical ethnography (Carspecken & Carspecken, 1996; Madison, 2005). Data analysis consisted of an open coding of interview transcripts (Creswell, 2013) with a thematic analysis conducted across interviews (Roulston, 2010). A qualitative descriptive research methodology (Sandelowski, 2000) was used to provide straight descriptions of the phenomena captured in the interviews in order to allow for the study participants to speak for themselves.

This research project revealed that narratives of Baltimore city public school teachers put forth by WBFF Fox 45's "Project Baltimore" series of teachers working in inherently violent schools, lacking resources/materials/conditions to teach successfully and teachers lacking integrity in student academic outcomes often does not align with the narratives put forth by Black teachers in Baltimore about their own experiences. These teachers contend that much of the necessary context needed to inform public perception of teacher experiences is missing from the local news framings and that they have many positive teaching experiences daily that are purposefully not included in media broadcasting.

This dissertation argues that Black teacher voices must be included in any public discussion of public-school experiences. The study highlights the need to use media platforms to uphold CRT's "voice of color thesis" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), which seeks to put forth the experiences of people of color, often unheard by white people. This study offers implications for Black public-school teachers, strategies to shape public perception of public-school teacher experiences and implications for public school education policy as well as suggested future research related to the topic.