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**Black, White, and Blue: Media and Audience Frames from Visual News
Coverage of Police Use of Force and Unrest**

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Black, White, and Blue: Media and Audience Frames from Visual News Coverage of Police Use of Force and Unrest

by

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Dedication

To Hendrix & Vaughan

Acknowledgements

I remember the day the grand jury returned with their decision about the possible indictment of Darren Wilson. I had finally found an afternoon to play with my daughter outside, but asked her to come in early so that I could watch the news. After the decision was released, I cried along with Brown's mother – her anguish on national display. I was devastated, and I revisited that devastation each time I heard another name called out in breaking news updates. These tears, sleepless nights, and disappointments were the catalyst for this research. I hope that by writing this, I can help one life breathe easier – Black, White, or Blue – and be part of the change I still pray I will one day see in the world.

There are so many people who helped make this dissertation possible, that I fear if I named all of them it would be a dissertation in and of itself. I'm grateful for my research participants who bravely verbalized their thoughts (sometimes for hours); that takes a lot of courage, and I'm so thankful for your time. And, when things got overwhelming, I am especially appreciative for Molly Smith and Cate Malek who helped me code articles and moderate interviews for this project. Paro Pain, thank you for being my cheerleader, for sharing my cube with me, and for reminding to take downtime for Grey's. Krishnan & Vincio, the initial clickbait project we discussed during our second year was the inadvertent spark that made this data collection possible. I'm so glad you invited me to collaborate. Speaking of data, I owe a huge thank you to Dr. Tom Johnson, who backed me 100% when I had this crazy idea to invest time, money and energy into NewsWhip, which turned out to be a turning point in my doctoral research career. Dr. Johnson stuck by my side for four years of research projects, helping me find my footing. Thank you for your endless support.

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Black, White, and Blue: Media and Audience Frames from Visual News Coverage of Police Use of Force and Unrest

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This study advances visual framing theory by uncovering the relationship between media and audience frames. This work uses recent media coverage of police brutality and social unrest to understand how audiences interpreted visual messages and frames, and highlight the differences in these interpretations for Black and White audiences. A secondary content analysis explores how digital news outlets portrayed the issue visually. In addition, this dissertation examines the role social media audiences play in redistributing media content in social media venues through sharing features.

These research objectives were tackled using a two-part, mixed-methods approach. The first study utilized think-aloud interviews with Black and White participants to examine how audiences understood visual information. Results show media frames help organize information for audiences, while interpretations and evaluations of visual messages were less uniform. White and Black participants treated visualizations of police with increased skepticism. Participants also noted small details that indicate criminality for Blacks. Visuals also play a critical role in interrogating structure of the protest paradigm. Yet, evaluations of images within this genre of news

varied considerably between Black and White participants. For White participants, rioting and chaos are primarily negative, while Black participants position their evaluations in more sympathetic, understanding terms. Non-violent visualizations also lead to various assessments. Black participants were hypervigilant of White thinking, acknowledging and opposing perceived negativity as a way of challenging the discourse they expect to encounter. These interpretations are evidence of dual consciousness and confirm the consistency of a contest-and-oppose approach to evaluations. Whites are less likely to battle stereotypes or to oppose them through empathetic responses than Blacks.

The second study includes a content analysis of digital news coverage shared on social media. Overall results for protest images were more likely emphasize the written demands of protesters and non-violent action of protestors than violence or sensational behavior. Identifying photos are also more balanced than expected. Regarding shareworthiness, visual messages did not affect social media audiences' sharing patterns, though visuals that included human emotion were more likely to be shared on Facebook and Twitter.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: A New Civil Rights Struggle

The current state of race relations in the United States is distinctive from other eras of racial strife in American history. While the Civil Rights era was pivotal in changing apparent deficiencies in American democracy by tackling blatant legislation and extending the enforcement of rights to all citizens, the current period confronts the challenges of colorblind ideologies and coded racial appeals, which are equally compelling in restricting the rights of minority populations. This battle appears more to be one of so-called "political correctness": one that tackles, head on, the more implicit racial ideologies and disparities of today. As Donald Trump made his way into the oval office, Americans felt the alarming intensification of the effects of this divisive rhetoric, uninhibited (Desmond-Harris, 2016).

For the Black community, the political sphere has been increasingly volatile since the Presidency of Barack Obama (e.g. Tesler, 2012; Wise, 2013). Though many have suggested that President Obama's ascension to the presidency was a catalyst for a "post-racial" America (e.g. Columb & Plant, 2011; Plant et al., 2009), the realities showed otherwise (e.g. Barnes, 2016; Carbado & Gulati, 2013; Johnson, 2012; Moody-Ramirez & Dates, 2013). He was attacked with racialized zeal, from the controversial "birther movement" to smaller and more casual commentary, such as President Obama's picture with watermelon toothpaste (Cavna, 2014).

Certainly, President Obama wasn't the only one to feel these effects in this self-proclaimed, post-racial and colorblind America, which President Obama would later call unrealistic in his final address to the American public as president. Blacks in the United States were continually confronted with profound struggles, and in recent years the strife between

Blacks and police has taken center stage. Concern about police brutality against Blacks and the continued social unrest that followed the death of Michael Brown is one such situation where communication researchers can examine how news organizations portray this struggle.

The news media's role in informing and educating publics within this context is pivotal. Scholars have lamented for decades that mainstream media has been ineffective at portraying Blacks accurately in news coverage. For example, criminality has long been one of the dominant depictions of Blacks in the media (e.g. Dixon, 2015; Dixon & Azocar, 2006; Hurley, Jensen, Weaver, & Dixon, 2015; Larson, 2006). In addition, the mainstream press historically portrayed protests against racial injustice negatively (e.g. Boyle et al., 2005; Watkins, 2001), though recent work examining local and national newspapers' coverage of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in Ferguson, MO reveals that this coverage may now be more sympathetic (Elmasry & el-Nawawy, 2016). Less is known about how these issues are covered in digital news, specifically in news shared in social media networks.

In addition, little is known about how audiences understand and interpret media portrayals. Do Blacks and Whites interpret messages about race and social unrest, particularly visual messages, the same way? Are frames of social conflict, protest, and crime that exist in previous scholarship similar to those that audiences can identify? According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), communication researchers do not well understand the effects of media frames versus other types of content.

Social identity theories, socialization theories, and social psychology theories all purport that Blacks perceive the world differently largely because of their position as "others." In his seminal work, W.E.B. Du Bois (1904) imposes a theoretical framework of "double

consciousness," which explains the psychological duality of Blacks who live in the White-dominated world. This duality may lead to different interpretations of media content, and it is possible that our understanding of media frames and effects have missed or silenced prevailing ideological and moral interpretations from Black people. For example, Entman (1992) refers to frames such as the threatening Black male or the "demanding black activist" as negative portrayals. Scholars have suggested that these understandings of frames, especially from the perspectives of the White mind, are a product of group-based ostracism, racism, socialization and cognitive processing differences (Adams & Stevenson, 2012; L. M. Coleman, Jussim, & Kelley, 1995; Entman, 1992). However, little research is dedicated to the identification and evaluation of similar depictions within the minds of Blacks, despite significant evidence that encounters with and evaluations of stereotypes and frames are markedly different for Blacks than for Whites (Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, & Stevenson, 2014; R. Coleman, 2003, 2011). In the context of recent events of police use of force and the death of unarmed Blacks – in which proponents on both sides of the argument have used the loaded term "racism" to describe the events, the coverage, the aftermath, and each other – this may be especially true.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This dissertation first seeks to understand whether audiences recognize media frames, how they interpret those media frames, and what evaluations stem from media portrayals. As with most racially charged issues, this research acknowledges the fundamental differences among audiences of different demographics, in this case, Blacks and Whites, might hold. Understanding what audience evaluations are, and how they might differ aides in the interrogation of framing theory, particularly within this genre of news. In addition, this inquiry helps provide support for the

consideration of emerging media frames deemed salient by Black and White audiences. The secondary purpose of this study is to examine how often and the extent media frames appear in news coverage of police brutality events, specifically coverage shared in social media environments. Collectively, these inquiries provide critical insight about the relationship between media and audience frames.

The dissertation contains two studies: The first assesses how audiences interpret and evaluate well-circulated photos; the second applies those audience-identified frames to a content analysis of social news coverage. For Study 1, audience interpretations of news images are examined using a think-alouds. Think alouds give space for audiences to simply verbalize their thoughts about information; in this scenario, participants thought aloud about what they saw in press images and what that meant to them. Data were collected from one-on-one think aloud sessions with 40 Black and White participants. Participants selected around 10 to 20 images from a pre-selected set of 200 images found in the most shared content about police brutality and discussed why each picture framed a relevant perspective of police use-of-force and social unrest. This think aloud process aids in the advancement of communication scholars' understanding of how social perceptions and stereotypes are understood differently by Blacks and Whites, and the possible differentiations with previously theorized frames in academic literature.

The second study of this dissertation utilized results from Study 1 to analyze digital news content. Specifically, this study looked at a two-year period since the death of Michael Brown. Brown's death was a catalyst that reinvigorated a conversation about police use of force, race, and the status and experiences of Black men and women in the United States. Many cases, from

Eric Garner to Freddie Gray, were covered internationally after Brown's death. Coverage of each case consisted primarily of two major components: A discussion of the event itself (death or forceful arrest); and related protests and unrest. The content analysis focused on visuals that appeared in both these coinciding narratives. Results from this study advance our understandings of journalistic practice, assessing audience interpretation of media frames to provide a more comprehensive account of framing and its potential impact. Additionally, this research explores the audiences' role in circulating and amplifying of news within social media by assessing which frames receive the most shares on Facebook and Twitter.

Ultimately, this dissertation seeks to uncover how audiences identify and evaluate media frames, how these evaluations are different for Blacks and Whites, and how visual news coverage looked on popular social media networks. While framing research concerned with news content has primarily been interpreted from research founded on perspectives of journalists, academics, and White audiences, Black audiences may not interpret media messages in the same way. In polarizing racial and social justice issues, the understanding from this perspective is imperative. Framing research, especially investigations that analyze social issues, should include multiple perspectives for assessing the identification and impact of frames. The implications of this study will further our understanding of social perception differences in visual contexts, and of the news media treatment of a persistent but evolving problem of race in the United States.

Chapter 2: Blacks and Police in America

In 2012, a young boy named Trayvon Martin was leaving a convenience store carrying a now-infamous bottle of tea and Skittles. Community watch volunteer George Zimmerman confronted Martin, against the instructions of emergency personnel. Zimmerman then said he feared for his life, which ultimately led to Martin's shooting death. Protests across the United States called for justice for Martin. One year later, Zimmerman was acquitted. This incident was the birthplace of the modern-day Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, a decentralized but nationally organized movement against the wrongful deaths of Blacks, the lack of prosecution in their attackers, and civil rights for marginalized populations (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016).

For decades, Blacks have been concerned about excessive use of force by police, "driving while Black," unjust criminal punishments, and mass incarceration (e.g. Alexander, 2012; Richie, 2012). For example, the 1991 beating of Rodney King by police officers in Los Angeles, California was one of the first videotaped incidents that brought the issue of police brutality to widespread attention. This concern was reinvigorated after the August 9, 2014 death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, which thrust collective action initiatives like BLM into the international spotlight. Brown, unarmed, was shot multiple times and killed by police officer Darren Wilson (Brown, 2014). At the time, inconsistencies clouded the details of the situation: Some said Brown's hands were up and he was begging the officer not to shoot, while the autopsy report showed no evidence of such a gesture; some said Brown was a suspect in a robbery, while official reports noted that the altercation began because Brown was jaywalking (Byers & Bernhard, 2014). Varying reports also said Brown engaged in a physical fight with the officer,

ultimately leading to Wilson's claim that he feared for his life, shooting Brown at least nine times. Protests and unrest related to the situation were prominent, and tensions intensified when the grand jury decided not to indict Officer Wilson (Clarke & Lett, 2014). Infrequently, protests were marked by violence and rioting during periods of tension (Brown, 2014).

Wilson was not the only police officer who was not charged for killing an unarmed Black civilian during this time frame. Just weeks before Brown's death on July 17, 2014, Eric Garner, who was confronted by police for allegedly selling loose cigarettes, died after being placed in a chokehold by police, famously proclaiming, "I can't breathe" (Goldstein & Schweber, 2014). The responsible officers were not indicted. On November 22, 2014, police shot and killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice, who was holding a toy gun in a public area (Izadi & Holley, 2014). Again, the officers were not indicted on any charges (Williams & Smith, 2015). In April 2015, Walter Scott was shot in the back by a police officer in South Carolina, who attempted to plant evidence on Scott's dead body to make him appear armed. The officer's trial resulted in a mistrial (Silva, 2016), with a retrial date set for August 2017 (Associated Press, 2017). In June 2015, Officer Eric Casebolt, who drew his gun on a group of unarmed teenagers and later threw 15-year-old Dajerria Becton to ground, was not indicted by a grand jury (Associated Press, 2016; Cole-Frowe & Fausset, 2015). Freddie Gray was thrown into the back of a police van and during transport received several fatal neck injuries (Pearson, Almasy, & Brumfield, 2015). Six officers were involved in his transport; zero convictions were made (Rector, 2016).

These and other incidents of Black deaths and police use of force have been thrust into a national debate. Racial injustice narratives were conflicted by colorblind initiatives that insist police are simply doing their jobs, despite the circumstances. On the one hand, protests such as

BLM cover the demands for justice against police. On the other hand, police advocates adopt "Blue Lives Matter" narratives, advocating on behalf of police (Blue Lives Matter, 2017). Others contested BLM advocacy efforts with the colorblind approach of "All Lives Matter." Tensions were high, and the costs are enormous.

Since the death of Michael Brown, news media outlets have paid close attention to new cases and the unrest that follows, documenting the lack of official data, conflicting official and civilian narratives, and the cost of civil unrest. Ultimately, there has been little resolution over the course of the past few years of news coverage. Though police are more likely to wear body cameras (Dann & Rafferty, 2014), the hailed effect has been minimal (Campbell, 2016). The incidents of police use of force against unarmed Black people continues. Take for example, the 2016 deaths of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile. Prolonged protests with seemingly unanswered demands, coupled with the deaths of Castile and Sterling brought tensions to an apex in summer 2016 (e.g. Donnella, 2016). During a BLM protest in Dallas, a mentally ill veteran Micah Xavier Johnson killed five police officers before he was blown up by a robot with a bomb, further complicating the controversy and tension across the nation (Kartalija, 2016).

As such, the study of news media coverage of these cases is critical for not only assessing the outcomes of journalistic practice but also how media portrayals are interpreted and evaluated by the very audiences that they inform. Scholarship advancing the conceptualization of the protest paradigm shows journalists produce negative coverage and portrayals of protests (e.g. Araiza et. al, 2016; Chan & Lee, 1984; Dardis, 2006; Harlow & Johnson, 2011). Framing serves an important facet of the protest paradigm, and frames of protest used in most studies include the riot, confrontation, circus/spectacle, and protest/debate frames (Hertog & McLeod, 1995, 2001).

Additionally, news coverage has been criticized for its use of stereotypes in crime stories. These stereotypes are useful for understanding Black civilian and police portrayals in incidents of police use of force. Previous literature focusing on Black portrayals in crime stories show that Blacks can be overrepresented as criminals, while police are more often portrayed as heroes (e.g. Dixon, 2015; Dixon & Azocar, 2006; Hurley et al., 2015). Because incidents and protests occurred simultaneously, this research seeks to understand the media's role in crafting narratives about the overall presentation of these events.

Ultimately, scholars interested in protests and Black portrayals in the media suggest coverage is negative or delegitimizing (e.g. Boyle et al., 2005; Dixon, 2015; Dixon & Azocar, 2006; Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Watkins, 2001). This inquiry seeks to better understand the nature of content that leads to audiences' evaluations of "negative" or "delegitimizing." Can the same evaluations be inferred for Black and White audiences?

The next chapter of this research dives into these theoretical foundations, highlighting the patterns of journalistic coverage of protest and crime. In addition, the literature review covers how audiences, particularly those who identify as Black and White, may interpret and evaluate frames in different ways than previously suggested.

Chapter 3: Media Frames, Audience Frames, and Audience Evaluations

One theoretical purpose of this project is to understand the relationship between media frames and audience evaluations from the perspectives of individuals who identify as Black or White. In addition, this research examines news coverage distributed in social media networks to understand the types of visuals frames that we can expect social media audiences to encounter. By doing so, this study not only provides a more complex understanding of media and audience framing but also examines coverage through social networks, an increasingly popular digital platform for news retrieval.

It is important to revisit the brief history of framing for a basic understanding of the 'fractured' paradigm. Framing is often considered a necessity for journalists and media professionals – a useful strategy for capturing the details of the story, for validating the omission of others, and ultimately for crafting a narrative that people want to consume. Legions of scholars have used framing as an overarching theory to examine patterns in coverage. This chapter will first give an overview of framing theory, shifting the conversation to prevalent media frames considered within research on news coverage of crime and protests. In addition, a review of scholarship focused on the audiences is explored, highlighting how and why evaluations might be different for Black and White people.

THE FIGHT ABOUT FRAMING

In Goffman's (1974) influential work, frames are metaphors that allow a deep examination into meaning, emphasis, and inevitably bias. Frames ultimately serve as structures that work in and outside of the media – they help communicators, scholars, and audiences make

sense of their everyday lives; they reinforce and sometimes challenge cultural norms and attitudes (Goffman, 1974). Frames construct information, events and thought in ways which transcend social boundaries. Reese (2007) says that frames are *socially shared* categorizing principles that meaningfully structure the world.

Entman (1993) explains that frames assign salience of certain objects, emphasize certain patterns in the definitions of problems or evaluations presented in a text, while ignoring others. Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2016) argue that Entman's heavily cited definition contributes to the confusion of framing scholarship because the conceptualization focuses on emphasis or salience of certain points (*emphasis framing)*. The authors, instead, present several examples of dichotomous frames, arguing these types of frames are the more methodologically sound approach to understanding framing. These dichotomous frames, which they categorize as *equivalence frames,* are mutually exclusive. Equivalence frames construct equal information in two different ways — for example, as gain/loss frames or episodic/thematic frames. Equivalence framing studies can ultimately present black-or-white scenarios. However, even those studies that code for equivalence frames such as episodic and thematic, often do so based on the predominance of frame in the article (e.g. Dorfman, Woodruff, Chavez, & Wallack, 1997; Fornaciari, 2012; Holt & Major, 2010; Nitz & West, 2004). In other words, studies code for the primary frame, making it look like stories contain only one frame, when they may contain many. In this case, Entman's emphasis framing remains a relevant approach to understanding frames.

Entman's (1993) suggests that the emphasis of certain elements includes evaluations, interpretations and suggestive remedies selected by the communicator. Scholarship has divided this concept of framing into at least two parts for empirical inquiry: media frames and audience

frames. Media frames are those constructed by news professional and journalists. The second is audience frames, often found in framing effects research. Both types of frames are discussed in the next sections.

Media Frames

For this research, media frames are those frames constructed by the media. For journalists, frames serve as useful and familiar structures for crafting narratives. Scholars tend to agree that media frames are an interpretation of selective information (Gamson, 1985; McQuail, 2010; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). Gitlin (1980) argues that media frames "organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports" (p. 7). This definition suggests media frames are, by default, not exclusive to media producers. Media frames are conceptualized in two parts then: Frames created by journalists' reliance on routines to identify and classify information in short notice; and organizational structures for the audience.

Research interested in media framing typically discusses the frames of journalistic content. For example, many recent protest studies use templated frames conceptualized in Hertog and McLeod's (1995) study of 1980's anarchist protests in Minneapolis. Few researchers speak with media producers themselves to decipher the construction of media frames. Framing analyses of this sort further complicate the concept of "media frames" because, technically, the researcher is reading articles as an audience member. Ultimately, who identifies a frame's evaluations and remedies is a methodological consideration that should be explored in more detail, especially in respect to literature on protests and crime stories. Acknowledging the

limitations of previous research, this dissertation builds on our understanding of prominent media frames by considering perspectives of different types of audiences.

Audience Frames

Audience frames are explored in media effects research as outcomes of media exposure. Defined as "mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information" (Entman, 1993, p.53), audience frames can also be considered the way the audience evaluates and interprets information. Sanbonmatsu and Fazio (1991) note media play important roles in constructing memories and schemas for audiences. And, as mentioned previously, Gitlin (1980) suggests that media frames help audiences organize information for themselves. These studies indicate that media and audience frames may overlap in some instances.

Scholarship examining how media and audience frames interact is underdeveloped. Price, Tewksbury, and Powers (1997) examined the relationship between media and audience frames by conducting an experiment where participants wrote down all their thoughts about news articles. Audience effects were more powerful for specific issues discussed in coverage rather than whether articles were framed as conflict, human interest or consequences (Price, Tewksbury & Powers, 1997). The authors argue the direct adoption of media frames by the audience is likely limited. Finding the opposite, Huang (1995) analyzed the role media play in constructing audience frames, and found that media frames and audience frames closely overlapped. To examine the difference between audience frames and media frames and avoid confusion associated with the terms, this dissertation divides audience frames into two sections: audience-recognized media frames and audience evaluations of those frames.

In his seminal work, Iyengar (1994) examined how television news framing influences audience's evaluations. Time after time, Iyengar found that the information from television news influences audience's evaluations of issues. In his research, he concluded that the attribution of responsibility shifted with certain media frames. In other words, the more extensive coverage given to an issue using a specific frame, the more likely audiences are to perceive information in a certain way, ultimately effecting who the audience blamed for the problem. Media frames of protest found in text, which typically focus on negative actions like rioting or confrontation, are thought to lead audiences to negatively view protests (e.g. Harlow & Johnson, 2011). From a contrary perspective, however, research on audience reception research has noted that engaged audiences can diminish the effects of media frames (Liebes & Katz, 1990; Livingstone, 2013; Morley, 1980). Noting these possible differences, a better understanding of the relationship between media and audience frames is crucial.

Standard content analysis approaches are increasingly common for understanding media frames' prevalence in news coverage. Yet, audience frames are rarely investigated. Particularly for research pertaining to crime and protests, audience frames are increasingly implied or speculated. Furthering our understanding of the relationship between media and audience frames (or how the audience interprets information) is vital for advancing framing theory. In addition, while most articles focus on frames and evaluations from text, few discuss images and visuals. An overview of visual framing theory is discussed in the next section.

VISUAL FRAMING

A brief discussion of visual framing is relevant because this dissertation interrogates framing from a visual perspective. Historically, scholars have paid considerably less attention to visuals than they have to texts, especially in issues of protest and social unrest.

Photographic meaning is more interpretive than the specific assignments and definitions given to words. Pictures are useful tools for conveying powerful emotions as well as displaying unique and vivid information that cannot be expressed in the same way with words (R. Coleman, 2010; Messaris & Abraham, 2001). However, emotional appeals and readings are not always universal. A portion of these variations in emotional and contextual interpretations are a result of images' semiotic and persuasive components.

Gitlin (1980) provides guidance for visual framing studies that directly addresses the role of visuals, explaining that frames serve as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (Gitlin, 1980, p.7). This observation relies on repetition to identify frames and describes frames for both the "framing [of] pictures in our heads" and the frames in the picture (R. Coleman, 2010). Ultimately at least two types of frames need to be differentiated in visual framing scholarship: the audience frame (the picture in our heads) or the physical frame (the media frame presented in the actual picture). For this reason, this research seeks to identify both by using a think-aloud protocol that ultimately asks participants to connect thoughts with parts of the picture.

As many scholars note, while visuals are important, interpretation is difficult because words are used to describe visual connections and understandings (e.g. Bock, 2015; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Bock (2015) says researchers should consider the multimodality and

recontextualization of images when examining image meaning. She speculates that visual framing may not be a theoretical program at all, arguing instead that framing adds to the confusion by providing a catch-all term for visual elements. Each visual element is a piece of the overall framing of an article, and therefore, scholars also argue against isolating visuals from text. While it is true that the entirety of a message is certainly a consideration for the overall framing of an article, audiences don't reliably read the entirety of news content. Instead, audiences have been known to have a "commitment problem online" (Rosenwald, 2014, para. 1). Instead of reading, users scroll and skim content. Keywords and visuals are prominent stopping points for this tactic. Thus, while the complexity of all text is a worthwhile consideration for scholarship, the research considering visuals in isolation is still valuable for understanding the nature of images and their messages. Therefore, consistent with other visual framing research, considering visuals separately from text remains a relevant point of entry for researchers (e.g. Coleman, 2010).

Interpretive tools of visual analysis are critical for understanding these frames. For researchers, interpretive tools and devices for visual approaches include complex technical terms that are often overlapping and are not always mutually exclusive. Scholars that utilize these different approaches argue the interrogation of object, signs, symbols, and actions in pictures helps understand how audiences create meaning. Saussure (1916) conceptualized signs as having two main elements, the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the signs' physical form; the signified is the underlying concept it represents. For an interpretation of Saussure's ideas, the signifier is a concrete principle – for example, a group of people holding picket signs that say "Black Lives Matter" means a protest is taking place. The words on the signs and the

collection of people have a detailed message and meaning. Thus, the signifier is the artifact of the photo. The signified is the concept: a group of people is protesting, but what? Are they angry and dangerous, or are they fighting an unjust cause? The answers to these questions lie in the signified and are mostly open to the reader. Herein lies significant space for audience interpretation differences.

Additionally, Barthes (1977) complicates this dichotomous approach to meaning by acknowledging that images have two types of signifiers that affect the signified: connotative and denotative meanings. The connotative element of a sign is the abstract concept of the denotative (or the literal object). These can both act as signifiers for a signified concept. Connotative elements carry meaning beyond the obvious, providing different and deeper context. Thus, connotative elements likely require an abstract thought process for interpretation. For example, in the context of Black Lives Matter, a picture of a confrontation between police and protestor (denotative) may be perhaps lead to evaluations of protests as unnecessarily combative and, for Black protests, may support ideas of violence (connotative). To another person, the same picture of a confrontation (denotative) may be understood as a necessary piece of the societal battle against oppression (denotative), perhaps conjuring ideas of confrontation from the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. Barthes (1977) contends that examining the denotative and connotative levels is essential for understanding how meaning is constructed, partially because the connotative sign can ultimately vary from person to person.

Peirce (1902) identifies another set of categorization terms for visual cues: Iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs. These types of signs explain how the signifiers and signified work together in different ways (Rose, 2016). Icons have signs and signifiers that are related to each

other through parts that closely represent each other. The identification of iconic signs does not necessarily need the direct connection between the object and the picture. Instead, iconic signs use the core features or the prominent "visual cues that we use in real-world vision" (Messaris, 1997, p. 54). Messaris (1997) argues that thinking about form and structure similarities, such as shapes and colors, can extend the idea of iconicity. Indexical signs depend on the cultural interpretation of the sign and signifier relationship (Rose, 2016). Indexical signs are smaller objects that come from a larger object. For example, we can recognize, despite great variation in detail, that the tears running down the face of an individual represent grief or sorrow. This tear is just a piece of the whole but has a direct connection with the entirety of the representation. Like connotative messages, symbols portray an image that may only be arbitrarily connected to the signifier and signified. These sign and signifier relationships are present in pictures and videos and can aid in uncovering how groups of pictures may work together to create a shared understanding. Overall, the interpretative devices used by scholars serve as different ways of understanding and processing the prominent signs, symbols, and actions that appear in visuals. This research refers to these objects, signs, symbols, and actions as visual cues.

Ultimately, Messaris (1994) argues that there is a symbiotic relationship between the absence of standardized visual literacy and the multitude of meanings from pictures. Additionally, the multimodality of the online sphere (see Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) also complicates what a visual means based on when and where it appears. A picture on Facebook may not be interpreted the same way as it would if it appeared, for example, on the evening news. These aspects are isolated partially in this study by using printed pictures from coverage (Study 1). Though ultimately this research does not explore the full extent to which text and

verbal direction may drive the visual message, the research on visual messages is no less important, particularly in the click-and-scan digital environment.

As with texts, frames within visual messages are not objective; instead, editors choose each picture for publication, just as photographers choose each moment and angle. R. Coleman (2010) acknowledges that the process of choosing camera angles, editing, and selecting all create different framing techniques. Her analysis includes components by actors such as facial expressions, gestures, subjects, as well as supplementary art such as charts and graphs. Receivers can also process each of these elements of visuals in different ways (Messaris & Abraham, 2001). Additionally, the focal point of the visual shot may provide descriptive information about the ability to portray certain signs. Focal points can include close-up shots of detailed accounts, medium shots of an individual (from the waist up for example) or a long, scene-setting shot. These technical frames provide pertinent information about the emphasis placed by the photographer. However, the sometimes-subtle effect on audience interpretation is not well understood. The remainder of this chapter discusses the framing scholarship as it pertains to police use of force incidents and social unrest.

FRAMING POLICE USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS

What the public knows about police use of force and the day-to-day operations of law enforcement largely derives from media coverage (Dowler, 2003). While crime and conflict are news values of the media (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013), police behavior is not always of concern in standard crime stories. Using the Rodney King Beating of 1992 as an example, Lawrence (2000) contends that because of media practices, police brutality and questionable use of force is simply an occasional issue, and thus only arises in the news in times of extreme or dramatic acts.

Indeed, most police brutality complaints do not become part of the news at all; however, since the death of Michael Brown, the media have afforded significant space to reporting and accounting for the issue (e.g. Elmasry & el-Nawawy, 2016).

Lawrence's (2000) study of news coverage revealed that police use of force coverage was primarily episodic, singular accounts. Lawrence argues that King's assault by police received increased attention because it was videotaped and broadcasted on television, quickly garnering national scrutiny. Visual evidence was a key for igniting more prominent media coverage, though Lawrence (2000) did not include visuals in her analysis. King's case stands as a comparative marker for the transition of news coverage almost 25 years later. Like the King beating and aftermath, in 2014 and 2015 several names associated with police brutality were prominent in the headlines: Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland to name a few. Most individuals had footage of their arrests or deaths. Each incident had additional similarities: All were victims of excessive use of force; all were unarmed; all were Black.

Nevertheless, the circumstances of being unarmed, Black, videotaped and dead did not necessarily lead to coverage of "victims." Instead, some of these individuals were subject to, for example, detailed accounts of their past (Eligon, 2014) and negative photographic identification (Brown, 2014). These recent questionable use-of-force incidents provide the ideal opportunity to reexamine the framing of both police and civilians involved. Because protests immediately followed these incidents, this research considers this triggering event as an essential consideration in conjunction with the protest coverage.

Though less research focuses on how the media portray Blacks in instances of police violence, the framing of Blacks' interactions with police in crime stories is useful for anticipating coverage patterns. Most research examining Blacks focuses on stereotyping and suggests Blacks appear prominently as criminals. For example, Dixon & Linz (2000a, 2000b) shows Blacks are represented more often as offenders and culprits in television news than reality. Mainstream media organizations tend to over represent Blacks as perpetrators compared to other racial demographics (Romer, Jamieson, & De Coteau, 1998). Recently, Dixon (2015) found Black crime coverage is now more proportional to coverage, although representations of them as victims and authority figures are still underrepresented.

This perpetuation of Blacks as criminals contributes to audiences' stereotypical evaluations of issues, an entry point for exploration in this research. Stereotypes about Blacks are embedded "deep within the White psyche" (Entman & Rojecki, 2001, p. 54). Even in instances where Blacks are victims of a violent crime, the media and audiences may frame Blacks as aggressors. As Martin (2009) notes, many minority populations are subject to "characterizations as both the victims and the aggressors, sometimes one person in the same." (p. 5). Indeed, the assignment of victim and perpetrator is important, for example, in the case of Sandra Bland. Framed as an aggressor, she was not complying with police orders and thus was dealt with by authorities. This frame might lead to evaluations such as the following: "I was appalled by the kind of language she was using with an authority figure…had [she] been my daughter, I'd be embarrassed" (Media Matters, 2015, n.p.). However, other visual accounts of the altercation that show the police officer pinning Bland to the ground may lead to evaluations that frame Bland as a victim of unlawful police use of force. Without this victim framing, a reinforcement of the

stereotype of Blacks as criminals in news coverage likely results in more negative evaluations of the incident. The role stereotypes play in news production and audience evaluation is important to consider within framing research during an event that challenges both the depictions of the criminal, aggressor, and victim.

Also relevant to this discussion is the absence of news coverage data (but not stereotypes) surrounding alleged police brutality against Black women. Black women's depictions in news coverage range from the complete absence (Richie, 2012) to misrepresentation (Hallmark & Armstrong, 1999). Historically, women have faced many of the same characterizations that other minority groups face: degradation, distortion, and trivialization (Tuchman, Daniels, & Benét, 1978). Bennett (2006) argues that from societal perspective, women were perceived as "naturally greedy, oversexed and untrustworthy…. [and] used sex to gain money, position and advantage" (p. 148). However, particularly in the United States, Black women were differentiated even further from White women, degraded for not conforming to preferred Western gender roles presented by White women, among other reasons (Davis, 2011). One turning point for the Black female characterization came from the Moynihan Report (Moynihan, 1965), which effectively blamed the so-called "matriarchal structure" of the Black family for Black inferiority, explaining away the oppression Blacks faced. More modern stereotypes include Black women as immoral, loose, lacking in the ability to mother, angry, and inferior (Davis, 2011). These depictions are important because they may serve as useful primes for audiences to understand images of Black women, especially within a genre where Black women do not frequently appear.

Another angle of consideration is that the status of Black women has often come secondary to that of Black men. Alexander (2012) catalogs the acceleration of Black male

incarceration and the targeted policing efforts toward Black populations since the implementation of the so-called "war on drugs." Alexander's study focuses mostly on the Black men. However, the Department of Justice statistics show Black women were neither immune to the effects of policing efforts nor to police use-of-force, evidenced by recent coverage.

Richie (2012) articulates the unique realities women of color face in light of police brutality, coercion, and excessive force within the American prison system. Richie discusses the death of Theresa Adell Ardoin, a Black woman killed by her White boyfriend, William Baker Bibb. Bibb beat Ardoin with a hammer, then dragged her behind his truck. News coverage was limited to only a handful of articles (Richie, 2012). However, a description of the account from the Dallas Morning News said that police said, "[T]he two had planned to 'possibly do some drugs, have sex, [and that] an argument somewhere in the middle of all this ensued, and it just went bad from there.'" (Associated Press, 2010, para.9). Richie (2012) argues that the inclusion of this speculative assertion (framing Ardoin in a sexual and criminal light) is just one way the media play a role in blaming Black women for their own deaths, rather than understanding them as victims. Law (2001) suggests that the demonization and criminalization of Black women can be accredited to the unjust "guilty by association" conspiracy laws that accompanied the start of the War on Drugs as well as political and media depictions targeting Black women as welfare abusers and drug addicts. It is, thus, reasonable to assume that Black women involved in police violence will be assigned to similar, if not worse, "criminal" stereotypes than their male counterparts.

A final crucial consideration for framing questionable use-of-force incidents is the media narratives used describe the police themselves. In the news coverage of crime, researchers have

cataloged a history of Whites framed in a positive light. Whites are consistently over-represented in heroic public servant roles such as police officers, official sources, and victims in coverage of crime (Dixon, 2015; Dixon & Linz, 2000b, 2000b). Additionally, Dixon (2015) found that Blacks were underrepresented as police officers in news coverage. These findings may also contribute to audiences applying ideas of race expectancy to police officers and victims.

The contradictory nature of Blacks' general portrayals as criminals and the opportunistic portrayals of Whites as victims and officers as heroes fits with the polarizing discussion of the actual events of police brutality in the period analyzed in this study. Coinciding each incident in 2014 and 2015 were protests and social unrest. The next section examines aspects of protest framing that are relevant to these police brutality incidents.

FRAMING PROTESTS

The identification of frames within the coverage of protest and crisis aftermath is a ripe area for evaluation and interpretation of interpretation differences. The protest paradigm describes the press' adherence to so-called "delegitimizing" pillars; one such pillar is the framing of events. When protest groups align more with the status quo, they usually enjoy fair results in the news (Boyle et al., 2005; Shoemaker, 1984). For protests directly challenging the status quo, as would the case for Black Lives Matter, the delegitimizing elements are more prevalent.

Studies of protests show that media coverage tends to expose extremes (rioting, confrontation between protestors and police, spectacle or sensational tactics) while ignoring moderate aspects (peaceful protesting, healthy debate). In journalism scholarship, adherence to the protest paradigm is typically studied quantitatively using text-based approaches, examining media frames that include "riot," "confrontation," "spectacle", and "debate" (Hertog & McLeod,

1995). The "riot" frame emphasizes the deviant behaviors of protesters or those associated with protests in some way. The "confrontation" frame reveals protestors as combatants, highlighting clashes between demonstrators and police and governmental forces. The "spectacle" frame draws attention to protestors' appearances and emotional drama, emphasizing the seemingly dramatic or sensational representations of protestors emotions, and includes aspects of celebrity endorsements and involvement. Scholars suggest that these three frames are delegitimizing to protestors because of the focus on negative activities (e.g. Harlow & Johnson, 2011). In this case, the delegitimization refers to an audience frame. Adding to the protest frame typology, Araiza et al.'s (2016) analysis of journalists' coverage of Ferguson unrest on Twitter, offering an additional frame they called "journalists as real-time storm chasers" (p. 5). This frame is one that presents protests as both "exciting and dangerous" (p. 5).

In textual studies, the so-called legitimizing frames of "protest" and "debate" emphasize protesters' causes and demands and provide social critique (Hertog & McLeod, 1995, 2001). These frames present a problem in visual coding because the context of a debate issue (e.g., the connection between an event and a police use of force or economic inequality problem) is likely hard to fully convey visually. Instead, scholars discuss legitimizing frames in more general terms. For example, Arpan and associates (2006) explained positive visualizations of protestors included depictions of peacefulness. Ultimately, scholars propose that the debate, protest, and peace frames are legitimizing.

In the case of police use-of-force against Blacks, research has shown mixed results. Mourao, Kilgo, and Sylvie (2015) found national and local newspaper coverage of Michael Brown's death during the first three months framed protests more often as violent or

confrontational than discussing protester's demands and grievances. However, Elmasry and el-Nawawy (2016) found that coverage was more legitimizing during peaks of intense conflict. Neither of these studies included visual elements. Araiza et al.'s (2016) qualitative study about the Ferguson protests examined journalist's Twitter posts, including multimedia elements. Overall, they found that tweets from journalists adhered to the protest paradigm; however, professional visual journalists dissented from the paradigm, focusing more on sympathetically framing the protestors. This is one of the few communication studies published to date that specifically gives visuals consideration in assessing the possibilities of their role in the protest paradigm in a social media setting. Building on this work, this dissertation adds to this nascent research examining the visual patterns in news coverage on social media as well as audience recognition of these protest media frames.

The terms legitimizing and delegitimizing have been used in countless studies to understand findings from content analyses of protest coverage. However, the terms do not derive from consistent empirical studies of the audience. The next section of this dissertation explains why the delegitimizing and legitimizing construction is a limitation of previous work.

UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCE EVALUATION

In racially-charged events such as those that include accusations of police brutality and use of force against Blacks, social and cultural differences of the audiences are important to consider. Theories that pertain to social perception serve as the best predictors for understanding possible differences in evaluation. Hall (1974) pointed out that variations of social perception were a product of audience's understanding and misunderstanding, all of which depend on how transparent a message's meaning is to the producer and receiver. Ultimately, Hall's suggestion is

that interpretations will differ based on identity. And, in communication scholarship, most research focuses on the audiences' understanding of frames and effects of media content on Whites' perceptions while less is known about Blacks.

For Blacks, W.E.B. Du Bois (1904) argued for the theoretical framework of "double consciousness," which explains the psychological duality that Blacks endure in a White-dominated world, and ultimately provides a basis for Black interpretation differences from Whites. According to double consciousness theory, Blacks' interpretations include their personal views as well as a consideration for how Whites would see an issue. Du Bois (1904) notes that double consciousness is a result of the internalization of oppression, and oppression is at the heart of police brutality.

It is imperative for scholars to consider this peculiar "two-ness" (Du Bois, 1904, para 2) when assessing the differences of audience frames and effects of media frames. Research in Black psychology showcases the breadth of this differences. White (1984) argues that it is inappropriate to use psychology theories based on White participants to assess Black people. Doing so assesses Black people through a lens of weakness, domination, and inferiority. In other words, generalizations of overarching White theory may not effectively predict the thoughts or cognitive processes of Black people.

The effects of twoness are also important to consider. For example, Thomas (1971) notes, "Black people accommodated and internalized their astoundingly oppressive society" (p.39) and that because of this "few [B]lacks can claim that they were always [B]lack" (p.41). These variations of identity have laid the foundation for social identity theories about Blackness, which

suggest that the degree of identity may change the dynamics of the "twoness" discussed by Du Bois.

Jones & Shorter-Gooden (2003) theorized Blacks process information through identity shifting – that is, Blacks may change cultural identities to understand certain situations. This research found that Black women shift from ideals that are true to themselves (marked "Black" ideals) to ideals fit more uniformly with "American" society (marked "White" ideals). One of the most prominent examples of variances in Black and White ideals rests in research on body images. Several studies indicate, for example, that Black women and girls do not have the same body image issues as White women. Black women embrace ideals that "normal" weights are more flattering than thinness (Dolamore, 1999; Flynn & Fitzgibbon, 1996; Thompson, Corwin, & Sargent, 1997). However, Black women acknowledge thinness ideals of Whites that surround them (Anthony, 2015). Additionally, the ability to identify institutional and covert racism may vary between Blacks and Whites.

Media effects studies are primarily concerned with how certain independent variables, such as media consumption, create variations in audiences' behaviors and attitudes. While these causal relationships are important to explore (for example, the presence of certain frames lead to possible delegitimizing attitudes from audiences), very few studies examine the cognitive processes, and the specific audience interpretations and evaluations of media content that can mediate effects (Reeves, Chaffee, & Tims, 1982).

An extensive body of research is devoted to examining media presentations and racial perceptions, including the assumptions drawn from Blacks and Whites. For example, years of research have revealed that stereotypical information informs real-world perceptions of

individuals, particularly racial assumptions in contexts of criminality, justice, and the legal process (e.g. Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Mastro & Kopacz, 2006; Pan & Kosicki, 1996). Other scholarship showed that Black criminality is among one of the most prevalent stereotypical presentations of Blacks, and may reinforce a cognitive association between race and crime (Dixon, 2015; Dixon & Azocar, 2006; Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b). However, almost all findings are based on studies that deal with primarily White participants, and they tend to suggest that assumed criminality of Black people prime negative interpretations about Black people in news coverage. This is likely not the case for Black audiences.

Studies in psychology and sociology also demonstrate that Blacks may have different interpretations than Whites, mainly due to socialization and cultural differences. For example, Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, & Stevenson (2014) found that Black youth interpreted stereotypical presentations of Black women through a critical lens, arguing they could identify and perceive negative stereotypes as damaging and marginalizing. However, in this study, youth were likely to challenge assertions, attributing them as false portrayals of reality. In other words, while Black people's identification of frames within images may be like those from White people, the evaluation was not. This research aims to shed light on these similarities and differences.

THE AUDIENCE AND STEREOTYPES

Regarding stereotype recognition and perception, race and gender stereotypes serve as space for a dominant group to dehumanize or 'other' another group. From the minority group, however, stereotype identification and internalization is noted to be different for Black people. Adams-Bass, Stevenson & Kotzin (2014) determined that Black racial socialization, Black

history knowledge, and media exposure all played a role in Black men and women's interpretation of information. L. M. Coleman and authors (1995) use several models of stereotyping to attempt to understand how Black people evaluate others. Their results show that Black participants only "abstractly" support in-group and out-group theories, finding responses to racial differences made less of a difference than that of White people. Also, R. Coleman (2011) found that for Black journalism students, in-group theories were not at play in ethical reasoning when analyzing photographs of people of different races. Therefore, the negative criminal stereotypes assigned to Black people and the positive heroic stereotypes assigned to police may be challenged in this study. Understanding the differences in audiences' understanding of stereotypes is also explored in this research.

MULTIMEDIA AND SOCIAL NEWS COVERAGE

The term "multimedia" includes considerations from institutional, technical, and cultural spheres of academic research (e. g. Brannon, 2008; Jankowski & Van Selm, 2000; Opgenhaffen, 2008; Pavlik, 2001; Steensen, 2011; Tu, 2015). Maguire (2014) noted that multimedia storytelling allows new ways to advance beyond the printed word. Though textual spaces remain a primary consideration for most communication scholarship, the use of visuals and multimedia in the digital age is increasingly important, especially as digital audiences prefer visually-oriented content to the isolated written word (Morrison, 2016).

Audiences have flocked to digital and online social platforms to retrieve news and information. Approximately 62% of adults retrieve their news from social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016). Social media networks are not only platforms for news distribution within connected networks, but they also allow news sharing and

interaction through liking, sharing, and commenting (e.g. García-Perdomo et al., 2017; Kilgo, 2016; Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015). Audience interaction with content on social media incites conversations, allows for the analysis of engagement with a particular news article, and increases visibility. Sharing (sharing on Facebook or retweeting on Twitter, for example) ultimately increases the exposure of an article within a social network. In a sense, sharing allows digital audiences to act as the "paperboys" of the past, giving users the ability to amplify, redistribute and reframe news.

Research has shown that there are similarities and differences between Facebook and Twitter. For example, Groshek and Al-Rawi (2013) found that for political campaigns, social media users were not hypercritical of candidates on either social network, yet sentiments diverged considerably in each network. García Perdomo and colleagues (2017) also found major differences in audience's preferences to share news content based on news values and country of origin. Similarly, Harlow and associates (2017) focused specifically on multimedia productions, finding that Twitter and Facebook users redistributed information about protests in significantly different patterns.

This study uses news media shared within social media platforms to evaluate patterns of news content and audience sharing patterns. Combining content analysis results with social media interaction data (in this study, the total number of times an article was publically shared on Facebook and Twitter), this study assesses not only how news was portrayed on social media and how audiences perceive those images, but also if there is a relationship between type of news coverage and social media audience sharing. Considering audiences' roles as distributors with

an analysis of journalistic coverage, this analysis will examine which frames were shared most often on Facebook and Twitter.

By doing so, this dissertation can give a more comprehensive look at the nature of visual images: 1) audience recognitions of media frames in visual media coverage; 2) audience evaluations (audience frames) of visual media coverage; 3) media framing of excessive use of force events and related protests; and finally, 4) the extent to which variations in visual messages were shared within two of the largest social networks online — Facebook and Twitter. Based on this literature, research questions and hypotheses for the first study focus on audience recognition of media frames and audience evaluations of coverage, while study two builds on both bodies of knowledge to examine news content.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS FOR STUDY 1

By using social perception and framing theories as an entry point, this research seeks to understand how audiences identify and interpret media frames (Study 1) and how often these frames appear in news coverage on social media (Study 2). The previous literature outlined the areas of framing that require more development, especially when it comes to media and audience frames. The literature review provided a basic layout for relevant academic frames that may be recognized by audiences viewing news coverage of protests and altercations with police. Based on the previous research, the following questions are explored.

RQ1: What media frames do audiences recognize?

RQ2: How do audiences evaluate media frames?

Additionally, the literature suggests that Black and White audiences will interpret news content differently. One such theory that provides explanation for hypothesized interpretation

31

differences is double consciousness of Black people (DuBois, 1904) – a psychological and

sociological theory that continues to remain relevant after more than a century of empirical

inquiry.

    H2: Black and White audiences will interpret frames differently.

Chapter 4: Qualitative Approach to Understanding Audience Evaluations

The first study in this research uses think-aloud procedures that included photos as stimuli to answer 1) how Whites and Blacks interpret and understand visual news depictions of police use-of-force events and protests, and 2) the relationship between media and audience frames.

PHOTO SELECTION

The social news coverage of prominent cases in 2014 and 2015, including visual coverage of protests, was examined to determine categories of pictures inductively. These categories were refined multiple times to increase validity (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Ultimately, pictures fell into six categories, which included overlap with previous literature on framing in protest and crime stories (e.g. Hertog & McLeod, 1995; Dixon, 2015), and emerging frames identified by a close reading of news content. Groups included: 1-Headshots and identification of the police officers, incident-involved Blacks[1], official sources, and other sources in stories; 2-Screen captures from citizen footage of the incident; 3-Violent protest images; 4-Police protest response images; 5-Non-violent protest images; and, 6-Counter-protest images. Pictures were obtained based on searches of online news websites, social media data, and Google images. Appendix 1 gives samples of each type of image included in the final study. Each category is briefly described below.

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[1] The term "incident-involved Black individuals" is used only as a technical term to differentiate those who are cast as a victim. While I believe that all people involved in police-related use of force incidents are inherently victims of force, regardless of their alleged crime, the term "victim" is not often used by participants in this study, particularly White individuals. The victim stereotype thus is a prevalent stereotype that should be considered separately from the civilian in question.

Headshots

Police officers (Appendix 1, Group 1). This category included officers in uniform in staged and candid settings. Some were mugshots. Often, news media grouped pictures together of people who were involved in the incident. For example, in the same jpeg file, pictures of an incident-involved Black may be digitally placed next to police officers. These could be discussed together or individually, depending on the participant.

Incident-involved Blacks (Appendix 1, Group 2). These images included headshots of a variety of Blacks, including Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Freddy Gray, Dajerria Becton, and Eric Garner.

Other Sources (Appendix 1, Group 3). These photos included individuals who were speaking about the events such as attorneys, public officials, and police officer's family members and representatives. This group of photos included people who were not involved in incidents and were not protestors or police officers.

Footage from the Event

(Appendix 1, Group 4). Event photos included video stills and screenshots from several key cases, including Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, and Dajerria Becton. Images included individuals and officers engaged in an altercation, being detained or in police custody, and in a few photos, individuals who lost their lives.

Violent/Confrontational Protest Images

(Appendix 1, Group 5). These included protestors engaged in or associated with reckless behavior (hitting cars, starting fires, using weapons), the destruction of public property, looting,

rioting, and other related behavior. Images of damage to property, police cars, and stores, and clashes and confrontations with police appeared in this category.

Police/Military Protest Response Images

(Appendix 1, Group 6). These photos accented the police as the focus of the photos. Pictures included police officers in regular uniforms as well as riot gear or more combat-ready clothing. Police were pictured engaged in a variety of activities, including simply being present in a public area, in a confrontational stance, and engaged directly with protestors either as an opposition or as a member of a protest. This group also included pictures of the national guard and military response.

Non-Violent Protest Images

(Appendix 1, Group 7). Peaceful protest images included a plethora that did not show protestors engaged or associated with violent behavior. These included individuals holding signs, walking in lines, attending vigils, participating in die-ins, speaking at podiums, peacefully resisting, etc. Photos that included protest signs had a variety of messages including signs that said "Black Lives Matter," "Enough is Enough," "Don't Shoot," "12 Years – 2 seconds, can't we have a trial?" Also, protestors varied in age and race. Pictures of individuals cleaning up after the destruction of public property appeared in this category.

Counter-Protest Images

(Appendix 1, Group 8). A series of non-violent, counter-protest images appeared in the sample, including visualizations of pro-police, anti-Black Lives Matter, or All Lives Matter protests. Violent images of counter-protests did not appear in this sample.

This study included a total of 40 individual think-aloud sessions. Think alouds are an ideal methodological approach for understanding how individuals process and interpret information (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). According to Kuipers and Kassier (1984), think alouds are a more appropriate methodological approach for analyzing the complexity of thoughts and evaluations than survey-driven methodological approaches. Recent research utilized think-aloud protocols to understand what prompts audiences to click on online news (Kormelink & Meijer, 2017) and what motivates online information seeking (O'Brien, Freund, & Westman, 2014). As such, a similar approach is appropriate for an analysis interrogating the interpretations of pictures shared on online news.

Before participating in each session, participants were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire that gathered information about news exposure, demographic information and overall exposure to recent news about police use of force and related unrest. Upon completion, participants were asked to select 20 to 40 pictures from the corpus of 200 described in the previous section. Participants were told to identify images portraying various elements, frames or perspectives related to recent events of police violence and protesting. Participants did not select images that fell in the Other Sources category (attorneys, public officials, and police officer's family members and representatives). Each participant chose a relatively diverse mix of images of protest and images relevant to each incident. Overall, picture selection relied more heavily on discussing protest images. However, every participant discussed at least four headshots and at least two stills from incidents.

Participant sessions (n = 40) were held one-on-one in a private setting that was convenient for the participant. In most cases, each session was conducted in the participants' home or private meeting rooms. Each think-aloud session lasted about one hour and was video recorded. Each participant was asked to think aloud about each image. If a participant became silent while looking at the picture, session moderators reminded participants to think aloud about the image until they had exhausted their thoughts.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 40 participants (20 Black participants and 20 White participants) were recruited using purposive sampling. Glaser (1978) suggests researchers should "go to the groups which they believe will maximize the possibilities of obtaining data and leads for more data on their question" (p. 45). Glaser (1978) also says that theoretical sampling is most useful when researchers analyze raw data during the data collection process. Consistent with these suggestions, data were analyzed while being collected, allowing the opportunity to recruit individuals with theoretically relevant characteristics. Participants were recruited initially through professional and personal networks. Also, participants were asked to suggest others who may be interested in participating. No participants were academic faculty, although some participants were graduate students. All participants resided in the southern United States.

Participants took a short survey that included questions about demographic information, political leaning, news consumption, and familiarity with the subject matter before beginning the interview. Regarding demographic information, the average age of participants was about 30 years old. White participants were slightly younger than Black participants (White M = 29.35, SD=5.914; Black M=32, SD=8.092). Those who did not identify as Black or White were no

included in this research. Participants were highly educated: 13 interviewees had at least

advanced degrees, 12 graduated from college, 11 had some college experience, and four

participants graduated from high school. In terms of political orientation, the sample leaned

moderately liberal (1 = very liberal, 7 =very conservative, M=3.05, SD = 1.339). Eight

participants considered themselves neutral, while a total of six participants considered

themselves conservative leaning. No Black participants identified as conservative leaning,

though five identified as neutral. Participants reported having at least moderate exposure to

news stories about recent events of alleged police use-of-force and social unrest (1 = none, 7

=extensive, M=3.93, SD=1.607). In addition, participants reporting using social media to retrieve

news on a regular basis (1 = never, 7 = all the time, M=4.33, SD = 1.831).

SESSION MODERATORS

The author of this study (who identifies as Black) moderated sessions with Black

participants and an additional moderator (who identifies as White) who was trained to interview

White participants. The additional moderator trained on all study protocols with the researcher.

Three meetings were held to discuss study protocol. The first meeting discussed overall protocol,

picture selection, expectations for time limits, and guidelines for think-aloud procedures. The

moderator was also given handouts for pre-interview surveys, and was asked to complete IRB

training. After IRB was complete, another meeting was held to review protocol. The session

moderators' interaction with each participant was minimal; they engaged only to remind

participants to continue verbalizing their thoughts to exhaustion. After the moderator had

performed the first interview, an additional meeting was held to discuss ways to invite (without

guiding) participants to select more pictures. The moderator and primary researcher also discussed ways to recruit different-minded individuals.

The inclusion of a secondary moderator was crucial to help control for reactivity because of race. Agyeman (2008) explains that having participants who can identify with the research in sensitive topics such as race helps reduce the "outsider looking in" effect (pg. 1).

Chapter 5: Audience and Media Frames of Police Brutality and Social Unrest

This chapter highlights findings from the think-aloud sessions, positioning audience-recognized media frames with audience frames, and emphasizing how Black and White participants in this study recognized and evaluated frames differently. As this chapter will illustrate, audience frames are closely related to media frames, though, as expected, differences in interpretations emerged between audiences. In think alouds, participants were prompted to discuss an image to exhaustion, and therefore responses often included both the participants' thoughts on how the media framed an aspect of the event, and their thoughts on how pictures play a role in the larger issue, which is ultimately an effects-based frame. These results (n=40) are not generalizable to the population. Pictures of coverage fall into three prominent categories: identifying photos such as headshot of involved actors, visuals of the actual altercations, and visuals of protest.

All frames arose from the participants; however, many coincide with media frames discussed in previous research. Overall, participants recognized media frames and stereotypes (**RQ1**) described previously in academic literature. For frames of protest, participants identified the riot, confrontation, spectacle, and debate frame unanimously (e.g. Hertog & McLeod, 1995). Participants organized these broad frames using sub frames, which help present a new typology for analyzing visuals in protest coverage. For frames of incidents, participants discussed stereotypes of criminality and professionalism (Dixon & Linz, 2000a). Black participants were more likely to sympathize with incident-involved Blacks than White participants, while White participants were more likely to discuss the professionalism of police. Overall, evaluations of

these sub frames varied (**RQ2**), but this study finds clear differences between Black and White participants (**H1**). Evidence of these findings is highlighted in this chapter.

The first grouping of photographs includes headshots and photographs used for the identification of the people involved in the initial altercations (i.e. Michael Brown, Darren Wilson). These photos can be placed in three overarching media frames identified by subjects: *professional, casual*, and *criminal*. These frames were not mutually exclusive, although participants' responses typically discussed one frame first, followed by another. Participants did not discuss headshots of non-police official sources, such photographs of lawyers involved in cases. Therefore, these frames are representative only of the people who were directly involved in the incident.

Professional

The professional media frame is assigned to headshots of individuals in a workplace setting and business attire. Photo quality is also an important aspect of recognizing a photograph as professional. In terms of the professional setting, most headshots were of individuals (usually police) in uniform, or were obviously posed photographs with a solid color backdrop (See Figure 5.1). For civilians, participants assigned the professional frame to individuals wearing uniforms (for example, military uniforms) and graduation attire (See Figure 5.2). For most participants, the appearance of the uniform in a headshot creates a professional frame, and primes the idea of heroism and nostalgia through public service and normative action. For Figure 5.1 participants said the following:

- "Obviously, this is a work photo, so it is professionally done – maybe for a website or award dinner or something."

- "He's in uniform and the flag behind him makes you think of like military headshots; the flag helps him seem heroic."

For Figure 5.2, several participants said:

- "He's in graduation attire so this is for like a yearbook."

- "This is Brown in regalia so this is a shot probably for his announcements or the yearbook or something like that. It seems like a good picture to use because it was really recent to the event and is professional."

Figure 5.1 – Professional identifying photo of incident-involved officer

Figure 5.2 – Graduation identifying photo of incident-involved Black man
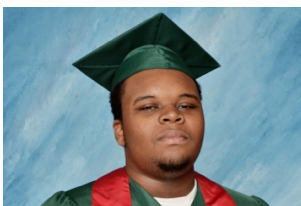
Most participants agreed that headshots rely on media editor selection. Participant acknowledgment and assessment of the media practice is reoccurring theme throughout this

research. In this case, the media selection of a photo that participants deem "professional" is based on the criteria above, and ultimately places the individual pictured in a legitimizing light – a "best foot forward" depiction, as one participant noted. For White participants, professional photographs were overwhelming stable, exclusive frames – that is, as the participants began to think aloud about photographs, photos framed as professional were likely to evoke a legitimizing and favorable evaluation. The term "stable" in this context means that the interpretation of the frame is unlikely to shift as White individuals think aloud about the photo.

However, for many Black participants, this favorable evaluation was less stable. Blacks were more likely to discuss and compare headshots with others. A Black woman noted in a discussion of a police officer's headshot, "He may look great here, but he's crooked underneath. [Media Organizations] just aren't going to frame him like that because of his job." The participant also observed that police are offered legitimacy by default. Black participants used professionalism to discuss police officers noticeably more often than White participants.

Comparative headshots (photographs that have multiple headshots in the same data file) provided opportunities for participants to further scrutinize media practice, as well as those pictured in the photos. Figure 5.3 shows a comparative shot between Michael Brown and Darren Wilson. Wilson, in uniform, was initially framed by participants as professional. The split screen structure of the picture, however, often led to a critical evaluation of the image. For many participants, initial thoughts about the image were immediately challenged, "It's not fair, but they made this kid look like whatever [they] think a thug is, and then put [Darren Wilson] beside him and make him look like he's some kind of hero," noted one Black man. The same was true for White participants. The presence of photos of both police officer and the incident-involved

Black led to critical evaluations. The placement of two images together (for example one

professional and one framed criminal or casual) shifts the way individuals read the images and

frame the meaning of pictures. Often, the juxtaposition of two pictures using different frames

makes audiences more critical of the framing. Many times, this causes audiences to scrutinize

media institutions.

The perception of a headshot taken by a professional photographer or photos with high-

quality resolution also frames individuals in a similar and favorable way. For incident-involved

Figure 5.3 – Comparative photo of incident-involved Black and police officer

Black individuals, these photos are not common. Excluding Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.4, all

headshots of incident-involved Blacks included casual elements that showed individuals in a

non-work setting. Several participants discussed as Figure 5.4 as professional. In this image,

Sandra Bland was smiling, appeared to be in work-appropriate attire and in a public setting.

One Black woman talked about her appearance, "She just looks nice in this picture … It's

a shame. I wish all the victims could look like this." Another Black man said, "I think this is a

real[ly] good picture. It's clear and she looks happy … It looks like it was taken with a better

camera then some of the other pictures." One White male who discussed this image noted, "This

Figure 5.4 – Professionally framed headshot of incident-involved woman

is a good picture of Sandra Bland, much better than her mugshot after her arrest … it is high quality and shows a little bit about her personality rather than just making her guilty."

Professional photos are what many Black participants labeled as "fair" or "ideal." In addition, Michael Brown's graduation photo (Figure 5.2) was another photo considered to be a professional depiction of an incident-involved Black person. Many participants mentioned that these pictures are used less often for civilians. Black participants discussed incident-involved Blacks not only as victims of police use of force, but also as victims of media representation.

The use of the professional frame to depict police made Black participants more acutely aware of the framing differences in headshots of police versus headshots of incident-involved Blacks. For example, one Black man noted, "If you make this young man [Michael Brown] look like a criminal and the cop like a hero, it spreads to everything else, and people can't get behind it. I mean, who can support a protest of the life of someone who is made to be a criminal in the first place? It's messed up. [The media] needs to give him a fair chance – use as good of a picture as they do with everyone else."

However, four of the 20 White participants did not discuss comparisons of pictures. For these individuals, police were heroes regardless of the situation. When discussing the headshot of

the police officer (Figure 5.1), one White participant said, "When I see this picture, I really think about my dad. This is the picture he would have wanted shown if something like [this incident] were to have happened to him, that he was doing his job, and he needed to come home … I don't know all the details of his job, but I know every day [the police] put their lives on the line – every day – and their jobs are to come home."

While participants in this study unanimously identified the professional frame, differences emerged in audience evaluations. For example, many people discussed the role the media plays in crafting narratives, particularly its portrayal of incident-involved black individuals. Data suggested that when the professional frame appears in isolation, it is a more stable, exclusive frame for White participants. In most instances, Whites' evaluations of the professional frame were positive and legitimizing for the individual pictured. However, for Black participants, the understanding of visuals that depict police as professionals is likely to shift to a critical analysis. Black participants' first recognition of the photo was often what they discuss as what White people see, followed by how they personally interpret in the picture. Personal interpretations often led to negative or skeptical evaluations of police, the media and public opinion.

Casual

The casual frame has more variation than the professional frame, and is used to visually depict civilians engaged in what participants described as everyday photographs. Casual shots differ from professional shots primarily because they are not posed. Casual shots also include individuals not in uniform, and often these shots are more candid, or show people engaged in ordinary activity such as conversing with others, etc. They depict individuals in casual settings,

and with informal facial expressions rather than, for example, a more posed picture that has the individual with a full smile. Almost all headshots of Black individuals, except for Figure 5.2 and 5.4, were casual, while participants discussed fewer casually framed pictures of police officers. Police may be less likely to post photos online, where journalists retrieve many photos. Many police departments have adopted policies for off-duty police officers' use of social media (e.g. PoliceOne.com, 2010), which ultimately deter officers from posting personal information online.

Figure 5.5, a prominently discussed depiction of Michael Brown, includes many elements that participants discussed as part of the casual frame. The image shows a closely cropped picture of Brown with headphones on his ears. Brown is not smiling; his head is tilted slightly away from the camera; his eyes are locked in focus. Brown appears to be in a game arcade, the letters on his jacket embroidered with "National League Championship 1983."

Figure 5.5 – Casual/criminal headshot of incident-involved civilian man

Both Black and White participants discussed the salience of Brown's facial expression and headphones in the picture. The headphones stuck out as a cultural symbol, which ultimately triggered the criminal frame as well. Criminality is linked inextricably with casual depictions of

Black individuals, and the criminal frame will be discussed more in the next section. However, for this photo, one White male participant highlighted the relationship between casual and criminal, "I mean, what do you think about when you see Beats headphones? Rap is the first thing that comes to mind. And, I listen to rap, but not all the time, certainly not when I'm at Chuck-e-Cheese. It seems to me that this is kind of out of place, and really shows him in a negative light. It's just a picture though, so you don't really know what's going on." In many ways, cultural artifacts serve as an othering factor – one that makes it easier for individuals to condemn a certain portrayal. In some cases, this leads to negative evaluations of the individual pictured.

Black participants viewed the media's use of this photo as an intentional tool used to frame Brown as urban, or deviant of American society. One Black man captured this sentiment by saying the following, "Because I know there are other pictures out there that could be used to show who this kid is, I know that this is wrong. The headphones automatically make people think of gangster rap … his scowl doesn't help either. I mean, he was 17 or something like that. There's better pictures. There's his graduation picture, for example. This one – a picture like this – is intentional. It's not a bad picture to me, but to them, it won't be helping his cause, you know?"

Photos of Tamir Rice elicited similar responses; however, the criticism of the media was less pronounced. In Figure 5.6, Rice's close-up shot made participants focus on his facial expression and the angle of the photograph. One White woman noted, "This isn't a great picture … it's dark, and it looks like it's probably a bad selfie on a cellphone. You know, a 12-year-old

kid – this is probably like his first picture or something. But it's bad lighting and he could have held up the phone a bit to get a better picture."

Casual headshots of police officers were less likely to appear in general; most police officers are shown in uniform in their headshots. The photo of the officer in Figure 5.3 was described as predominantly professional, however, because the officer wasn't posing for a picture, the casual depiction was evident.

Figure 5.6 – Casual/Criminal headshot of incident-involved child

Criminal

The categorization of criminal is both a frame and a prime for single-person photos. In previous literature on Black portrayals in the media, the appearance of Black civilians in crime news is automatically coded as criminal (e.g. Dixon 2015, 2016). Sessions illustrate that a variety of visual cues have the potential to frame a pictured individual as criminal. These characteristics are increasingly vague for visual portrayals of Blacks, as this section will illustrate.

Participants in this study did not discuss the mutual exclusivity of frames, particularly with the casual and criminal frames. In addition, criminality serves as both a frame and a prime. As a frame, criminality is identified unanimously through the depiction of jail uniforms, typically

orange jumpsuits. One black woman explained about Figure 5.7, "It looks like they picked a picture of [Sandra Bland] that makes her look like she's ratchet[2]. That's on purpose." Another Black participant had a similar sentiment: "It's like they used this [mugshot of Sandra Bland] because they already decided she was guilty. She didn't need a trial. There are other pictures out there ... I've seen a few where she's smiling and happy. But they used this of her from jail and then turned around and used a picture of the cop [who was] looking all professional."

Figure 5.7 – Criminal headshot of incident-involved civilian woman

Blank backgrounds, cold glares, specific cultural gestures such as using gang signs, brick buildings, and untidy appearances also primed evaluations of an individual as criminal. Visual cues that link individuals with urban culture, such as specific shoe brands and clothes, are useful for framing individuals as criminal. In Figure 5.8, Michael Brown is wearing street clothes, his right hand making a gesture and his left hand pinched. "It looks like he's in a rundown place, just from the setting. He's got his Jordan's [shoes] on, gesturing a gang sign, I think, and looks like he's holding a joint in the other hand," one White participant noted. Another participant noted,

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[2] Ratchet is a slang term, used in a similar fashion as the term wretched. Ratchet describes someone or something with a disorganized or unappealing appearance.

"Everything in this picture really looks rundown from the background to his clothes … This [picture] is one that lots of people talked about as unfair because it made him look like a criminal when [the media had] other options … the way his hands are positioned, the outfit and just the setting make him look [sic] pretty stereotypical." Interestingly, several participants used the term "rundown" to describe individuals near brick buildings. The presumed presence of drugs in a picture – whether through pinched fingers or thick smoke swirling in the background -- warranted both Black and White participants to understand the individual as one who engages in criminal activity. Black participants often contested this presumed criminal depiction.

Figure 5.8 – Criminal identifying photo of incident-involved man

In subtle ways, casual single individual photos and headshots allude to criminality by casting the individual in a way that makes him or her appear deviant. For example, in the previously discussed casual picture of Brown (Figure 5.5), many Black participants suggested criminality by the cultural symbol of rap music. One Black man said, "You know they could have used a better picture. It's like they picked the one picture that didn't make him look like a

kid. I'm positive there [are] pictures of him smiling, or happy, or with ears. But they picked this

up-close shot of a Black boy glaring at the camera. It makes me wonder what picture they'd use

if this was me?" As mentioned previously with this photograph, several participants pointed out

the headphones as a symbol of rap culture. "He's wearing headphones, and I'm not sure why …

he's probably just listening to music or something but in a public setting like this where people

are probably everywhere it seems weird … out of place." Thus, the casual frame correlates with

the criminal frame, more so for Black individuals.

Another photo of Brown with a partial smile and plain gray shirt also conveyed deviance.

(See Figure 5.3, left): "I don't know if you can see that white thing there, but it looks like a cup.

And you know, people drink lean[3] out of Styrofoam, and I feel like … they could have cropped

that [explicit] out. But they didn't because he's not a boy. He's not 17. He's questionable, you

know? He's the bad guy," the participant stated. Several participants went on to talk about how

cues of urban culture make individuals look criminal without warrant. Important too, lighting

plays a role in criminality. Discussing a picture of Freddie Gray (Figure 5.9), one White

participant noted, "I selected this picture because it's definitely different from the ones with

[Michael Brown]. But still, I mean, he's obviously in a bad part of town. But even then, he's got

this dark shadow on his eyes. Just kind of makes him look evil, like the Godfather." Ultimately,

data suggest that, primarily for headshots of Blacks, criminality is difficult to avoid.

Headshots of police officers in uniform were typically exempt from being framed or

primed as criminal, except when they appeared side-by-side with incident-involved blacks.

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[3] The slang term "lean" is used to describe cough syrup that includes the prescription drug codeine. The syrup is mixed often mixed with soda.

However, criminality was almost always a prime; that is, individuals noticed the negative depiction of a victim and then questioned the depiction of the officer. For example, one Black participant said the following, "It breaks my heart that even in this picture, you can see one

Figure 5.9 – Causal/Criminal headshot of incident-involved man
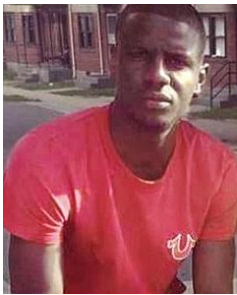
person is guilty and one person is not … They don't even take the officer's actions into question in this picture. [Media professionals] just pop in his most professional shot and give him credit because of his badge. But he was booked. They should have used his [explicit] mugshot too."

ACTUAL ALTERCATION

When video footage was available of the altercation, media organizations could show, visually, the totality of the actual incident. Often, media accounts used images from screenshots (literal frames from the video) to highlight certain instances of the event. These screen captures included two temporally-oriented frames: *struggle* (police and civilian struggle) and *aftermath* (images of death or final arrest). These frames are differentiated by the emphasis of the time period that occurred. The first frame (struggle) highlights the events that occurred before the second frame (aftermath), which includes images of the end of a use-of-force situation or death.

53

When the aftermath was discussed by Black participants, they were more likely to describe the incident-involved Black person as a *victim* than White participants. When images showed struggle, White participants were more likely to discuss the difficulties of policing than Black participants.

Struggle Frame

Participants framed photos of triggering events between civilians and police as struggles between two actors. Evaluations of power within that struggle depended largely on whether a White or Black participant was discussing the picture. White participants were more likely to examine police actions, and discuss the loss of power police hold when engaged in a confrontation with a civilian. "I think it would be very difficult to be this officer," one White participant said when discussing Figure 5.10, "These split-second decisions are life and death." Another participant noted, "The cop seems to approach the situation and try to handle it, and I'm not sure what that guy is doing in the back there – maybe trying to further restrain him? This may be the chokehold that had everyone up in arms … But to me, these pictures show how hard it is to make the arrest as an officer."

Figure 5.10 – Sequence of struggle photographs of excessive use of force incident

In these images, for many White participants, police engagement with suspects was not discussed as excessive. Instead, descriptions about the difficulty of the officer's job and uncertainty about the officers' actions (because of lack of information about the situation) are key for understanding the image.

In contrast, for Black participants, pictures that depicted the struggle frame were often first seen from the incident-involved Black person's perspective. Evaluations of the photo from this perspective regularly resulted in framings of the individual as a victim. For example, one participant lamented, "He's treated like an animal." Another participant noted, "[The police] couldn't take him down so they used any means necessary so they killed him." Likely because of the tendency to frame Blacks as a victim, Black audiences were more likely to view images of struggle between police officers and incident-involved Blacks as an end of struggle scenario, discussed in the next section.

End-of-Struggle Frame

The end-of-struggle frame includes images that depict those who have died (i.e., Michael Brown's body which lay in the street as police stand by, Tamir Rice's body), or those that have been detained by police in some way (especially for those who did not have recordings of their death or did not). Returning to the aforementioned Figure 5.10, a Black participant noted, "There's death in this picture and they are so concerned with whether the police acted ok or not, no one is looking at this as 'this is what death looks like.' Maybe we're just desensitized to it all, it's hard to tell. But to me, I think what strikes me most in this picture is what we know happened afterward. This guy," the participant points to Eric Garner, "is now dead, and nobody is there to defend him. It's just hopeless." For Black participants, these end-of struggle images are a new

frame of struggle that coincide with the pre-described "about to die" images (Zelizer, 2012).

These images show Black individuals in police custody or controlled by police force, ultimately

leading to their deaths or unnecessary abuse. However, because some of the incident-involved

Blacks did not die in the actual event, the term "end of struggle" rather than "about-to-die."

Some examples of screenshots of these images are pictures of Eric Garner lying on the ground,

and the dragging of Freddie Gray (Figure 5.10 and Figure 5.11). Also important to note about

Figure 5.11, Freddie Gray's death was not discussed as often by participants as the deaths of

Michael Brown, Tamir Rice or Eric Garner.

Figure 5.11 – Photo of end-of-struggle photographs of excessive use of force incident
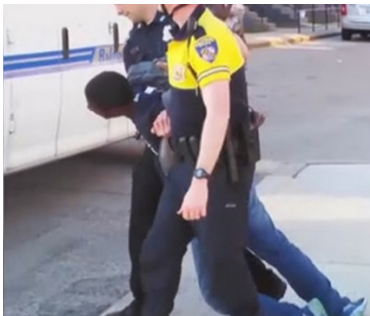
These results reveal two primary ways of seeing struggle and end-of-struggle framed

images: One from the perspective of the police, mostly likely considered by Whites; the other

from the perspective of the person who is being detained or about to die, most likely considered

by Blacks. In almost all think-aloud sessions, White men and women examined the perspective

of the police first, as was the case in this account of Figure 5.10: "You can see the police there,

some in street clothes. This sequence really shows the escalation of what's happening. But you

don't know what happens. And then you see the guy in the chokehold. I think what's important that so many people don't understand is that videoed or not, you can't see what is going on in this image. You just don't know. So to make a judgment based on this is just irresponsible." White participants paid little attention to Garner's depiction.

But Black participants were more likely to evaluate the Black individual pictured first. "He's just there … I mean, he looks upset, but he's not doing anything wrong. And then next thing you know, here he is in a chokehold, probably almost dead, saying I can't breathe but nobody can hear him anymore. They've snuffed him out. They mount him like a [explicit] horse - like we're animals or something."

When the suspect or incident-involved Black was a young girl, the evaluations of the officer's actions were more unified. For White participants, pictures of the Dajerria Becton incident led to negative evaluations of police force (Figure 5.12). For struggle and end-of-struggle images of Becton, all participants discussed police actions as excessive. "This cop – he's just out of control. I mean, I don't see what the threat was with this girl. Could it be her bikini? This is just unacceptable. I can't understand his actions," one White participant noted.

Figure 5.12 –End-of-struggle photograph of excessive use-of-force incident

Similarly, a Black participant lamented, "She's just a girl. What kind of man would do this? What kind of man needs to prove his power over a little girl?" The results reveal a more sensitive approach to understanding the genre of journalistic depictions of Blacks and police altercations, particularly when it comes to Black women and girls.

End-of-struggle images elicited less variation in audiences' framing of the event, and more variation in the emotional impact of such pictures. Most participants could recognize an individual was in a submissive position or dead. One Black participant discussed Figure 5.13, and his eyes welled up with tears as he discussed the photo of Michael Brown's body lying in the street. "I can't believe they just left him in the street like that … I saw this picture before, but I guess thinking [aloud] about it makes it …" He couldn't even finish his thoughts. The same Black participant also discussed the image of Tamir Rice's body, "This whole scene was just so graphic. It reminds me of what we saw with Emmitt Till. They just killed him for no reason. They get to this idea that Black men and boys – This is a boy! – are criminals. They kill them," he pauses, "A child. He was just a baby."

While end-of-struggle pictures often lead Black participants to evaluate circumstances in more thematic terms, this was not always the case for Whites. Thematic and episodic interpretations varied based on the case, as did emotional responses. Several White participants discussed death in a desensitized way. For example, one participant said this about Figure 5.13, "There's someone there dead on the ground - pretty sure that's from Michael Brown. I would assume he's dead anyway … the police officer standing next to him is just standing there. I don't get why he's just standing there. That to me is a bit strange." This participant went on to discuss the dark vignette and its possible post-production in a site like Instagram, before moving

on to the next photo. This avoidance of the humanizing discussion was never the case for Black participants. Other White participants described cases such as Tamir Rice and Dajerria Becton in more emotional, thematic terms as previously described.

Figure 5.13 – End-of-Struggle photo of incident-involved man

PROTEST AND UNREST

The next section examines protest-related images. It is important to note that participants almost unanimously discussed media frames of protest (riot/looting, confrontation, spectacle, debate, nonviolent protest) by selecting images that would fall in those categories and used terms similar to those used to operationalize these frames in previous research. However, a series of sub frames emerged, and highlight vital differences that help explain some of the shifting evaluations. Table 5.1 lays out the relationship between these media frames and the associative sub frames identified by audiences in this study. Evaluations ultimately were individualistic, though in some cases patterns could be identified. Ultimately, these data show that despite how the protest or unrest is depicted, there was no legitimizing way to protest for some participants.

Riot Frame

All participants identified and discussed property destruction, violence, and riot, consistent with conceptualizations of the *riot frame* identified by scholars of the protest paradigm (Hertog & McLeod, 1995; 2001). In other literature, violence is considered a separate *rhetorical device* that emphasizes protest by specifically calling a protest "violent" (e.g. Dardis, 2006). In visuals, however, violence is associated directly with property destruction, fires, and engaging in criminal activity such as lighting Molotov cocktails. Therefore, riot and violence against property were collapsed into one overarching riot media frame. Think alouds revealed that the audience understood rioting through three key sub frames: criminal activity, chaos, and community rebuild. These sub frames are helpful for organizing and anticipating differences in audiences' interpretations.

Criminal Activity Sub Frame

This sub frame includes photos with assumed protestors (almost always Black) who are engaged in criminal activities, the very essence of rioting. Figures 5.14 and 5.15 illustrate unanimous evaluations of the riot frame. Responses included the following:

- "This guy is taking a bat to a car. I hope there's no one in there. There's protestors all around him that are just watching it all go down. No one seems to be super alarmed by the rioting that's going on." – White Participant, Figure 5.14

- "This man is smashing the window of a car probably at a protest. This is the kind of stuff they want us to do." – Black participant, Figure 5.14

- "I mean, sometimes you just aren't heard, so you riot. It's the nature of things. It's not the right way though. You don't even know whose car this is. But maybe they do." – Black participant, Figure 5.14

- "The guys are obvious lighting a Molotov cocktail. Seems to me they should be lighting it a little bit further down so they don't blow their hands off, but I guess it doesn't matter when all you want to do is destroy things anyway." – White participant, Figure 5.15

Figure 5.14 – Riot photo with criminal activity sub frame

Figure 5.15 – Riot photo with criminal activity sub frame

In some cases, participants viewed pictures such as these as one-sided, resulting in the reemergence of critical evaluations of media organizations. One Black participant said the following about Figure 5.15: "It seems to tell one side of the story. There's not police. All I see are what I'm supposed to call 'rioters.' One, they are masked individuals with had on camo pants. That's bad. And two, they're lighting a Molotov. That's bad… it's meant to be bad to

Table 5.1 – Outline of Media Frames, Descriptions, Sub frames and Evaluations of Protest Images

Media Frames of Protest Identified by Participants	Description in Scholarship	Sub frames	Audience Evaluation
Riot /Violence	Destruction of public property, violent acts against property or people; delegitimizing to protests	Criminal Activity	Negative evaluations of involved, skepticism of media depictions
		Chaos	Negative or empathetic evaluations of protests; critical or negative evaluations of media and police
		Community rebuild	Positive for protests, Blacks or communities
Confrontation	Clashes between police and protestors; delegitimizing to protests	Tense Confrontation	Positive and negative evaluations
		Questionable Police Use of Force	Negative evaluations of police
		Cordial Confrontation	Positive and negative evaluations of protestors and the media
Spectacle/Circus	The "drama" of protestors; engaging in odd or unusual behavior; involvement of celebrities as protestors; emotional displays; delegitimizing to protest	Oddity	Generally negative evaluations individuals involved
		Emotional Spectacle	Crying leads to more sympathetic or empathetic evaluations; yelling and anger can lead to both negative and empathetic evaluations
Debate	Exploration of protests demands, agendas, and organizations; Characterized by non-violent protest activities; is best identified by protestors engaging in *any* activity that is not violent	Written Demands	Evaluation depends on support for or against the demand displayed; more detailed demands evaluated more positively
		Non-violent protest	Mixed evaluations of negative and positive

people. There's definitely a White lady in the background, and a White person and a shirtless man. I just think this happens to only tell only the bad version of the story, and that version makes the African Americans look like criminals. The portion that gets people upset and mistrustful on both sides."

White participants were more open-minded with their assessment of rioting. If there were people in the picture, those subjects did not necessarily have to be actively partaking in a deviant act for White participants to describe them as rioters. Instead, there was a predisposition that property damage had happened because of the civilians pictured. The chaos sub frame (outlined in the next section) was often considered in this criminal activity frame as well. However, Black participants primarily understood criminal activity as pictures that included people caught in a criminal act (as shown in Figure 5.14 and 5.15, rather than, for example, Figure 5.16). That is, for Blacks in this study, the assignment of the criminal activity was more specific – assignment of criminal activity is contingent on images that directly capture the actor engaged in destructive behavior.

Figure 5.16 – Photo with chaos and criminal activity sub frame

While several pictures illustrate this point, the exemplary discussion of Figure 5.16 helps illustrate differences in sub frame evaluations. A White participant noted, "The first question I

have is 'Why is this guy so excited about toilet paper?' I mean, it's a bit alarming," he chuckled, "His priorities are all screwed up. He's got all this going on around him – fire, overturned police cars – and he's zealously holding up his toilet paper flag. There's wasn't anything better to steal? I mean, come on dude." Another White participant said, "There's a subway, and it looks like a good neighborhood, but then you see a burning cop car in the background, and this guy who just took advantage of the situation… stole a few things." Both automatically assign criminality and blame to the actor in the picture absent of context.

In contrast, a Black participant discussed this same image in the following way, "In this picture, you have a guy out in the chaos, probably grabbing things he needs at home to take care of his family. I'm not sure what he's doing, maybe yelling at someone to show them he got what they needed or something. But I look at everything around him. I mean, it's probably ruined. It's just chaos everywhere. Chaos. Makes you wonder if he gets home safe or not," he said. "That's not how they'll see it though." This participant discussed other scenarios where he acknowledged Blacks were framed differently than Whites. "There was a lot of talk about pictures like these during [Hurricane] Katrina. They were out there shooting Black folks because they were looting or whatever. Meanwhile, [the news] was saying White people are scavenging for food or whatever … It's like [White] loss is different than [Black] loss even when we have the same fight. So, I don't expect a picture like this would be any different. I mean, nobody is going to go loot for toilet paper. This photographer just did a whack job at getting the reality." Another Black woman said, "This is a picture of a guy who's probably yelling with groceries in his hand. There is… a fire in the background." Her evaluation of the picture did not automatically link the man's position in the photograph with the destruction and chaos around him. For Black

audiences, the chaos sub frame has important differences from the criminal activity sub frame,

illustrated in the next section.

Chaos Sub Frame

The chaos sub frame is similar to the criminal activity sub frame; however, there is no

apparent actor involved in property destruction, looting, or violent behavior. Black participants

were more likely to think about the differences between the criminal activity and chaos sub

frames. In previous scholarship, these images would likely be grouped in with the riot frame

defined by Hertog and McLeod (1995; 2001). The results from this study highlight the need for

further differentiation.

Both White and Black participants identified the chaos sub frame in Figure 5.17. This

picture – specifically referred to as "iconic" by 11 of 21 people who discussed this image – had a

combination of messages within: a fire raging in the background, a man sitting in the shadows

holding a Black Lives Matter sign, and the phrase "kill cops" spray painted on the wall directly

behind him. One White participant explained, "This picture is just so powerful. It pretty much

says it all, you've got both sides of this narrative in this picture, and this guy just sitting there,

ignoring all the chaos. It's powerful." This sentiment was shared by most participants regardless

of race. A White woman noted, "This picture to me says a lot about both arguments. On this

hand a man is just there in the middle of chaos all around him, and on the other hand, there's this

rage going on around him. It really shows not everyone who has something to say is involved,

but they are involved, if you get what I'm trying to say here."

For Black participants, the sentiment was similar, though a collective "us" was often used

to describe the impact of the image's message. "To me, this picture says so much. It has the

Figure 5.17 – Riot photo with chaos sub frame

anger felt by us," one Black woman noted as she pointed to the "kill cops" graffiti, "and it has this man, who's holding the sign 'Black Lives Matter' … he's just letting everything burn around him, because what else can he do?"

For Black respondents, the chaos frame was most applicable for pictures that include public destruction, fire, and property damage. For example, Figure 5.18 shows a burning police car. One Black woman deliberated, "You don't have much context. I think that most people would think that, of course, this is a result of protestors. But no one is there. I mean, what if one of those massive military tanks they brought in was the reason this car got [explicit] over. There's just no context. We didn't get to see that part of the story." Black participants differentiated the chaos sub frame by the criminal activity sub frame primarily by identifying whether an actor was involved.

Community Rebuild Sub Frame

The final sub frame within the riot frame is community rebuild. This sub frame includes property destruction, but also depicts cleanup efforts. Ultimately, the general evaluation of this frame is legitimizing for the community. For example, Black participant noted about Figure 5.19, "Here are some people sweeping and cleaning up. They're Black. The context, I believe

Figure 5.18 – Riot photo with chaos sub frame

this is the gas station that got burned down in Ferguson that they made a big deal about. It looks like they're cleaning it up, they seem to be doing it in a peaceful and uniform way. They seem to be collegially talking, cleaning up whatever [is] on the ground. It says you got to come together at some point and rebuild. It happens all the time, I guess I just didn't see this as often. There's a White person there too and it all seems to be working together."

Figure 5.19 – Riot photo with community rebuild sub frame

Another participant mentioned, "I picked this picture because probably a day or two after the riots or whatever, people have to clean it up. It doesn't just magically happen. Life carries on and

people come back together. It's like the civil part that has to happen after all the anger is finally let out." Ultimately the community rebuild sub frame, which symbolizes unification and community, leads to more positive evaluations of the area and or protestors.

Confrontation Frame

Participants overwhelmingly recognized the confrontation frame. Again, confrontation derived from previously discussed media frames in protest paradigm research (e.g. Hertog and McLeod, 1995; 2001). But for audiences across demographics, sub frames of "confrontation" were more exhaustive than simply police/national guard/military and protestors confronting each other. The sub frames help understand the conflicting and sometimes polarizing evaluations made by participants. These sub frames include the following: tense confrontation, questionable use of force by police, and cordial confrontation.

Tense Confrontation Sub Frame

The tense confrontation sub frame included visual images of police and protestors opposing each other in what appears to be an intense or passionate way. This included police arresting protestors[4] specifically, and/or protestors approaching or engaging with police in a markedly defiant way. Enforcement and detainment photographs that have apparent protestors apprehended and cuffed typically do not result in a victimization for Black or White participants (Figure 5.20 and 5.21). For these images, two different Black participants said the following:

- "This is a picture of police arresting a girl protesting."
- "This picture shows a White man being arrested, and I assume he's a protestor of some sort … I guess it's nice to see a White man on our side."

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[4] The identification of protest is paramount for differentiating between this frame and the "end-of-struggle" frame. Audiences could identify the difference between the arrests of protestors and the arrests of incident-involved Blacks discussed in the for example, in Image 12.

It is important to note that both White and Black participants were less likely to think about the events that preceded the protestors being arrested, unlike those end-of-struggle pictures. One possible cause for this is that participants could not personally identify those depicted, unlike event-associated pictures that were framed as "end-of struggle" in the previous section. This reveals that participants can interpret images episodically or thematically depending on prior knowledge. The protesters in the pictures, however, did not appear to have sensational stories about their detainment and arrest, and therefore, they were less likely to be discussed for latent meaning.

Figure 5.20 – Confrontation photo with tense confrontation sub frame

Figure 5.21 – Confrontational photo with tense confrontation sub frame

In addition, the tense confrontation sub frame includes some images of protestors and police face-to-face (Figure 5.22), and shows displays of defiance as an aspect of this tense confrontation. A Black man discussed this image:

> "They aren't moving, and they aren't going to move … You don't know what happens six seconds after this photo was taken. I would imagine it can't be good for the Black people in this photo. But this is a photo that says, 'Hey, this means something. We're here, and we ain't going anywhere, you feel me?'"

Images like Figure 5.22 was evaluated more negatively by several White participants in this study. "This picture should just remind everyone of how impossibly hard these police have it when they're in uniform," one participant said about Figure 5.22. The tense confrontation frame thus can lead to polarizing overall evaluations that consider the role of the officers involved and the protestors.

Figure 5.22 – Confrontational photo with tense confrontation sub frame

Questionable Use of Force Sub Frame

Images that included uniformed officials engaged in questionable use of force led participants to interrogate the actions of police officers within the context of protest. This frame was one that ultimately delegitimized police, and challenged stereotypical presentations of police and the military. Several pictures help illustrate the boundaries of this frame. In Figure 5.23, a man on his phone, casually standing near what appears to be a protest, approaches too closely to

a line of police (whom participants typically described as "bicycle cops"). One female officer is

pepper spraying the bystander. "It doesn't make a lot of sense," one White female participant

said with a chuckle. "This guy is just on the phone. I don't see the threat. But here's this lady,

pepper spraying the crap out of him. It's ridiculous." Black participants discussed these images

similarly, although reading the image wasn't as humorous. "That's what they do to us. It doesn't

matter if we're peaceful or if we're rioting. They [are going to] spray us anyway."

Figure 5.23 – Confrontation photo with questionable use of force by police sub frame

The questionable use of force sub frame included visualizations of police in military garb

or the presence of the military in domestic disputes. The militarization of the police was a

concern for most Black and White participants. Pictures of police or military engaging in

activities such as gunfire or in defensive positions seemingly against protesters rendered

skeptical responses. In Figure 5.24, several participants described the police officer as

"Robocop." One White woman said, "Look at this *man*. This looks so futuristic. This looks like

Syria or something. But it's in our streets? What could possibly warrant a flame thrower like

this? This is out of control." Another Black woman expressed similar sentiments saying that

while she knows this is typical, "It's just hard to believe this is real. It looks like a scene from a

space movie or something. It's hard to believe that this is how they deal with Black people, and

get away with it." The militarization of police was a point of contention for most participants,

particularly when large weaponry and tanks were involved. The depictions in the photos seemed to create general unease about government and police protocol. In only one scenario was this not the case: A White participant, who mentioned her father was a police officer, said she was "comforted" by the amount of protection the police had, as well as the restraint they showed while having so much power.

Figure 5.24 – Confrontation photo with militarized questionable use of force sub frame

Cordial Confrontation Sub Frame

The cordial confrontation was a sub frame deemed ideal for White participants and unrealistic for Black participants. This frame included presumed protestors engaged in non-confrontational and friendly acts with police or military personnel (Figure 5.25). For example, Figure 5.26 has a picture with a Black man taking a picture with a military officer. One White woman described the photo as such: "This picture is what you would hope to see – people engaging with police in a really casual way. The way you might expect - thanking them, even. It seems to me that this picture shows that it's not all about hating police, but it's more about finding understanding." In contrast, several Black participants viewed these depictions with skepticism. One Black woman this picture was unrealistic, "This picture seems like the media was taking advantage of a situation. I don't know what protest this is from, but the government

felt threatened enough to have to send in the military to defend their stake. It just isn't fair… this picture makes it seem like 'Oh everything is just fine. No worries here.' That's just not the case. That's just not how it was."

Figure 5.25 – Cordial Confrontation Protest Photo of Fist Bump

Figure 5.26 Cordial Confrontation Protest Photo of Selfie

Spectacle Frame

Participants associated spectacle with pictures of non-destructive but suggestive body language and nudity. McLeod and Hertog (2001) characterized spectacle as the circus-like aspects, odd behavior and drama of protestors. Though participants did not discuss these depictions as often as other framing categories, the spectacle frame was an important visual frame, differentiated in two primary sub frames: oddity and emotional spectacle.

Oddity Sub Frame

Two examples of the oddity sub frame were most prominently discussed in this study: Black women with shirts off, and Black men flipping off police officers. Figure 5.27, which features Black men making obscene gestures at officers in the police car, shows one evaluation of the oddity sub frame. As a White participant noted, "This is disgusting … In this picture these guys are literally giving the police the middle finger. There's just no respect. These officers are there to help the community, and these guys are out there flipping off police officers who are there to help them in their own community."

Figure 5.27 – Spectacle photo with oddity sub frame

Many Black participants noted this same component of the spectacle frame. "When I see this I think, [explicit] the police. I mean, I wouldn't do this. They're brave… or they're fools -- one or the other," one Black participant said. In general, however, the oddity sub frame seemed to delegitimize protestors by showing them as obnoxious.

Emotional Spectacle Sub Frame

While previous research on media frames suggests emphasis on emotion would fall underneath the spectacle frame and thus be categorized as delegitimizing (e.g. Harlow & Johnson, 2011), results showed that emotional cues such as crying or yelling are important to consider separately. Emotional spectacle was discussed for images that showed protestors

tearful, obviously distraught or visibly angry. Grieving, crying or mourning tended to have a humanizing effect on participants, noticed grief as a part of non-violent protest. White participants did not always associate the emotional spectacle sub frame with the protest itself – instead, emotional spectacles were episodic events. Take this account on Figure 5.28: "This lady looks sad, she's grieving. It makes me wonder if it's the parents or something. It's pretty obvious this is hitting her pretty hard." Another White participant noted, "This woman is visibly upset, I would imagine she's related to someone who died. And it looks like this is probably at a protest or a funeral but it helps tell the story of the situation on the people who are left behind." Overall, the discussion of grief isn't associated directly with protestors specifically.

Figure 5.28 – Photo with emotional spectacle sub frame

One Black man's observations highlight a different interpretation. "This woman is devastated. It's obvious she's lost something, whether it was her son or her patience or her dignity. Look how old she is: She's probably seen protest like this before. I have. I've seen them. It's devastating to know that we took one step forward by electing a Black president, and 25 steps back – literally back into a civil rights era – in every other aspect of society. This is a mother's pain. This is every mother's pain." Similarly, another Black man talked about the grieving woman from a maternal perspective, "This is an older woman. She's sad – grieving the

loss of someone … to me this picture shows how Black mothers feel. Her son, or her nephew or whoever she is to someone – he's gone … It's moving to see someone willing to stand in grieve in public. I couldn't do it for my own son."

Depictions of protestors yelling or with angry facial expressions are also included in the emotional spectacle frame, and create contradictory evaluations of protestors. Blacks seemed to be more likely to use pre-existing knowledge to understand and evaluate anger as a relevant and important visual depiction. Pictures of angry protestors often lead to an empathetic evaluation. "This woman is angry. I think I saw this image from the Baltimore protests… These situations go in cycles and eventually people get tired of not being heard. People get angry when things aren't done. And [sic] that's what others miss. This isn't one time. This is all the time. I mean, when I look in her eyes I can feel it too…" Depictions of anger and yelling are linked to the struggle of protestors – "a reaction to the chaos," as one woman said. White individuals who discussed emotion in pictures mentioned anger with little elaboration, calling protestors angry or mad, and then moving on to discuss other aspects of images. "This man is visibly angry," or "She's mad and yelling." (See Figure 5.29).

Figure 5.29 – Emotional Spectacle Protest Photo Showing Anger from Woman

Anger wasn't always viewed positively. In some cases, anger was combative, priming ideas of violence. For example, a White participant discussing an image of a man yelling: "This

76

guy is literally screaming in the face of a man who didn't do anything to him. He's just screaming. I can't imagine being that cop. It would take a lot of guts to just sit there. This guy is just so angry. And they wonder why they came with riot gear? This is why."

Debate Frame

The concept of the media debate frame includes the explication or inclusion of protestor demands and agendas (Hertog & McLeod, 2001). As conceptualized and operationalized in primarily textual inquiries, this frame only partially translates to visual communication. For example, a demand for justice is difficult to relay through press photos, and instead may be more readily discussed through words. In the visual realm, the debate frame had two sub frames: The *written demands sub frame* included words that appeared in pictures; and the *nonviolent protest* included broadly pictures of protestors engaged in the right to engage in peaceful assembly.

Written Demands Sub Frame

Almost all participants discussed the meaning of signs that people were holding, messages on t-shirts, and other written demands. In many cases, participants discussed whether they thought those messages or protest demands were legitimate. Overall, the use of signs to express ideas, grievances or demands triggered participants to discuss the actual debate associated with BLM protests.

In some cases, complex signs with well-articulated demands provoke more thought among audiences than simplistic signs that said only, for example, "Black Lives Matter." In one instance, a White participant recalled seeing a complex sign that described the point that Black Lives Matter was trying to make:

> I remember seeing a sign that said that even though all lives matter, Black lives also matter and the whole point of the protest was to recognize police knew that. In my opinion, that type of sign takes the point home more efficiently than just saying Black

Lives Matter. It goes beyond a polarizing statement to make a point in the debate, and that's important.

Another White woman noted,

> The sign reads Black Lives Matter. And I get it. But some people don't. There has to be a better communication strategy to get their point across to those people. Because technically, all lives matter too. And I get how that is not necessarily the point here, but I think if they wanted to try to get more people on their side, they might consider using different language…

To the contrary, for Black participants, "Black Lives Matter" is a well-articulated demand. One

Black woman noted:

> I know people have said this before, and I'll say it again: To say Black Lives Matter doesn't mean that other people don't. I shouldn't have to say that. I shouldn't have to say any of this. But here we are, with person after person getting hurt and killed by police and people just want to argue over the rhetoric.

Another participant said the following:

> I really liked 'Black Lives Matter' when I first saw it … then you read about this debate that the whole saying is racist. Three words and they feel attacked … It shows that [there is not any] good way to say 'You're doing Black people wrong' without being attacked for it.

These contrary points about simplicity and complexity in demands bring light to the issue of how much words, pictures, and words in pictures matter. In addition, even in the face of ideal protest behaviors, such as asserting demands, BLM face problematic public perceptions. Some demands were viewed as potentially polarizing by many White participants, regardless of political affiliation or background. Ultimately, the written demands sub frame does not lead to uniformly positive evaluations of protests, especially for Whites.

Non-Violent Protest Sub Frame

The absence of violence in protest is another important consideration within the debate frame. Scholars such as Neumann and Fahmy (2012) have previously categorized these

photographs as peaceful. Yet, in this work, only a few participants used the word "peaceful" to describe protests. Most were identified as "organized" or "non-violent." Pictures with the non-violent protest sub frame presented protestors with signs that were organized in some form or fashion, engaged ultimately in non-violent gatherings. Non-violent protests included, for example, people walking in the same direction. Important to note, the visualization of non-violent protests was discussed most often by Black and White participants in this study when examining images of counter protests (protests where people were supporting the police).

Non-violence was evaluated as more legitimizing when protests appeared as what some participants described as "organized." For one Black participant, the appeal of organization was typically assigned to counter-protests (Police Lives Matters, Blue Lives Matter):

> These people have it together. They are so organized. … I think it's because they have on the same color shirts, and their all walking in the same direction. It just looks different than other pictures.

Pictures of BLM protests (organized or non-violent) were not typically described in this manner, suggesting that for participants, the presence of non-violence and peacefulness was less pronounced than other frames and sub frames.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Think-Aloud Interviews

The previous chapter highlighted the results from 40 think-aloud sessions, describing prominent frames and sub frames that participants discussed. Theoretically, the findings from this study reveal key takeaways about media frames and how audiences use them to organize information. In addition, results show that evaluations and judgments of coverage are more complex than negative/positive or legitimizing/delegitimizing evaluations of specific actors (e.g. Elmasry & el-Nawawy, 2016; Harlow & Johnson, 2011). Data suggest Blacks continue to battle problematic stereotypes in visual coverage, and audiences evaluate police and uniformed military personnel in increasingly critical ways. This chapter will discuss some of these findings in broader terms, beginning with a recap of important findings of the interpretations of visuals in this genre of news. In addition, a theoretical discussion of the contribution of this literature to framing scholarship and audience studies will follow.

VISUALS OF POLICE USE-OF-FORCE INCIDENTS

Incidents and protests are intimately related; the portrayals of the incidents of alleged police use of force serve as part of the foundation for understanding civil unrest. Participants were increasingly skeptical of media organizations' visual portrayals of police and Blacks, and footage from the events led to complex evaluations.

Concerning incident-involved Blacks (i.e. Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Dajerria Becton), the previous chapter revealed the problematic interpretations of images of Blacks, particularly Black men. Both Black and White participants in this study consistently noted criminality in identifying photos of Black, even in pictures with subtle features like the shadows under their eyes. This provides evidence that criminality is a stereotype that is both a media frame and a prime. As a frame, the media can use images that depict individuals engaging

in criminal behavior or in a mugshot. As a prime, a seemingly insignificant visual cue, like the top of what is assumed to be a Styrofoam cup, may provoke thoughts of criminality that match the "pictures in our heads" (Lippman, 1922). These findings show it may be impossible for the media to consistently and accurately portray Blacks in a non-criminal way to some audiences, especially within this genre. In a few images, participants discussed Blacks portrayed professionally, as was the case with Sandra Bland (Figure 5.4) and Michael Brown's graduation photo (Figure 4.2). Nevertheless, participants primarily discussed criminal depictions for incident-involved Blacks, suggesting many times that the media is responsible for routinely using visuals that make Blacks appear deviant. In summary, criminality is the *big* picture in audiences' and researchers' heads while professionalism is the *smaller* picture. Ergo, media professionals should be cognizant of subtle and overt cultural symbols, signs, and cues within pictures that may trigger the criminal prime, and make every attempt to avoid these cues when possible.

These findings raise concerns about social media users' online practices as well as news organizations' visual media image selection. The multimodality of images provides opportunities for images to be used in ways they might not have been intended. For example, Figure 5.6 depicted Tamir Rice in what appeared to be an attempt to look "tough." Such a seemingly juvenile picture, reframed within the context of Rice's unfortunate death, might lead to observations of his presumable criminality. Coupled with findings from this study that suggest it is incredibly difficult for Black men to not appear as criminals, digital users should be extraordinarily cautious of the images posted publicly and privately to online networks. These images, recast in news coverage such as this, can assume an entirely different meaning.

Evidence shows notable variance in the identification of individual as a victim. Black participants readily used the end-of-struggle frame to discuss the victimization of incident-involved Blacks, while White participants were less likely to discuss this frame in such a way. Furthermore, Black participants were more likely to consider incident-involved Blacks as victims, particularly when opposing negative, stereotypical coverage of Blacks. The victim frame is another *big* picture, articulated most often by Black participants. This points to critical implications: Victimization remains a social construction that is not easily assigned to Blacks by White audiences (Carter, 1988). As such, these findings support the research approaches of Dixon (2015) that suggests appearing in a crime story as a Black person leads to evaluations of the individual as a criminal, especially for White audiences. While it is important for visual journalists and editors to be aware of this conundrum, it becomes that much more important for writers to account for, and perhaps attempt to balance, this possible bias by carefully considering the portrayals that accompany these photographs. These differences may also explain episodic and thematic evaluations found in many protest images. Several White participants who did not articulate the incident-involved Black as a victim in any point of this study also viewed the emotional depictions of protests in an episodic way.

Police officers were more often discussed as being portrayed professionally. For police, evidence showed that the big and small picture metaphor is not as clear. For some White participants, professional framing was considered heroic; this was not the case for Blacks in this study. Other White participants identified positive portrayals of police and discussed the problematic depictions of Blacks. When compared, most participants (Black and White) noted that the police were visually represented in a better light than Black people involved. Participants were more likely to think about the media's roles in framing individuals, and the potential

inaccuracies of visual portrayals. From a practical perspective, journalists should strive to provide more visually objective presentations within coverage, particularly for the portrayal of Blacks, by using images that align with the professional or casual frame. It is important to note that while police officers may be less likely to have casual-framed pictures available online, civilians may also be less likely to have professional-framed pictures available, although there is little empirical evidence to suggest this is the case. Because journalists routinely use social media and online sources to obtain these photographs (Newman, 2009), the findings of this study suggest journalists and ethics scholars should revisit protocol for using social media networks as a source for identifying photos in controversial scenarios such as this. Ultimately, any media organization's inclusion of a trivializing or inaccurate picture reinforces negative stereotypes about Blacks, contributing to the societal and institutional oppression faced by marginalized populations.

VISUALS OF PROTEST

The previous chapter also illustrates how visual framing works within the conceptual framework of the protest paradigm (Chan & Lee, 1984; Hertog & McLeod, 1995, 2001; McLeod & Hertog, 1999). Though previous studies have shown the media frames of riot, confrontation, spectacle and debate are useful for categorizing written work (e.g. Boyle et al., 2005; Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Hertog & McLeod, 1995; Kilgo et al., 2016), this research provides evidence for a new typology for protest images. This typology includes consideration for important sub frames, outlined in Table 5.1 of the previous chapter.

Based on this table, findings indicate evaluations of protests dive far beyond the "legitimizing" and "delegitimizing" implications suggested in protest studies that use content analysis (e.g. Dardis, 2006; Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Hertog & McLeod, 1995, 2001). In

addition, visuals of protest lead to evaluations of police and the Black community more generally, a critical component to consider in future audience effects studies. For example, depictions of the militarized police often led to skepticism and distrust of the police force. For many Black participants, depictions of militarization supported evidence of police excessive use-of-force, an element of BLM and related protest demands. For White participants, militarization had more alarming societal implications, which were often not discussed in the context of BLM and related protests. Future research should continue to explore what coverage means to audiences, allowing scholars to better assess how coverage affects public opinion.

MEDIA AND AUDIENCE FRAMES

One of the most important theoretical findings in this chapter is the unique and intricate relationship between media and audience frames. Consistent with Huang's (1995) research media and audience frames of a racially charged issues, media and audience frames are complexly connected. For example, in this study, participants recognized and discussed all previously conceptualized media frames of riot, confrontation, spectacle, and debate. This supports Reese's (2007) assertion that frames are socially shared: Audiences may use the exact same *categorizing principles* to structure information as media professionals and researchers. Yet audience frames (evaluations and interpretations) are more individualistic.

For frames of protest, this study also reveals that traditional framing conceptualizations may be too broad to truly understand the impact of frames (Chan & Lee, 1984; Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Hertog & McLeod, 1995, 2001; McLeod & Hertog, 1999). A series of sub frames were related to each media frame of riot, confrontation, spectacle, and debate, indicating that emphasis framing of protest is understood in a more diverse way than previous studies suggest (e.g. Elmasry & el-Nawawy, 2016; Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Hertog & McLeod, 1995; Kilgo,

Mouaro & Sylvie, 2016). If the inevitable goal of framing scholarship is to understand how

content can shape a collective public life (Reese, Gandy & Grant, 2001), the considerations of

sub frames may help us understand the societal effects more precisely.

Visual media frames and sub frames presented in this chapter are useful for organizing

media information for the audience, yet evaluations varied along the line of identities. Thus, this

research advances scholarship that suggests audiences may *interpret* media coverage in similar

ways (Gamson, 1985; McQuail, 2010), and these interpretations cannot be understood in their

totality by one evaluative term. For example, for White participants, destruction to property,

fires, overturned vehicles, and direct damage to public structures results in negative evaluations

of actors in most cases. For Black participants, however, riots and property damage weren't

always associated with protestors, and this coverage wasn't always considered negative. Blacks

in this study considered the possibility that militarized police may have played a role in property

destruction, particularly when property damage didn't show protestors as actors in the damage.

In addition, Blacks, in some instances, noted the possibility that rioting was necessary.

Evaluations of empathy, sympathy and criticism of opposing forces are just as important

perspectives as evaluations of delegitimization.

DIFFERENCES IN WHITE AND BLACK EVALUATIONS

Black and White participants used media frames to categorize information in similar

ways, though interpretations and evaluations varied. For protest frames, White participants

generally evaluated criminal activity and chaos as negative, and rarely discussed the community

rebuild. Tense confrontation brought mixed evaluations, and cordial confrontation between

protesters was seen more positively. Questionable use of force led to negative evaluations of

police. Whites also evaluated identifying photos in more stereotypical ways, though once images were juxtaposed, criticisms of media practice emerged.

Black participants regularly evaluated images with dual consciousness (Du Bois, 1904), articulated many times through two interpretative communities: "us" and "them." Black participants described how they would see an image ("us"), reflecting how they believe "they" might see it. "Us" responses from Black men and women often reflected empathetic evaluations, duress and distress, and Blacks articulated more often how they felt about the societal issue of police use-of-force and the Black experience in America than Whites did. "Them" thinking was often hyper-critical of Whites and the media, resulting in palpable frustration in several think-aloud sessions. This hyper-criticism of White naivety is likely a component of what Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards and Stevenson (2014) described as a tendency to "contest and oppose" (Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards & Stevenson, 2014, p. 94). For example, when Black participants speculated White audiences would view depictions as negative, the victim frame was useful for opposing that evaluation. "In the end, this was a boy – someone's child. And he's gone," one participant lamented. Indeed, these incidents and related unrest provided ample opportunity for negative stereotypes of Blacks to emerge in news coverage. Opposition to these stereotypes may be a mechanism for coping with racism and Whiteness as a Black in America. Thus, the "peculiar twoness" described in 1904 by DuBois remains an essential element for understanding how Black audiences might interpret media frames.

One important finding is the unified discussion of incident event pictures surrounding Dajerria Becton, the Black girl known as the "McKinney pool party girl." In general, both Blacks and Whites saw Becton as a victim, viewing the uniformed officer as "out of control." One possibility for this unified characterization is media coverage may have mirrored such outrage, a

speculation that is partially explored in the next chapter. Another possibility, however, is that the previous lack of media coverage about police use-of-force against Black women and girls prior to this event (Richie, 2012) may have affected how audiences understand frames. This research shows that this case was the only one evaluated in this unified way.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides evidence that media frames are direct organizational tools for audiences, however, sub frames encompassed within each media frame help explain several differences in overall audience evaluation of an image. In addition, evaluations of visual media content are problematized by primes and stereotypes, interpersonal discussion, and personal experiences and beliefs. As expected, Black and White participants in this study thought about images differently, revealing the need to quantitatively analyze media images from a different perspective than previous literature suggests.

Considering the results from Study 1, this research suggests a few practical considerations for journalists and editors. For incidents of police use-of-force, media practitioners should include images of both incident-involved Blacks and police with complementary frames. For example, media professionals should use a professional shot of both the incident-involved Black person and police officer. In addition, when footage of the incident is available, editors should avoid taking specific screenshots from footage, and instead make the entire scene available in video format. The research shows that the inclusion of the full incident is more likely to include the end-of-struggle frame, which is also useful for humanizing the perspective of the incident-involved Black and, for some participants, portraying them as a victim. Finally, in terms of protest, coverage should utilize previously identified frames of riot, confrontation, spectacle and debate; however, the visual iterations of these frames should strive

to include the range of sub frames identified in the previous study when relevant to the reality of the protest (see Table 5.1). To effectively use this typology, the main frame should be displayed when relevant to the reality, and sub frames should be included in equal proportions. For example, when there is confrontation between police and protestors, there should be a balance of pictures that include tense confrontation, police or oppositional behavior, and cordial confrontations. When civilians are actively engaged in active protests through non-confrontational picketing, demonstrations and marches, for example, visual journalists should strive to incorporate pictures of written demands, as well as aspects of non-violent protests that don't include written language. By using these sub frames, visual journalists have a better opportunity to counter stereotypical presentations that cause polarizing evaluations from audiences.

This typology also suggests scholars who study frames in visual or textual media content should complement findings with other methodological approaches that consider the perspectives of media practitioners or audience members. Ultimately from an audience perspective, the presence of the riot frame is not universally delegitimizing, and neither is spectacle. Similarly, the presence of protestors' demands isn't necessarily legitimizing. These often-discussed legitimizing and delegitimizing effects are therefore inaccurate to assume. More work should focus on understanding the evaluations and effects of stereotypes for non-Whites. Does the contest-and-oppose evaluation strategy for Blacks eventually lead to the internalization of oppression, as Thomas (1971) suggests? Or, in the face of what has been called a new civil rights movement, does the presence of negative stereotypes become a legitimizing element of a protest cause? The understanding of how media framing shapes public life relies on tackling these questions. The next chapter will discuss the methodological approach for a content analysis of

news coverage on social media (Chapter 7). A discussion of results from the content analysis

(Chapter 8) will be discussed in light of results from Study 1.

Chapter 7: Research Questions and Methods for Study 2

This chapter proposes a new set of research questions and hypotheses by examining prominent stereotypes of Blacks and police, and applies the organizational protest typology proposed in Study 1 to journalistic content. Study 2 focuses on identifying which sub frames appeared most often in news coverage from social media.

Literature about journalistic coverage of crimes suggests Blacks have a history of appearing more frequently as criminals in news coverage (e.g. Dixon & Azocar, 2006; Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Law, 2001), and many scholars have noted that the overall framing of Blacks as victims of crime is limited (e.g. Carter, 1988; Richie, 2012). Meanwhile, research suggests the media overwhelming presents police as the "good guys," heroic for their public services (Dixon, 2015). In addition, framing scholarship based on the protest paradigm suggests the mainstream media are responsible for focusing on the actions of protests rather than the demands (e.g. Chan & Lee, 1984; Dardis, 2006; Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Hertog & McLeod, 1995; McLeod & Hertog, 1999; Mourao, Kilgo, & Sylvie, 2015; Weaver & Scacco, 2013). While Study 1 showed that audiences from different demographics may evaluate media frames in different ways, Study 2 seeks to understand how often sub frames were present in news coverage from social media. In addition, Study 2 also seeks to examine how different types of media outlets (mainstream, alternative, digitally native) might portray these issues differently – an important inquiry for the increasingly diverse digital news landscape.

Based on the literature review, the first set of hypotheses and research questions are proposed concerning identification photos of those involved incidents of alleged police use of force:

H1: Incident-involved Blacks will be framed as criminals more often than other frames.

90

RQ1: Which media outlet type is most likely to frame incident-involved Blacks as a) criminal b) professional or c) casual?

H2: Police will be framed professionally more often than other frames.

RQ2: Which media outlet type is most likely to frame incident-involved Blacks as a) criminal b) professional or c) casual?

In Study 1, the most prominent recognition of the victim frame for incident-involved Blacks appears in end-of-struggle scenarios. As such, this study seeks to identify how often this frame appears in footage or screenshots of the incident is included in coverage:

RQ3: How often do articles include the "end-of-struggle" frame?

RQ4: Which media outlet type is most likely to include the "end-of-struggle" frame?

Finally, sub frames from Study 1 advance our understanding of audience framing of protest news coverage shared on social media and how media outlets presented these elements different:

H3: Protest sub frames associated with riot, confrontation and spectacle will appear more often than sub frames associated with debate.

RQ5: Which media outlet type is most likely to use sub frames associated with a) riot b) confrontation c) spectacle and d) debate?

Noting the importance that social media audiences play in redistributing news articles through sharing (García-Perdomo et al., 2017; Kilgo et al., 2016; Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015; Trilling, Tolochko, & Burscher, 2016), this study also examines if certain elements of coverage were more or less likely to be shared on Facebook or Twitter. Using a quantitative measure of cumulative sharing numbers, the following research question seeks to understand if social media audiences amplify certain aspects of coverage.

RQ6: Are articles with different visual frames and sub frames more likely to be shared on social media platforms than articles that do not have those frames?

METHODS

This study uses quantitative content analysis to examine which frames and sub frames were more likely presented in news coverage, and how coverage was shared on Facebook and Twitter. Data were retrieved from social media data collecting company NewsWhip. NewsWhip tracks the URLs for each article published from a news organizations' website across Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn APIs (including shortened versions of links through sites such as bit.ly). By doing so, NewsWhip's data includes all social media interactions numbers (such as likes, comments, shares, retweets, pins). This database tracks more than 50,000 news organizations worldwide, allowing for a more diverse news sourcing than is available in databases such as Factiva (ProQuest, 2017) or LexisNexis (LexisNexis, 2017). In addition, the database available at NewsWhip provides social media analytical data. In this study, sharing data from Facebook and Twitter were used to assess the number of times an article was publicly shared on each network.

Data were downloaded using a string of keywords that included "police use of force," or "police brutality," or "excessive force," "excessive use of force," and "shooting death." Data were collected from the same time period as Study 1 (Jan. 1, 2014 to December 31, 2015). Though the issue of police brutality is certainly not confined to these specific dates, the suggested time period includes many cases of police brutality events covered by national media beginning in 2014, including controversial cases such as Jordan Baker, Yvette Smith, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, John Crawford III, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Jr., Walter Scott, Dajerria Becton, and Sandra Bland (Juzwiak & Chan, 2014; Quah & Davis, 2015).

A total of 48,712 news articles were downloaded, prioritized by those most shared on Facebook. Using a skip interval of 64, a systematic random sample of articles was retrieved to create a sample of 751 articles. Articles with content that was not relevant to police use-of-force incidents against Blacks in the U.S. were removed and replaced, as were dead links. In addition, articles that did not have photographs or multimedia were also removed and replaced. Each individual article with multimedia served as the unit of analysis.

Using frames and sub frames from Study 1, a codebook was constructed to examine visual media and audience frames of Blacks, police and protestors. Two coders underwent six rounds of training. Following satisfactory training sessions, coders performed intercoder reliability testing, resulting in satisfactory Krippendorff alpha levels (α = .81 to 1.0) The unit of analysis was the entire article; as such, frames and sub frames were not mutually exclusive. Each individual variable with alpha levels is described in the next section.

Codebook

Coders first identified if the article was relevant by assessing 1) if the article focused on use-of-force against Blacks, the public response and social unrest that followed, and 2) if the article had relevant multimedia (pictures or videos). Infographics were excluded from this study. Dead links and irrelevant articles, and articles without multimedia (n = 812) were replaced in the sample. For articles in the final sample, coders identified the type of geographic region of the media outlet as either the United States/Canada or other regions (α = .89).

Coders also established the type of media outlet (α =.81) as either an online version of a mainstream media provider (ABC, NBC, The New York Times, local papers, etc.), alternative news outlets (those declared as alternatives to the mainstream press such as Democracy Now, The Root, The Grio, Anonymous, The Nation, etc.); digitally native news organizations (e.g.

Huffington Post, Buzzfeed, Mic, Vox, or mainstream news outlets that don't have a print counterpart); video or image sharing sites (e.g. Youtube, Vimeo, Flickr); satirical or "fake" news sites such (e.g. The Onion); or other sites that do not fall into these categories (e.g. niche websites, news aggregators, etc.).

Next, coders identified if they had multimedia (photos or videos) and the number of photos ($\alpha =1$). Coders also open coded the protest location and case if applicable. For articles that included photos or videos, coders identified if there were identifying photos of incident-involved Blacks or police officers. If present, each were coded for presence of professional, casual and criminal visual frames. As Study 1 shows, audiences often overlap criminal and casual frames using small cues that trigger criminality. As such, frames were not mutually exclusive to account for this overlap.

Professional ($\alpha = .83$) For both Blacks and police officers, a professional depiction includes a professional setting and the individual is in work or business attire; uniforms, graduation, suits; high-quality image (small depth of field, high quality image); and/or carries symbols of achievement (medals, regalia, etc.).

Casual ($\alpha = .81$) Casual depictions include selfies, low quality images taken in non-professional settings, unprofessionally posed images or candid shots. Mugshots are excluded in casual headshots.

Criminal ($\alpha = .93$) Criminal depictions include mugshots, gang signs, out of place cultural objects, persons engaging in criminal activity, and ominous lighting (dark shadows, for example).

The next coding variables required coders to identify temporal frames in photos and visuals that showed frames of the controversial incidents between Blacks and police.

94

Detainments of and altercations with protestors were not included in this category. Coders identified if coverage included either the struggle or the end-of-struggle frames described in the previous chapter. Only the end-of-struggle frame was used for this analysis.

End of Struggle Frame (α = .91). Coders identified if there was an end-of-struggle frame present when footage of the police officer with an incident involved Black was included in coverage. This included images of incident-involved Blacks as either dead, or detained in a forceful way. Detainments of protestors were not included in this category.

Finally, coders coded for individual protest variables, first by establishing if a photo or video visualized protests or civil unrest and then by assessing if any of the sub frames appeared in coverage. Because the unit of analysis included all visuals in each article, sub frames were not mutually exclusive.

Riot Media Frame. The riot frame focused on property destruction and violence of protestors and was identified using three key sub frames: chaos, criminal activity or community rebuild. The *chaos sub frame* identifies scenes with the riot frame but do not have people who can be visualized as directly responsible for the damage. In other words, there is no person "caught in the act" of the chaos, fire, overturned cars, property damage, etc. (α = .89). The *criminal activity* included images of a person or protestor "caught in the act" of violence, criminal behavior, property destruction, looting, etc. This did not include police engaged in violence, only protestors (α = 1.0). Finally, the *community rebuild sub frame* was identified by depictions of people cleaning up property destruction, removing graffiti, etc. (α = 1.0).

Confrontation Media Frame. The confrontation frame included visualizations of protestors and police, and was identified by three sub frames: tense confrontation, questionable use of force, and cordial confrontation. The *tense confrontation* sub frame included images of

non-controversial arrest, for example, a picture of an officer putting an individual in handcuffs or zip ties. Images included officers arresting protestors with reasonable use of force and included visualization of officers driving citizens in police cars. In addition, protestors who are challenging police boundaries, standing face-to-face with a police line, or provoking officers were coded as tense confrontation (α = .82). The *questionable use of force* sub frame included police using what appears as excessive force against protestors, including pepper spraying, hitting, or seemingly assaulting protestors in a way that appears to be unreasonable or questionable (α = .94). Finally, the *cordial confrontation* included pictures of protestors fist bumping or shaking hands with police officers or military personnel, taking pictures together, etc. (α = 1.0).

Spectacle Media Frame included two sub frames: Oddity and emotional spectacle. Coders identified the *oddity* sub frame in pictures of protestors flipping off police, engaged in odd or unusual behavior, or nudity (α = .90). The *emotional spectacle* sub frame was used to separate spectacle categories, and uses emotions of protestors as the main frame. For example, this frame would include protestors crying at vigils, or if they appear to be screaming at police (α = .84). Coders also identified whether the type of emotion was loss/sadness or anger.

Finally, coders identified the two types of sub frames present within the debate frame: written demands or non-violent protest. For the *written demands sub frame*, coders looked for identifying words or demands that appear on signs, t-shirts, or protestor paraphernalia (α = .82). Examples include signs that just say "Black lives matter" as well as more elaborate signs that describe hypothetical scenarios, demands, and calls for action. For the *non-violent protest sub frame* (α = .93) coders identified if any of the visuals included depictions of protestors as non-violent. This variable includes vigils, candlelight services, and crowds that are not violent.

Other frames. After coding, articles that did not include any of the above frames were coded as having "other" visual frames.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to show the prevalence of frames and sub frames (**H1**, **H2**, **H3** and **RQ3**). To answer research questions about differences between media outlets (**RQ1**, **RQ2**, **RQ4** and **RQ5**) chi-square analysis was performed. To answer **RQ6,** which examines the extent to which certain frames were circulated in social media, non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests were conducted to account for unequal group sizes as well as skewed sharing data (Nachar, 2008).

Chapter 8: Results from Content Analysis

An overview of pertinent descriptive statistics is provided before the analysis of research questions and hypotheses. Results showed that a total of 93.6% (n = 703) articles were from US media outlets, while only 6.4% (n = 48) of social media coverage was present from other countries. A total of 49% (n = 368) were online versions of mainstream media outlet content, 29.2% (n = 219) were articles from alternative media organizations, 18.2% (n = 137) were from digitally native media outlets, and 3.5% (n = 27) were from other types of news media organizations.

In terms of multimedia, most articles included photos (61.1%, n = 459), followed by videos (24.2%, n = 182) and finally articles with videos and photos (14.6%, n = 110). Of those articles with photos, most articles only included one photo (n = 365), 103 articles had only two photos, and 122 articles included three or more visual images, and/or photo galleries in their digital content. A total of 173 articles did not include any of the frames of interest to this study (23%, n = 173). Those articles included official sources that are spokespeople, lawyers, and people who could not be identified as protestors or police, as well as infographics and art.

In terms of general article topic distribution, articles were most likely to focus on protests (49.9%, n = 375). Male police brutality cases were the second most likely to appear in this sample (36.5%, n = 274) followed by female police brutality cases (7.3%, n = 55), and finally articles that more thematically discussed many different cases (6.3%, n = 47%).

H1 [Incident-involved Blacks will be framed as criminals more often than other frames] was answered using descriptive statistics. A total of 97 articles included identifying photos of incident-involved Blacks. Of those, 26.8% (n = 26) included the professional frame and 83.5%

(n = 81) included the casual frame, while only 38.1% (n = 37) included the criminal frame. **H1** was rejected.[5]

For **RQ1**, chi-square analysis revealed there were no significant differences between type of media outlet and portrayals of incident-involved Blacks in similar ways. Table 8.1 shows the breakdown of these frequencies.

Table 8.1 – Crosstabulations of the Presence of Visual Frames of Incident-Involved Blacks by Media Outlet

	Outlet Type				Total
	Mainstream	Alternative	Digital Native	Other	
	$n = 49$	$n = 22$	$n = 17$	$n = 9$	$n = 97$
Presence					
Criminal	38.8% (19)	27.3% (6)	52.9% (9)	33.3% (3)	38.1% (37)
Casual	83.7% (41)	91.0% (20)	76.4% (13)	77.8% (7)	83.5% (81)
Professional	30.6% (15)	27.3% (6)	29.4% (5)	0% (0)	26.8% (26)

H2 predicts police will be framed professionally more often than other frames. Identifying photos of police were present in 80 news articles. As predicted, police were framed professionally most often (55.6%, n = 50) followed by criminal (48.8%, n = 39). Very few photos depicted police as casual (7.5%, n = 6) (Table 8.2). **H2** was accepted.

For **RQ2**, chi-square results revealed that there were no significant differences between media outlet type and portrayals of police as professionals [$X^2(3) = 4.129$, p = .248]. For police depictions that included the causal frame, 100% of cell counts were too low to perform a reliable content statistical analysis – casually framed police photos appeared in only six articles. However, significant differences emerged when it came to media outlet type and visualization of police as criminals [$X^2(3) = 8.097$, p < .05] (See Table 8.2). Results show

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[5] Frequencies were reported to assess H1 because identifying photos of Blacks and police were typically not present in the same article.

Table 8.2 – Crosstabulations and Chi Squares of the Presence of Visual Frames of Police by Media Outlet

	Outlet Type				Total
	Mainstream *n* = 45	Alternative *n* = 12	Digital Native *n* = 19	Other *n* = 4	*n* = 80
Presence					
Criminal**	57.8% (26)	25.0% (3)	52.6% (10)	0% (0)	48.8% (39)
Casual	6.7% (3)	8.3% (1)	10.5% (2)	0% (0)	7.5% (6)
Professional	55.6% (25)	75.0% (9)	63.2% (12)	100% (4)	62.5% (50)

** p < .01

that mainstream (57.8%) and digitally native organizations (52.6%) used criminal headshots and depictions of police more often than alternative organizations (25%) or other types of media organizations (0%).

 RQ3 asks how often articles include the end-of-struggle frame. A total of 211 articles included videos or images of the altercation between incident-involved Blacks and police. Of those, most these articles (n = 147, 66.5%) included the end-of-struggle frame. For **RQ4**, chi-square results reveal significant differences between media types and frame presence in articles that included visualizations of the incident [$X^2(3) = 10.774$, p < .05] (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3 – Crosstabulations and Chi Squares of the Presence and Absence of the End-of-Struggle Frame by Media Outlet

	Outlet Type				Total
	Mainstream n = 89	Alternative n = 62	Digital Native N = 51	Other N = 9	
End-of-Struggle					
Present	79.8% (71)	61.3 % (38)	58.8% (30)	88.9% (8)	69.7% (147)
Absent	20.2% (18)	38.7% (24)	41.2% (107)	11.1% (1)	30.3% (64)

n = 211, p < .05

The end-of-struggle frame appeared most often in media organizations classified as "other,"

followed by mainstream media, alternative media and lastly digitally native. Post-hoc column

comparisons show that the proportions between mainstream media and alternative and digital

media are significantly different.

To answer **H3** [Protest sub frames associated with riot, confrontation and spectacle will

appear more often than sub frames associated with debate], descriptive statistics revealed protest

and unrest appeared more frequently in news coverage than identifying photos or visualizations

of incidents (n = 408, 54.3%). Table 8.4 summarizes the presence of sub frames in articles by

media organizations.

Table 8.4 – Crosstabulations and Chi-Squares of Presence of Protest Sub frames by Media Outlet

	Case				Total
	Mainstream	Alternative	Digital native	Other	
Sub frames Present	N = 202	N = 119	N = 72	N = 15	N = 408
Riot					
Criminal Activity	0% (0)	1.7% (2)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	0.7% (3)
Chaos	12.4%(25)	6.7% (8)	12.5% (9)	0% (0)	10.3% (42)
Community Rebuild	3.5% (7)	1.7% (2)	2.7% (2)	0% (0)	2.7% (11)
Confrontation					
Questionable Use of Force	7.9% (16)	10.9%(13)	6.7% (8)	20% (3)	9.8% (40)
Tense Confrontation	22.7%(46)	25.2%(30)	18.1%(13)	53.3%(8)	23.8%(97)
Cordial Confrontation	1.4%(3)	3.4%(4)	1.4%(1)	0%(0)	1.9%(8)
Spectacle					
Oddity *	18.3%(37)	31.9%(38)	20.8%(15)	20%(3)	15.2%(62)
Emotional Spectacle **	25.2%(51)	9.2%(11)	11.1%(8)	13.3%(2)	17.6%(72)
Debate/Protest					
Written Demands	64.3%(130)	56.3%(67)	62.5%(45)	60%(9)	61.5%(251)
Non-violent protests	92.6%(187)	84.9%(101)	90.3%(65)	86.7%(13)	89.7%(366)

The riot frame included three sub frames: criminal activity, chaos and aftermath. Overall,

the criminal activity sub frame was almost non-existent, appearing in only three articles (0.7%).

Also appearing in low quantities was the community rebuild sub frame, which appeared in 11

articles (2.7%). In terms of sub frames of riot, the chaos sub frame appeared most often ($n = 26$,

3.5%).

For confrontation sub frames, results showed that 40 articles included the questionable

use of force sub frame (9.8%), and only eight articles included the cordial confrontation sub

frame (1.9%). The tense confrontation sub frame dominated images of confrontation, accounting

for a total of 97 articles (23.8%).

The media frame of spectacle included two sub frames: oddity and emotional spectacle.

For visuals that showed protestors engaged in odd or unusual behavior, 62 articles included the

oddity sub frame (15.2%). Similarly, 72 articles included the emotional spectacle sub frame

(17.6%). In terms of type of emotion displayed when the emotional sub frame was present, anger

(n = 48, 65.7%) appeared slightly more often than loss (n = 43, 59.7%). Thus, these findings

suggest that in coverage that visualized the emotional responses of protestors, grief was as

prevalent as anger.

Finally, the debate frame also included two key sub frames: Written demands and non-

violent protests. These visual sub frames were found in coverage most often, with written

demands appearing in 251 articles (61.5%) and nonviolent protest appearing most often of all

protest images (n = 366, 89.7%). Ultimately, the sub frames of debate were present more often,

contrary to what was predict. Therefore, **H3** was rejected.

To answer **RQ5**, which asks if media outlets use certain sub frames differently, crosstabs

and chi-squares were used (See Table 8.3). The criminal activity, community rebuild, and cordial

confrontation frames appeared too infrequently to perform statistical tests. No significant

differences were found between media type and use of the chaos frame [$X^2(3) = 2.428$, p = .488],

tense confrontation frame [$X^2(3) = 3.977$, p = .264], or questionable use-of-force frame [$X^2(3) =$ 2.882, p = .410].

However, for sub frames of spectacle, significant differences were found in both cases. Results show overall significant differences for oddity [$X^2(2) = 13.465$, p < .05], with alternative media outlets including this frame (31.9%) more often than mainstream (18.3%), digitally native (20.8%) and other media outlets (15.2%). Column proportion comparisons using Z scores reveal that mainstream media and alternative media organizations are significantly different at a level of p < .05, yet all other individual column proportion comparisons were not significantly different. Additionally, emotional spectacle was presented most often by mainstream media (25.2%), followed by other types of media organizations (13.3%), digitally native media organizations (11.1%) and finally alternative media organizations (13.3%). These overall differences were significant [$X^2(2) = 16.121$, p < .01] (See Table 8.4). Column proportion comparisons using Z scores revealed the mainstream media was significantly different from alternative and digitally native media organizations (p < .05), but not other types of media organizations. There were no significant differences in proportions between alternative, digitally native or other organizations. No differences between media outlet type and use of the written debate sub frame, or the non-violent protest sub frame were found. Overall these findings suggest that, in terms of protest, digital media shared on social media has few visual variations based on the type of news outlet.

Finally, **RQ6** asks if certain news articles with visual frames and sub frames are more likely to be shared on social media platforms than others. Overall, data show that there were no differences of any kind in sharing when an identifying photo was included for Blacks or police, indicating these pictures are not a significant factor of social media sharing. However, for those that included photos or videos of the altercation with the end-of-struggle frame, articles were

significantly more likely to be shared on Facebook (*Mdn* = 656.0) than those without the video (*Mdn* = 140, U = 29301.5, p < .001). No differences were found on Twitter (U = 36705.0, p = .229).

For protest sub frames, no significant differences were found with any of the sub frames associated with riot (criminal activity, chaos, or community rebuild) or confrontation (tense confrontation, questionable use of force, or cordial confrontation). In addition, data show that inclusion of the oddity sub frame did not indicate more or less sharing. However, differences were found with the emotional spectacle sub frame on both Facebook and Twitter. Results indicate that for Facebook, the presence of emotional spectacle [*Mdn* = 415.0] was more likely to be shared than those without emotional spectacle [*Mdn* = 167.5, U = 13186.0, p < .05]. Similarly, for Twitter, those with the emotional spectacle [*Mdn* = 149.0] were more likely to be shared than those articles without emotional spectacle [*Mdn* = 57.5, U = 12810.5, p < .05].

For articles that included photos with written protest demands, results revealed there were no significant differences on Twitter, but there were significant differences on Facebook [U = 45867.5, p < .05]. Surprisingly, articles with images of written debate [*Mdn* = 129.5] were less likely to be shared on Facebook than those without [*Mdn* = 194.0]. No differences were found when visuals included the non-violent protest sub frame.

Chapter 9: Discussion of Findings from Content Analysis

The previous chapter makes an important contribution to the understanding of the visual representations of these recent incidents of questionable police brutality and associated protest in social news coverage. This analysis also helps situate the theoretical positioning of audience interpretations and evaluations and audience-identified media frames from Study 1.

First, the descriptive statistics give insight into the origins of news coverage that appeared on social media. Only half of the articles that included multimedia came from mainstream media organizations. This points to the increasing relevance of alternative new outlets, digitally native sites, and other types of media content providers to online audiences. Also, descriptive statistics show that fewer media articles featured a discussion of excessive police use-of-force against women, reaffirming the alarming findings from Richie (2012) about the limited coverage surrounding police violence against Black women within these types of events. Despite the landmark cases of Dajerria Becton and Sandra Bland, in addition to the prominent hashtag #sayhername which encouraged social media users to recognize Black women as victims of police violence and relevant to the Black Lives Matter protests (Susman, 2015), media professionals and digital audiences paid less attention to these cases.

For identifying photos of Blacks and police involved in an incident of police use-of-force, results showed digital coverage portrayed Blacks casually more often than they were portrayed criminally. Interestingly, in Study 1, these casual depictions were less likely to be discussed by participants. Instead, a discussion of polarizing images, such as the several pictures of Michael Brown, was prevalent. The same discussions and assumptions of media's negative portrayals of Blacks were discussed online, centering around the hashtag #iftheygunnedmedown. This hashtag accompanied initial coverage and criticized news media outlets that chose to use a photo that

depicted Brown as he was reportedly flashing gang signs, a criminal depiction (Durando, 2014). Though the findings of this content analysis suggest criminal depictions appeared less frequently than more casual depictions, it is also possible that appropriate visual depictions adjusted over time, especially considering public discourse that followed the death of Michael Brown. In addition, this content analysis cannot account for the totality of primes that might lead to audience's identification of the criminal frame. Nevertheless, coupled with findings from Study 1, this research reveals that casual depictions of Blacks appeared most often. Results also show that overall Blacks did appear in articles more often than police, giving more opportunity for the possible association of minorities and crime in general.

Police were frequently visualized in one of two ends of the polarizing spectrum: criminals and professionals, though professional depictions appeared most often. Study 1 revealed almost uniform sentiments from Black participants, who regularly pointed to the negative visual treatment of Blacks and the more positive, professional depictions of police. Study 2 refutes these assessments, revealing the presence of the criminal frame in 48.8% of all police identification photos. This provides evidence that media organizations do not rely solely on professional frames to visualize officers. These seemingly conflicting findings from Study 1 and Study 2 suggest people often subscribe to biased perceptions of media practice that are not confirmed by evidence, particularly in the case of police. These findings may also point to the likely role interpersonal communication and online discourse may play in audience's assessments of frame salience from the media.

Taking these findings into account with social media sharing data also show a telling side about how social media audiences circulate images. For headshots of incident-involved Blacks and police, audiences are just as likely to share articles with criminal depictions as they are with

casual or professional depictions in both cases. Under these circumstances, we can see that negative images are just as likely to be shared as ones that might counter those stereotypes. As such, this further complicates findings of press patterns, because social media audiences play a role in amplifying certain narratives through sharing.

For multimedia that included footage or photos of the altercation between the incident-involved Black and police officer, this study finds that the end-of-struggle frame appears quite frequently (69.7%, n = 147). Results from Study 1 suggest that for Blacks, the end-of-struggle frame is a visual victim frame, which evokes evaluations of sympathy and empathy for incident-involved Blacks and criticism and contempt for their aggressors (police). White audiences think of each event in more discrete and episodic terms. In some cases, however, these evaluations shift, especially in end-of-struggle scenarios that include children, who are more often discussed as victims by Blacks and Whites. Beyond these differences in evaluations, one must account for the graphic nature of the end-of-struggle images. These images not only appear more often than articles that simply show the struggle between police, but they are also shared more often than articles that didn't include this frame. This amplification by digital audiences through online sharing may explain some of the differences encountered in Study 1 between Black and White participants. The prevalence of the end-of-struggle frame may have intensified the salience of the victimization of Blacks for Black audiences. However, less likely to empathize with incident-involved Blacks, White audience may have simply become more desensitized to cases as they continued to make national headlines in recent years.

The bulk of visual coverage focused on depictions of protest, and findings suggest that the negative coverage patterns established in the theoretical confines of the protest paradigm (e.g. Chan & Lee, 1984; McLeod & Hertog, 1999) are reversed in visual content, shown by the

large proportion of visuals with debate sub frames. Many authors have criticized journalists for writing about tactics instead of giving space to the demands and calls to action of protestors (e.g. Boyle et al., 2005; Hertog & McLeod, 1995; McLeod & Detenber, 1999). Results from this study suggest visuals fill this void. In terms of visual framing, sub frames of riot appeared the least, followed by confrontation, and spectacle. Sub frames of debate appeared most often. As such, visuals are essential for future inquiries of the protest paradigm, particularly in digital coverage that routinely includes important multimedia elements.

One of the most interesting findings of protest coverage through visuals is the reliance on nonviolent protest, and/or photos that emphasize written protest demands. Almost 90 percent of protest images depict non-violent protest. Photojournalism's foundations include shooting and recording *action* to tell a story (Kobre, 2011). Coupled with news values hierarchies that imply this action would be best suited by emphasizing conflict and controversy through deviant behavior, it is surprising that visual journalists focus primarily on action through peaceful means. These findings point to the realities of BLM-related protests, which were primarily peaceful, marked only by short, intense periods of chaos and unrest. Despite perceptions that the media focused on riot and destruction or that BLM protestors were engaged primarily in violent behavior, visual media coverage of actual protests relied more on emphasizing non-violent protest and written demands. Overall, these results point to the role visuals play in unraveling the well-established patterns of the protest paradigm in its original form. However, as Study 1 shows, sub frames of debate aren't uniformly *legitimizing*, which is inevitably an essential element for understanding the paradigm. In some cases, for example, written demands might further delegitimize protests. The only agreed-upon legitimizing frame was the community rebuild frame, which appeared just a few times in coverage. Results also show that on Facebook,

articles that included the written demands were less likely to be shared, though this was not the case for Twitter. This is in line with nascent research that suggests retrievable news on Facebook will be characteristically different than the news on Twitter (e.g. García-Perdomo et al., 2017).

Elements of the confrontation frame appeared in about one-third of protest images. Results show tense confrontation appeared more often than images that included questionable use of force or cordial confrontation, meaning protestors were visualized more often as provoking or agitating police, and being arrested, rather than police tactics and militarized operations. Despite its lower frequencies, the questionable use-of-force sub frame distinction is nonetheless important for scholars of protests who use Hertog & McLeod's (2001) typology to analyze coverage. Scholars should consider the effects that coverage of police and government aggression play in assessing audience effects. In addition, this questionable use-of-force sub frame typically does not fall within the spectrum of "delegitimizing" and "legitimizing" for protestors, but instead, challenges the depictions of governments' actions, and in some cases, promotes empathetic responses toward protestors from audiences. In other words, as opposing forces become more involved in maintaining and controlling protestors, their tactics are also scrutinized by journalists and audiences. In the complicated relationship between police and Black Lives Matter protesters, the rising presence of the questionable use-of-force sub frame may be one that helps further protest demands, thus providing more sympathetic coverage for protests. News organizations did not include any of the previously discussed sub frames in visuals in significantly different proportions.

Sub frames of spectacle appeared more evenly proportioned in coverage; however, they were also utilized differently by different types of media organizations. Differences were significant between traditional and alternative media. The emotional spectacle appeared in 17.6%

of all protests images and was included more often in content from mainstream media organizations than content from other organizations analyzed in this study. Emotional depictions of anger and sadness were present in almost equal proportions, revealing social media as a space for more comprehensive visual coverage of protestor emotions than previous research on the paradigm might have expected. The emphasis on anger may be considered a negative aspect to some scholars, but not necessarily to audiences. For example, Entman (2012) said that Black protestors are stereotyped as demanding and angry, though Blacks from Study 1 tended to rely on an understanding of anger as relatable and necessary. For those who view anger as negative, however, the counter-balance of grieving protestors emphasizes a different emotional perspective. Interestingly, mainstream media organizations were significantly more likely to include visuals with these emotional elements from protestors than other types of media organizations, while alternative media organizations included emotional spectacle the least often. Additionally, social media audiences appear to be more receptive to the emotional sub frame, and are more likely to share articles on both Facebook and Twitter than articles that use other frames.

Results also showed that the oddity sub frame (15.2%) appeared almost as often as the emotional spectacle sub frame (15.2%), and was included significantly more often in articles from alternative media organizations. This shows that mainstream media organizations are more likely to visualize spectacle through emotion, while alternative, digitally native and other types of media organizations are more likely to approach spectacle through the sensationalism of oddity. The sub frames of the spectacle frame were the only areas of protest visuals that differed by organization types.

Finally, the least frequent protest media frame to appear in coverage is the riot media frame, with the associated chaos sub frame appearing most often, followed by criminal activity and community rebuild sub frames. While coverage of rioting, property damage, and conflict would certainly be deemed newsworthy, the lack of overall visuals containing riot images suggests that visual journalists and editors allowed violent events to remain predominantly episodic, not associating them visually with the ongoing protests that marked the two-year period examined in this study. Still, social media sharing results suggest that there were no differences in sharing of these images, meaning that different characteristics of visuals did not result in more or less sharing when a visual was present.

Regarding the overall evaluation of the negative coverage of the protest paradigm, these findings show that visuals add a vital element to consider when assessing news coverage, ultimately suggesting depictions of protests are different from the frames conceptualized in previous studies of text. Visual coverage is much more likely to focus on narratives of non-violent protests, which by most accounts, would be considered a positive aspect of media coverage. Researchers must assess protests by including visuals as an essential element of understanding protest coverage and allow for more precision regarding how to move forward in journalistic coverage of protests.

Chapter 10: Discussions and Conclusion

The death of Michael Brown in August 2014 sparked unrest and a search for justice within the Ferguson, MO, community. Within days, Brown's death renewed a national conversation about police use-of-force against Blacks, and protests occurred worldwide. Simultaneously, news media fervently covered new controversial cases of police use-of-force against Blacks, including the deaths of Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, and Sandra Bland.

This dissertation sought to explore how visual coverage was framed and evaluated by Black and White audiences, and understand how visual media coverage represented the issue. To extend framing theory, this study explored how audiences recognized, organized and evaluated media frames, building a typology to examine the characteristics of digital news coverage found in social media networks. The final chapter of this dissertation highlights key findings from think-aloud sessions and the content analysis of news coverage, and to discuss the overall theoretical and practical implications of this study. Limitations and areas for future work are outlined.

KEY FINDINGS

Each study of this dissertation seeks to understand framing from different angles. Study 1 is based on extending our knowledge of media frames and stereotypes to the audience, focusing on how audiences identify and interpret media frames and the overall evaluations of content. Three primary findings emerged: Audiences use media frames to organize information; audiences are contesting stereotypes for different people depicted; and finally, in this genre of news, race and identity play a role in evaluation.

The first finding clarifies the connection between media and audience frames. This study showed that media frames were useful organization structures for participants – in fact, most

participants identified all the media frames defined in previous literature. However, these frames typically helped organize information into sub frames, which provide a more detailed account of the scope of framing, particularly within protest coverage. For example, coverage associated with the riot frame was organized more specifically in sub frames of chaos, violence, and community rebuild. Ultimately these patterns of sub frames help build a new typology that can be used to guide future work that analyzes images and texts of protest coverage and leads to a more precise understanding of audience effects, beyond the blanket assertions of, for example, legitimizing and delegitimizing protests.

In addition, Study 1 shows that both White and Black audiences challenge stereotypes but in different ways. For Blacks, stereotypes of Blacks as criminals or deviants are almost always observed or articulated, even when an individual does not project obviously "criminal" traits. Black participants regularly engaged in critically evaluating image meaning from the perspective of Whites, evidence of the continued relevance of Du Bois' (1904) concept of double consciousness. Furthermore, an "us" and "them" narrative was consistently relevant in these think-aloud interviews. Black participants also blamed media organizations for their role in reiterating those stereotypes.

White participants recognized stereotypical presentations, but were far less likely to oppose them, except in the case of police. The "heroic" stereotype of police was in question in many interviews. Instead, White participants skeptically evaluated police militarization, and, to a lesser degree, police use of force. This new skepticism of police by White participants reveals that the assumed "heroic" stereotype of uniformed officers may be shifting. This change may have significant sociological implications in the future, especially when more cases of alleged police brutality and/or police militarization emerge.

Finally, Study 1 shows that while evaluations of images can be individualistic, there are distinct differences between Blacks and White interpretations of images. As such, this research finds that assertions that certain coverage patterns lead to delegitimizing and legitimizing evaluations or even more simplistic negative and positive evaluations may be widely inaccurate. Instead, considerations for sympathetic, empathetic and critical responses, in addition to the target of those evaluations, is crucial to understanding the reality of content analysis approaches.

Results from the content analysis of digital news coverage in Study 2 builds on the frames and sub frames identified by audiences in Study 1. The analysis contributes three main findings: 1) digital media includes a different emphasis of visual coverage than audiences presume, and more than past studies have shown; 2) media outlets of different origins have only minor differences in visual coverage; and 3) audiences' sharing patterns reveal their problematic contribution to the redistribution of news in social media arenas.

First, these results show that visual media coverage is different than audiences and previous scholarship might presume. Concerning identifying photos, results show incident-involved Blacks were shown most often as casual, followed by the criminal frame, which contradicts the patterns and criticism many participants articulated in Study 1. Also in light of results of the first study, the criminal frame can also function as a prime, which cannot be exclusively identified in a content analysis. Criminality might always complicate depictions of Blacks, and is much more likely to be seen in casual photos. The relative absence of professional depictions for incident-involved Blacks remains problematic. In terms of media practice, results extend recent findings by Dixon (2015), showing that when Blacks appear in crime coverage, journalists and editors attempt to use non-criminal depictions. Interestingly, while most coverage included professionally framed images of police, mugshots were more prevalent than anticipated.

114

This finding suggests that journalists did not rely solely on accessible professional shots, but instead treated police as suspects in some cases as well. The almost non-existent casual pictures of police officers in this content analysis reveals that strict online policies adopted by many police departments around the nation (e.g. PoliceOne.com, 2010) may have made retrieval difficult.

Regarding protest coverage, this study points to an overwhelming reliance on sub frames associated with the debate frame. Scholarship interrogating the protest paradigm has shown time and time again that in text the "legitimizing" debate frame is frequently absent in coverage, and results from Study 1 also indicated that the media focus more on the negative aspects of protests rather than the positive ones. Visual coverage contradicts these assertions. This study reveals that visual journalists are more likely to emphasize visuals of non-violent protest and written demands. However, as Study 1 shows, the reliance on the visual sub frames of debate does not necessarily lead to more "legitimizing" coverage. Audiences will read images that include written demands and/or that depict non-violent protest, and evaluate them in different ways. Study 1 showed there was no concrete way to be legitimizing to one specific entity of people. Therefore, implications of both studies suggest that in the visual realm, an over-reliance on one type of media frame may produce consequential effects. Also important to consider is the balance of sub frame appearance within each overarching frame. For the riot frame, for example, the criminal activity frame appears less often than the chaos frame. This ultimately may result in a divide in evaluations: White audiences may be more likely to subscribe to attitudes that suggest protests as intentionally violent; Black audiences may see chaos as more representative of the entirety of the situation. The community rebuild frame also appeared in low frequencies. This sub frame is the only community-level, legitimizing sub frame associated with coverage of riot,

115

and is critically absent in coverage. Within the confrontation frame, coverage focused more often on tense confrontation than questionable use of force pictures. This reveals that coverage was more likely to highlight the intensity of confrontation between police and protesters, rather than focus on police militaristic actions and responses. As discussed previously, this militaristic frame was a key element for both Black and White audiences for triggering skeptical criticism of police tactics and methods. Ultimately, these findings suggest that within frames of riot and confrontation, there is an emphasis on sub frames that are more likely to produce negative evaluations from White audiences.

The second major finding from Study 2 showed media organizations produced similar multimedia; visual representations were homogenous. Journalism scholarship suggests that news organization ideology shifts the representation of different groups of people (e.g. Ibrahim, 2012). For example, alternative media organizations are expected to dissent from mainstream media norms (Downing, 2001). In visuals, however, evidence shows there are few differences. Similarly, digitally native organizations' visual presentations were not significantly different from other media outlets. Thus, it may be reasonable to assume that while alternative and digital media organizations may account for textual differences, in terms of sourcing and framing as shown by previous studies (e.g. Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Shah & Thornton, 2004), visual practices are similar. On one hand, this may suggest that visual depictions are not as easily manipulated as words, suggesting visual journalists and page editors must align with a different set of guidelines. But visuals can still contain subtle-yet-meaningful differences (highlighted by sub frames), and the typology built in this work could be used strategically to advance a news organizations' goals. On the other hand, the similarities in visual depictions show that visual journalists may succumb to pack mentality. Pack journalism has been widely criticized because it

diverts from the newsgathering process, pushing journalistic competition ahead of the values that drive the news (Gordon et al., 2011). For writers, pack journalism contributes to the overreliance on official and celebrity sources, often marginalizing minority voices (Tumber & Webster, 2006). For visual journalists and editors, using similar visual narratives may also add to these negative effects. Practical considerations for mitigating these effects are discussed later in this chapter.

The third major finding from the content analysis considers audience sharing differences. For Facebook, results are limited to increased sharing for articles that included emotional spectacle and footage from a trigger incident, and decreased Facebook sharing for the presence of the written demands frame. Comparisons of Twitter sharing data were more inconclusive, revealing that the only articles that were more likely to be shared were those that include the emotional spectacle frame versus those that do not. Taken together, these findings suggest that while sub frames of debate may be more prevalent, sub frames of emotional spectacle may be shared more often on both platforms. In addition, Facebook continues to reveal that the content of news may be relevant for understanding shareworthiness, while different considerations, particularly those that dive beyond news content, should be developed for the analysis of shareworthiness on Twitter.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Though framing theory is considered a relatively fractured paradigm, this work sought to advance our theoretical understanding of media frames and audience frames. Entman (1993) describes these as interpretations and moral evaluations made in media content. Decades worth of research has discussed media frames from an inductive-journalistic perspective. Most studies that approach framing content and textual analysis use pre-identified frames to advance the

117

theory (e.g. Araiza et al., 2016; Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Neumann & Fahmy, 2012). In fact, scholars warn against new frame introduction (e.g. Reese, 2007). While this may be the case for framing scholars interested in uncovering how framing works and its effects from a media production perspective, the ontological shift to incorporate audiences requires a reconsideration of framing concepts. As this study shows, media frames are organizational constructs used for audiences to identify suspected media patterns. These organizational patterns were discussed and criticized in equal proportions in Study 1, despite differences in the frequency of frame appearance in Study 2.

As with agenda setting, media frames tell the audience what to think about – criminality, professionalism, rioting, confrontation, spectacle, for example. However, sub frames help evaluate content and organize differences in audience evaluation. While Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2016) argued that equivalence framing models were an ideal approach to examining content, the implications of this study suggest that emphasis framing models are more useful for exploring audience effects, particularly in terms of evaluations and interpretations of media content. As such, this research calls for continued research that aligns with emphasis framing approaches (Entman, 1993) for research interested in tackling media effects on society. Mixed-methods approaches that couple content analysis with audience analysis will ultimately provide more theoretical and practical evidence that can advance the framing program. This is especially true in the visual realm.

This research advances the conceptualization of the protest paradigm by re-evaluating audience effects of coverage. The traditional conceptualization of the protest paradigm says that upon identifying frames, devices and sources, patterns will ultimately delegitimize or legitimize protests depending on the type of protest. However, the generalizability of this "delegitimizing"

and "legitimizing" is not only limiting; it is inaccurate. As this research shows, these outcomes were not universal, and often are not even associated with protests. In addition to protests, audiences use news images to evaluate the triggering incidents, the status of people involved (in this case, Black people), the role of oppositional and government forces, and media organizations generally. In the case of Blacks and Whites, these can lead to opposing evaluations of an event. Inevitably, more research must be done to understand effects of framing for audiences.

The findings of this study confirm that to advance our understanding of protest coverage production and effects, research must include visuals. Visuals are fundamental element of framing programs, and the continued exclusion of visuals is ultimately one of the most limiting factors of prior research. Visuals have lasting effects, and images become part of how audiences remember significant events (e.g. Zelizer, 1993). Thus, visuals not only play a role in remembering a specific incident, but also likely play a role in understanding certain groups of people, their actions, and their demands overall. In Study 1, for example, many participants evaluated the picture through their own schemas. Certain pictures reminded participants of the 1960s Civil Rights movement; other pictures were described in ways that align with long-standing stereotypes of protests, Blacks, and police. As such, both historical and contemporary considerations are important for evaluating visual coverage and understanding how and why audience interpretations are so different.

This research also provides direction for understanding these differences in interpretations from Black and White perspectives. As this study illustrated, Whites' and Blacks' evaluations of visual content were frequently misaligned. This points to the role race and culture play in shaping cognitive differences. Black participants discussed images by incorporating their own evaluations with perceived thoughts of Whites. Double consciousness (Du Bois, 1904) was

ubiquitous in this research, and stems from the continued acknowledgement and effects of racism at societal and institutional levels. For Blacks, other audience interpretations included critical evaluations of police, the government and the media – powerful institutions run primarily by White people – and more empathetic and sympathetic evaluations of visuals of Blacks and social unrest. Double consciousness was linked with what Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards and Stevenson (2014) described as a contest-and-oppose response. Evidenced in this research, Black participants were likely to oppose negative stereotypes, using their own schema to contest what is presented. Yet, Black thought in Study 1was not always uniform. In some cases, for example, participants scolded the actions of those protesting who wore clothing with obscene language. Moreover, some Black participants were more likely to criticize the actions of police than others. However, the point of this research was to compare how Blacks and Whites generally interpreted these images, and as such, similarities were highlighted. Future work should consider more extensively the differentiations within Black and White thought. Nevertheless, every Black participant in this study acknowledged the problems Blacks face in American society. This articulation of societal oppression was likely a key factor for the similarities in evaluations, and explains the century-long continuation of double-conscious thinking. Ultimately, Blacks, who are often assessing pictures of other Blacks, were more likely to think empathetically about depictions of Blacks, and had more critical or negative depictions of police and the media.

For White participants, evidence of comparative thinking appeared less frequently than for Black participants. For example, while Whites were just as likely to recognize negative depictions of Blacks or protests, negative stereotypes were not consistently rebuked. This lends insight about how the "pictures in our head" help us interpret the meaning of visuals. For Whites, the absence or rejection of certain schemas makes comparative thinking less common. For

Blacks, who are routinely exposed to racism, stereotyping, microaggressions, etc., comparative thinking is a product of the schemas built through their encounters. For issues that involve Black people and civil rights, it is imperative to acknowledge the varying roles of colorblind ideologies and the recognition of societal oppression. The degrees to which individuals subscribe to these ideologies are likely a result in evaluation differences. Additionally, White participants were much more likely than Black participants to consider the difficult positions police face, especially for those participants with who had family or acquaintances in the police force. This can again be explained by the potency of mental schemas. Whites are overrepresented in police forces and presumed White stereotypes of public servants such as police are generally positive.

There was more alignment with evaluations of images that included police in militarized uniforms for both Blacks and Whites. For Whites participants, this new way of framing police revealed the development of contrary mental schemas that are more critical. This research showed that to understand "new" depictions like police militarization, both Black and White participants used schemas from other media sources, like Hollywood films and coverage of Syria. For example, one depiction of a police officer in riot gear was primed by ideas of futuristic policing. Movies such as *Robocop* was referenced by several participants to evaluate police militarization. This observation suggests that when audiences build new frames (e.g. militarized police), they may rely on marginally-related schema developed from other media sources.

Finally, this study contributes to emerging research on the phenomena of "shareworthiness" (Trilling et al., 2016), a concept that focuses on the relationship between news content and sharing among digital audiences. As this study shows, visually framing protests as rioting, chaos, and confrontation doesn't lead to more sharing in social networks. Instead,

pictures that highlight the emotional drama of anger and sadness are more likely to be shared on social media than those without these images. This research supports speculations from previous work that suggests social media audiences may be more emotionally driven (Kilgo, Lough & Riedl, 2017). The concept of shareworthiness in news stories of conflict should be extended to include visualizations of emotions as a relevant predictor of social media sharing. In addition, findings from Study 2 show that the sharing cultures on Twitter and Facebook are distinctly different (García-Perdomo et al., 2017; Kilgo et al., 2016; Trilling et al., 2016).

PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This dissertation also offers a typology for protest coverage that provides a useful guide for visual journalists, editors, and scholars. This typology includes detailed considerations that can serve as a checklist for journalistic coverage. Protest coverage includes four key media frames that emphasis different aspects of the reality of protest: riot, confrontation, spectacle and debate. Concerning previously-identified media frames of protest, these conceptualizations are similar from an overarching perspective (e.g. Hertog & McLeod, 1995, 2001; McLeod & Hertog, 1999). That is, the media can ultimately frame protest activity through visual interpretations that emphasize 1) property destruction and violence (riot frame), 2) clashes with police (confrontation), 3) the drama of protests (spectacle frame), or 4) protestors' demands, organizational efforts, and agendas (debate). Findings from Study 2 show that visualizations in digital news media rely on the debate frame rather than riot, confrontation and spectacle frames. Previous research suggests that this overreliance on the debate frame is presumed to be ideal for protestors (e.g., Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Hertog & McLeod, 1995; Mourao, Kilgo & Sylvie, 2015). Because Black Lives Matter and related protests were overwhelmingly peaceful, this research agrees the reliance on debate sub frames is ideal because it reflects reality.

Sub frames of the typology are useful for structuring and understanding audience-identified variations within the overarching frames of riot, confrontation, spectacle or debate. Results showed visuals with riot and confrontation frames were most often articulated by one sub frame (chaos or tense confrontation). For spectacle or debate, sub frame appearance was more uniform. Moreover, images of triggering events that sparked the protests play a critical role in evaluating protests, the Black community and police. Professional depictions of Blacks were less likely to appear than criminal or casual depictions of Blacks; criminal depictions of police were just as likely to appear as professional depictions of police. From these findings, four practical suggestions for journalists and digital content creators emerge.

Consider sub frames of protests as relevant visual narratives. Because results show major differences in audience evaluations, journalists should strive to include sub frames identified in this research, contingent on the reality. This is especially true in cases of rioting and confrontation, where certain sub frames appeared more frequently than others. Including the community rebuild frame that allows journalists to provide a different perspective for understanding the chaos of violent clashes and riots as well as provide follow-up coverage. The inclusion of different sub frames within framing narratives allows journalists an opportunity to visualize a more objective agenda for audiences of different backgrounds that neither universally supports or marginalizes any one group of people.

Treat oddity with caution. The oddity sub frame is often a result of protestor's tactics – an attempt to engage in strange, unusual or odd behavior to capture news attention. On the one hand, oddity should not be ignored, because these tactics often are a relevant part of protests. On the other hand, these actions are often a strategic move to gain media attention when media organizations ignore peaceful strategies. A focus on oddity is ultimately paradoxical for protests,

because, as this study shows, public evaluations of oddity are almost always negative. For

participants in this study, participants viewed protestors engaged in odd or unusual behavior as

childish, foolish, disrespectful and obnoxious. In this study, oddity reinforced many negative

stereotypes that are held about Black men and women. Journalists and editors might consider

using additional photos of protests that fall in other sub frame categories to help offset the

adverse effects of this sensationalizing sub frame.

Show the suspect, the police officer, and the entire incident. Each case of alleged police

brutality serves as a trigger for protests. Visually, critical representations that leave lasting

impressions with audiences include identifying photos and footage of the incident. Concerning

identifying photos, an ideal way to entice critical thinking from audiences is to include pictures

of the officer and incident-involved Black that employ the professional frame for both. However,

in breaking news, this might be unrealistic. As an alternative, journalists should include pictures

that identify both police and incident-involved Blacks. While journalists should strive not to

criminalize people who are ultimately suspects (whether it's the police or incident-involved

Blacks), this research suggests that comparative photos – even those with different frames – help

prompt audiences to think beyond the frame. The trade-off with this unequal framing is an

intensification of audience criticism of the media, a serious dilemma since the Trump Era.

Therefore, a third alternative is also proposed: Exclude identifying photos until courtesy or

professional photos can be obtained.

Retreat from pack mentality. This research shows that visual coverage was similar among

different news organizations, suggesting that journalists and editors might still cling to the

controversial pack mentality in times of conflict. This practice recently made news headlines

during coverage of protests proceeding the inauguration of President Donald Trump, where

photographer Evy Mages captured a photograph of more than a dozen journalists who were capturing images of the same burning trash can (Freed, 2017). As discussed earlier, this pack mentality is problematic because it shifts the focus of reporting a story to competing with another news organization. Therefore, visual journalists on the ground should strive for diversity while shooting, and avoid clustering with other photojournalists to capture similar images. However, responsibility also lies in the hands of editors. Editors also strive to diversify visual content. One way to do this is to include image galleries or video montages in digital coverage that inevitably include many visual frames and sub frames rather than relying on one.

Re-evaluate coverage patterns. Self-regulatory exercises such as debriefs and "post-mortems" in the newsrooms are essential for advancing journalism practices in this continually evolving profession. As situations of police use-of-force, protest and racial strife continue to make headlines, the re-evaluation of media coverage is useful for navigating issues that lead to problems with publics. The protest typology built in this study, particularly the relationship between frames (which ultimately appear in verbal and visual communication) and sub frames (which are differentiated frames from visual messages), is a useful tool for assessing coverage patterns and problems.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

This dissertation focused primarily on audience's recognition of media frames, their evaluations of those frames, and how often digital news coverage featured prominent audience-recognized media frames and sub frames. However, there are several limitations to this research. Though many have argued that visual coverage must be considered in conjunction with textual elements in framing research (e.g. Baran & Davis, 1980; Bock, 2015; Gitlin, 1980; Graber, 1990), this research intentionally excludes text because the isolation of visuals aids in our

development of visual analysis tools. As this study shows, visuals are not measured in the same way as text, and therefore, this research provides a typology for evaluating visuals within a program that is well-versed in analyzing text. Future studies can use this typology to analyze the totality of media packaging, as well as interrogate the differences between visual and textual representations of crime and protest news coverage.

Future work should also consider examining differences between individual cases, rather than longitudinal approaches. This work hints at the possible differences in audience understanding of certain cases and related protests, particularly in the case of Dajerria Becton. The discussion would benefit from further inquiry that compares media representations of the Becton case with others like Michael Brown, providing more depth to our understanding of new media coverage practices, as well as audience evaluation differences. Comparative work could also show the evolution of journalistic practice, examining how media and audience frames or frame patterns shift over time. Wesley Lowery, a *Washington Post* reporter, noted that in Ferguson, initial reports were unfamiliar territory, and there were many things about his reporting that he would have done differently (Longform, 2016). Studying case-by-case may help journalism scholars understand the link between journalism experience, and shifting patterns of protest and incident coverage. Additionally, this work focuses specifically on use-of-force incidents against Blacks and related protest, and thus its application outside of race-related protests is another space for further inquiry. More research using the visual typologies built in this study would also help confirm the exhaustiveness of the typology.

In addition, there are several methodological limitations to this study. From Study 1, results were identified from only a total of 40 think-aloud interviews, all from participants who resided in the southern United States, limiting the generalizability of the evaluations. However, it

does set the tone for future research to examine a myriad of possible framing effects rather than reducing framing effects to simply one or two (i.e. legitimizing and delegitimizing). In addition, future research should extend inquiries of evaluations by including other races and ethnicities. Further, Study 2 is based on a content analysis of the most shared data from the social media sphere over the period of two years and thus excludes articles from news organizations that were not shared as often. Additionally, this research cannot account for the algorithmic limitations on each social media platform. Still, this content analysis helps understand what social media audiences were more likely to see from news organizations to the most popular social media outlets.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation sought to further our understanding of media and audience frames by examining coverage of recent incidents of police brutality and social unrest. Results from this dissertation advance the understanding of the framing program, particularly within protest literature, and highlight the role the press and audiences play in understanding and evaluating racial conflict and unrest in the United States.

This research advances framing and visual framing theories by illustrating the different functions of media frames and audience frames. Gitlin (1980) suggests media frames "organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports" (p. 7). Gitlin's nod to audiences reveals some uncertainty as to how much (i.e. "to *some important degree*", pg. 7, emphasis mine) readers use media frames as organizing principles. This research clarifies this vagueness: Media frames are essential organizational components for audiences. Yet, media frames of text are different from media frames of visuals. As such, this research also provides an organizational typology that can help better understand

127

media's production of relevant visual frames of protest, in addition to confirming that long-held stereotypes of police, protestors and Blacks are useful for organizing interpretations of photographs.

On the other hand, *audience frames* – conceptualized in this study as the evaluations and interpretations of media content by audiences – have less uniformity. In previous research, audience frames and media effects have been understood using monolithic approaches. The protest paradigm, for example, suggests that frames of riot, confrontation and spectacle serve as elements that delegitimize protests for audiences (e.g. Harlow & Johnson, 2011), and ultimately can lower public support for a protest's efforts (McLeod & Detenber, 1999). Research assumes that when protests are treated more positively – perceivably by increasing the use of the debate frame – protests are seen favorably by audiences. This dissertation shows that the legitimizing/delegitimizing binary glosses over the complexity media effects. Participants in this research assigned evaluations that extended empathy, sympathy, disapproval and negativity to Blacks, Black communities, protesters, police, bystanders, and media organizations, depending on the person. As such, when assessing the impact and interpretation of media frames, elements and devices of protest coverage, researchers should consider the entanglement of effects that extend to all actors and institutions covered in the issue. Additionally, audience frames that develop from visual news content reveal the complexity of an image: The polysemic nature of images can lead to differences in interpretation. Moreover, collective memory and personal experiences play a role in understanding audience frames. As such, media effects studies can better assess audience frames in future work by examining audience recognition of media frames in addition to addition to these "mentally stored clusters of ideas" (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Methodological approaches such as the think-aloud protocol used in this dissertation fulfill this

objective by considering the interpretative and evaluative step between the consumption of media content and the effects of that exposure

Despite the individualism of audience frames, this research shows that evaluations and interpretations host more similarities for audiences with similar racial identities. Though McLeod and Detenber (1999) found that demographic variables have limited effects, this dissertation shows that race is a vital component for understanding differences in audience effects. Because this dissertation focuses on news content and issues that deal with racial strife, the anticipated variance might seem obvious. To understand communication and race, studies conclude that in-group theories, prejudice and stereotyping explain why and how audiences interpret certain messages. However, many scholars have shown these theories have less predictive power (if any) for understanding Blacks' interpretations and evaluations (L. M. Coleman et al., 1995; R. Coleman, 2006; White, 1984). This dissertation provides insight about some of the cognitive processes that may cause these differences for Blacks, such as double consciousness.

Finally, this study points to critical implications about American society, speaking to scholarship that discusses the critical aspects of race in American society. Previous analyses of news coverage of Black conflict and protests suggests that the media play a role in sustaining White superiority through negative coverage. After the 1960s race riots, National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders issued the famous Kerner Report which argued "[The press] have not communicated to the majority of their audience – which is [W]hite – a sense of the degradation, misery and hopelessness of life in the ghettos" (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). Recent research shows that for text and verbal accounts, the media may still be unsuccessful at communicating and educating White publics of the struggles Blacks face in the U.S. This study, however, reveals that visual coverage does not overly project protests as

violent or Blacks as criminals, despite criticism from audiences. Yet, the ability for Whites to identify and consider Black perspectives when interpreting information remains a relevant concern. Therefore, while positive journalistic progress is evident by the results of this dissertation, the history of marginalizing media coverage for Blacks, combined with racial strife, prejudice, and discrimination remain relevant aspects of audience interpretation and public opinion. No patterned press initiatives – visual or verbal – are going to eradicate the stereotypes and primes audiences hold. As such, future scholars of journalism, sociology and psychology should turn to experimental methods that focus on interventions that minimize media misrepresentation and audience misinterpretation, and that challenge the pictures in our heads.

Appendix

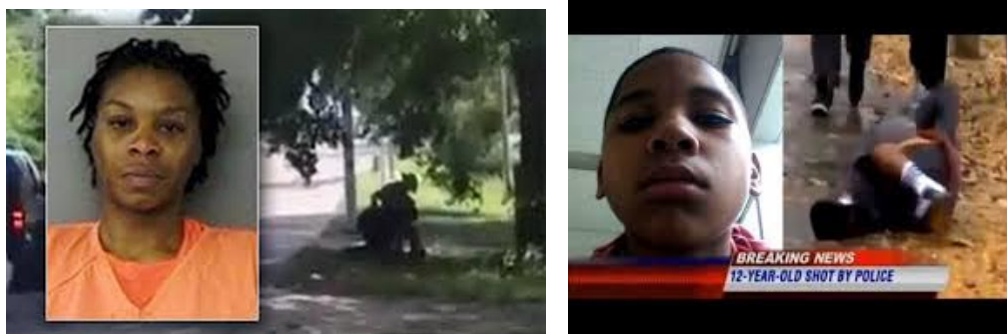**SAMPLE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM STUDY 1**

Group 1 – Headshots/Identifying Photos of Police officers
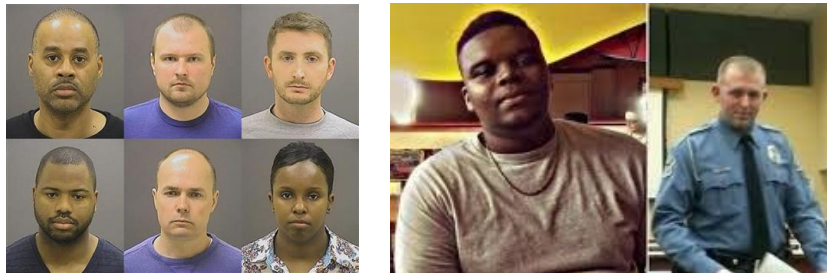
Group 2 – Headshots/Identifying photos of incident-involved Blacks.

Group 3 – Headshots/Identifying photos of Other Sources

Group 4 – Footage of the Event

Group 5 – Violent Protest Images

Group 6 – Police Protest Response

Group 7 – Peaceful Protest

Group 8 – Counter-Protest Images

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Vita

Danielle K. Kilgo received her Bachelor of Arts (2008) and Master of Arts (2013) degrees from Baylor University. Prior to beginning her doctoral program, Kilgo worked as a public relations specialist, designer and photojournalist. Her research currently focuses on race, gender and disability issues in visual and digital communication. Kilgo has also studied the influence of framing on audience interpretation, framing effects, and news redistribution practices of social media users. Her work appears in academic journals such as the *Journal of Communication*, *Journalism*, *Journalism Studies*, *Digital Journalism*, and *The International Journal of Communication*. Her research has received multiple honors at national and international conferences. Kilgo will join the faculty of The Media School at Indiana University as an assistant professor in Fall 2017.

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