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PATTERNS OF FEAR OF BEING MURDERED AND HOMICIDE VICTIMIZATION: A COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED AND REALISTIC RISK

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INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

- From 1973 to 2004, the homicide gap between males and females was insignificant
- From 1990 to around 2016, the Black-White gap, Hispanic-White gap, and Black-Hispanic gap in homicide has decreased by at least 35%
- 60% of spousal killings have wife victims
- Men kill their wives in order to avoid negative outcomes of divorce (financial, reputation, custody, etc.)
- Correlation between fear of mass murders and desire to ready about them
 - Potentially the same for violent crimes, including murder
- Crimes covered in news are chosen for newsworthiness (sensational)
- Murders in Mexico are over 2,000 times more likely to show up on Twitter than property crimes
 - Potentially the same for circumstance in the United States
- Most common relationship between victim and offender is acquaintance
- Second most common relationship between victim and offender is intimate partner

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Cognitive Vulnerability Model
 - Fears are formed from the perceptions of danger, disgust, uncontrollability, and unpredictability

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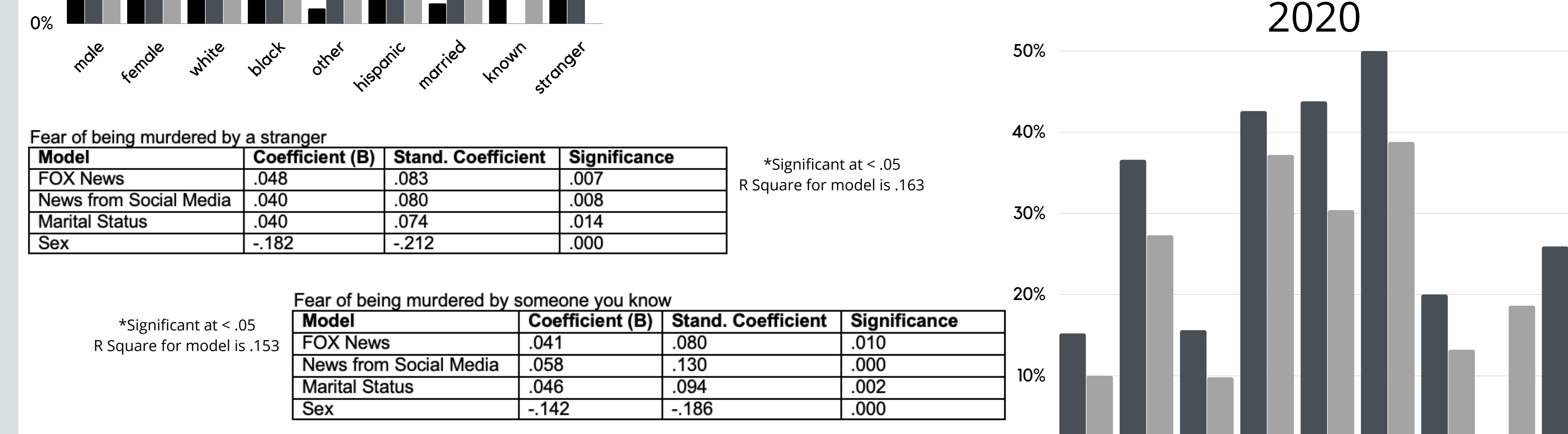
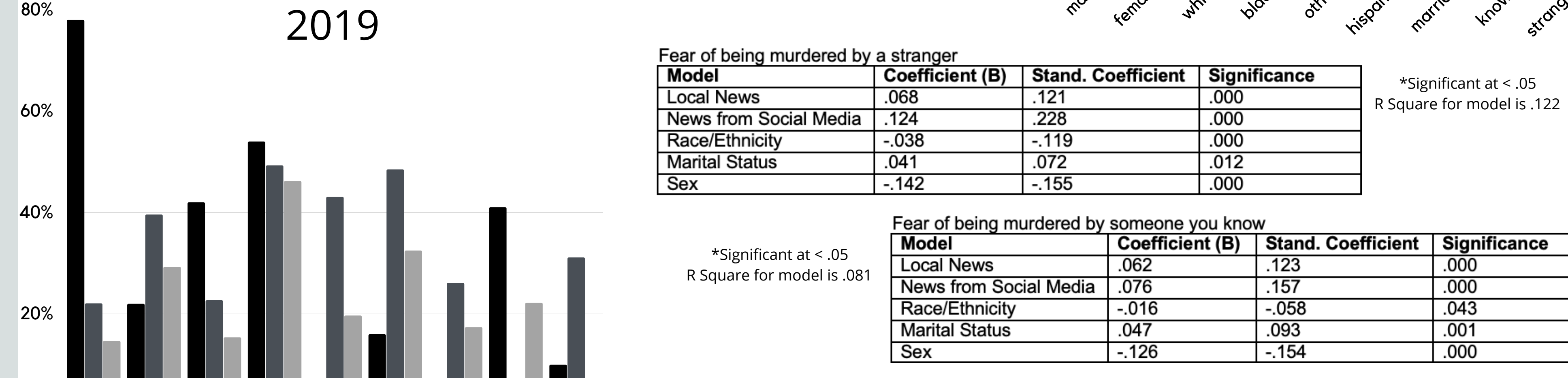
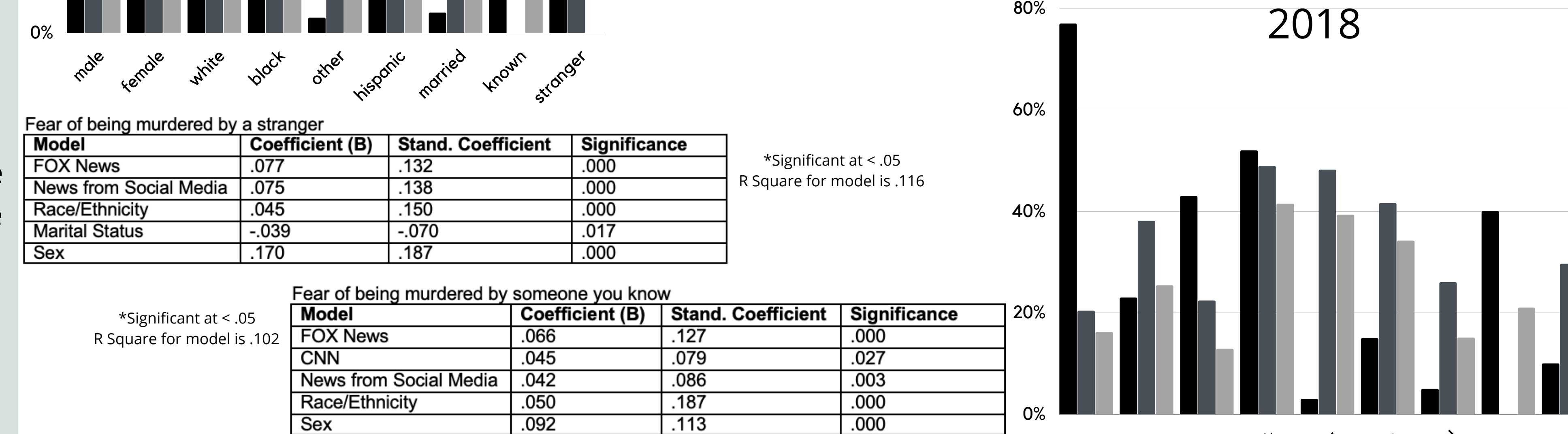
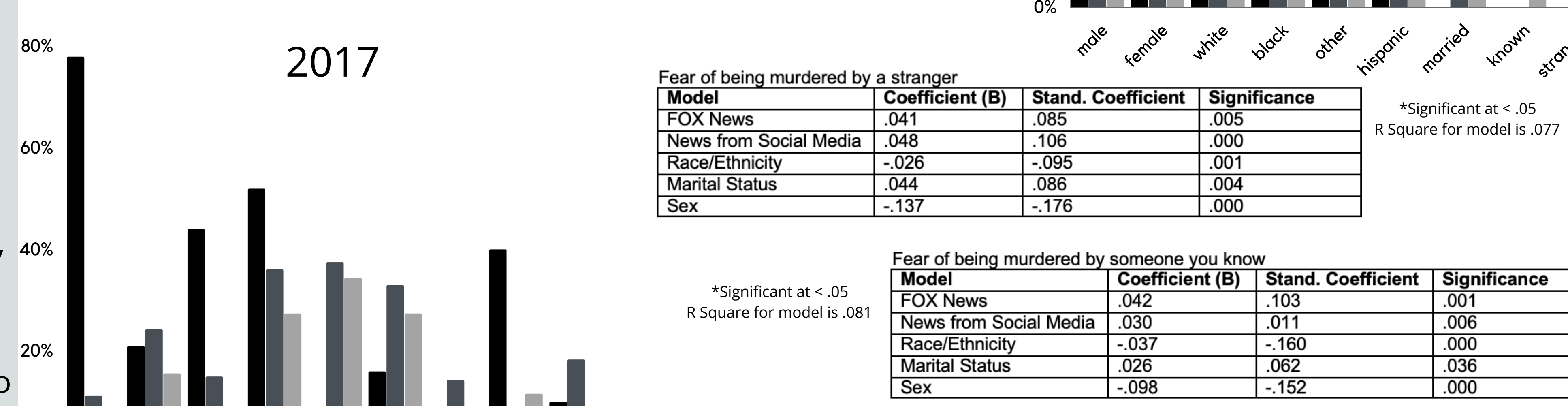
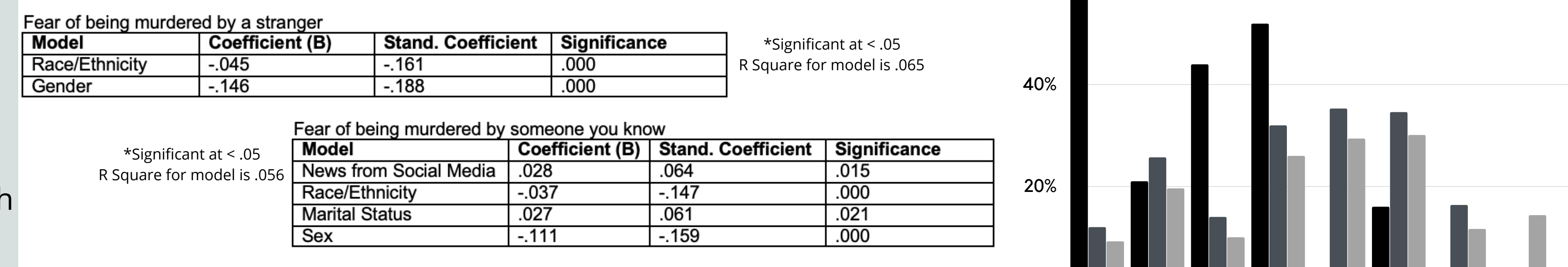
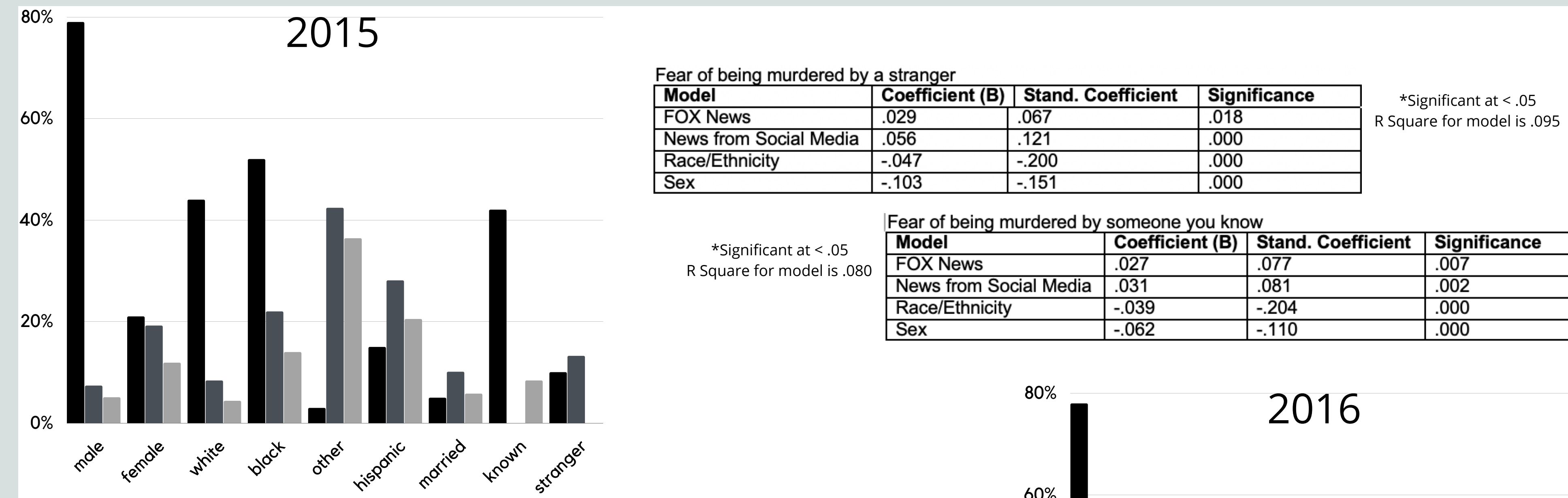
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HYPOTHESES

- H 1: Black Americans are more likely to fear both being murdered by a stranger and being murdered by someone you know than Americans of other races
- H 2: Married individuals are more likely fear for both being murdered by a stranger than being murdered by someone you know
- H 3: Women are more likely to fear both being murdered by a stranger and being murdered by someone you know than men
- H 4: The more often an individual watches national nightly news, the more likely they are to fear being murdered by a stranger
- H 5: The more often an individual watches local news, the more likely they are to fear being murdered by a stranger
- H 6: The more often an individual watches cable news (Fox, CNN, MSNBC), the less likely they are to fear both being murdered by a stranger and being murdered by someone you know
- H 7: The more often an individual gets news from social media, the more likely they are to fear both being murdered by a stranger and being murdered by someone you know



FINDINGS

- Gender has a significance level less than .01 for both fears for all years 2015-2020. *Women are more likely than men to fear both murder by a stranger and murder by someone you know*
- Race has a significance level less .05 for both fears for all years 2015-2019
- Marital status has a significance level less than .05 for either fear 2016-2020
- News from social media has a significance level less than .05 for both fears 2015-2020. *Those who get news from social media more frequently are more likely to fear both murder by a stranger and murder by someone you know*
- Local news has a significance level of .000 for both fears in 2019. *Those who watch local news more frequently are more likely to fear both murder by a stranger and murder by someone you know*
- FOX News has a significance level less than .05 for both fears all years 2015-2020, except for 2019. *Those who watch FOX News more frequently are more likely to fear both murder by a stranger and murder by someone you know*
- Race and Sex are the strongest influences on both fears 2015-2020
- R Square of regressions 2015-2020 range from .056 to .163

CONCLUSION

- There is a significant gender gap in both fears for all years 2015-2016. Women fear both at higher levels than men consistently
- There are no patterns in which race fears murder by a stranger or murder by someone you know more throughout the years 2015-2020
- Individuals that are married fear murder by a stranger more than they fear murder by someone you know
- Levels of fear reported for both fears between 2015-2020 fluctuates for each of the independent variables. Levels of fear between 2015-2017 are similar and levels of fear between 2018-2020 are similar
- Levels of fear for both fears increased in 2018
- FBI statistics remain relatively stable between 2015-2019 (note: some statistics missing for 2016)
- Comparisons
 - Women fear more, men victimized more (over 75%)
 - Black Americans victimized the most (over 50%)
 - Murder by a stranger feared more, murder by someone you know more common (at least 40%)
 - Murders by a stranger only 10% of cases
- The independent variables (sex, race/ethnicity, marital status, national nightly news, local news, cable news (FOX, CNN, MSNBC), news from social media) only account for a range of between 5.6% to 16.3% of the explanations for these fears between the years 2015-2020