The Dangers of Viewing the News: How News Event Priming Affects Subject Bias and Memory of Witnessed Events

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It is possible to see the same event on two news channels, and receive differing opinions, positive and negative, about the same event. How much does exposure to negative priming and bias news affect memory of events and personal bias? To answer this I conducted a 2 phase experiment. In phase one I looked at how 300 subjects, who viewed news events, were affected by negative, positive and neutral priming. In Phase two, I measured the amount of biased news 100 subjects were exposed to and measured their personal bias and false memory rate. To measure personal bias I created 20 blended Ekman Friesen faces to measure a person's negative bias. To measure false memory I combined a subjects self measured news viewing time and a ranking of the bias in the news shows they watched to give a bias news exposure score. In phase one, I found a significant increase in negative personal bias and rate of false memory when subjects were given negative priming statements as opposed to neutral or positive. Phase two found a significant increase in negative personal bias and rate of false memories with increasing bias news exposure. Negative bias is associated with anxiety and depression, false memories affect decisions and attitudes. This is the first study to measure the effects of news biasing on the viewing public.

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