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**Recording the Movement: The Role of Citizen-Generated Videos in
Perceptions of Police and Police Use of Deadly Force**

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**Recording the Movement: The Role of Citizen-Generated Videos in
Perceptions of Police and Police Use of Deadly Force**

by

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Dedication

To my dad, who has been a victim of the very system that supposedly set us free- I know you are trying- this research is for you.

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To my mom, who put her life on hold so I could have more than she ever had, I hope this makes you and the twins proud.

And finally, I want to give a huge shoutout myself. Because anyone who romanticizes the writing process is a liar. This has been the most exhausting commitment I have ever made, but I am so proud of the work I produced here, and the person I have become along the way.

Abstract

Recording the Movement: The Role of Citizen-Generated Videos in Perceptions of Police and Police Use of Deadly Force

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Since the shooting death of Michael Brown in 2014, there has been widespread mobilization of activist groups and individuals both online and on the ground, to address issues of police brutality, racial bias, and equity within the criminal justice system. The emergence of citizen-generated videos as well as the democratization of internet access has enabled marginalized groups often targeted by law enforcement to have a voice in new and meaningful ways. More specifically, citizen-generated videos of police brutality and the different avenues they are disseminated across have been able to challenge mainstream narratives of police-citizen encounters. Through a critical technocultural discourse analysis of comments surrounding the shooting death of Michael Brown, Philando Castile, and Dajerria Becton, I will code for racialized and gendered understandings of the cases and perceptions of police. Further, I utilize Jackson and Welles notion of counter-publics and Castells development of ‘mass self-communication’ to uncover what elements of technology contributed to self-efficacy and activism, which lead to these cases becoming national news stories. I argue that there is something

uniquely impactful about the visceral nature of citizen-generated videos of police brutality, which has led to a pervasive push for transparency within police departments and their interactions with the Black community. As a result, the public discourse surrounding police brutality has heightened, and the public's perceptions of law enforcement is shifting

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media platforms and citizen-generated videos as well as the democratization of internet access has enabled marginalized groups often targeted by law enforcement to have a voice in new and meaningful ways, potentially altering the ways Black victims are perceived and their interactions with police are observed. The public's dedication to capturing instances of police brutality on their mobile phones has reignited an overdue conversation of law enforcements excessive use of force, especially in America. More specifically, citizen-generated videos of police brutality and their widespread circulation have the potential to challenge mainstream narratives of police-citizen encounters. Citizen journalists and their intentional use of mobile devices for activist purposes have lead to mass counter-public networks such as the Black Lives Matter Movement and hashtag campaigns such as #Ferguson, #MyNYPD, and #SayHerName. While these activist groups and counter public networks have encouraged a mainstream discussion on the state's excessive use of force on people of color, change

at the policy level has been slow, and America remains at the top of the list for police killings around the world (The Economist, 2014).

This thesis primarily responds to the rise in political and social activism surrounding police brutality in America, and how everyday citizens have utilized their mobile phones and social media platforms in attempts to hold law enforcement accountable for their actions. Earlier scholarship on digital activism have centered on Occupy Wall Street, Arab Spring, and The Indignados movements, but my thesis extends on these social campaigns to include Black Lives Matter and criminal justice reform movements. Victoria Carty (2015), argues that in order to understand the contemporary social movements emerging, “it is crucial to update social movement theories to include analysis of how the digital revolution has categorically changed the way that activists express grievances and share information” (p. 1) as well as challenge the mainstream narratives put forth by authorities and the mainstream media. Through the analysis of three videos of police brutality captured by citizens, I build upon existing research that has established how newly “emerging digital platforms allow for more accurate and

grassroots coverage of events and also provide a new source of energy and communicative action” (Carty, 2015, p. 31).

In an evolving digital landscape that enables constant access and connections to others through online sites, citizens are using tools like mobile phones with video capabilities, apps with live video and sharing capabilities, and the sharing capabilities of social media to hold law enforcement accountable in new and effective ways. Additionally, more people are beginning to trust online commentaries and accounts of events that counter mainstream news, and this can largely be attributed to the advent of cell-phones with video and sharing capabilities. I argue that video is harder to discount or overlook than words, and thus new narratives and perspectives are being thrust into the mainstream. Today, Rodney King, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, and Walter Scott are all names most Americans have heard and stories they are familiar with because a bystander chose to film their violent encounter with police and distribute their footage to the public online. Parry (2017) argues that these extremely visceral encounters with police that are viewed by the public have consequences, including officers being

reassigned, suspended, fired, sued, and in some cases, criminally prosecuted. Videos of police-citizen encounters have also resulted in citywide drops in citizen satisfaction with police (Weitzer, 2002), served as a rallying point sparking organized protests (Deen et. al, 2016; Jackson & Welles, 2016; Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Cole-Frowe & Fausset, 2015), and as my analysis will show, provoked change in police department policies and political interests across the nation, especially in cities where a deadly police shooting that went viral took place.

Prior to the use of mobile phones to record police-citizen encounters, much of what mainstream media showed American audiences was through shows like *Cops*, where the stories were focused on the criminal and from the perspective of law enforcement. Additionally, the camera footage would go through a heavy editing process before being aired, further allowing for manipulation of the story and removing agency from the viewer. Citizen-generated videos however, switch the power of telling the narrative from the police officer to the witness and allow for an unedited and potentially more impactful evidence of the police-citizen encounter.

Most contemporary research surrounding policing and digital media and technology has focused on how social media has been used by law enforcement to investigate individuals or groups that may do harm to society. The research here generally points to the gaps in regulation of law enforcements technology use, and how this has negatively and disproportionately affected the poor, minorities, and immigrants. This research, however, focuses on the opposite end; how citizens who are concerned about racial profiling and police brutality, have utilized their own digital devices and social media to regulate how officers are posing a threat to society. Jackson and Welles (2016) refer to this form of citizen efficacy as counter-publics. Further, analyzing the ways in which citizen-generated videos have potentially supplemented other forms of activism and counter-publics that have left women out of conversations, will offer insight into the limits of this technology as a revolutionary digital device. I rely on media centered frameworks such as counter-public studies and mass-self communication to re-examine literature and findings on the public's attitudes towards police-citizen encounters and Black victims.

Despite increased scholarly attention on the role of social media platforms and emerging technologies in grassroots activism and social movements, it remains unclear how these new technologies impact the the rising conversation on police brutality and excessive use of force on people of color in America. More specifically, it is unclear how vicariously viewing citizen-generated videos of police brutality may play a role in an individual's perception of those involved in the case. This represents a major gap in the literature given the role of violent police-citizen encounters in sparking the Black Lives Matter Movement and the subsequent national conversation centering on criminal justice reform, racial bias, and excessive use of force- especially on Black men. While multiple studies have tracked hashtag movements of highly publicized cases of police brutality(Deen, et. al., 2016), studied a specific police-citizen encounter and its news coverage (Erkkinen, 2017), or examined aspects of social media activism in these movements and cases (Brown, Ray, Summers, Freistat, 2017), few researchers have examined the impact of the videos that have lead to these movements, and their impact on the viewers perceptions of police.

The purpose of this thesis is to expand on new media research to examine the extent to which citizen-generated videos are impactful in creating tangible change that exists offline as well as online. My research here contributes to the theoretical frameworks of the public sphere, shifting communication networks in a more technological landscape, and the emerging research surrounding participatory politics and online media's role in social movements and activism. Further, my research addresses the potentially far reaching effects of vicariously viewing police brutality as it relates to the above frameworks.

Since many of the conversations surrounding #Blacklivesmatters and police brutality were based on Twitter, the majority of my analysis will take place there. However since some videos were uploaded onto Youtube, an analysis of comments will also include the video platform. Not meant to be a survey of the entirety of 'Online Activism', this study provides insight into how internet users navigate the platform and their smartphones to add to conversations surrounding cases of police brutality, specifically when there is a citizen-generated video of the event. Andre Brock's (2016)

“Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis” as an approach offers a “holistic analysis of the interactions between technology, cultural ideology, and technology practice”(p. 2) guided by a theoretical framework. I rely on seminal research of counter-spheres, mass-self communication, and network formations and meanings as the conceptual framework that guides me. Through these lenses I argue that citizen-generated videos have an impact on public perception of those involved in the case, specifically the police and the victim, and in some instances the recorder. Furthermore, I posit that counter-publics and counternarratives were formed in response to these videos, and that these formations led to visibility in mainstream news media and therefore pushed the conversation of police misconduct and brutality into the national public discourse.

Several forms of citizen-journalism and online activism movements have been recognized as strong counter-power networks with the ability to challenge mainstream narratives. But to what extent these videos are capable of shaping or encouraging new perceptions of police and impacting tangible or ‘offline’ change remains contested. I focus here on interrogating the role of the highly circulated citizen-generated videos of

three Black Americans; Michael Brown, Dajerria Becton, and Philando Castile. I will code responses from individuals that viewed the video, through an iterative process that will determine the most significant and common themes emerging from the responses to each video. Each recorded police shooting reveals new angles of the limitations and opportunities of citizen-generated videos, but all three consider the ways in which self efficacy is reflected through the decision to record as well as the importance and uniqueness of video evidence. Through three high profile cases of police brutality captured by mobile devices, I will utilize a critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA) to analyze how these videos were conceptualized in online commentaries and how emerging technologies have enabled people to participate in citizen journalism on a large scale. Drawing on qualitative methods of critical race theory, technocultural studies, and discourse analysis, this research is guided by three central research questions.

CTDA: Theoretical Framework and Application

Technoculture	Critical Race	Discourse Analysis
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<p>I use frameworks of mass self-communication and counterpublics to determine which elements of technology, including the citizen-generated videos, lead to acknowledgment of the three cases in my thesis. Additionally, I use these frameworks to determine how individuals felt they had a voice as a result of social media, and thus how counternetworks were formed.</p>	<p>I use this lens primarily for determining themes and sub-themes in my discourse analysis pertaining to perception of police. More specifically, I use the concept of the “white-supremacist gaze” to determine whether citizen-generated videos are able to shift the traditional gaze historically offered by the mainstream media's narration of police-citizen encounters.</p>	<p>I use a discourse analysis of Tweets and Youtube comments to determine perceptions of police and themes within the three police brutality cases in my study.</p>
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Drawing on qualitative methods of critical race theory, technocultural studies, and discourse analysis, this research is guided by three central research questions:

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

RQ 1: What are the implications of citizen generated videos of police brutality and/or shootings, on the public’s perception of police and the victim?

RQ 2: What roles have the rise of social media platforms and mobile technologies played in the conversations involving racial bias and police brutality on Black communities?

RQ 3: Have Citizen-generated videos been able to bring more attention and awareness to the specific types of police violence facing Black women?

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE

One of the fatal shootings that led to the mainstreaming of Black Lives Matter was the murder of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, who was shot and killed by a Cleveland police officer while playing with a toy gun in a community park in November of 2014. The Department of Justice that had been investigating the Cleveland Police Department prior to the shooting death of Rice, found that the Cleveland Police displayed a pattern of using unnecessary force. Nevertheless, the grand jury decided not to indict the officer, claiming Loehmann had reason to fear for his life. Rice's death sparked outrage and mass protests against police misconduct in Cleveland and became one of the leading catalysts in the Black Lives Matter movement. The death of Tamir resonated with mainstream audiences for many reasons, but mostly because of his young age and the video evidence that the

officers shot him with hardly any warning. Prior to his death conversations about the criminalization of Black people, starting from a young age was emerging in some mainstream discourses, thanks to movies like “Fruitvale Station” and books like Michelle Alexander's, “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in America”, which Alexander said was written with boys like Trayvon Martin in mind. In 2012 when the book was published, it was not yet a normalized part of citizen journalism to record police-citizen encounters on a personal phone, and simultaneously public notarization of systemic issues like mass incarceration and state violence had been overlooked in the mainstream media. Today, these videos have pushed forward many of the injustices Alexander wrote about in her book to the forefront of the political conversations and agendas, and American citizens as well as news organizations have begun campaigns to track police violence in order to build transparency.

In response to the deaths of Black people at the hands of police that have been caught on video and shared nationally, activists and publications began to form several sites that hold police accountable in new and effective ways. Two of the most prominent

are The Washington Post, which began tracking all fatal shootings by on-duty police in 2015, after the killing of the unarmed teen Mike Brown in Ferguson, Mo., in 2014, and Mapping Police Violence. The Post believed that the data being compiled by the federal government was unreliable and incomplete, and after their first year of data, they found that to be true. In fact, the ongoing Post Project has documented twice as many shootings by police in both “2015 and 2016 as ever recorded in a single year by the FBI’s tracking of such shootings,” a pattern that continued the following year. In 2017, they accounted for 987 people shot and killed by the police, 24 more fatal shootings than the previous year. Although some police chiefs have attempted to take steps to reduce unnecessary fatalities in response to the national protests of police brutality and subsequent calls for reform, the overall number of deaths at their hands remain as high as ever. Other significant data points show that police most frequently kill armed white males, one quarter of fatalities are of mentally ill persons, and Black men account for nearly a quarter of all deaths despite being 6% of the U.S. population.

Public sites like MappingPoliceViolence.org and The Washington Post were extremely helpful in my research, however I found some downsides to the scope of their research. For example, one of the limitations of these sites is that they only track citizen deaths at the hands of police. While this data remains important, it also reinforces the idea and narrative that police brutality is limited to fatal shootings or a citizen death, which leaves out the hundreds of victims being brutalized that are forced to live in fear of the police after excessive use of force has been used. Additionally, it leaves out the very specific kinds of violence women are often subjected to by police. Andrea Ritchie, author of “Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color” confronts this lack of representation in the definition of police brutality in her book, noting that the first image that comes to mind when asked about police brutality is often a white cop beating a Black man (often imagined as heterosexual and cisgender) with a baton. Further, she argues that sexual violence is rarely the response, and thus, the daily sexual harassment, assault, and violation experienced by Black women and women of color at the hands of police continues to be missing, overlooked, or in her words “invisible.”

According to data gathered from The Washington Post, 45 women were fatally shot by police in 2017, nine of them were Black. While these numbers are much lower than their male counterparts, women of color face other kinds of violence in their encounters with police, including intimidation tactics, racial profiling, excessive use of force, assault, and most devastatingly sexual violence (Ritchie, 2017). Since this kind of violence is not often tracked, it has led the statistics to show that women are less affected by police violence than men, when really, it is a framing problem. While police violence against women is a persistent problem, there are few highly circulated videos that have captured this violence. I argue that this lack of visceral evidence, and data that only fully represent how police brutality affects men, is a primary factor in the invisibility of Black women and women of color in the movements that acknowledge police brutality.

Additionally, the stories that have been at the forefront of activist movements against police brutality have been the stories of Black men, meaning Black women have been all but erased from the narratives and public scrutiny about police use of deadly

force. Not only have Black women's stories of police brutality been missing largely from the media, but research on why this happens is also minimal. Women and female identifying people and their interactions with police have been largely understudied, underreported, and overlooked. Each chapter will uncover some of the reasons why Black women have been left out of the mainstream conversation, as well as explore how citizen-generated videos, as beneficial as they have been at exposing police brutality, have not been as successful of a tool for women as they have been for men.

What remains clear is that Black males continue to be overrepresented in male unarmed deaths (32%), with 19 in 2017. One of those deaths was 15-year-old Jordan Edwards, a high-school student on his way home from a party. According to The Dallas Morning News, Oliver, a six-year veteran of the Balch Springs police force, opened fire with an AR-15 on Jordan and his friends as they drove away from the party. Jordan was shot in the head and died on the scene. Balch Springs Police Chief originally gave a statement that the kids car was aggressively reversing toward the officers, but retracted

that statement after reviewing the body camera footage which contradicted that story.

Oliver was fired and arrested on the murder charge in May 2017.

Jordans death reignited an existing national conversation about excessive use of force on Black communities and the criminalization of Black male youth, but what was different about this case is that the officer was fired, arrested, and charged with murder. This speaks to the reforms many activists have called for in order to increase accountability and transparency from law enforcement through, for example, enacting body camera footage policies. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, there has been push back from police unions and departments to against implementing mandatory body camera footage practices (Boss, 2016). Additionally, there is not a current way for the public to know whether or not an officer has his body camera footage on, even if taxpayers invest in providing the cameras for department use. For instance, The Post's data collection shows that 90% of fatal shootings by the police this year did not have body camera footage, even though it has been consistently found that most Americans

want officers to wear them while on duty (The Leadership Conference Education Fund, 2015). This is one reason why citizen-generated footage remains vital.

The other organization that has been significant in the past few years and also began in response to the failures of the law enforcement agencies across the country to provide information about fatal shootings in the line of duty is the Mapping Police Violence Organization. This organization was founded by three Black activists; Samuel Singawe, Brittany Packnett, and Deray McKesson, as a data-driven platform with the goal of tracking and mapping incidents of police violence. Following this data collection, the same activists launched Campaign Zero, a more comprehensive data collection platform with data spanning over three main areas of police reform; ending broken-window policing, community oversight, and limiting excessive use of force. This platform was created in part, due to activists pleas for concrete policy initiatives.

Since it's launch in August 2015 the group has published multiple reports including one that examined the use of body cameras in police forces in 30 cities and associated practices that went along with body camera policies, one that reviewed police

union contracts in 81 cities and examined ways the contracts allowed for abuses in power like delays in interrogation, disqualifying complaints, and limiting civilian oversight, and a third that detailed use of force practices and policies and evaluated whether these policies protected civilians. Data collection sites like Mapping Police Violence and Campaign Zero, came to similar conclusions and numbers as The Posts report, revealing some statistics that are difficult to deny or discount in larger debates about the role race plays in incarceration and violence against minorities. For instance, according to The Post, Black males accounted for 22 percent of all people shot and killed in 2017, yet they were 6 percent of the total population, and Mapping Police Violence found that Black people were more likely to be killed by police, more likely to be unarmed and less likely to be threatening someone when killed. Each of these data collection catalogues began in response to the disproportionate deaths of Black people at the hands of police, and although Black activists have been aware of these issues for generations, the emergence of citizen-generated footage of police brutality has made these injustices more believable to mainstream America.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is organized around various aspects of an evolving digital landscape in which adopters of media technologies view, understand, and contribute to narratives surrounding police brutality. Chapter two discusses relevant literature and includes discussions of citizen-journalism and its role in contemporary society, the role of vicariously viewing police-citizen encounters on perceptions of police, and Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA), the method in which I will complete this analysis. The next three chapters will each be a case study of a different viral video of police brutality in America, and this analysis will end with a discussion on my findings, limitations, and my recommendations for future research.

Case Study 1: Mike Brown

Chapter 3 will discuss the fatal shooting of Mike Brown and the resulting protests and discourse that emerged from the case. The citizen-generated video created by Piaget Crenshaw recorded the aftermath of the shooting, which I argue gives less weight to the video for two reasons. Firstly, the police were able to help shape the narrative of this case by withholding Piaget Crenshaws video initially, enabling them to control the news

narrative through their statements and Darren Wilson's accounts of what happened. Secondly, Ferguson Police Department ordered a timely release of video footage of Mike Brown allegedly robbing a local convenience store that would later be shown on newscasts across the country and worked to criminalize the victim. This video would later be used by many as evidence that Brown was a 'bad kid'. I use a critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA) to analyze how the shooting and subsequent protest was conceptualized on Twitter and how emerging technologies enabled people to participate in citizen journalism on a large scale. Additionally, I demonstrate how citizens used Twitter and videos as tools to share their opinion and to form an active community of engaged citizens who sought justice for Mike Brown.

I use two main sources of data for this first chapter: Tweets from responses to @DeRay uploaded videos between August 9, 2014 -August 31, 2014, and from Nov 24 to December 2nd. DeRay McKesson is an American Civil Rights activist that emerged as a significant source of citizen-driven journalism through using his mobile phone camera to document, record, and disseminate information during and throughout the Ferguson protests. I chose to use his videos in this chapter because he was the most central node

and highly retweeted activist account during the Ferguson uprising, as found by the report *Beyond the Hashtags*. I use the timeframe from the day Brown was shot on the 9th of August, 2014 until the end of the month in order to collect initial responses to the videos generated via citizen journalists, and the second time frame was chosen due to high #Ferguson hashtag activity after the non-indictment of Darren Wilson. These two separate time-frames were accessed through Twitter's advanced search page.

Case Study: Dajerria Becton

The second case study will consist of a discourse analysis of the comments surrounding the citizen-generated video of 15-year-old Dajerria Becton, who was violently slammed to the ground by a male officer after attending a pool party with friends in McKinney Texas. The widespread, systemic, and violent culture of police violence against women and girls remains largely overlooked in the public sphere, including sexual violence. A 2015 investigative report by the Buffalo News found that “In the past decade, a law enforcement official was caught in a case of sexual abuse or misconduct at least every five days.” Additionally, an investigation by The Intercept and WNYC found that women visiting loved ones in a Rikers jail described a pattern of invasive strip searches by prison

guards, where some women were booked for not allowing the inappropriate treatment by guards. This chapter will continue to relate the emergence of social media and individual use of technology to the viral video that brought widespread acknowledgement to this case, but it will go further to explore why the movement against police brutality hasn't been constructed to include women.

For instance, I found that there were fewer protests, less hits for the search term 'Dajerria Becton' than 'Mike Brown' or 'Philando Castile' on Google, and fewer calls for reform that resulted from this case specifically after this brutality took place. I argue that the lack of public outrage and acknowledgement is due in part because Becton was not fatally injured during her violent encounter with the officer. I use this case to explore the specific kinds of violence by law enforcement that women and girls of color face, that often goes unnoticed due to the limiting definition of police brutality. Finally, I argue that citizen-generated videos have not been able to be as effective for women affected by police violence as they have been for men.

Case Study: Philando Castile

The final case study will be an analysis of the live streaming video of the shooting death of Philando Castile and the subsequent public discourse that it catalyzed. Philando Castile was shot and killed by Jeronimo Yanez, after being pulled over in Falcon Heights, a suburb of Saint Paul. Castile was in the car with his girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, and her four-year old daughter when he was pulled over by Yanez and another officer for a traffic violation. After being asked for his license and registration, Castile told the officer that he was legally carrying a firearm and then proceeded to reach for his ID. Counternarratives that followed this case centered around ‘driving while black’ and ‘crimes of poverty’, the second amendment, and connecting multiple cases of police together. I argue that these narratives begin to position police brutality as a structural issue endemic to being Black in America, a shift from previous chapters where responses focused more on the individual case or officer.

Additionally, this case study extends my research to include how the news media has begun to regularly use citizen footage in their newscasts. I opt to use a breaking story from ABC news that was uploaded to their Youtube account the day after

the fatal shooting of Castile. The video is just under two minutes long, and combines footage from Diamond Reynolds recording of Castile's death and another citizen's footage of a Black man being fatally shot by police the day before. The incorporation of citizen-generated videos into mainstream news casts across the country, provides additional evidence to my argument that citizens now have more power in creating narratives related to cases of police brutality. Rather than the media relying on police accounts and interviews of police-citizen encounters, the media has begun to rely on witnesses and their personal footage of events.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. PROTEST AND #BLACKLIVESMATTER

Following the shooting death of 17 year-old Trayvon Martin, three women; Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, created a Black centered, political movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. Since then, ordinary people have pledged themselves to the cause, taking on the role of citizen journalists when excessive use of force by the police takes place, recording during protests, and sharing information online to challenge the narratives created by the police and sold to news media. In Ferguson for instance, after news spread that Darren Wilson had shot and killed Mike Brown, within minutes of his death members of the community took to Twitter to tweet about what they were witnessing. While Mike Brown's body lay in the hot sun for four hours, concerned citizens, friends and family members all started working to make sure Brown's death was not misconstrued or swept under the rug. Their efforts continued throughout the year as they worked to construct the city of Ferguson, and the Twitter hashtag #Ferguson, as devices for a national conversation about American racism, excessive use of force and

racial profiling by the police, militarized responses to civil unrest, government corruption and criminal justice reform (Jackson and Welles, 2016). On the other end, many Americans watching from a distance looked to social media as a form of constant news, and specifically looked to those that were at the event for timely and factual information. Ferguson sparked a newfound contemporary trust in citizen-journalists, where a concerned citizen could follow Ferguson online and through the eyes of individuals at the scene, rather than being forced to trust traditional mainstream news sources.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement rose to prominence in the wake of earlier instances of citizen journalism and anti-authoritarian movements such as the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and the Indignados of Spain. However there are several ways in which BLM sets itself apart from the former movements. Firstly, it demands specific policy changes within certain areas of sociopolitical issues, whereas others have focused on non-tangible or more broad goals like demands for wealth distribution. Secondly, BLM seeks to improve the lives of individuals and shed light on the oppressions of the marginalized, specifically within the Black community. And third, BLM activists fully

engage and participate with politicians, the media, and the public, as opposed to other movements that operate in just one of these domains (Deen et al., 2016). While most scholarship on contemporary instances of citizen journalism has posited that online media played a significant role in the growing of these movements, the purpose of this chapter is to add to this research, and to reveal how the use of video specifically has contributed in portraying police brutality.

Months after the fatal shooting, when Darren Wilson was acquitted of all charges, protests erupted in Ferguson, and in addition to tweeting, many were sharing videos and photos of the militarized police forces, as well as the peaceful activism taking place. Although, if you were looking at the Ferguson protests through local or national news stations, the narrative was often centered around looting and riots, thus revealing the importance of the work of citizen journalists. I am not positing that Citizen-journalism did not exist before #BlackLivesMatter or the acquittal of George Zimmerman and Darrell Wilson, but rather that citizen-journalism was greatly influential in pushing forward the reality of white supremacist structures in ways that traditional news was not

able. Furthermore, because of the ever changing media landscape and emergence of new technologies, the type of citizen-journalism that is now happening has also evolved, into what I conceive as “citizen-generated videos”, and which predominantly covers instances of police brutality against poor Black men and women.

2.2 CITIZEN-JOURNALISM

When Rodney King was beaten by Los Angeles police officers after a high-speed chase in 1991, it quickly became a national scandal. This was not because police brutality was new to Black communities in Southern California, but rather because it was one of the first major American incidents of gratuitous police violence caught on videotape that went viral, in effect, and was distributed on newscasts across the country. The homemade VHS tape of the beating galvanized thousands of protesters, and became one of the most notable examples of citizen journalism, and the seminal instance of a citizen-generated video of police brutality. Months later when the officers were tried in court, none of them were charged, and riots broke out around parts of southern California. Much of the research on citizen journalism has looked to the Rodney King beating (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Farmer, 2016; Jacobs, 2000; Maurantonio, 2014) as a case study

or example of early citizen journalism and in an attempt to understand what it is about video evidence that feels so personal. Would the riots have taken place had the beating not been captured on camera? I surmise they would not. Despite the 25 years that have since passed, there are some glaring similarities between this incident and the police brutality that is still taking place today, as well as between this early act of citizen-journalism, and what I am calling citizen-generated videos that are taken today.

When average citizens, like George Holiday who filmed the King beating, assume the right tools and technology, such as video camcorders, smartphones, and an internet connection to document events and disseminate them, it is referred to as citizen journalism (Allan, 2009). Before these advancements in technology, individuals mainly relied on traditional mass media outlets for new and current event information (Macnamara, 2010). However today, it is not unusual for citizens to get their news online or even from Twitter where they follow and trust non-media based accounts and individuals for their news and updates. According to Gregory Brown (2015), the popularity of citizen-journalism can be attributed to three factors: 1) the availability of

mobile communication devices (generally cell phones) capable of both capturing events and uploading them, 2) the accessibility of online social sites with video sharing capabilities like Youtube.com, and 3) and overall awareness by citizens of the effectiveness of this means of communication. Furthermore, social media sites such as Youtube, Twitter, Snapchat, Vine, and Facebook have created an environment where ordinary citizens have direct access to an expanded audience, allowing for the dissemination of personal stories and live events without facilitation (or narratives) of traditional media (Brucato, 2015). This takeover of construction and narrative is part of what makes citizen-journalism so influential and necessary in social movements. Before the advent of the mobile video camera, police departments could choose and therefore manipulate the information they shared with the news media (Brown, 2015; Goldsmith, 2010). Now, citizen-journalists are able to have the first word, and can provide the public with irrefutable video evidence.

Rosen (2008) defined citizen journalism as: when people formerly considered to be the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one

another. Citizen journalism has also been described as any non-professional or news media affiliated person that actively engages in recording, generating, and disseminating newsworthy events, thereby allowing citizens to confront issues of social injustices or counter mainstream news narratives with technology such as cell phones (Antony & Thomas, 2010; Greer & McLaughlin, 2010). This practice has been able to transform community based surveillance into a ‘high visibility’ occupation (Sandu & Haggerty, 2015). Allan (2015) wrote that the term ‘gained currency’ in the aftermath of the South Asian tsunami in 2004, when news organizations were forced to rely on amateur content in order to inform the public about the events that had transpired.

Shirky (2008) argues that the Internet, and online platforms in particular, have enabled a “mass amateurization” of the media, which has included a departure from professionally produced news for citizen journalism. Shirky (2008) also contends that this shift away from mainstream media sources has the potential to open up a space for marginalized voices to become influential in ways that may not have been possible before. Moreover, I argue that citizen journalism allows groups often targeted by law

enforcement, to share police-citizen encounters from their perspective. Castells (2012) argued that online activism might be more flexible than traditional (offline) activism because it does not require a unified message or elite powerful groups that work to influence the terms of mainstream political dialogue. Instead, online groups generally reject traditional structures of leadership altogether (Castells, 2012).

Camera-Witnessing

With each new social movement, activists are learning what does and does not work in their favor as far as utilizing technology and online tools. Papadopoulos (2014) recognized some emerging modes of civic engagement, specifically street opposition movements in Burma, Iran, Egypt, Libya and Syria, were connected to the widespread use of mobile-camera phones and elected to call these forms of protest ‘citizen camera-witnessing’. She builds on literature of ‘mobile witnessing’, which argues that mobile phones are a wearable extension of the self, enabling individuals to bypass established news filters and turn their experiences of an event into a public testimony that works to disrupt the carefully crafted perspectives of the mainstream news media (Papadopoulos, 2014). Further, she defines citizen camera-witnessing as the pattern of citizens utilizing

their mobile cameras as a personal ‘witnessing device’ to provide a public record of embodied actions of political dissent for the purpose of persuasion”(Papadopoulos, p. 754). My research departs from hers in that my focus is not on the act of bearing witness to a brutality or what it means to be a witness today, but rather I interrogate how camera-witnessing has affected public opinion or altered their views in ways mainstream media was unable to.

2.3 PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE

Opinions are not formulated in a vacuum, humans require some kind of experience in order to have feelings about a subject. Due to this, many studies have looked to find correlations between police-citizen encounters and citizens’ perceptions of police in order to gauge what aids in forming these opinions. Generally, research has found that direct personal experiences with police can greatly impact or shape individuals’ opinions, attitudes, and perceptions (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins, & Ring, 2005). However, many Americans lack personal experience or direct contact with officers, and so, other characteristics must be explored (Gaines & Kappeler, 2011). Indirect experiences with police can come from several different places, such as; stories

from friends and family who have shared their personal experiences (Rosenbaum, et al., 2005), the news media (Weitzer, 2002), and popular entertainment such as reality or fictional television programs featuring police related content (Eschholz, Blackwell, Gerts, & Chiricos, 2002; Surette, 2014), and anywhere else relevant.

Some recent scholarship has argued that vicarious viewing of citizen-generated videos of police brutality has the ability to affect and shape individuals perceptions of the police. For instance Parry (2017) found that the impact of viewing police-citizen encounters on individual perceptions are primarily linked to the content – whether positive, negative or neutral – of the video. Specifically, she argued that “viewing positive videos of police-citizen interactions (such as those where police are seen treating citizens in a procedurally just manner) may lead to higher perceptions of procedural and lower estimations of police misconduct” and “viewing negative videos of police-citizen interactions (such as police using force against citizens and behaving unprofessionally towards citizens) lowers overall perceptions of police and increases estimations of police misconduct.”(Parry, 2017, p. 96). However, she also found that the effects of the video

encounters on perceptions of police were not lasting. Her research called for a more extensive study on ‘digital vicarious experiences’ when examining factors impacting perceptions of police, which my research responds to.

With each passing day, more incidents involving police officers, individuals, and citizen-generated recordings are emerging on the Internet, making the news, generating hashtags, and sparking conversations. Despite this, little is known about the vicarious effects of viewing these videos. Weitzer (2015) argued that highly circulated videos of negative police-citizen encounters may have a cumulative effect, where the reactions to a video or event may elicit a response by an individual’s for the next video or encounter of similar context. Further, Weitzer (2015) states that the increased viewing of violent police-citizen encounters gives the impression that this is a “skyrocketing epidemic”(p.3). If this is true, then these videos have the potential impact perceptions of police in meaningful ways. Historically, the police constructed and managed their public image through their relationship with mass media outlets such as newspapers, radio, and televised news programs (Chermak, 1995; Goldsmith, 2010; Manning, 2001). However,

the proliferation of personal video recording devices has the ability to transform the relationship between the media and police departments, in light of encounters recorded and disseminated by the public (Brown, 2015; Goldsmith, 2010).

2.4 MASS SELF-COMMUNICATION

Theories of ‘Mass Self-Communication’ are central to understanding how and why citizen-generated videos mattered in the discourse that unfolded following the killing of citizens at the hands of police. Castells notion of mass self-communication is in response to the emergence of a digital communication ecology and the development of an interactive and horizontal network of communication. He posits that communication and information have historically been tied up with the most fundamental power struggles in democracy, ‘the minds of the people.’

Torturing bodies is less effective than shaping minds. If a majority of people think in ways that are contradictory to the values and norms institutionalized in the state and enshrined in the law and regulations, ultimately the system will change, although not necessarily to fulfill the hopes of the agents of social change. (p.55)

Castell’s notion of mass self-communication has been applied widely in activist, ICT, and media studies to determine what facets of technology have been able to shift this age old

power struggle. For instance, in Papadopoulos (2014) article *Citizen camera-witnessing: Embodied political dissent in the age of 'mediated mass self-communication'*, movements in Burma, Iran, Egypt, Libya, and Syria were used to demonstrate the effective moralizing force of video footage within a movement and the risks a citizen will take for the chance at justice. She elects to call the conjecture of these videos and activists a *citizen camera-witness*.

“The term refers to camera-wielding political activists and dissidents who put their lives at risk to produce incontrovertible public testimony to unjust and disastrous developments around the world, in a critical bid to mobilize global solidarity through the affective power of the visual.” p.754

A citizen camera-witness assumes the role of a martyr, challenging political governments through citizen-produced imagery and risking brutal state repression in order to share truth with the world. In today's complex and globalized media landscape, with interconnected media conglomerates and communications networks, smartphone-carrying citizens can become instant citizen journalists by capturing a timely event (Papadopoulos, 2014). Further, she posits that in today's highly mediated economy, audio(visual) recordings play a large role in what events will garner local, national, or

global media coverage, giving a significant form of capital to the witness. This form of capital is transformative for marginalized groups with internet access and a device with mobile video capabilities, offering them agency over their stories and access to the global media ecology.

2.5 THE COUNTERPUBLIC AND COUNTERNARRATIVES

Overtime as marginalized groups have been repeatedly excluded from national public debates and political power, a new space for civic engagement has emerged in online spaces. Their individual and collective struggle for power served as resistance to a larger superstructure, one in which was determined by the public sphere. According to Habermas (1989), the ideal public sphere is one in which citizens, facilitated by the media, are able to be a part of the social and political national issues. However, in practice, those on the margins of society have been systematically excluded from the public sphere by historically framed definitions of citizenship that exclude women, people of color, immigrants, and other marginalized groups (Squires, 2007; Jackson and Welles, 2016). Through the use of online social platforms, the Black community has created separate communal spaces to discuss both personal and systemic issues in their

lives that are often left out of the media and the public sphere. Patricia Hill Collins (2000) explains that structural racism, has facilitated the creation of these spaces, and that a culture of resistance may exist apart from the dominant structures. This resistance has been linked to counterpublics and counternarratives, which includes challenging “the power embedded in the institutions of society for the purpose of claiming representation for their own values and interests” (Castells, 2012). Challenging these ideologies can occur outside the view of the dominant group through hidden groups or password protected blogs, but also in ways that push their discourses into the mainstream on platforms like Twitter and through the use of hashtags. The latter has been used increasingly with activists online, specifically within the Black Lives Matter Movement and following the deaths of Black citizens with hashtags like #Ferguson and #SayHerName.

Habermas (1989) considered the interconnection between the working class, the state, and the media as an integral part of a functioning democratic society, in which citizens are able to contribute to social issues and state agendas, and used this as the

framing for an ideal public sphere. The Rodney King beating both encapsulated and challenged this supposedly equal exchange and relationship. On March 3rd, 1991, George Holiday, a man living in South Central LA woke up to loud noises outside of his apartment and quickly picked up his new video camera to record from his balcony. Initially, he tried to give the video to the LAPD but when they refused he sold the video for \$200 to KTLA news station. In Jill Swensons's article, "Rodney King, Reginald Denny, and TV News: Cultural (Re-)Construction of Racism", she argues that the video footage of the Rodney King beating threatened the logic and interests of social structures in America that have imposed racial orders. The fact that the Rodney King video was purchased by a local news station and given any recognition at all revealed that marginalized groups have some power to shift mainstream narratives, and allows the video to become an expression of the public sphere through its relationship to the news media and the state. However, she also posits that the video of Reginald Denny acted to challenge Holiday's video through maintaining structures of racial inequality. Reginald Denny, a white truck driver, was captured on live television being beat by four Black men during the riots that ensued after the officers that beat King were acquitted, and the video

was then used by the mass media across the nation to represent the unrest in Los Angeles.

The cognitive dissonance between the two videos demonstrates how race became the dominant framework in which the mass media was operating. Even though Holiday's video and the subsequent conversations on police brutality are emblematic of the ideal public sphere at work, the continuous coverage of the videos of the uprisings and protests worked to undo that counter-narrative.

Scholars have pointed to the public distrust of the government and media's re-telling of current events as motivations for the creations of counter-networks (Jackson and Welles, 2016; Jenkins, 2008; Florini, 2014). In Ferguson, when protests began activists on the ground were continuously fighting the narratives displayed in the news through video and textual evidence on apps like Twitter, Periscope, and Facebook.

According to Jenkins (2008), these shifts in the communication design have brought contradictory debates within our culture.

“On the one hand, this ‘democratization’ of media use signals a broadening of opportunities for individuals and grassroots communities to tell stories and access stories others are telling, to present arguments and listen to arguments made elsewhere, to share

information and learn more about the world from a multitude of other perspectives. On the other hand, the media companies seek to extend their reach by merging, co-opting, converging and synergizing their brands and intellectual properties across all of these channels.” (p.6)

The TV news coverage of Rodney King represents a stark display of a community being able to tell their story to the world, however the reduplicated video of Reginald Denny illustrates the ways in which TV news restores racial inequality as social order. Today, citizen-generated videos of police brutality are fighting with the mainstream news in similar ways.

Contemporary scholarship of counter publics and counter networks has illustrated how marginalized groups have been forced to create their own alternative publics in order to bring attention to the specific, and often overlooked issues that affect their communities, and to put forward an agenda that challenges the mainstream one (Jackson and Welles, 2016; 2014). Jenkins (2016) has utilized notions of counter publics alongside contemporary instances of participatory politics to reveal how some marginalized groups have been enabled by technology to create and broadcast their stories or knowledge. Similarly, Bonilla (2015) argued that when most mainstream media

constructed the experiences of marginalized groups as stereotypical, social media platforms such as Twitter offered sites where counterpublics could collectively create their own narratives and reimagine group identities. This next section moves from groups that are empowered to spread information and find community, to how the individual develops political efficacy within these counter-networks.

The group identity of the protestors as portrayed through the media revealed mixed performances of both rioting and peace, but ~~but~~ activists on the ground were able to reveal truths about the Ferguson PD and other law enforcement members that were portrayed more negatively in the media. Historically, the police have been able to construct and maintain their public image through their relationship with the mainstream mass media. However, the proliferation of citizen-journalists has the ability to create counternarratives and to challenge this constructed façade.

2.6 CRITICAL TECHNOCULTURAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This analysis is based on Andre Brock's approach which is characterized as Critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA). Brock posits that "CTDA is designed to be

open to any critical cultural theoretical framework,” as long as the same critical cultural approach is applied to both the interface of the technology used in the analysis and the examination of the discourse of its users. For example, my research draws upon critical race theory, and public sphere scholarship, which is applied to both the interface of technologies/platforms, and also the discourse of the user comments. Brock explains, “this conceptual framework is then applied twice: once to the material, practical, and discursive properties and a second time to examine the cultural practices that take place in these digital spaces.” I examine the interface of mobile devices with video capability as well as the social platforms Twitter, Youtube, and Facebook that enabled the dissemination of the respective video, alongside the ways in which internet users articulate the citizen-generated videos of Mike Brown, Philando Castile, and Dajerria Becton.

CTDA has been applied widely to examine racial presentations in video games (Brock, 2011), race and gender on blogs (Brock, Kvasny, & Hales, 2010; Williams, 2017), and social movements more broadly and through hashtags on Twitter (Deen et. al.,

2016; Brock, 2012). In order to contextualize Twitter as cultural rather than social, Brock posits that CTDA recognizes the internet as a social structure which embodies Western ideology through its design and maintains Western culture through its content (Brock, 2012). I use it as a framework to examine the interfaces of both mobile devices with video capability and social platforms like Twitter that aided in dissemination of videos, alongside a critical discourse analysis of the ways in which internet users articulate the videos in reference to police-citizen encounters.

CTDA builds from critical discourse analysis, but Andre Brock's (2016) "Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis" adds the examination of "structural analysis of an artifact with a discourse analysis of the cultural means through which users interpolate themselves within relations to the artifact." Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), having roots in Frankfurt School of ideology and "critical linguistics", emerged as a response to uncritical research paradigms. This framework explores how discourse mediates social inequalities, and then attempts to explain the underlying roots. Adding a layer of complexity, Brock (2009) argues that Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis

(CTDA) “draws from technology studies, communication studies, and critical race theory to understand how culture shapes technologies” (p. 531) and how technologies shape culture. According to Williams (2017), CTDA, is a methodology or framework most useful in highlighting the relationship and power dynamics that exist within technology. CTDA works from the premise that populations other than the dominant group do not fundamentally lack technological capabilities, even though they have frequently been excluded from the literature (Brock 2009). In other words, CTDA, as a methodology is able to highlight the relationship and power negotiations that occur on, and through, technology.

In this case, CTDA allows for analysis of the structure of citizen-generated videos of police brutality and the technologies which they are both created and disseminated on, and a discourse analysis of comments surrounding these videos. Additionally, Twitter is the site used because it is a platform where citizen-generated videos of police brutality have been disseminated on and made viral, thus bringing cases into the main news stream that may have otherwise been overlooked.

Interface Analysis:

While much of so-called online activism has been unable to produce sustained social change, recent work has illustrated the capability of new technologies, smart phones in particular, and social sharing networks to elevate and reinforce counter narrative voices into the mainstream According to Bock (2017), video is overtaking other modes of communication in new media. Today, when you open up a social sharing app on your phone, chances are you will see someone post a video within a few scrolls down the page. In fact, while doing my analysis and after entering the search terms, often before I even clicked on the video tab, one of the first tweets would be one of the activists shared videos. Whether citizens are choosing to use their smartphone, a tablet, or other mobile devices to partake in acts of citizen-journalism, videos are being made and shared in unprecedented ways(Jackson & Welles, 2016; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). In examining the role of Twitter in the Egyptian revolution, Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira (2012), for example, reviewed the unique nature of storytelling and collaboration through Twitter. They argue that unlike traditional modes of storytelling, Twitter provides constant flows of communication from the perspectives of those most near the crisis events.

Some scholarship that has used a CTDA analysis (Brock, 2009, 2011, 2012), has pointed to statistics of high usage of Twitter by Black members constitutive of the platform's interface and capabilities. I build from this argument to add that mobile phones with camera capabilities have enabled Americans to be apart of activist movements, thus aiding in their ability to participate in forms of mass self-communication.

Critical Race Theory: “The White Supremacist Gaze”

American media, as a social institution that is primarily white owned, controlled, and maintained, has been and remains rooted in hegemonic ideologies about race (Watts, 2005). In this context, the history of the Black body in America is fundamentally linked to whiteness and is expressed through fear, brutality, policing, politics, and “the production and projection of white fantasies”(Yancy, 2016, p.xxx). This projection of the Black body is what is referred to as the white gaze, which Yancy (2016) describes as “seeing that evolves out of and is inextricably ties to various raced and racist myths, white discursive practices, and centripetal processes of white systemic power”(p.xxxii). Further, Yancy (2016) argues that from this perspective, “the Black body *is* criminality itself”(p.xxx).

W.E.B. Du Bois describes the African American societal position as a psychological space mediated by a "white-supremacist gaze", and therefore divided by competing images of blackness- The images produced by a racist white American culture, and images maintained by African American individuals, within African American communities. Further, Du Bois posited that challenging the discourses and images of "negro criminality" was an important tool for African Americans, which he showcased through his portrait collection for the "American Negro" exhibit at the Paris Exposition of 1900.

Through the advent of technology and materialization of citizen journalists though, Black people have been able to assert more control in how they are portrayed, especially in instances when the news media are using citizen-generated footage in their re-telling of events. This shift in the projection of Black images allows for those behind the camera to deconstruct dehumanizing representations of Black criminality, and expose the white supremacist gaze. In an essay entitled "In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life," bell hooks states: "The camera was the central instrument by which blacks could

disprove representations of us created by white folks" (48). It is in this resistant spirit that the Black community, especially the youth, have begun to use their smartphones as a way to show the public their stories through their own eyes. Hooks (1992) argues that the development of photography and the access and appeal of it to Black people, allowed for a shift in the production process of Black images, that would allow them to simultaneously be photographer, target, and viewer (p.57). In the face of harmful and misleading narratives of police-citizen encounters, control of the camera, or the recording of these encounters, have become acts of resistance in the struggle for how Black images and stories are presented in the media and to the public.

Since critical race theory is an integral part of CTDA, I opt to use the concept of "the white supremacist gaze" to guide my analysis of how the public perceives, articulates, and ultimately defines the technological space in which they and/or others operate during activist movements or in viral videos of police brutality. More specifically, it is used to analyze and categorize the perspectives of viewers and the public after citizen-generated videos have been widely circulated. The white supremacist gaze has

been examined through images and dialogue used by the media, and specifically through the police and states deployment of “Black criminality” narratives after people of color are violently handled by the police. This concept is conducive to analyzing whether citizen-generated videos may produce changes in the lens in which Black images are viewed.

CHAPTER 3

MIKE BROWN

3.1. INTRODUCTION

“Hands up, Don’t Shoot.” These words became the national cry of a new civil rights movement in America after a white police officer named Darren Wilson fatally shot unarmed, Black teenager Michael Brown in the St. Louis, Missouri suburb of Ferguson. Protesters chanted it, arms raised, in cities across the country as American citizens were forced to face the disproportionate killings of Black men at the hands of the police. The shooting and subsequent acquittal of the officer sparked a national debate centered on police brutality, mass incarceration, and the discrimination of primarily Black men in the criminal justice system in the United States.

Out of the several hundred police shootings that occur each year, Mike Brown's was in many ways an unlikely candidate to receive national attention. The actual shooting of his death was not recorded, only the immediate aftermath; Brown was not the kind of victim the media usually gave attention to. He was Black, not well-connected, from a poor area, and a big kid. Additionally, there was no controversial legality that made the

case more appealing to the media like with Trayvon Martin and the Stand Your Ground Laws and Ferguson is not a particularly well-known city in America. However, he was still an unarmed Black man that was fatally shot by a white officer, which as Andrea Ritchie argues in her book is exactly what most people think of when imagining police brutality. Therefore, his death became pivotal in sparking the current national movement against anti-Black racism in America; including protesting police brutality, the mainstreaming of #BlackLivesMatters, advocating for law enforcement transparency, and positioning the discourse of a pattern of disproportionate killings of Black people near the top of political agendas.

Although the #BlackLivesMatter was created in July 2013, it did not come to signify a widespread movement until after the protests in Ferguson. According to the report *Beyond the Hashtags* (2016), “For more than a year, #Blacklivesmatter was only a hashtag, and not a very popular one: it was used in only 48 public tweets in June 2014 and in 398 tweets in July 2014. But by August 2014 that number had skyrocketed to 52,288, partly due to the slogan’s frequent use in the context of the Ferguson

protests” (Freelon, Mcilwain, & Clark, 2016). Additionally, the report revealed that social media posts were pivotal in positioning the killing of Mike Brown at the top of the mainstream and national news cycle and disseminating alternative information about the aftermath to the public. This report along with other scholarship focused on online advocacy and new age citizen journalism have pointed to social media as a tool that marginalized and activist groups have used in their efforts to share their stories, advocate for change, and to challenge mainstream media narratives.

During the protests in Ferguson, not only did community members and activists post to social media to spread information, they also shared hundreds of videos online to give proof to their statements. While apps like Periscope, Vine, and Facebook are collectively known for their video capabilities to either watch (Facebook) or record (Persiscope and Vine), Twitter is the focus of this analysis because it has been largely linked to the activism in Ferguson. Tweets from community members, activists, and the general public surrounding events in Ferguson have been recognized as meaningful contributions to the public record, and the videos that surfaced gave visual evidence to

those following the case from afar. The unique testimonial force and galvanizing potential of amateur video footage in Ferguson, Missouri in the weeks following Mike Brown's death are of importance in this chapter. The videos created during this time encapsulate what defines citizen-generated videos: the purposeful act of recording an instance of brutality, injustice, or crisis on one's personal mobile device, with the aim of providing a factual and influential counter-narrative for advocacy purposes.

Since there are a multitude of resources and technologies that can now be used alongside social movements, it is important to understand how they are being used and what is most influential. DeRay Mckesson in an essay for *The Guardian*, wrote on the importance of social media during protests:

“social media was our weapon against erasure. It is how many of us first became aware of the protests and how we learned where to go, or what to do when teargassed, or who to trust. We were able to both counter the narrative being spun by officials while connecting with each other in unprecedented ways. Many of us became friends digitally, first. And then we, the protesters, met in person. Social media allowed us to become our own storytellers. With it, we seized the power of our truth.”

The idea of using social media to tell a story is a prominent theme in research about citizen-journalism, and activists in Ferguson utilized social media as a tool in every way possible. In this analysis, I focus on the way videos were used, and how impactful they were in narrating the events that took place in Ferguson, as well as influencing or impacting viewers and the public's perception of police.

McKesson recorded hundreds of videos and shared them on several social media channels during his time in Ferguson, along with several other activists on the ground in Ferguson such as Johnetta Elzie and Cherrell Brown. For activists and community members seeking justice for Mike Brown, video proved to be an effective way to show the public what was going on during the protests amid allegations of looting and protest initiated violence. Even though there was not a citizen-generated video of Darren Wilson shooting Mike Brown, the video that captured the moments after by Piaget Crenshaw, a Ferguson resident, as well as others who videoed Brown's body while it lay under the summer sun for over four hours surely helped to initiate the public outrage of the incident. These videos also reveal trends of self-efficacy and counter-movements,

which is an additional interest in this analysis. Unlike the other chapters in this thesis, this chapter will interrogate how video played an influential role in making Mike Brown's case a national news story-without footage of the actual shooting death. The fact that news channels opted to use Piaget Crenshaws video to introduce the case to the public reveals that news media are actively seeking video content in order to tell a story, even if it's amateur footage. Additionally, this shows that the news media has realized and chosen to capitalize on the unique and influential capabilities of citizen-generated content in narrating cases of police brutality, potentially shifting the lens from which viewers see and understand police-citizen encounters from the police point-of-view, to the witness'.

Shirky (2008) argues that the Internet, and social media in particular, enables a “mass amateurization” of the media, which has upset the traditional boundaries of power and authority by opening up a space for marginalized voices to be more influential. This has created a shift in which people formerly considered to be the audience, have begun to employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another. While the mainstream media has been criticized for their promotion of pro-police perspectives,

citizen journalism counters the status quo with visual evidence (Greer & McLaughlin, 2010). As a result, citizens that use their mobile devices as a tool to hold police more accountable, have been able to play a role in constructing the news and, as a result, influence public discourses about policing, race, and the criminal justice system.

3.2. CASE STUDY

Mike Brown's murder has become one of the most fundamental instances of police brutality called upon in the fight for accountability and transparency among citizens and their police departments, and the case attributed to bringing the Black Lives Matter movement into the spotlight. Mike Brown was fatally shot on August 9th, 2014, and the only video recording known to exist captured the aftermath of the event, and was taken from across the street. The case fit what has come to be known as the standard instance of police brutality, Black unarmed man shot and killed by white cop. Unfortunately, the narrative that followed the case also fit the standardized way of depicting a Black victim. For instance, the news media initially used unflattering photos of Mike Brown posthumous in their retelling of the event, and several news media was critiqued for their negative portrayal of Brown. However, thanks to the efforts of residents of Ferguson,

visiting activists, and a community of concerned citizens online, another representation of Brown was also shown through sharing images of Brown in his high-school graduation cap and gown, smiling, or with his family, in attempts to challenge the traditional gaze of Black criminality.

The Video(s):

In this chapter I analyzed 39 videos recorded by DeRay Mckesson during his time in Ferguson and throughout the protests there. These videos ranged in content, but due to them originally being captured on Vine, all were around 6-7 seconds in length. Additionally, each were intentionally recorded and shared with the public in order to expose the reality of the activists on the ground in Ferguson. Some videos focused on the militarization of police, while others showed simple moments of unity between activists, residents of Ferguson, and all of the protestors. While I found all of these videos on Twitter, most were originally created on the platform Vine, which allowed its users to record and share 7-second looped videos to a variety of platforms and on their personal account. Since the interface of Vine does not encourage user interaction, Twitter was the most appropriate site to complete analysis of user responses to these videos.

The Aftermath:

After the fatal shooting of Mike Brown, Ferguson residents gathered around the street while his body laid partially covered under a tarp for four hours. The hashtag #ferguson quickly began to grow as America became more concerned with the death of another Black man at the hands of police, and the hashtag grew into weeks of protests and riots (both locally and nationally), and even garnered support globally. Additionally, the widespread acknowledgement, and to some extent support of Mike Brown, lead to what is now known as The Black Lives Matter Movement. Largely fueled by existing community tensions between Ferguson PD and the community they serve and anger at police for their handling of the incident, #Ferguson quickly grew to represent the larger structural issues of law enforcements excessive use of force, militarization of police, and lack of transparency with the public and communities they serve.

The Case:

This chapter is part one of a three part analysis of citizen-generated videos of police brutality, and will consist of a case study of the activism and public discourse surrounding Mike Brown's death. More specifically, this chapter will analyze Twitter

comments that respond to citizen-generated videos that either mention or capture police in action, and are taken during the aftermath of Mike Brown's death in Ferguson. I utilize theories of the public sphere and counterpublics, as well as Castells development of 'mass self-communication' to reinforce the unique and influential capabilities of the videos created in Ferguson that led to the widespread activist movements, and eventually policy change.

I use a critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA) of comments surrounding the shooting death of Michael Brown, where I code for understandings of the case and perceptions of the police. Given the ubiquity of citizen-generated videos in this case and the widespread use of the #Ferguson, the public was given the opportunity to view and share in some of the societal pain facing Black communities and view the peaceful protests in ways that challenged the one-sided narratives of Black criminality that Police Departments feed to the news media after a controversial police-citizen encounter. Further, I focus on interrogating the role that citizen-generated videos related to the protests and killing of Mike Brown in Ferguson, MO, played in the public's

perception and understanding of the controversial event. Mainly, I am looking at the impacts of these videos in two ways; public perception of police as shown through Twitter commentary and department, local, state, and federal level policy change that relates to police brutality.

I use each so I can explore how citizen-generated videos aid in counterpublic movements that challenge mainstream accounts, but also to determine whether these videos and counter-networks were able to bring tangible change in the city of Ferguson and beyond. Additionally, I am interested in the ways self-efficacy is reflected through a citizens decision to record rather than solely attending the protest or tweeting about it.

Drawing on qualitative methods of critical race theory, technocultural analysis, and discourse analysis, this chapter is guided by three central research questions:

Chapter 3 Research Questions

<p>Research Questions:</p>	<p>What are the implications of citizen-generated videos in Ferguson and during the protests, on the public's perception of police?</p>	<p>How has did the pervasiveness of social media use and smartphones with video capabilities encourage and produce the formations of counternetworks in Ferguson?</p>	<p>How have citizen-generated videos brought attention to the commentary and critiques that have established a new lens through which to think about police use of force and subsequent policy shifts?</p>
<p>Data Collected:</p>	<p>I used the Twitter Advanced Search to find 39 videos from DeRay McKesson's Twitter and 157 individual responses to these videos.</p>	<p>I used the Twitter Advanced Search to find the total number of videos DeRay McKesson uploaded onto Twitter, as well as data from <i>Beyond the Hashtag</i> report.</p>	<p>My analysis shows that a majority of the public is looking at police-citizen encounters through a new lens. The Department Of Justice investigation and subsequent report, also revealed a clear acknowledgement of racial bias within the criminal justice system.</p>

3.3 METHODOLOGY

CTDA

The central focus guiding this chapter is analyzing how users respond to the citizen-generated videos shared on Twitter during the aftermath of Mike Brown's murder, and how the public articulates the police and the overall case based on these tweets. A

critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA) allows me to analyze how the shooting was conceptualized, and how the rise in individual use of technology, along with the emergence of mobile phones with video capabilities and social media platforms, have both enabled people to participate in citizen-journalism on a large scale, and also affected perceptions of police. Andre Brock (2012) describes CTDA as a framework that “draws from technology studies, communication studies, and critical race theory to understand how culture shapes technologies.”

As a network of social platforms and concerned citizens, the Ferguson movement and activists within it produced and supplemented mainstream discourse of the protests following Brown's death, largely through videos. Without Twitter or mobile phones, activists and the citizens of Ferguson would be largely excluded from creating or adding to the mainstream narrative. I use CTDA to examine some of the most influential and retweeted citizen-generated videos in Ferguson and the accompanying discourses responding to these videos, as well as to examine the counter-networks and themes of mass-self communication that took place alongside these videos.

Method

According to the report *Beyond the Hashtag*, there were millions of tweets using the #Ferguson in 2014 following Mike Brown's death. The report also posits that attention given to the #Ferguson over #MikeBrown suggests there was “a greater emphasis on the protests and resulting police response than on the victim”(p.47), which is part of the reason I utilize #Ferguson in my collection of responses. In order to narrow the scope of this study, I used Twitter's advanced search page to focus my analysis in three essential ways. First, I used the search page to narrow the time frame in which I collected tweets to analyze. I chose two separate time frames that amassed national coverage in Ferguson, MO, according to the report *Beyond the Hashtag*; first, the time surrounding the death of Mike Brown and initial protests, which is August 9-August 31, 2014; and also the non-indictment of Darren Wilson, November 24 - December 2, 2014. Then, I chose the central activist in Ferguson as found by the report “Beyond the Hashtag, DeRay McKesson. That study of social media activism reports that DeRay was the most referenced participant in their dataset that included millions of tweets. I then input DeRay’s username, in order to narrow down the tweets and videos analyzed within those

time frames. This method generated 152 tweets and 39 videos, which I use as the primary source of data in this chapter.

According to The New York Times, after watching protesters in Ferguson clash with a militarized police force and following on the ground citizens on Twitter, DeRay left his house, packed his things and tweeted, “En route to Ferguson.” In the years since, DeRay has become a full-time protester and organizer, and a go-to source for reporters covering protests around the country. I chose to analyze DeRay’s videos for several reasons, but mostly because he shared more videos that remain accessible, than any other on the ground activists in Ferguson during those time frames, and also used the #Ferguson, meaning his videos and tweets were accessible to a wide variety of people who were following that hashtag.

Analyzing Tweets

After limiting the tweets by time frame and username, I clicked on the “Video” tab, and analyzed user responses to each video that either showed police, or talked about police, in order to examine how citizen-generated videos played a role in police-citizen

encounters in the aftermath of Mike Brown's murder. Despite the variation in support surrounding the activists videos, I include all 152 tweet responses to the videos recorded by DeRay in the timeframes named. Each of the responses were read and annotated (e.g., notes were made about specific hashtags used, style of writing, and references to police, protestors, the Black community, and Mike Brown), and then discourse themes were generated based on my notes. Each response was analyzed with a focus on the users description of police, the state, the protests/ors, and police brutality more generally. As topics repeated, they confirmed existing themes. Similar tweets were compared to each other within categories to ensure continuity and authenticity. This iterative process resulted in the creation of four main themes; support of the police, support for the activists and DeRay, criticism of the police/state, and criticism of the activists, and also various sub-themes that presented how the public understood the events unfolding in Ferguson. The tweets that are presented in this chapter, were chosen because they showcase a particular theme well, and additionally, were from unprotected accounts.

Mass Self-Communication and Counter-Networks

I begin the analysis by illustrating how DeRay was able to use video as a form of mass self-communication and to contribute to counter-networks during the Ferguson uprising. DeRay used video in ways that proved influential in how the public understood the protests and the police present there. I counted how many videos DeRay uploaded to Twitter during the selected time-frames, and analyzed them with a keen eye for patterns revealing mass self-communication and/or counter-networks. These frameworks have been used to showcase the ways citizens have participated in social movements across the world, and I intend to explore how citizen-generated videos are increasingly being utilized in counter-publics and how they have been influential in giving ordinary citizens a voice.

3.4 RESULTS: THE IMPACT OF VIDEO IN FERGUSON

One of the most essential facets of citizen-generated footage of police brutality is in its ability to create or add to the narrative of the event, or as DeRay called it become a storyteller. In this case, the original video recorded by Piaget Crenshaw did not capture Darren Wilson shoot Mike Brown, and therefore it was less successful in creating a

counternarrative. However, the several videos captured during the Ferguson protests offer a unique look at the advantages of citizen-generated videos in the activism surrounding the injustices of police brutality, and specifically surround Mike Brown's death. Additionally, the citizen-generated videos that amassed after Mike Brown's death is evidence of both mass self-communication and counterpublics/networks that mobile phones have enabled. In this section I examine how Twitter users engaged with the 39 videos I analyzed, and gauge their perceptions of police based on responses I sectioned into four themes. I looked at the responses through a critical race lens, attempting to see if the video was able to subvert the dominant and negative views of Black people often found in the media, and allow the viewer to see themselves in the victims. I conclude with nationwide, state, city, and department level policy changes in response to activism surrounding Mike Brown's killing and the conversation on police brutality.

Perceptions of Police

Based on the 152 tweets analyzed, I divided the responses into four main themes; First, support of activists and/or DeRay, second, criticism of activists and DeRay, third, pro-police and use of force, and lastly, anti-police and use of force. Building on the

concept of the white-gaze, I grouped responses into categories that showed resistance to dominant tropes of Black criminality and that challenged the mass media narrative that protesters were violent with responses that did not. Criticism of activists/DeRay and pro-police contain responses that continued to see the video through a white-supremacist gaze. Support for activists/DeRay and anti-police are the two categories in which viewers were more prone to be sympathetic to the victim, and therefore better able to 'put themselves in the victim's shoes' through the video. These categories showed a willingness to trust the person behind the camera, in this case DeRay, and be influenced by the narrative created by his video.

Of the videos I analyzed, all of them either showed the police doing something that could be considered excessive or violent, showed the solidarity of the community and protestors, or depicted the protestors as non-violent. DeRay's videos illustrated a clear intention to challenge the white supremacist gaze, and give humanity to the protestors and victim. The other two categories however, revealed viewers that continued to see the videos through a white-supremacist gaze, and were unable to see humanity in

Blackness. The graphs below show a breakdown of the responses in the first and second time frames analyzed, grouped into their respective categories.

Aug. 9-Aug 31, 2014 Responses

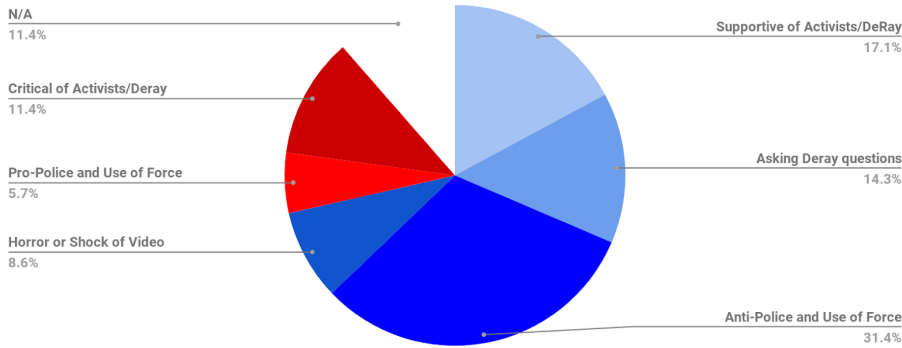


ILLUSTRATION 3.1

Nov. 24-Dec. 2, 2014 Responses

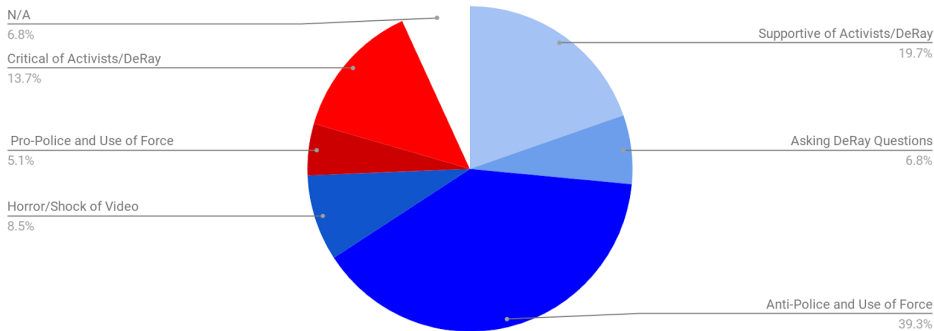


ILLUSTRATION 3.2

In total, less than 1% of tweets I placed into an ‘N/A’ category, 31% were categorized as ‘Anti-Police’ and 37% when including the sub-theme ‘horror or shock’, 17% were categorized as ‘Support of Activists/DeRay’ with 23% including the sub-theme ‘asking DeRay questions’. These pie charts represent a clear willingness by the

public to criticize mainly, law enforcement, but also the activists. My analysis shows that in each time frame, anti-police tweets were by far the most common response with 31.4% of responses in the first time frame and 39.3% after Darren Wilson was acquitted. This was followed by support for activists, criticism of activists/DeRay, horror/shock of video, asking DeRay questions and unclear, and then pro-police. Based on this breakdown it appears that although there was a variation of responses to the videos analyzed, DeRays videos garnered the majority of its interactions from those who condemned the actions of the police, even when including sub-themes.

Additionally, I found that support for police was the lowest response garnered, and that this category remained relatively unchanged from the start of the protests until the end. However, the criticism of police rose about 6% from the height of the protests until the waning of them, potentially representing a shift in perception of police over time and as DeRay and other activists shared more video footage. The following collections of tweets reveal some of the ways in which the public's opinions were impacted by the

videos. Of particular interest though, is how people's perceptions of police were impacted.

Anti-Police and Use of Force:

The stark difference in support for and criticism of police illustrates the dominant dialogue following the Ferguson uprising. The following tweets from users responses to DeRay’s videos represent perceptions of police.

Table 3.1 Responses Showing Criticism of Police

Anti-Police and Use of Force	Horror/Shock of Video
<p>1a. “ Land of the free my fuking nuts” “@deray: Riot police advance. #ferguson https://vine.co/v/Onx9A905uM5 ”</p>	<p>1d. “@deray u can totally see Dotson run from around the other side when he sees camera's coming. What was that....."WE GOT ONE!" fist pump?”</p>
<p>1b. “@deray what do these guys think they are protecting??? Why aren't they out working? Taxpayer dollars at work.”</p>	<p>1e. “This looks staged out of a movie” “@deray: So. Many. Officers. #ferguson https://vine.co/v/OnQBgdeYXmQ ””</p>
<p>1c. @deray Ugh these cops. It's not freedom to assemble "as long as you stay on the sidewalk". Also why that curfew was unconstitutional.</p>	<p>1f. “The Gestapo have arrived. This is chilling. “@deray: Riot police March. Super intense. #ferguson https://vine.co/v/OnxIbrpUpra ”</p>

The tweets from Table 3.1, as well as many of the other tweets in my analysis, reveal a theme of disbelief, horror, and anger with the Ferguson PD and also law enforcement in general following the weeks and months after Mike Brown's death. The first response I

chose to include, 1a; “Land of the free my fuking nuts”, demonstrates how this user feels about law enforcements choice to wear riot gear to the protests. This response mirrored many others that pointed to the 1st amendment right, and how police officers infringed on this right throughout the protests. One user remarked “make sure u stay in the first amendment designated zone LMAO what a fucking joke!!!!” in response to a DeRay video showing several cop cars lining the streets. Another common response within the criticism theme showed a lack of respect for the way Ferguson PD was ‘policing.’ This can be seen from response 1b from Table 3.1; “what do these guys think they are protecting??? Why aren’t they out working? Taxpayer dollars at work.” This user shows a clear disapproval of the mass amounts of police that surrounded Ferguson protestors, and questions their purpose for being there. Additionally, this user reflects a larger critique of what many referred to as the militarization of the police's response to protestors.

The militarization of police refers to the use of military equipment and tactics by law enforcement officers. Activists in Ferguson and those vicariously viewing the protests, witnessed the transformation of the ordinary Ferguson PD, into police toting assault rifles, wearing helmets, and roaming the streets in mine-resistant armored vehicles in a matter of days. This transformation became a major concern following the protests in Ferguson, and a primary topic of discussion within the national conversations about police brutality. The ACLU’s recent report on police militarization found that federal programs have provided a surplus of military equipment “that is often far beyond what is

necessary for their jobs as protectors of their communities”(War Comes Home, 2014). Further, they argue that sending a heavily armed team of officers to police a community under distress, can quickly escalate situations that were previously non-violent. The drastic change in equipment parallels the corresponding change in attitude, where instead of serving to protect communities, the police feel at war with them.

The other most prominent responses found within the criticism theme was shock/horror of the video. Both 1d and 1e from Table 1 reveal the public's disturbance by the events taking place in Ferguson. Since the videos taken by DeRay were made to show a counternarrative to the mainstream narrative, and also aimed to portray the police as violent and protestors as peaceful, it can be assumed the public horror/shock was aimed at the actions of the police. 1d; “u can totally see Dotson run from around the other side when he sees camera's coming. What was that....."WE GOT ONE!" fist pump?” highlights the disdain for a specific officers actions after arresting a protestor. The user calls out the officer for his physical movements as if they were present in the moment, and concludes that the officer is disturbingly proud of his arrest. These opinions point to the potential that video evidence and live-tweeting from those at the scene can have on the public's opinions.

Support for Activists/DeRay

The next theme with the most responses was supporting the activists in Ferguson. These responses suggest displeasure with the police since activists were protesting in direct opposition to law enforcements excessive use of force. reflected the public's concern for the activists safety, as well as a respect and appreciation for their bravery and actions to record.

Table 3.2 Responses Showing Support for Activists/DeRay

Support for Activists/DeRay	Sub-theme: Asking DeRay Questions
2a. “#HandsUpDontShoot “@deray: Man arrested. Wow. #ferguson https://vine.co/v/MLmedLPpW72 ””	2d. “@deray their handguns are out, right? Is that what I see?”
2b. “@deray, Thanks for your videography! Otherwise, many of us wouldn't witness this at all. Be safe good people! #Ferguson”	2e. “@deray Did they arrest him? No Warning?”
2c. “@deray thank you for documenting and sharing what is happening in #Ferguson!”	2f. “@deray I wonder if they broke them law? Do you know what happened?”

#HandsupDontShoot was a popular hashtag accompanying the #ferguson and throughout the protests. This hashtag came from the fact that witnesses of Brown's death claimed his hands were up when Wilson shot him. Response 2a from Table 2 depicts how

#handsupdontshoot was used alongside and in addition to the Ferguson hashtag, and in this instance to reinforce DeRay's tweets. This tweet is in response to a shaky video recording in a sea of people close together, including police officers, protesters, and news reporters. Tweets of support were often in response to videos featuring mass amounts of police, an arrest taking place, or actions by the police. For instance, in response to a video which showed a panoramic view of officers fully armed in riot gear and lined up, 2c and 2c, thanked DeRay for "documenting" and allowing the viewers to become 'witness' to these events.

In addition to supporting the activists and DeRay, the users asking DeRay questions revealed trends of confirming what they saw in the video, as well as enquiring more about the happenings in Ferguson. This illustrates the trust users were able to build with activists on the ground, and how these videos worked to supplement other news and discourse that was surrounding Mike Brown and Ferguson in real time. Users were able to look to activists on the ground in Ferguson to help construct their knowledge of what was taking place, how citizens were participating in the protests, and how law enforcement was treating those protestors. While asking DeRay questions did not make

up a substantial part of the tweets in my analysis, the number of users that asked DeRay questions about the video or about the protests rose from five in the first time frame, which covered nearly three weeks, to eight in the second time frame which was only one week. Overall, the number of user replies in the second time frame far surpassed replies in the first time-frame, partially due to the fact that DeRay took more videos, but the rise in users that asked questions still reveals a clear desire from the public to trust DeRay with information regarding the protests.

The image below shows a “call and response” that was also a common form of supporting activists. The call and response tradition is often used in Black culture discourse, and has been associated with the use of trending hashtags on Twitter (Brock, 2012). According to Smitherman (1977) a call and response occurs when the speaker either requests a specific response from their audience or prompts a response by appeal to popular culture. Call and response interactions are fulfilled by the completion or affirmation of the original persons statement, and in Ferguson, this communicative style was used in actionable ways. DeRay tweeted that the activists on the ground required a megaphone, and “the good people of Twitter” sent one to them.

 **Johnetta Elzie** 
@Nettaaaaaaaa Follow 

I love the good people of Twitter! @deray tweeted we needed a REAL megaphone and here it is. I feel like CHANTING 😎



Tweet From @Nettaaaaaaaa on Dec. 1st, 2014

Figure 1

Criticism of Activists/DeRay:

Of course there were also several comments that referenced activists and their videos in ways that were unfavorable. In fact, criticism of the activists was the third highest response after criticism of police and support for activists. Some of these responses worked to put the blame of the disruptions in Ferguson on the protesters for ‘not following the law’ rather than the police for killing someone. However this theme is separate from supporting the police, because condemning protesters does not necessarily equate to favoring law enforcement. In the first time frame, 11% were in this category, however this number raised noticeably in the second time frame to 13.7%. This increase could account for the fact that the protests, #ferguson, and Mike Brown received more

news coverage as the movements continued, and therefore more people were interacting with the #Ferguson and DeRay's tweets, but it also reveals the challenges the activists faced.

DeRay posted over 100 videos while in Ferguson in 2014(I analyzed 39), and still these were not enough to influence or impact the entirety of Twitter. While there is no way to check whether or not the people responding to the videos actually watched them, I would argue that those with strong opinions on either side will be less likely to change their political point-of-view than those with ambivalent feelings about police. As an activist seeking justice for Mike Brown, it can be assumed that while DeRay wanted to share with the public the events in Ferguson, he also wanted to showcase the excessive use of force by law enforcement and the peaceful nature of the activists. This is proved through my own analysis of the types of videos he took and the captions he used. Due to this, it can also be assumed that the users that disapprove of DeRay and/or activists are not being influenced by DeRay's videos in the way he intended. Perhaps, there is still

influence from the video content he posted, but the impact is discontent with McKesson, his video, or the sentiments of the protestors.

Table 3.3 Responses Showing Support for Activists/DeRay

Criticism of Activists/DeRay
3a. “@deray ok dude there's not that many cops in what you're showing”
3b. “@deray You guys are fools. You have NO idea what a police state looks like. Go to Cuba”
3c. “@deray or maybe...just maybe...BECAUSE OF YOU! God are you the dimmest protest leader ever?”
3d. “@deray Retard. That's not marching. That's moving in a close tight group. For safety”
3e. “Thats what you get when you run from the police! @deray”

The common responses within this category consisted of calling out DeRay for over-exaggerating police presence and causing a disturbance in the community. These responses helped reveal some of the videos that were and were not as influential. For instance, when DeRay posted a video about a street being closed or blamed the police for disturbing the peaceful protest, there were more negative responses to him. In **3c**, the user blames DeRay for the closing down of a main street. In DeRay’s video that the tweet

responds to, he claims that it was the police that shut down the street and not the protesters in order to avoid blame from the public and news media. However, the video is unable to prove that this is the fault of the police. This exposes some of the setbacks to citizen-generated videos. Since it is taken from the perspective of the camera owner, the public can understand the video differently than anticipated by the videographer. **3a** illustrates this clearly, “@deray ok dude there's not that many cops in what you're showing.” This tweet challenges DeRay’s statement that there are a lot of cops nearby, and even with video evidence, the user does not believe this to be true. Therefore, while the video may appear to expose a mass amount of police to the public, some viewers will still deem this as an ordinary amount, and therefore will not be impacted by the video.

Counterpublics and Mass Self-Communication

In this section I demonstrate how mobile phones with camera capabilities enabled citizens in Ferguson to be a part of activist movements accessible and innovative ways.

For instance, DeRay Mckesson was a relatively ordinary citizen before he became involved in the Ferguson protests. According to *Beyond the Hashtags* (2016), DeRay had less than 1000 followers prior to his arrival in Ferguson, where he began live-tweeting

and recording events using the #Ferguson. He now has over 1 million followers on Twitter and is a central leader in Black activist movements across America. DeRay's rise to prominence allows for an exploration of the ease and accessibility of mobile phones with video capability, and how this technology has worked to expand the ability to perform mass self-communication.

Affordances of Twitter:

Some scholarship that has used a CTDA analysis (Brock, 2011, 2012), has pointed to statistics of high usage of Twitter by Black members constitutive of the platform's interface and capabilities. Recent studies have shown that Black youth have been especially active on Twitter due to ease of use, minimalist interface, and high smartphone adoption rates (Bonilla, 2015). For instance, Pew Research published a study on smartphones and other mobile devices that revealed 95% of Americans own a cell phone of some kind with no difference between Black and white users, and that 72% of Black Americans own a smartphone in comparison to 77% of white Americans (Pew Mobile Fact Sheet, 2017). Moreover, despite the participation gap within the digital divide in the

United States, the percentage of Black Americans who have a smartphone use Twitter (22 percent) is much higher than that of white Americans (16 percent; Bryers 2014).

Acknowledging that Twitter cannot be representative of the American population or even citizens most affected by Brown's killing residing in Ferguson, information gathered from this site can assist our understanding of what a vast sample of people thought about the case while the details were still unfolding. According to Chaudry (2016) Twitter has become a 'powerhouse' in disseminating news and information (both locally and globally), "Users are able to search for keywords or hashtags related to an event, moment, or experience, allowing them to feel like they are experiencing the event in real time" (p. 297). With this in mind, using Twitter as the main source of data collection, this analysis tracks the discourse surrounding three viral videos of police brutality.

While early scholarship was less hopeful that online activism would be able to produce sustained social change, recent work has illustrated the capability of new technologies, smart phones in particular, and social sharing networks to elevate and

reinforce counternarratives voices into the mainstream public sphere (Jackson & Welles, 2016; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). In examining the role of Twitter in the Egyptian revolution, Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira (2012), for example, reviewed the unique nature of storytelling and collaboration through Twitter. They argue that unlike traditional modes of storytelling, Twitter provides constant flows of communication from the perspectives of those most near the crisis events. As Murthy explains, “part of Twitter’s seductive power is the perceived ability of users to be important contributors to an event” (Murthy, 2013, p. 33).

Counternarratives and Mass-Self Communication:

DeRay Mckesson helped galvanize thousands of retweets using the #Ferguson, helping Mike Brown become an igniting case for Black Lives Matter. When DeRay arrived in Ferguson on the 20th of August, that first day alone he recorded and shared 11 videos to twitter using the #ferguson. All of these videos were short clips since he used vine which has a 7-second time limit, but were still able to inform the public in meaningful ways. From August 9th to August 31st, 2014 DeRay posted 93 videos to Twitter with the #Ferguson. Of these tweeted videos, almost half of them garnered

responses. From November 24th to December 2nd, DeRays use of videos skyrocketed, in just 8 days he recorded 176 videos to Twitter from the ground in Ferguson. DeRay opted to use a mixture of Vine and Twitter as a public record of the protest happenings:

Table 3.4 Deray Tweets

USERNAME/ TWEET / LINK
3a. @deray / WOW. DOTSON ARRESTED SOMEONE. #Ferguson / https://twitter.com/deray/status/539169709795840001
3b. @deray / Riot police go to bus. #Ferguson / https://twitter.com/deray/status/539174175815262208
3c. @deray / While running from police she had a seizure. #Ferguson / https://twitter.com/deray/status/539170965394309120
3d. @deray/ Riot police march. Super intense. #ferguson / https://twitter.com/deray/status/539160352676904961

Each of these videos were originally recorded on Vine, but were shared to Mckesson's twitter account and reveal varying levels of excessive use of force by police. The first shows multiple officers arresting a protester that is face down on the ground, one of the more violent videos of the three. The second shows the militarization of police, marching in line with riot gear to face the protestors. The third received the most retweets of all his shared videos, and shows a woman having a seizure in response to being chased by the

police. This video also garnered some of the most responses from other Twitter users, most of which condemned police action. Nevertheless, there were a few users who blamed the victim in their response to the video: “Thats what you get when you run from the police! @deray”. DeRays use of his mobile phone, the vine app, and twitter, enabled him to contribute greatly to the discourse surrounding Ferguson. Additionally, through using these technologies he was able to amass a following and became a central figure in the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Papadopulous (2014), argues that a citizen that opts to use their personal devices to challenge political governments essentially assumes the role of a martyr. Further, she posits that in today's highly mediated economy, audio(visual) recordings play a large role in what events will garner local, nationwide, or global media coverage, giving a significant form of capital to the witness. This form of capital is transformative for marginalized groups with internet access and a device with mobile video capabilities, offering them agency over their stories and access to the global media ecology. These feelings of agency I argue, are what led DeRay to start recording the actions of the police, and the peaceful nature of their own protest experiences. In Ferguson, when protests

began, activists on the ground were continuously fighting the narratives displayed in the news through video and textual evidence on apps like twitter, vine, and facebook. This reveals the desire to tell their counter narrative story and to be apart of the conversation, even if it meant risking jail time. DeRay Mckesson among countless others protesting, each faced the police with the knowledge that they could be arrested, harmed, and/or even killed, thus assuming the role of a martyr in order to share their stories.

Change Post #Ferguson

Department Of Justice:

According to Pearce (2014), one of the driving factors that pushed for videos as a tool for police accountability came after Mike Brown's killing. Brown's death was followed by weeks of protests and rioting (both locally and nationally) largely fueled by existing community tensions and community anger at police handing of the incident (Craven, Stewart, & Reilly, 2015; Sanchez & Lawler, 2015). Although Darren Wilson was never charged for Brown's murder, the protests and national outrage led to real and tangible changes in the city of Ferguson, partially due to the results of the Department of Justice(DOJ) looking into the Ferguson Police Department. The DOJ released a scathing

report that concluded that the Ferguson Police Department had participated in a pattern of unconstitutional policing where officers routinely violated the constitutional rights of its Black residents. According to the report, bias against African-Americans was routine and often unfounded, affecting “nearly every aspect of Ferguson police and court operations.”

Some of the examples in the report included several police and state employees expressing racist views in emails and correspondence. For instance, they found messages between Ferguson officials comparing African-Americans to chimpanzees and characterized a Black woman’s abortion as an effective crime-stopping tool. Among other findings, the DOJ reported that the FPD used tasers and dogs in excess on Black suspects, issued expensive fines for minor offenses, routinely stopped and searched Black residents at higher rates, arrested Black residents at higher rates, jailed Black residents over two days at higher rates, and claimed that Ferguson’s focus on revenue had “fundamentally compromise(d) the role of Ferguson Municipal Courts.” The report concluded that the FPD had practiced intentional discrimination that stripped Black citizens of their constitutional right, and the report was published with open access for anyone to view. Additionally, the report offered “broad recommendations” for the FPD to make, including

implementing a community-policing system, increase the tracking and review of the stops, searches, and arrests made, change their approach to using force, implement measures and trainings to reduce police bias, revise payment plan offerings, and to stop using arrest warrants as a means of collecting fines, among many reforms.

Body Worn Cameras:

Body Worn Cameras(BWC) are another example of the changes that followed Mike Brown's death. For instance, the White House received a petition calling for BWCs to become mandatory for police officers and within a week of creation, the petition had surpassed the required number of signatures to trigger a response from the government (Raghavan, 2014). Shortly after Wilson was not charged, President Obama committed \$75 million to help police departments purchase 50,000 body-worn cameras (Hermann & Weiner, 2014). By September 2015, the DOJ announced the creation of a grant program designed to equip police departments with BWCs with the expressed goal of increasing officer accountability and transparency as well as repairing police-community relationships (USDOJ, 2015). In the first two years of that program, the DOJ has awarded

more than 170 agencies with grants totaling nearly \$40 million for the specific use of buying and maintaining BWCs (Parry, 2017).

Structural Change:

In an article for The New York Times titled *A Year Later, Ferguson Sees Change, but Asks if It's Real?*, residents of the town were divided between the reforms that were made post Mike Brown's killing. Some citizens were pleased with the addition of a Black police Chief and a newly appointed Black judge, and felt that this was the beginning to more substantial changes in the future. Many others though, felt that these changes were surface level and were made to get the critical eyes of the country off their back. According to the article, increased funds for job training and college assistance, legislation lowering the percentage of revenue Missouri cities can make from traffic fines and fees, and a 'revamped' municipal court system that replaced the judge and revoked two widely criticized actions that lead to a disproportionate amount of Black and poor people subject to jail or heavy fines were some of the main changes as a result of the Ferguson protests. Nevertheless, the police force remains overwhelmingly white, and

citizens still feel that the police treat Black residents suspiciously and make arrests for trivial charges.

3.5 DISCUSSION

Jackson and Welles (2016) argue that Twitter catalyzed the activism that took place after the death of Mike Brown, and that the first week of Ferguson tweets lead to social pressure for more media coverage and to an eventual public address by the former President Obama. Further, they argue that the compelling movement portrays the power of online counterpublics to influence the public discourse and empowered everyday citizens to take up forms of citizen-journalism in moments of community crisis. The national dialogue on issues of structural racism, police profiling and brutality, and the militarization of police in response to the protests have lead some to call the movements and activism following Mike Brown's death in Ferguson America's 'New Civil Rights Movement' (Allen & Cohen, 2015; Demby, 2014). Hashtags and video used during the Ferguson uprising worked to transport Mike Brown's murder out of Ferguson and shed a light on those attempting to cover up unfavorable details of police abuse and profiling in the town of Ferguson.

Although Mike Brown's death reignited a national discourse about police brutality and racial bias in law enforcement, and has been the focus of scholarship about hashtag movements, online activism, American contemporary counterpublics and networks, or Black Lives Matter research; the videos surrounding his death are not as influential as some of the videos I analyze in the next chapters for several reasons. First and most obvious, the earliest known citizen-generated video surrounding the case and taken by witness Piaget Crenshaw, only captured the moments after the video. This alone, set a precedent of ambiguity for how people understood the case and how the media narrated it. The fact that the actual shooting was not shown, left room for interpretation, uncertainty, and made up claims. This is one of the reasons that made Brown's case unlikely to be picked up by mainstream media. The video and the witness were disparaged in national discourse, and without the activists that lead in Ferguson and community members that made sure this case was not overlooked, this video alone would probably not have been able bring mainstream attention.

Even though the lack of primary video evidence was unable to successfully challenge the police departments accounts of what happened for some users, the citizen-generated videos captured by activists like DeRay in the aftermath of Mike Brown's death did make an impact. According to the “Beyond the Hashtags Report”, eyewitness accounts from the ground attracted a great deal of attention given the dramatically violent circumstances, and of the 12million plus tweets in their data collection, they found no highly retweeted eye-witness accounts that **supported** the police response (Beyond the Hashtags, 2015). The video responses and citizens live-tweets I analyze occupies an integral cultural site of analysis to my consideration of citizen-generated videos of police brutality. From my analysis, there was an overwhelming sense that the treatment from the police and to activists was rendered irregular and excessive. The comments revealed this in a number of ways. For example, there was a pattern of tweets that revealed themes of shock, horror, and/or disbelief at the brutal police response to the protests. These reactions demonstrate how the mixture of videos and social media have the potential to promote informal education about political issues, similar to how the televised police

brutality against civil rights activists in the 1960s forced Americans to confront their beliefs and the countries morals.

Though it is disheartening that Darren Wilson was not charged for murder, we can make a cautious but significant conclusion that the discourse surrounding police brutality did increase due to the efforts of activists in Ferguson and around the world. Activists are committed to pushing for police transparency and accountability through criminal justice reform, they helped push the United States Justice Department to investigate Fergusons police department and its practices, helped spark the mobilization of the Black Lives Matters Movement, and created counter-narratives to the mainstream media and police accounts of the shooting and the aftermath.

As the movement to push for police accountability and transparency continues to expand, it becomes easier to observe the discursive nature of activists on Twitter and users that respond to them. Retweets and responses of the activists in Ferguson indicate how common feelings of injustice towards the police are. With activists like DeRay McKesson that started with well less than 1000 followers but posted live-tweets with

thousands of retweets, it is apparent that the public does want to hear and learn from the experiences of non-professional journalists, and that their work is valued. Beyond being appreciated, the use of the videos as a way to challenge mainstream narratives empowers ordinary citizens to be politically engaged and to continue to create more of their own content.

CHAPTER 4:

DAJERRIA BECTON

4.1. INTRODUCTION

“Say Her Name.” These words signified more than a hashtag that arose after the wrongful death of Sandra Bland. These words represent a movement. A movement that is focused on fixing the insufficient attention that certain victims of police violence face. Say Her Name exposes a pattern of civil rights movements that have forgotten about Black women. According to the African American Policy Forum, Say Her Name “responds to increasing calls for attention to police violence against Black women by offering a resource to ensure that Black women’s stories are integrated into the demands for justice, policy responses to police violence, and media representations of victims and survivors of police brutality.” Additionally, Say Her Name is “intended to serve as a resource for the media, organizers, researchers, policy makers, and other stakeholders to better understand and address Black women’s experiences of profiling and policing”(Say Her Name, 2015). Although this chapter is a case study on Dajerria Becton, whose viral video and assault took place before #SayHerName existed as a movement,

due to its proximity to Sandra Bland's case(one month before), Becton's violent incident is often discussed within the frameworks of #SayHerName and #BlackLivesMatter.

Black women, girls and female-identifying who have been victims of police brutality are often overlooked by the media and the public. When Black men and boys are profiled, brutalized, and murdered by police it has become a national issue, sparking protests and movements across the world. Some digital opportunists argue that in a changing media landscape it may become more difficult to relegate female victims to obscurity. However over the years women victims of police brutality have yet to be recognized. The viral video of 15-year-old Dajerria Becton, shows her being thrown to the ground in McKinney, Texas, by a white police officer responding to pool party incident. The seven-minute video captures the officer dragging Dajerria into submission, pressing his knees down on her back, and pushing her face to the ground. The officer is also shown pulling his gun on two unarmed boys who attempt to help the girl. Shortly after the video was posted to YouTube the views reached millions, and the officer under investigation resigned. Though the story and shocking footage captured national

attention, highlighting the reality of Black female police brutality victims remains a struggle and an overlooked cause.

Black Lives Matters was founded by three women, however, the mainstream narrative around BLM has mainly highlighted the stories of Black men and boys, and therefore many reforms have also worked to address the ways law enforcement have failed Black males. While these reforms were not made specifically to bring change to police-citizen encounters of men only, the types of brutality men and women face at the hands of the police often differs. So, when the national discourse is centered on Black male encounters with the police or how the criminal justice system is failing Black men, not only are women killed by police being left out of the conversation, but issues of sexual abuse, harassment and other risks primarily face by women from law enforcement are not being brought up at all.

This chapter explores why Black women and girls have largely been left out of the national conversation of police brutality, and how lack of video evidence, narrow

definitions of ‘police brutality’, and victim blaming play a role. Additionally, this chapter aims to gather evidence that shows how a viral video of Dajerria Becton, a teenage girl in a swimsuit being slammed to the ground by police, potentially shifted the conversation—even if momentarily, due the citizen-generated video that coincided with the brutality, and therefore affected the public's perception of police-citizen encounters with females.

Some preliminary research on the search term ‘Dajerria Becton’ found themes of racial disparities in the punishment of Black children, the neglect of Black women and trans-women in the national conversation, and the sexualization of girls. Each of these subjects were largely missing during the conversations featuring Mike Brown and Philando Castile. While Dajerria Becton was assaulted by the police officer a month before the death of Sandra Bland, the video went viral, and became associated with the hashtag #SayHerName, after Bland's death began to receive more attention. Sandra Bland became one of more than two dozen Black females who have died in police custody or in confrontations with law enforcement since 2000.

Sandra Bland was 28-years-old when she was arrested for allegedly assaulting a police officer during a traffic stop in Waller County, Texas on July 10, 2015. Bland was found dead in a jail cell three days later, and many academics and activists alike looked to this case as the latest victim of police brutality against African American women. Kimberle Crenshaw, Columbia Law professor and creator of the framework ‘intersectionality’ posits that while the resurgent civil rights movement in the United States has developed a clear frame to understand the police killings of Black men and boys, “Black women who are profiled, beaten, sexually assaulted, and killed by law enforcement officials are conspicuously absent from this frame even when their experiences are identical.” The national conversation on police brutality has been able to theorize the ways in which Black men and boys are systematically criminalized, incarcerated, profiled, and feared across disparate class backgrounds and regardless of circumstance, but when the “experiences with police violence are distinct—uniquely informed by race, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation—Black women remain invisible”(AAPF: Say Her Name, 2015).

Unlike many cases of women being attacked, harassed, killed, or sexually abused by police, Dajerrias attack was caught on camera, from a close range, and with multiple witnesses. There was no denying the events that took place, and therefore the public was forced to look at this video and the case, through a different lens than when other Black women and girls are victimized. Zelba Bay, a writer for Huffington Post argues that this video and another one a year prior showing a California Highway Patrol officer beating a 51-year-old woman, illustrated "the inherent reality of both physical and sexual harassment against black women and girls at the hands of cops." Accordingly, the video was still being highly circulated at the time Sandra Bland started making headlines. I argue that this video helped catalyze the Say Her Name movement, by giving evidence to a problem that has long been overlooked partially due to lack of video documentation.

4.2. CASE STUDY

Du Bois (Souls) surmised that white anxiety over social and economic equality with African Americans was unequivocally entangled with white violence upon the Black body. This concept presents itself clearly in modern day form with the case of Dajerria Becton, where Black children were seen as a threat in a mostly white suburban

community. Dajerria Becton was thrown to the ground by a white police officer name Eric Casebolt in McKinney, Texas after police responded to a “disturbance” at a pool party in a wealthy part of town (The Atlantic, Khazan, 2015). According to news stories, a dispute took place after several white adults began complaining about the number of teens at the community pool. According to a witness, the dispute turned violent when a white woman slapped a Black girl, and a larger brawl involving hair-pulling broke out. When the police arrived, they told several Black teens to sit on the ground, and then Eric Casebolt drew a gun on a couple of unarmed Black boys. Shortly after this, 15-year-old Dajerria Becton attempted to walk away from the chaos when Casebolt threw her to the ground and pinned her there with his knee to her back.

The Video:

The citizen-generated video captured the minutes before and after the brutality against Becton, and after posted to Youtube, the video quickly went viral. The seven-minute video captures the officer dragging Dajerria into submission, pressing his knees down on her back, and pushing her face to the ground. The officer is also shown pulling his gun on two unarmed boys who attempt to help the girl. The remainder of the video

shows Dajerria calling out for help, and captures some handcuffed Black boys sitting on the grass while Brooks, a white teen, remains unbothered by police. Shortly after the video was posted to YouTube the views reached millions, and the officer under investigation resigned. Brandon Brooks, an attendant of the teen pool party, took the video on his mobile phone camera, uploaded it to his personal account on Youtube the day following the incident.

Case Study:

This chapter is part two of a three part analysis of citizen-generated videos of police brutality, and will consist of a case study of the activism and public discourse surrounding Dajerria Becton's violent attack by Officer Eric Casebolt. More specifically, this chapter will analyze Youtube comments underneath the original video posted by Brandon Brooks who was an attendant at the party and recorded the incident on his phone. I utilize theories of the public sphere and counterpublics, as well as Castells development of 'mass self-communication' to reinforce the unique and influential capabilities of the videos created in McKinney, Texas that led to the creation of #SayHerName and a shift in the national conversation on police brutality.

I use a critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA) of comments responding to the citizen-generated video of Dajerria Becton's attack, where I code for understandings of the case and perceptions of the police and state guided by bell hooks seminal article "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators". hooks contends that even in the face of desegregation, the media continues to produce images and representation through a "white supremacist gaze", but that this gaze can be challenged when we have control of the camera. For citizen journalists or even bystanders to instances of police brutality that pull out their mobile phones to record, this gaze can be resisted, and a new one can become dominant. For many vicarious viewers of the Ferguson protests this was the case, as seen in the previous chapter. Additionally, if citizen-generated videos are unable to successfully challenge the white supremacist gaze, they have at least brought issues of police brutality to the forefront of national conversations.

Nevertheless, while most Americans will know the names Rodney King, Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, and other Black men killed or brutalized at the

hands of the police with video evidence, most Americans will not know the name Dajerria Becton. As Kimberle Crenshaw pointed out in her Ted Talk, most Americans will also not know the names Michelle Cruseaux, Tanisha Anderson, Kayla Moore, Aaiyana Lewis, or Rekia Boyd. What differentiates these names from each other is one obvious thing, gender- However, in addition to gender, a citizen-generated video of the police-citizen encounter is also missing-except in the case of Dajerria Becton.

So even though video evidence has proved useful in Americas acknowledgement of police brutality, it has been a less useful tool in the fight to address violence against women and girls of color. I surmise that this is due to the fact that Black women are much more likely to be victims of sexual abuse or assault at the hands of the police (Ritchie, 2017). Further, Black women are much more likely than Black men to be victims of sexual abuse or assault at the hands of police and these kinds of violations are more likely to occur in private or at night. Hence, limiting exposure via citizen-generated videos.

In this case study there is only one viral video in relation to the incident, and the hashtag #SayHerName was not heavily attached to the incident until a month later. However, given the virality of the citizen-generated video on Twitter, Youtube, Facebook, and in the mainstream news, the public was still given the opportunity view some of the distinctions between Black males and females in their police-citizen encounters. I focus on interrogating the role that this citizen-generated video played in the publics perception and understanding of the controversial event. Mainly, I am looking at the impacts of this video in three ways; highlighting the conversation on females and female-identifying womens violent interactions with police, the public's perception of the victim, and perceptions of police in response to this video. I use each so I can explore how citizen-generated videos have unique and influential qualities that prove influential to the publics perception of police, and also how they aid in counterpublic movements that challenge national discourses on police brutality. Additionally, I am interested in the ways self-efficacy is reflected through a citizens decision to record the incident, rather than run away for safety or for fear of becoming involved in the attack.

Drawing on qualitative methods of critical race theory, technocultural analysis,

and discourse analysis, this chapter is guided by three central research questions:

Chapter 4 Research Questions

<p>Research Questions:</p>	<p>1. What are the implications of citizen-generated videos of a females violent interaction with an officer, on the publics' perception of police?</p>	<p>2. What roles have the rise of social media forms and mobile technologies played in creating the counter-movements such as #SayHerName in relation to police brutality against women?</p>	<p>3. Has the national conversation surrounding police brutality shifted to be more inclusive since or in response to this viral video?</p>
<p>Data Collection:</p>	<p>I looked at the top 200 comments on the original video of the case uploaded to Youtube.</p>	<p>I used the Twitter Advanced Search to the name 'Dajerria Becton' and also the '#SayHerName' to find counternarratives pertaining to the case.</p>	<p>I look to my own analysis of the Youtube comments, for data to support that citizen-generated videos have proved to bring some awareness, but have overall been less effective.</p>

4.3 METHODOLOGY

CTDA

The central focus guiding this chapter is analyzing how users viewed the viral video, giving specific attention to how users speak about police and officer Casebolt and what kind of mainstream conversations were had in response to the video. CTDA allows me to analyze how the incident was conceptualized, and how the rise in individual use of technology, along with the emergence of mobile phones with video capabilities and social media platforms, both enabled an ordinary citizen to record and share the event, and also expand the conversation within the Black Lives Matters to be more inclusive of women and girls affected by violence in similar and distinct ways to men. Concerned academics, organizers, and citizens were able to utilize this video to supplement their argument to a cause that has historically and continuously been overlooked. Without Brandon Brooks bravery to capture the video, as well as the technological affordances of a mobile device, not only would Dajerria Becton be missing from the conversation, but the spark to the centering of females interactions with police could have been given much less weight. I use CTDA to examine the discourse surrounding the viral video and to explore the social,

and political responses enabled in part by the virality of the video and the activists and organizers that created and employed #sayhername. Moreover, I examine the counter-networks and themes of mass-self communication that took place alongside the video.

Method

There are three primary ways I consider my research questions in this chapter. First, since this citizen-generated video was originally posted to Youtube, I look there in order to gauge the direct reactions to the video from viewers. I only use original comments, not replies, in order to filter out those who may have not watched the video or those who are impacted by another users response. Second, for the section on the counter-networks created in response to this video I look to Twitter, where the #McKinney was used in connection with the case, and later #SayHerName was utilized to portray to the public how Black girls are also affected by police violence. This section will mainly focus on the national conversations that took place in response to the video and whether or not these diverged from the male-focused discourse surrounding police brutality. Lastly, I explore themes of mass-self communication through a technocultural lens.

Analyzing Youtube Comments

In “The Oppositional Gaze” bell hooks, writes, “Conventional representations of black women have done violence to the image”(hooks, 1992). Citizen-generated videos of police brutality against women have the potential to diverge from this through building a narrative that challenges longstanding tropes about African American women. Additionally, she posits that “Critical black female spectatorship emerges as a site of resistance only when individual black women actively resist the imposition of dominant ways of knowing and looking”(hooks, 1992). Hooks coins this site of resistance as ‘The Oppositional Gaze,’ from which Black women are able to look at images of themselves or other African American women with a critical eye. Although ‘The Oppositional Gaze’ was created as a framework to understand Black women as spectators, it is useful in determining whether or not spectators of the viral video of Dajerria Becton were able to view the video through a similar gaze. A gaze that resists to traditional representations of Black girls and women in the mainstream media.

Brandon Brooks video has garnered 29,888 comments since the video posted one day after the incident. In order to methodologically sort through and analyze these

comments, I collected the first 200 responses from the original Youtube video posted by Brandon Brooks. Youtube allows you to sort comments by ‘Top Comments’ or ‘Newest First’, and I chose to leave the default ‘Top Comments’ in order to use the responses that had the most engagement. Each of the responses were read and annotated (e.g., notes were made about comments on the officer and the victim, the overall case and video, style of writing, and the Black community with special attention on the gender dimension), and then discourse themes were generated based on my notes. Each response was analyzed with a focus on the users description of Eric Casebolt or the police in general, race relations in America, gender disparities in the conversations on police brutality, and police brutality more generally. As topics repeated, they confirmed existing themes. Similar comments were compared to each other within categories to ensure continuity and authenticity. This iterative process resulted in the creation of four main themes; support of Casebolt/police, criticism of the Casebolt/police, empathy for Becton, and criticism of the Black teens attending the party/Becton, and also various sub-themes that presented how the public understood the events unfolding in #McKinney. The

comments that are presented in this chapter, were chosen because they showcase a particular theme well.

Mass Self-Communication and Counter-Networks

For this section I took my analysis back to Twitter. First, I used the search page to narrow the time frame in which I collected tweets to analyze the common discourse surrounding the case. I chose June 5th, the day of the incident, until July 31st, two weeks after Sandra Bland was allegedly ‘found’ dead. Next, I chose the search terms that brought up the case in question distinctively. I used two separate search terms to bring up the case. Since Dajerria Becton was a minor at the time-her name was not released to the public right away and I am unable to look through Twitter's advanced search page with search term “Dajerria Becton.” To rectify this, I use a mix of “Texas Pool Party” and “Police” to find discourse surrounding the case, and also “Dajerria Becton” and “#SayHerName.”

I end the analysis section by illustrating how Brooks used his mobile phone to capture an event that he believed should be recorded and shared with the world. His

decision to record and put the video online for the public to see is a clear example of Castells concept mass self-communication. I argue that Brooks active decision to record resulted from feelings of efficacy related to technological advances. Additionally, the ‘youth culture’ of recording fantastical events as well as previously viral videos of police-citizen encounters may have aided in his decision to record. The youth are using their smartphones through several participatory avenues, potentially leading them to feel more politically and socially connected than ever before and giving them a voice in discourses that historically only involved adults.

4.4 RESULTS: THE IMPACT OF VIDEO IN FERGUSON

As far as I have searched, there have not been any thorough reports or data driven articles surrounding Dajerria Becton and the networks involved in bringing attention to the video, like “Beyond the Hashtag” in the first chapter to build from. However, my research shows the #McKinney was the most used hashtag during the weeks following the assault, similar to how #Ferguson was used more than the victims name #MikeBrown. Moreover, in the second time frame analyzed, #sayhername began to be utilized alongside the case, and there has been an increasing amount of literature on

#SayHerName and the violence that women and girls face ranging from their schools, to police, to healthcare professionals that I build upon. I utilize some of these reports that mention Dajerria Becton to make an argument about the impact of the citizen-generated viral video on the national conversation of police brutality and what it has historically overlooked. Some activists have pointed to a lack of video evidence and deaths at the hands of police as part of the reason that females receive. Since this case has video evidence, the virality of it proves their hypothesis correct. However, since Dajerria was not fatally injured, counternetworks used Becton's case alongside Sandra Bland's case to make their movement stronger. This technique helped Dajerria's case better fit into 'imagined' description of a victim of police brutality, and thus brought more media coverage.

Perceptions of Police

Earlier research has shown that public perceptions of police are affected by a number of demographic and situational factors. For instance, younger people, racial and ethnic minorities, and those with lower levels of education, all tend to perceive law enforcement more negatively than their counterparts (Brunson, 2007; Huebner et al.,

2004; Tyler, 2005; Tuch, 2004; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). Additionally, individuals' perceptions of the police are also heavily influenced by the behavior of the police themselves (Tyler, 2006). In this video, many users comment on the officers use of force and fair unfair treatment of the kids shown in the video. This means that even though the viewer was not at the scene or perhaps has never had an interaction with a police officer in general, this video served as an example of police behavior for them. The stark display of rejection to the normalization of violence against Black girls found in my analysis reveals a shift in narratives often offered by police accounts or news media coverage.

Based on the 200 comments analyzed, I divided the responses into four main themes; 1. Support of Casebolt/police, 2. Criticism of Becton/the Black teens attending the party, 3. Empathy for Becton, and 4. Criticism of the Casebolt/police, and also various sub-themes that presented how the public understood the events unfolding in #McKinney, Texas. The first two are grouped together because they exhibit some of the properties of viewing Black images through a white-supremacist lens and reveal a lack of being influenced by the video in the ways intended by the recorder, and the second two

are grouped together because comments within these themes do show possibilities for influence and have potentially changed the lens from which the public is accustomed to viewing Black images. In addition to the main two categories, the most prominent sub-themes found were ‘making fun of the cop’ and ‘thanking Brandon’ for recording the video. I placed both sub-themes under criticism of police. There were also three comments that were unclear and four that showed both criticism of police and criticism of the teens and Becton.

Brooks video reveals a clear intention to showcase the excessive use of force by the officers. The camera movement follows the officers movements, specifically focusing on Casebolt from when he rolls on the ground, to when he pulls out his gun on Black teens, and finally when he pins down and handcuffs Becton. The video works to challenge the narrative that law enforcement often feeds to the media after an officer is accused of excessive use of force, and gives the power back to the citizens, or the person behind the camera. Since Brooks sought to expose Casebolts violence against Becton, his recording exhibits a resistance to the white supremacist gaze and offers the viewer a

chance to connect with Dajerrias pain in a way that the media has not historically offered Black victims. Therefore, those that thanked Brandon were categorized to be in agreeance with him, and critical of the police.

Employing the concept of a “white supremacist gaze”, I grouped comments into categories that showed resistance to stereotypes of Black criminality and the ‘angry Black woman’ and comments that did not. The comments that did not resist this gaze, worked to justify white violence against Black women and girls, while the remaining comments were categorized as anti-police or use of force and were able to resist to longstanding tropes of Black deviance. The responses that interrupted the mainstream or police narrative which operates through a white-supremacist gaze, were categorized as ‘anti-police and use of force’ and included responses that showed empathy for Becton and criticism of how the officer treated her and the teens in attendance. The comments that aligned with elements of the white-supremacist gaze were categorized as ‘pro-police and use of force’ and consisted of comments that criticized the Black teens attending the party/Bectons actions or showed support or provided justifications for Casebolts actions.

I gave each of the 200 comments either a 1, to represent pro-police and use of force, a 2, if the comment was anti-police and use of force, a 0 for N/A, and a 3 if the comment showed a mix of 1 and 2.

The graph below shows a breakdown of the comments, grouped as either “anti-police”, ‘pro-police’, ‘N/A’, or ‘Mixture.’

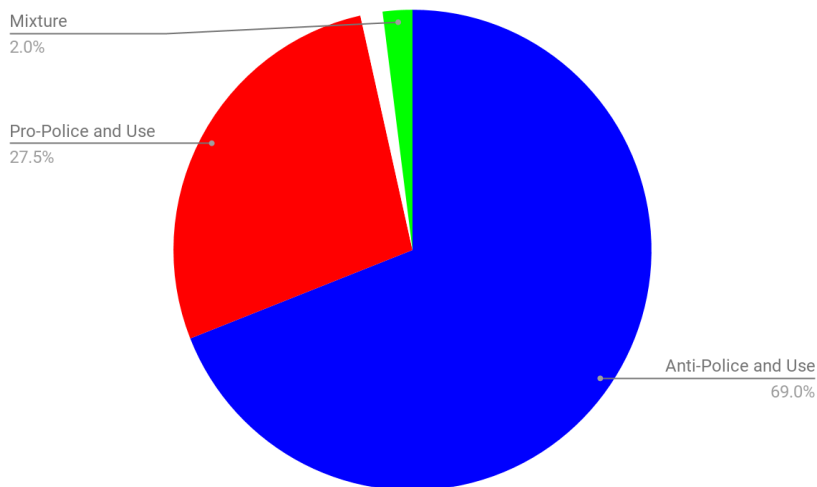


ILLUSTRATION 4.1

Illustration 4.1 shows that a significant majority of the sample (69%) viewed the video of Dajerria through a lens that challenges viewing the video through a white supremacist gaze, and either showed Becton empathy, and/or showed discontentment

with police actions. Twenty-Seven and a half percent of comments fit the the category that did exhibit elements of viewing the video through white supremacist gaze. Three comments were marked as 'Unclear' and four were categorized as 'Mixture', meaning the user both acknowledged the excessive use of force in some way, but also justified the officers actions to some extent- making no clear indication of who was truly at fault or who the victim was. Moreover, there is a recognizable percentage that showed empathy for Dajerria Becton and not the officer. Many users comment on Dajerria Becton as a victim of Officer Casebolts violence, challenging mainstream media accounts that often justify the criminalization of Black women and girls by portraying them as angry, aggressive, or disruptive. Although there are still some commenters that build from the angry Black woman trope, my analysis shows that these comments are in the minority.

Criticism of Casebolt/police:

Similar to my findings in chapter 2, criticism of the officer involved in the event of police brutality had the most representation in my sample. Several users displayed a combination of comedy and aversion to disparage his actions, such as this user that commented;

“What the hell did he roll for? Invisible ninjas? Seems to me that roll indicates the problem here: guy who wants to be big and bad with a gun and badge who didn't make SWAT or the military. This isn't Iraq here, guy. You aren't fighting ISIS. Just look at how he completely dominates that poor teen girl crying for her mom. Complete domination over an innocent person. And drawing his weapon was completely uncalled for. This is the very definition of police escalating a situation. It's sickening.”

This user refers to the cop as an ‘invisible ninja’ that is not fighting ISIS, but rather dominating a ‘poor teen girl crying for her mom.’ Their hyperbolic statement is not only for comedic purposes; it also exposes the militarization of law enforcement and unnecessary violent movements of the officer.

In the same vein, another user stated;

“To start, what is with that barrel roll? Did the cop think he was on the set of a movie and needed to show off his stunt man moves or maybe his big head got too heavy for a moment and it caused him to lose balance for a split second? Whatever the reason, I know we can all agree he looks like a damn fool.

The rest of the video he spent strutting around on his power trip ~ I definitely did not appreciate his use of profanity and aggression towards those kids. As for the incident with the young girl... I agree that she aggravated the situation quite a bit by running her mouth. Teenage girls these days just do not know when to shut up or show respect.

Anyway, regardless of her inability to show respect, she is still a child. The cop, as an alleged adult and authority figure, is supposed to behave in a much more responsible

manner!! I know I would have liked to turn her over my knee with all that back talk, but his response was totally uncalled for. It only proves that he is not suited for police work.”

This user also points out the officers bizarre roll at the beginning of the video and discusses the action as foolish and over the top in comedic style. They go on to observe the language Casebolt used and his actions as aggressive and not suitable for a police officer. Towards the middle of the comment however, the users language exhibits some qualities that expose the lens in which they see Dajerria Becton as partially responsible for the situation. This comment was still categorized as resisting the white-supremacist gaze however, due to their acknowledgement of Becton as a ‘child’ and also for clearly stating their condemnation of the officer involved.

Not only were users commenting on Casebolts violent actions, but they were also acknowledging how race played a role in this violence. Several users commented on how the Black kids were being told to sit down and were handcuffed, while the white kids were left alone. For instance one viewer observed; “Notice he only tells the black people to get on the ground” and another commented similarly; “Seems like the cop majorly overreacted. And why is every child that he made sit down African American?”

That seems fishy to me.” The first example shows a distinct recognition of bias towards the Black kids shown in the video, while the second user notices a pattern that makes them question the officers intentions. Both users actively confront notions of injustice and inequality through mentioning the fact that only the Black kids were affected by the cops violence. Generally, when the news media covers stories about police brutality, race is always an ‘if’ rather than the propagating cause. These users show a shift in thinking, resisting traditional narratives and using an oppositional gaze to critical analyze the video.

Empathy for Dajerria Becton:

Empathy for Dajerria Becton fell under the category, “Challenges the white-supremacist gaze” and was also a highly represented theme in my analysis. However there were more signs of reluctance to fully resist the white-supremacist gaze in this category than in the previous. Empathy for Dajerria Becton came in many forms, but mostly it was through describing her size compared to officer Casebolt and putting themselves in ‘her shoes’. For example, one user comments that the officer is “twice or three times her weight”, and that “if that was your daughter or sister you would try and

get the person that's sitting on her off.” In a similar vein, this user responded, “Just damned ridiculous!!! The parents of that lil girl he had his weight bearing down on need to sue!” Another user describes the cop as “taking out all his fury on a teenage girl” and that “even if that young woman sassed him, he attacked her and then beat her. Cops are supposed to protect the public, not behave like street thugs and gangsters with uncontrollable tempers.” Each of these examples display elements of the oppositional gaze and a critical spectative analysis of the video, however the first two examples are only able to empathize with Dajerria through seeing her as a daughter or sister, not able to fully put themselves in her shoes. The last example includes the a line that illustrates their perception of Bectons alleged ‘deviance.’ Becton ‘sassed’ the officer, she was ‘angry’, she showed too much emotion, she did everything that Black women and girls are not allowed to do publicly without later being attacked for it. While the user clearly believes that the cop used excessive force on the victim, there is still resistance to see Dajerria fully as a victim of police brutality that did nothing to deserve the situation.

Another example of a comment that uses an oppositional gaze that challenges

Du Bois concept of a white-supremacist gaze is a user that is able to put themselves in the

place of those, especially the victims in the video. This user observed the disparity between how the white and Black children were treated, and also pointed to what he would do in that situation;

“I’m confused, the cops came, and everybody ran, but only the black kids got put on the ground and handcuffed. The crowd seem to be leaving when the cops got there, why would that racist cop arrest only the black boys and then tell only the black kids to leave? If my little brother or cousin were getting thrown on the ground and handcuff, I would not leave his side either. I’m just wondering why the fat white guy and Brandon the white kid with the camera was not told to leave? By the way thank you Brandon Brooks for recording the video!”

Again, this comment only clearly shows the ability to empathise fully with the boys in the video. While they are able to place themselves at the scene and justify the actions of the teens that stayed instead of leaving the area-which according to the video includes Becton, she is all but missing from this comment. This projection of self is an example of a user that is able reject westernized images of Black criminality and show empathy for the Black kids involved, however I argue that Dajerria Becton was excluded from this projection.

There were some users on the other hand that were able to fully sympathize with the victim. These users exhibited a higher sense of critical analysis in their comments, detailing specific parts of the video and examining them. For example;

“It's quite amazing. You can actually see him tell the girl he attacks to leave and she starts walking away. After he throws more verbal assaults at people who are leaving, as he asked to do, he turns to where the girl who was leaving was and violently grabs her and drags her back to the center. This was a complete physical assault. He had no justification for going after her after she did what he asked. This guy is just a fucking punk. He's the thug here.”

This user was not hesitant to call the incident a physical assault. In fact of the 200 comments, this is one of the only comments that uses the term “assault.” This comment challenges the notion that Dajerria did anything to deserve the violence inflicted upon her by Casebolt, and therefore objects to viewing Black images in ways that justify the over criminalization of African Americans.

An additional comment that illustrates a high level of critical analysis walks through their horror while watching the video, and is the only comment in my sample that brings up themes of the ‘sexual violence’ that women and girls face at disproportionate rates;

“ the horror emerges from the undertones of sexual violence in that instant. Casebolt pulls the girl by her hair, forces her face against the ground and presses his knee into her back -- all while she pleads for him to stop. Here's a grown man, forcing a young underage girl into submission against her will. The video acts as a prime example of the inherent reality of both physical and sexual harassment against black women and girls and boys at the hands of cops. It's a totally different treatment for blacks than there is whites in this racist society.”

This comment covers what others fail to, the actions of the officer that move from ordinary police use of force to a physical and sexual violence. The mention of the pulled hair, forced movements, submission, and pleading, are all very specific to the types of violence women and girls face. These are not common words used in the national conversation about police brutality, rather they are descriptors of the overlooked issues and violence affecting female victims of police brutality- Which as stated earlier in the chapter, do not receive nationwide coverage to the degree that Black males do.

Support of Casebolt/Criticism of Dajerria Becton/Black teens :

Favorable perceptions of the police have been linked with voluntary compliance with both the law and the police as well as willingness to provide information to the police (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006). In my analysis I found a clear correlation within comments that I categorized as viewing the video through a white-supremacist

gaze. Comments with language that supported Casebolt generally used Becton as a justification for their support, or for his violence. This is no great surprise, since prior research has shown that ‘compliance’ is linked to a favorable opinion of police, and those that supported Casebolt argued that Dajerria Becton was not following his orders, and therefore deserved to be thrown to the ground. This is elucidated by the following comments:

Table 4.1

Criticism of Dajerria Becton
1a. “How hard is it to listen to a policeman and do as your told? Don't run and do as your told. Plain and simple.”
1b. “Please people listen and obey them and this won't happen. ”
1c. “That girl was asking for trouble.”
1d. “I just can't get, why the black guys\girls can never do what they told? If you were told to sit then sit. You can sue cops after if they were wrong. But why all that screaming-running circus is always happening around them?”

Listen, do what you’re told, obey, comply, authority; these are some of the most used words and phrases in Category One, viewing the video through a white-supremacist gaze. These users were unable to resist the imposition of the dominant ways of knowing and

looking. I would guess that they went into viewing the video with a strong opinion about either the case or police-citizen encounters already, and the video was unable to influence their view. Smith (2000) argues that there is a desire to look for "tell-tale" signs of hidden criminality in African Americans by whites. Smith writes, "anxious whites hoped to identify racial passers, and thereby to reinforce a belief in the exclusive bounds of white privilege"(Looking at One's Self through the Eyes of Others, Smith, 586). This is demonstrated by several of the comments found in category one. The language used to describe Dajerria Becton and her actions exposes an eagerness to blame her for the incident. If only she would have listened, obeyed, or complied like the good whites that were not violently attacked- these comments express no interest in shifting their gaze, but rather are desperate to find ways to keep their perception of the police in place.

Regardless of how the consumer responded to the video, they produced individualized accounts of the controversial event, including observations, concerns, discrepancies, and examinations that could only take place after watching the citizen-generated video. This tells us that that viewers believed and trusted the video, and were

able to transport themselves into a virtual witness role. In the next section I address how the virtual witness of this video contributes to a counter-narrative within the conversations surrounding police brutality.

Counterpublics and Mass Self-Communication

Each of the comments in my study are emblematic of the ways a citizen-generated video can help a viewer internalize another perspective, “removed from the narratives of white (oftentimes male) authority figures”(Fain, 2016). After the video went viral on Youtube, it was brought to Twitter and Facebook through click-through links and embedded into several news organizations editorial coverage of the story. In this section I demonstrate how technology was able to facilitate the spread of this video and make it ‘viral,’ therefore bringing attention to a case that would otherwise not have made even the local news. I explore some of the prominent discourses that emerged after the virality of the video and how it related to #SayHerName and examine some of the political, economic, and social reasons why most Americans know the name Mike Brown, but do not remember Dajerria Becton. Finally, I make a case for an increase of mass self-

communication, especially affecting youth due to the complex digital landscape they are growing up in.

Counter-networks and #SayHerName:

Only a few weeks before the pool-party video surfaced, a Say Her Name vigil was held in New York City to acknowledge the Black women that have been victims of police brutality and to remind people that Black men are not the only group affected. Like Mike Brown, Eric Garner and Freddie Gray- just a few of the Black men killed by white police officers that were exonerated for their deaths- Black women and girls deserve to be remembered too. These men's names and stories have been used to galvanize thousands of protesters and create the activist centered movement Black Lives Matters, but women have been all but left out, including Dajerria Becton. At the time this is being written, there are nearly 13 million views of Brandon Brooks citizen-generated video, and that doesn't include all of the times it has been watched on social media sites, on news stations that broadcast the video into thousands of viewers watching, or individuals that saw clips of the video. The virality of this video is unique in its functioning compared to other citizen generated videos though because even though many Americans have heard

of the incident or even seen a clip of the video, Dajerria Bectons name has not been a focus of interest in the national conversations on police brutality. There are several reasons for this, but mainly it is because she was not killed, and she is a she.

While the definition of police brutality does not specifically point to death as a criteria or proof of its existence, the movement surrounding police brutality has centered on these types of cases. Surely, there are still many cases of police brutality that lead to the death of women-identifying citizens that were still not recognized by mainstream media and discourses, but these cases lack the video evidence that implicate police violence, and therefore are not considered newsworthy.

In order to further explore the kinds of conversations that were taking place after the video was circulating and what kind of counternarratives were created alongside or response to the video, I used Twitter's Advanced Search Page to travel back to 2015 in the aftermath of the event and explore some of the top tweets as observed by Twitter's

algorithm¹. My search on Twitter revealed that users tweeting about Dajerria Becton and #SayHerName did recognize the disparity in treatment between male and female coverage of police brutality, and several users called out the media for calling Dajerria Becton ‘the teen in the video’ rather than using her name. For instance, “She has a name! Naming gives power & significance. Her name is Dajerria Becton. #SayHerName #McKinney” and “After #McKinney everyone knows the "bikini-clad 14yr old" yet no one knows her name is Dajerria Becton. That's called erasure #SayHerName.” These tweets are in direct response to news reports of the incident involving Dajerria Becton and Officer Casebolt that refused to use her name. On the one hand, she was a minor, and therefore it is protocol to protect her privacy, however previous police-citizen deaths where the minor was killed their name was used.

My critique of the erasure of Dajerria is not based on journalistic integrity, but rather the several roadblocks faced by Black women to be included in the conversation or for their cases to be acknowledged. One being that Black females are not killed by the

¹ As of 2015, Twitter began disrupting the reverse-chronological order of Tweets on your feed. Instead, they implemented algorithmic-timeline that ranks tweets specific to your tastes.

police at the same rate as men, but they are sexually assaulted at a higher rate. The emphasis on death to be considered police brutality then, has hindered the inclusion of females.

Additionally, themes of sexual violence are not often included in the discourse of police brutality. From my Twitter analysis there were two articles that continuously came up with the search terms noted above, the first, “Why We Have to Say Her Name After #McKinney” responds to the lack of acknowledgement of women in the police brutality conversations and the irony in the fact that we are even talking about is because of the “tireless work of Black women.”

Chaedria Labouvier proposes in the essay that Casebolt enjoyed dominating Dajerria and that Casebolt got pleasure from humiliating her and showing off his power, “I’m going to shove your face between my knees before I place them both on your back, recalling centuries of sexual abuse and rape of Black women by slave owners.”

Another widely circulated editorial found in my analysis was from Huffington post entitled “The Dehumanization of Black Children: Tamir Rice, Kalief Browder and Dajerria Becton” which took these three stories as evidence to their argument that Black children and bodies have been exploited, dehumanized and policed throughout centuries. While this article points more to institutionalized racism than gendered difference, it brings up some valid points about the stereotypes of Black children and how this manifests in the justifications of fearing them and brutalizing them as in the case of Dajerria Becton.

Mass-Self Communication:

The video, filmed by 15-year-old Brandon Brooks, shows a McKinney police officer throwing Dajerria Becton to the ground, sitting on her, and drawing his gun on other teens after a call about a pool party disturbance. Brooks told news reporters that he was stunned when Casebolt pulled out his weapon, "At that point my heart did drop and I was scared that someone was going to get shot and possibly killed, so I knew I had to keep on filming because I got really scared when he pulled out his gun." Brooks, a white teen in attendance of the party, also told reporters that he thought the police officers were

targeting Black teens specifically, and that the officer completely dismissed him and told his African-American friends to sit down on the grass.

The video on Youtube captures 7:19 of the incident, beginning with what appears to be a very unnecessary sprint and roll on the ground from Officer Casebolt and ending with the Officer yelling at handcuffed Black boys on the grass. The video is clear, stable, close-up to the action, and captures the entirety of Casebolts interaction with Dajerria Becton. Moreover, Brooks filmed the entire video horizontally, so the viewer is able to see the surroundings of the incident in unrestricted view. I surmise this is intentional and potentially in response to youth culture and even a 'youtube popular culture', where anything you record can be shared and worldwide and can in effect bring the individual validation and even fame.

As stated in Chapter 2, Papadopoulos (2014), argues that a citizen that opts to use their personal devices to challenge the state essentially assumes the role of a martyr, however this does not take race into account. When Brandon opted to record the incident,

many of the comments remarked that his whiteness kept him safe, in fact even Brooks told this to reporters after the event;

I was one of the only white people in the area when that was happening..You can see in part of the video where he tells us to sit down, and he kind of like skips over me and tells all my African-American friends to go sit down. -NewsFix

Brandon was able to record from a safer place than those being told to sit on the ground and were handcuffed, he continued to record- mostly because he was not seen as a threat and therefore allowed to. This poses an alternative to what Papadopoulos elects to call a “citizen camera-witness,” a person who ‘puts their life at risk’ to produce incontrovertible public testimony to an unjust situation. Through the ritualized employment of the mobile camera as a personal witnessing device, Brooks is able to showcase the repression of others without any threat on his own life. Thus, his participation in challenging the state through recording this police brutality came more as a response to popular culture than as a form of martyrdom or ‘citizen-camera witnessing.’ Moreover, Henry Jenkins (2016) posits that the current ‘cyber culture’ that many citizens have participated in, has given rise to a digital revolution where youthful generations

believe they have the power to change the world., but that also mirrors western social structures where whites have more access to disseminating messages for a cause.

YouTube Interface:

Due to the length of the video and interface capabilities of Youtube, many of the comments crossed multiple themes. Unlike Twitter, Youtube allows for long comments and responses, and therefore users were able to discuss multiple feelings and facets of the case in their comments. For instance, many users would both criticize the police and show empathy for Dajerria Becton, using both themes to elucidate their perception of the case. One user stated;

“This is a tough one to have an opinion on. Respect not shown to the police office is a bad start. You can't talk back like they are your parents. However that was excessive force. Maybe do something with the girl to teach her to keep her mouth shut, but she wasn't a threat. These days you have people instigating police trying to start trouble so it can lead to a lawsuit. Sad all the way around. Lastly that cop was clearly overboard on this entire situation. Other cops were just standing around.”

In one comment, this user was able to show his struggle to understand the case or form a solid opinion. They show some justification of violence due to perceived deviance from

Dajerria Becton but also there is a clear criticism of Casebolt and law enforcement in general, while they also make fun of the cop, and make comments about the surroundings and happening of the video. This comment among others in my sample were ones that showed respect for most police officers, but acknowledged that this officer did use excessive use of force. This reveals a change in perception of police, or at least in an individual officer.

Another attribute of YouTube that makes it a good site for activism or counternarratives as mass self-communication is the shareability of the videos to virtually any platform or space with internet connection. Even in 2015, YouTube had features that allowed its visitors to embed the video, share the link to social sites, and even use the video in personal powerpoint presentations.

Change Post #McKinney

Overall, while the #SayHerName did serve a function alongside the viral pool party video, I noticed that those Tweeting out the hashtag appeared to be women according to their avatars. Women were using Dajerria Bectons name and women were using the #SayHerName. Additionally, when searching ‘Dajerria Becton McKinney’ on

google, it turned out 15,700 results and ‘Say Her Name’ had 218,000. When compared to ‘Mike Brown Ferguson’ that had 5,340,000 hits- the lack of coverage and attention is stark. This reveals that while there was a clear counter-network created, it was not able to garner the attention that Mike Brown's counter-networks created with #Ferguson. I can make a cautious but significant discernment that a counternarrative was created but it was not successful in shifting the national conversation surrounding police brutality, or, more specifically, center women-identifying and girls in a meaningful way.

4.5 DISCUSSION

As stated in the last chapter, the notion of the criminal, threatening, or angry Black body is not new, and neither is violence affecting Black women. It is endemic to the American identity. Fain (2016) argues that when viral Black death is able to transform the white cultural gaze from assumed criminality towards a ‘shared racial empathy’ only then can efforts toward police reform be made. Without bearing witness, even if virally, to injustice, society does not offer itself the opportunity to reexamine race relations or histories that have never been rectified. The video acts as a prime example of the persistent reality of both physical and sexual violence affecting Black women and girls at

the hands of police, and based on my analysis, most viewers were able to shift their gaze in a somewhat meaningful way. However, as we continue to see stories where the Black females, whether bikini clad, pregnant, mentally-ill, or woman identifying without female genitalia are overlooked by news coverage and even within the movement, the idea that counternetworks facilitated by citizen-generated videos will be able to suddenly propel women's issues to the forefront of the movement seems bleak. Nevertheless, #SayHerName has continued to grow as a movement, and women have continued to work to make sure other women and girls are not forgotten.

CHAPTER 5:

PHILANDO CASTILE #DRIVINGWHILEBLACK

5.1. INTRODUCTION

“Driving while Black.” Philando Castile’s familiarity with police stops began when he still had his learners permit. According to NPR, he was stopped before his 19th birthday, and from there, “he descended into a seemingly endless cycle of traffic stops, fines, court appearances, late fees, revocations and reinstatements in various jurisdictions”(NPR, 2016). Turning into a parking lot without signaling. Driving with tinted windows. Failing to repair a broken seat belt. Driving at night with an unlit license plate. When you're a Black man in America being stopped by the police on average about once every three months, it’s only a matter of time before an officer feels unjustifiably threatened and uses force. Over the final 13 years of Castile’s life, he was stopped at least 46 times according to NPR, but other sources have reported up to 52 stops. His mother Valerie Castile said that of the 52 times he was pulled over for a traffic stop, his only crime was “driving while Black.”

Public police records show that Castile spent the majority of his driving life fighting tickets from traffic stops. Police stopped him on Jan. 8, 2003. They stopped him on Feb. 3 and on Feb. 12 and Feb. 26 and on March 4. Some traffic stops kicked off months-and years-long cycles of fines, fees, and court dates that often resulted in a suspended license- making him prone to another violation while driving. After his death, Castile's sister said that she had been pulled over in the same car her brother was killed in, because officers would run the plates and find that the owner of the vehicle had a suspended license. Erik Sandvick, a public defender in Ramsey County which includes the St. Paul Missouri area, said that the case of Philando Castile is emblematic of a pattern he has seen as a public defender, that "driving offenses are typically crimes of poverty." The pattern goes something like this: poor citizens get tickets they cannot pay, they continue to drive to work so they have money to pay them and survive, and then they are ticketed over and over again for not having insurance or for having a suspended license. This pattern leaves poor citizens with tough choices- like whether they should pay their fine or pay for car insurance that month. For instance, on June 3, 2005, Castile is stopped for a 'moving violation' for allegedly driving too slow and 'impeding traffic.'

The charge was later dismissed, but he was convicted of not having proof of insurance and forced to pay a fee of \$778- which he has trouble paying and later leads to a suspended license in December of that year for ‘non-payment.’ Philando Castile’s “crimes of poverty” is both a structural tenet of the criminal justice system, and unfortunately, endemic to being a Black American.

Angela Bell (2016) posits that part of the structural injustices of driving while Black come from the implementation of the Fourth Amendment, which states that:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the person or things to be seized.

One of the central principles of the Fourth Amendment is that the police cannot stop and detain an individual without ‘probable cause’ that the individual in question is involved in some kind of criminal activity. However, past Supreme Court decisions have allowed law enforcement to use traffic stops as a pretext in order to search for evidence-

and both anecdotal and quantitative evidence have shown that nationwide, police have used their discretionary powers primarily against African-Americans, Native-Americans, and Latinx. Bell argues that unreasonable intrusions on privacy-especially of Black citizens- have been legalized through the manipulation of the Fourth Amendment and the practice of drug courier profiling, which was enacted as a technique during the 'war on drugs' era. This practice has since allowed for a legal way to "favor aggressive law enforcement" and has created "an avenue for discriminatory and prejudicial practices to escape judicial scrutiny" (Bell, p.62). It is out-of-date and common policies like drug courier profiling that have failed to recognize the equality between African-Americans and the rest of society, and have lead to the regularization of discriminatory racial profiling of Black drivers. The loosely structured approach governing 'drug courier profiling' has been applied in ways that disproportionately affect Black citizens, and therefore violates their constitutional rights- and yet the Supreme Court continues to hail the discretion of law enforcement as superior to the individual rights of its citizens.

David Harris (1999) mirrors Bells sentiments and blames the “war on drugs” for the rampant abuse of power, calling the term “a war that has, among other depredations, spawned racist profiles of supposed drug couriers”(Harris, 2). Today, agents of law enforcement continue to routinely stop drivers based on the color of their skin, which is regularly referred to as ‘racial profiling.’ Racial profiling is based on the premise of Black criminality and the false notion that most drug offenses are committed by minorities (Harris, 1999). Not only has this been proven untrue, but it has turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy where police look for drugs primarily in low-income and minority neighborhoods, and thus find a disproportionate number of people in these communities with contraband. Therefore, more minorities are stopped, searched, detained, arrested, prosecuted, and incarcerated- which reinforces tropes of Black criminality and encourages or allows law enforcement to justify their excessive use of force through allegations of fearing for their own life. A 2013 report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that in 2011, Black Americans were more than three times more likely to be stopped and searched than white drivers. After the Department of Justice investigated the Ferguson police department, they found that from 2012 to 2014, 85

percent of those stopped, 90 percent given citations, and 93 percent of people arrested were Black. Furthermore, Black drivers were more than twice as likely to be searched during vehicle stops, but 26 percent less likely to be found with illegal substances on them. These disparities all point to racial profiling that has evolved from a war on drugs, to a war on Black citizens.

5.2. CASE STUDY

When Jeronimo Yanez walked up to Castile's vehicle with his girlfriend and her 4-year old daughter inside, Castile let the officer know that he was legally carrying a firearm. According to Diamond Reynolds, the passenger and Castile's girlfriend, Yanez then panicked and opened fire several times after Castile told the officer he was going to reach for his wallet to get his I.D. Reynolds quickly started recording on the aftermath of the shooting on Facebook live, amassing over a million views before being taken down by Facebook. The video shows a bleeding Castile still alive, trying to say " I wasn't reaching..." and a calm Reynolds walking the viewers through what just happened. The most chilling part of the video, apart from the close-up view of a blood-stained Castile dying while the officer shouts profanities and continues to point his gun at the couple, is

when Reynolds calm demeanor breaks as if the shock has worn off, and her 4-year-old daughter tries to calm her down. This video was the first of its kind in exposing police violence in its most raw form. Live and unedited, the world witnessed another Black man killed at the hands of the police in an arguably more devastating way than ever before, and unsurprisingly, the media was quick to incorporate Reynolds viral video into their narration of the incident (Furber and Pérez-Peña, 2016).

The Video:

The ABC News clip uploaded to Youtube is 1:48 seconds long, meaning they cut out about 8 minutes from the original footage. While they did upload other broadcasts to youtube that were longer, this video is their first breaking story on the case, uploaded the morning after Castile was killed. Most of the video is either muted or the volume is turned low while the narrator speaks and explains what is going on, and the volume in the video is only used after the narrator has already discussed what Reynolds or the officer is about to say. For instance, the narrator explains that in the video Reynolds warned the officer that Castile would be reaching for his I.D., and that “The officer appears agitated”, which is followed by the officer yelling “I told him to get his hands out” and Reynolds

calmly explaining “You told him to get his I.D. sir, his drivers license.” The video then transitions to protests taking place at the local hospital and the governor's mansion, and then to protests in Baton Rouge that continued for its second night for the police killing of Alton Sterling, which also had a citizen-generated video attached. The end of the news clips shows part of Alton Sterlings shooting death, thus relating the two cases together as representative of a stream of police shootings in America that have been documented by mobile phones.

The Aftermath:

Within hours of the shooting, activists both in the Twin Cities and throughout the nation began tweeting with what later became the most used hashtag surrounding the case, #PhilandoCastile (Erkkinen, 2017). Both in the ABC broadcast video shared on Youtube and on Twitter, the case was compared to the death of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge which occurred just the day before. My analysis shows that the discourse surrounding the case made charges of racial profiling and bias, and even lead government officials to question whether Castile would have been shot if he were white. The deaths

of Castile and Sterling led to more than 100 protests in 88 cities in the two weeks that followed (Lee, Mykhyalyshyn, Omri, & Singhvi, 2016).

The Case:

This chapter is the final case study in a set of three instances of police violence that were captured by a citizen on their mobile phone. This case study focuses on the specific activism and public discourse surrounding Philando Castile's shooting death and will analyze the perceptions of police and new media organizations, through the captured live video which was incorporated into breaking news stories across the nation online and televised. Since the original live video on Facebook is no longer accessible, I opted to use ABC news coverage of the video which was posted the morning after Castile's death, in order to offer a new perspective to my set of case-studies- how news media organizations utilize and rely on citizen-generated videos of police brutality in their breaking news-stories. This was especially relevant during 2016 because it was in the midst of election season, and the shooting took place at a time when distrust of the media and the term "fake news" began to rise.

This chapter will analyze Youtube comments on the ABC channel which has amassed over one million views since being posted, and nearly 4,000 comments. In accordance with my previous chapters, I deploy theories of the public sphere and counternarratives, as well as Castells development of ‘mass self-communication’ to reinforce the unique and impactful presence of streaming a video of police brutality live to a global audience.

I utilize CTDA as a framework for this analysis, by methodologically collecting comments underneath the Youtube video and coding to find perceptions of police and racial profiling. Although the video was initially posted on Facebook live, due to restrictions in access, I will be using the Breaking News video created by ABC News that incorporates Diamond Reynolds citizen-generated video within the story. Mainstream news use of amateur videos speaks to the importance of these new forms of evidence in nationally relevant news stories and reveals the ability of these videos and ordinary citizens to have a part in building the narrative that follows the case from their own perspective. I explore how this citizen-generated video is able to efficiently produce a

strong counternarrative to police accounts of the case and to the nationwide narrative that instances of police brutality are the byproduct of a bad apple rather than an inherently racist and flawed system. The responses to this video will be analyzed with a keen eye for three themes; how the comments highlight the rise of distrust in the news media and fake news, the public's perception of the victim, and how the viewers observe the police in response to this video. Additionally, I am interested in why Diamond Reynolds chose to live-record this shooting rather than take a regular video, and what this says about the evolution of digital media and how it may enable mass-self communication.

Drawing on qualitative methods of critical race theory, technocultural analysis, and discourse analysis, this chapter is guided by three central research questions:

Chapter 5 Research Questions

Research Questions:	1. What are the implications of a live citizen-generated videos of police brutality on the publics' perception of police?	2. What roles have the rise of social media forms and mobile technologies played in creating the counternarratives relevant in this case such as #drivingwhileblack and racial profiling?	3. How has the rise of the public distrust in the media affected how news organizations are able to convincingly narrate a story with the use of citizen-generated videos as a form of evidence?
Data Collection:	I collected the top 200 comments from an ABC News Cast uploaded to Youtube that featured parts of the citizen-generated video of the fatal Philando Castile police shooting.	I used the Twitter Advanced Search with the name 'Philando Castile' to find counternarratives pertaining to the case.	I look to my own analysis of the Youtube comments, to recognize themes that represented a distrust of the media and trust in citizen journalists and their created media.

5.3 METHODOLOGY

CTDA

This analysis is mediated by the understandings of the case based on the comments under the 1:47 minute video ABC news broadcast and then shared to their YouTube channel. Guided by a CTDA analysis, I explore how ABC News utilized Diamond Reynolds video in its narration of the case, and how viewers conceptualized the news media organizations portrayal of the video- which in its original form is nearly 9

minutes long and reveals Diamond finally breaking out of her calm state of shock praying and pleading “please don’t tell me my boyfriend is gone” over and over. While I don’t believe ABC’s mashup video is as influential as the original live-stream, it adds an important perspective to my analysis that represent how the public reacts to citizen-generated videos used by mainstream news stations. The emergence of real-time broadcasting on platforms like Facebook Live has continued to give citizens access to share their stories with the world- now with more quickness than ever before.

After 24 hours of being on Facebook, the video had amassed over 4 million views, and news organizations around the country had already used parts of its content in their news coverage of the event. With the bravery and quickness of Diamond Reynolds to capture the video on Facebook live, millions of Americans were invested in the shooting through her eyes before news organizations or law enforcement were able to create a narrative. I use CTDA to explore the publics perceptions of police officers, the overall discourse surrounding the viral video, the functionalities of Facebook live, and to explore how viewing it through a news media organization site may or may not affect

how the viewers conceptualize the case. Finally, I examine how counternarratives and mass self-communication were enabled by technology.

Method

I explored my research questions in the following ways: First, I collected the first 200 comments on ABC's Youtube upload from the morning after the shooting, and same as the last chapter, I only use original comments, not replies, in order to gauge initial reactions rather than users arguing with each other. Second, for the section on the counter-networks created in response to this video I look to Twitter, where the #PhilandoCastile was used in connection with the case. This section will mainly focus on the national conversations that took place in response to the video, including #drivingwhileblack and the NRA's lack of support among narratives found. Lastly, I use a technocultural lens to explore why Diamond Reynolds recorded the event on Facebook Live, and what that may mean for the future of citizen-generated videos and the effects on citizen surveillance of police.

Analyzing Youtube Comments

The ABC News Broadcast that was uploaded to Youtube the morning after Philando Castile's fatal shooting has garnered over one million views and nearly 4,000 comments. In order to methodologically sort through and analyze these comments, I collected the first 200 responses to the video, sorted by 'Top Comments.' Then each of the responses were read and annotated (e.g., notes were made about comments on the officer and the victim, the overall case and video, style of writing, and the news media's portrayal of the video). Next, I generated discourse themes based on my notes and fit these themes into three categories. Similar comments were compared to each other within their respective themes to ensure continuity and authenticity.

This iterative process resulted in the creation of the following categories: 1) anti-police and the use of deadly force; 2) pro police and the use of deadly force; 3) distrust in the video or news media. Determining whether a user is pro police versus anti-police is guided by whether or not the user is able to subvert the western gaze on the Black body that has been historically and traditionally used by the mass media including news organizations, television programmes like the show Cops, and deployed by police

in press conferences after a controversial police killing. This gaze is often referred to as the white-supremacist gaze. I also had a small number of comments that I marked as N/A. Although I approached the collection of comments with knowledge accumulated from the previous chapters, I also allowed for new or unexpected understandings to emerge from the text-which they did. The comments I present in this chapter expose these themes or gazes particularly well.

Counter-Networks and Mass Self-Communication

In this part of my analysis I explore the various counternarratives created alongside the case, such as #drivingwhileblack, racial profiling, and the second amendment. Since Youtube does not track hashtags, I utilize the Twitter Advanced Search Application to track the #PhilandoCastile and determine what discussion are most common alongside the hashtag. First, I used the search page to narrow the time frame in which I collected tweets to analyze from July 6th, the day of the incident, until August 6th, one month later. According to Erkkinen (2017) this time frame “represents the heaviest period of protest activities and news coverage related to Castile’s death” (p.31). I

complete the analysis by discussing how Facebook Live and the culture of recording helped Diamond Reynolds to feel empowered and share this tragic event with the world.

5.4 RESULTS: DIAMOND REYNOLDS VIDEO AND MEDIA DISTRUST

Before delving into the analysis of the case, it's important to understand the video within the social, political, and cultural contexts in which it took place. In July of 2016 the presidential elections were in full swing. While Trump was publicly speaking about the dangers of minorities and immigrants and calling liberal news media "fake news", the media was simultaneously using this term in their battle to alert audiences to "fake news" on Facebook and 'Russian bots' on Twitter. This created a cultural climate of distrust of the media for many- which is seen clearly in my analysis. Since I argue that one of the most impactful elements of citizen-generated videos lies in its ability to create or add to the narrative of the event from an entirely new perspective, the media's use of Reynolds video adds weight to my argument.

The media has traditionally been responsible for creating narratives of political, social, and cultural events, and their repeated use of Diamond Reynolds video to cover

this case reveals that social media has compelled traditional news organizations to restructure their coverage of newsworthy events, which has led to citizens' ability to aid in the narrative. However, due to the politically tense and divisive climate during the election, many viewers, as I report below, were quick to dismiss the video as either 'fake' or tampered with by the media. Moreover, Castile was killed the day before the also tragic "Dallas Five" shooting took place, where five police officers were slain by a mentally ill Black man.

In the next sections I examine how YouTube users perceive the news media's coverage of the case and then how this affects their understanding of the fatal shooting. I continued to look at the responses through a critical race lens, to see if ABC's use of the video was able to subvert the dominant tropes of Black criminality in an effective way, and through a technocultural lens to understand how or if Facebook Live played a significant role in the public's opinions. I conclude with nationwide, state, city, and department level policy changes in response to activism surrounding the death of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling which occurred only a day before.

Perceptions of Police and the Media

Based on the 200 comments gathered, I found that comments labeled as anti-police and use of force, showed a willingness to trust both the ABC News and Reynolds narration of the event, called for criminal justice reform, and critiqued law enforcement on a large scale. While this was the dominant way the users in my sample viewed the video, many users were adamant that Reynolds was lying, or that ABC had only shown parts of the video that fit the narrative they wanted to show. A breakdown of the responses from ABC news Youtube video is shown in the graph below.

Top 200 Comments on YouTube Video

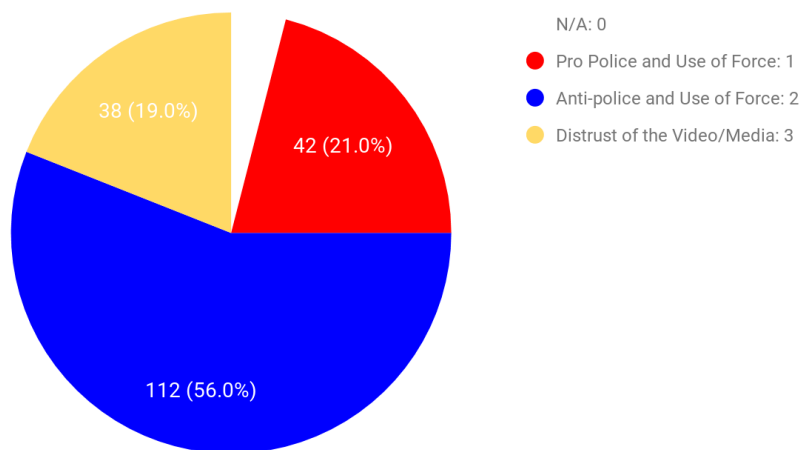


ILLUSTRATION 5.1

Pro Police and Use of Force:

This section was the second most represented in this study (21%). Trends within this theme included, calling Reynolds a liar, tropes of Black criminality, and victim blaming

or justifications for the officers shooting. The quotes chosen in the table below represent these sub-themes particularly well.

Table 5.1

Critique of the Reynolds/Castile
1a. black males = 1 percent of population but are responsible for 27 percent of homicides. Hard to blame cops for paranoia. Not condoning, just citing fact.
1b.Liars. He fit the description of a recent armed robber who also happened to steal the same brand of cigarettes his girlfriend was smoking. I saw the photos of Castile and the armed robber - identical. Btw, how many people conceal and carry on their leg?
1c.is it so hard to do what an officer tells u?
1d. cop I have a gun I'm reaching into my pocket SMART.
1e. Interesting, two black men reach for their guns and get shot by police. So, what exactly is the outrage about? Oh right, not what actually happened but what black people and those who control them want you to think happened that actually didn't. Neither video even looks real does it? They aren't acting like any normal person in these circumstances would, well the one with the girlfriend anyway. She doesn't seem to give a shit her boyfriend, does she? She's not the least bit upset at all. The cop on the other hand is hamming it up really badly. lol These events appear to have been staged, but why? Oh right, to take your rights away from you. To take away your right to own certain guns.

Table 5.1 contains comments that collectively work to provide justifications for the killing of Philando Castile. While each comment works in it's own way, they exhibit a clear understanding that the officer was not at fault, and that Castile and/or Reynolds did

something to deserve the fatality. The users that remained looking at Black images through a white-supremacist gaze pointed to longstanding tropes of Black criminality, such as 1a; which uses statistics on Black homicides to prove his point and 1b; which alleges that Castile was an “armed robber.” These comments were common throughout each case study in this analysis, and reveal how stereotypes play a role in how Black images are viewed and how cases of police brutality are understood.

1c and 1d are similar in that they both fault Castile's actions for the reasons Yanez shot him. Since the video does not show what happened that lead up to the shooting, these are the users that assume Black criminality without evidence, and would most likely suggest Castile did something wrong in any situation. The final comment I chose as an example reveals a user that hits all three trends found in this theme. The user starts by simultaneously victim blaming and assuming Castile was going for his gun and moves to being suspicious of Reynolds behavior, before going into a conspiracy theory about the video being staged to ‘take away your guns.’ Clearly, this user has been somewhat affected by the political climate at the time, which may have influenced their

perception that Castile reached for his gun- despite Reynolds clearly stating that he did not.

Anti-Police and Use of Force:

This theme made up 56% of the total comments as shown by Illustration 5.1, making it the most documented response. Within the anti-police and use of force comments, various sub-themes were found as shown by the blue areas in Illustration 5.2. In line with the previous chapters, Criticism of Yanez and law enforcement was the most common response.

Top 200 Comments on ABC News Video

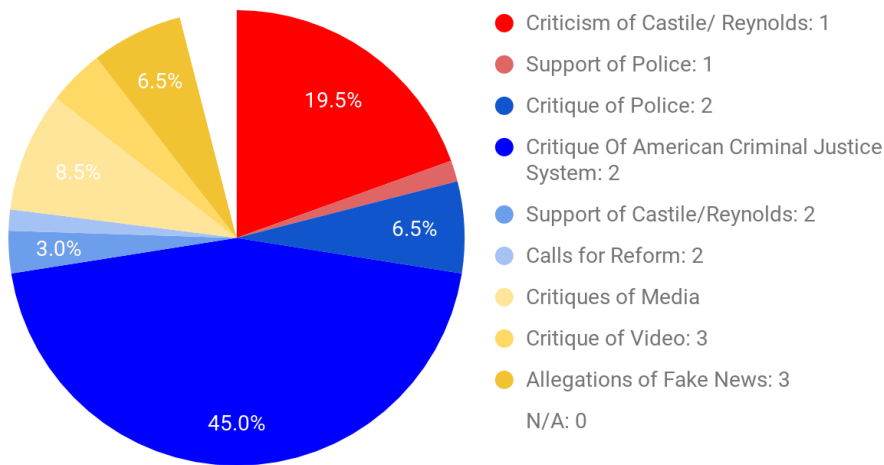


ILLUSTRATION 5.2

There was however, a shift to users criticizing the American criminal justice system as a whole (45%), rather than Yanez specifically (6.5%). This reveals that the

public is beginning to understand police brutality as a structural issue rather than as a ‘bad apple’ situation. Additionally, those that critiqued the system often used examples of other cases of police brutality in their responses, potentially further evidence that the public is understanding and recognizing the pattern of excessive use of force by police. The following examples of comments display the various ways users critiqued the American CJ system, officer Yanez, or America in general.

Table 5.2

Critique of the American Criminal Justice System
2a. Well this is getting intense and dangerous #POLICESTATE
2b. Cops need better training. If you can't handle a stressful/dangerous situation without killing someone you shouldn't be a police officer.
2c. U.S. please bring democracy and human rights to... To the U.S.....???
2d. It's obvious those cops are not well trained..they just handed them a badge and a gun..smh
2e. This is so unfair and painfull. This unecesary policed state has to stop.

Several users adopted terms like “police state,” argued that officers need better training, or accused America of lacking democracy. Each of these patterns reveal that the public believes police brutality is an American issue, and that their concerns go deeper that the

safety of Castile. Expressing fears of America turning into a ‘police state’ and that all cops are the issue exposes a fear in the public that police brutality does not only reflect on specific departments or individuals, but rather that the entire country is being affected. Most importantly, the users in this category clearly are able to see from the perspective of Diamond Reynolds, meaning they were able to reject viewing a video of police brutality with a white-supremacist gaze. The stark difference between users that faulted the cop for the shooting versus the system, is potentially due to the past years of exposure to similar videos. Perhaps, the public's gaze is shifting slowly overtime.

Other common responses grouped under anti-police consisted of users that applauded Reynolds for recording, called for policy reform, or simply showed empathy for the victims. While this section took up a small space within the responses (4.5% combined), it remains an integral part of my analysis because it shows that these videos can lead viewers to think about policy and long term solutions, refuting early communication scholarship that posited being online makes you less politically involved. For instance, one user wrote, “the cops need cameras on them. they need to prove their

innocence or their guilt,” and another user commented similarly, “if police had body cameras (and helmet cameras, as all of them should wear helmets too), it'd help show who is truly innocent and who is guilty. It's 2017 and many officers STILL don't have cameras on them? Pathetic.” Each of these users argue that BWC would make their job as viewers easier in determining if the cop is guilty or innocent. Furthermore, this exposes the inherent desire of individuals to view these videos and to be able to decide for themselves what took place. Additionally, these comments exhibit that while Reynolds video does not fully convince the viewer of the officers fault, there is no assumption of Castile being guilty, which would most likely be the narrative had there been no citizen-generated video. However, the lack of direct support for Castile and Reynolds also reveals the public's hesitance to empathize with Black people. So although the users predominantly were able to subvert their gaze, it is very telling that the public found it easier to criticize the victims, as shown in the previous section, than to directly support them.

Distrust of the Video/Media:

Allegations of fake news and critiques of the media made up 19% of total responses, but this theme is especially significant because it says a lot about how sociocultural events may play a role in the ways that the public understand a case of police brutality. Additionally, of the three case studies in my analysis, this is the only study that criticism of the news media plays a meaningful role in the public's understanding of the case. The timing of Castile's killing requires an additional layer that takes into consideration the other controversial events that took place in the same news cycle. The most common trends within this theme were critiques of ABC's coverage of the story, the incompleteness of the video, and justifying the actions of the officer. Table 3 represents how many of the users were unable to shift their gaze or believe Reynolds narration of the incident, due to external factors like distrust of the news media, coverage of the event from a different perspective, and support for the 'Dallas 5,' which seemed to make it difficult to sympathize with anything related to Black Lives Matters or victims of police brutality.

Table 5.3

Fake News
<p>3a. In the Michael Brown shooting, the media rushed to judgement, only later finding out the initial details were wrong and the shooting wasn't murder. In the Eric Garner tragedy, the media rushed to judgement again, only to find out later the facts they reported were wrong(no choke-hold was ever used). Here again we have an incomplete video, only showing the aftermath of the shooting, and people act as if they already know how the shooting happened, and why. Disgusting.</p>
<p>3b. Watch closely. He IS NOT the passenger, he is the driver. She shows no concern for him or her daughter. The video is in reverse and she just is casually recording while a cop has a gun pointing in the vehicle with her daughter in the back???? Not to mention he was pulled over for being an armed robbery suspect, NOT a taillight and the gun was in his lap and not in a holster. Get the facts before the media lies to you some more.</p>
<p>3c. Conveniently the narrator talks over the most important part of the video, the beginning... In this missing (edited out) portion she admits the victim was warned to NOT get his license but to simply keep his hands visible. Shame on you ABC.</p>
<p>3d. Gee, ABC News, ever investigate much? You can see the gun in Castile's lap, with his hand on it. The cop says he told him to get his hand off it. It's easy enough to check if Castile has a carry permit (the Sheriff of that county says he doesn't.) Maybe get all the facts next time and maybe five Dallas cops could have gone home instead of to the morgue.</p>
<p>3e. Hmmm.... since when does Minnesota have European cars? Passenger side steering? I do not believe this story sorry media. Hilary Clinton just got away with treason ya know.</p>

Each of the comments chosen for Table 5.3 exhibit users that show a strong sense of distrust with the media in general, and also ABC news. 3a posits that this is not the first time that the media has “rushed to judgement,” using Mike Brown and Eric Garner as examples. This user clearly had preconceptions of the case based on their opinions of

other cases of brutality, and I doubt there are any videos that would be able to change the way in which they view videos of police brutality. Both 3b and 3e discuss the backwardness of the video, which is actually what happens when you flip your camera to face you- the video turns around. This was a concern for several users, influencing them to believe that the media this story is an example of fake news, further cementing their fears of distrust in the media.

3c comments on another facet of the video that many users did not appreciate- the fact that the narrator spoke over the video. This reveals a desire to see the full video without news intervention, or that citizen-generated videos are more effective without the intervention of the news. This is an important finding, because early communication scholarship has argued that news organizations create the narratives that the public receives. 3d is another case of conspiracy theories mixed with outside information that does not match ABC's video. Since ABC's breaking story came out before the Dallas 5 tragedy, the video could appear insensitive to those watching the story after knowing

about the shooting. Furthermore, this user may be more apt to believe Castile was aggressive, after being made aware that a Black man killed 5 police officers in Dallas.

Discussion

My data revealed that while the majority of users (56%) were able to shift their gaze and condemn the police's use of force, a higher percentage than in the previous chapters were unable to do so (21%), or had major hesitations in their perception due to the distrust in the media (19%). There was also an increase in comments that were categorized as N/A. I speculate there are several reasons for this. First, the ABC news broadcast projects the video in an unconvincing way. The broadcast does not show the full length of the streamed video and it is stopped and restarted to show the same part over and over again. Some of the users complain that the odd pauses and restarts to the video disrupt their view. Additionally, users complained about the narrator speaking over the video, making it hard to understand what was going on. The N/A category speaks to this trend, because many of the comments categorized as unclear did not reveal what they felt about the case, but rather commented by critiquing the video or ABC News version of it.

Secondly, as explained earlier, the political climate at the time of this case was especially tense, and it seemed to make users pick sides that aligned with their political views in ways that were not evident in the previous case studies. Many users directly spoke of ‘crooked Hilary’ or a ‘racist Trump’ being factors in the case. Third, there is a heightened sense of distrust in the news media. Several users point to the news story as being “fake news” or deduce that Reynolds is a paid actor, or that there is something ‘off’ about the video. Since conducting this study, we have learned that Russian generated bots were creating content on social media specifically to foster racial hostility and to heighten political tension between opposing groups. There is a great possibility that many of the users and therefore comments in this study may have been influenced by some of the fake content circulating from Russian bots, that targeted either conservative leaning or liberal leaning individuals and encouraged a more biased or strong perspective on the case.

The final clear trend that potentially impacted the users conceptualization of the video is the fact that Castile was carrying a gun. Since Black men are already viewed by mainstream society as a threat, the fact that Castile had a license to carry made users even

more hesitant to believe in his innocence, or able to subvert their gaze into Diamonds point of view. Additionally, since Diamond Reynolds video did not capture the actual shooting, only the immediate aftermath, there were many comments that speculated on what actually happened that led Yanez to unload his firearm, meaning that those users did not believe Reynolds account of what happened.

Counternarratives:

"He had a permit to carry. But with all of that, trying to do the right thing and live accordingly, abide the law, he was killed by the law..." "I think he's just black in the wrong place." These comments from Valerie Castile, Philando Castile's mom shortly after finding out her son had been fatally shot, are emblematic of the fears in the Black community regarding law enforcement. Valerie Castile told reporters at CNN that she had told her son that if he was ever pulled over, to "comply comply comply," the type of conversation many Black mothers and fathers are forced to have with their children at some point. A conversation that comes from generational experiences of racial bias while driving, walking, working, and simply living.

According to a detailed analysis by MPR News of St. Anthony's police data, African-Americans were cited for 44 percent of about 650 traffic stops prompted by faulty or tinted taillights, headlights or license plate lights- which is much higher than the percentage of Black residents in the three largely white suburbs patrolled by St. Anthony's police. The three cities have an average black population of 7 percent. The high disparities in stops of Black drivers speaks to the distrust the Black community had with law enforcement, and potentially why Reynolds chose to record the violent encounter. Reynolds states clearly in several interviews that she knew it would be her word versus the officers, and she used her video to make sure the public had the chance to resist the white-supremacist gaze traditionally offered by law enforcement to justify their use of force. In accordance with my analysis of Youtube comments, Twitter users also showed signs of a looking at the video through Reynolds perspective- a perspective that resulted in various counternarratives.

My search on Twitter revealed that users tweeting with the #PhilandoCastile did recognize racial bias as an essential factor in the case, and frequently used the Philando

hashtag with other victims of police brutality to cement their argument that this is a structural rather than case by case issue. For instance one user tweeted, “#PaulONeal #RekiaBoyd #LaquanMcDonald #AltonSterling #PhilandoCastile #FreddieGray #TamirRice #MikeBrown #SandraBland when will it stop!?!?” and another tweeted, “I bet u believe #philandoCastile was non compliant as well. And #tamirRice... The list goes on #BlackLivesMatter #blm.” These comments illustrate the public's ability to connect several cases of police brutality to address a specific issue and their desire to point out the scope of the issue.

Other users were more specific in their understanding of the case, with several people commenting on the NRA's lack of response, Korryn Gaines who was also killed by police, and also the dangers of driving while Black. For instance, one user tweeted “#PhilandoCastile, we also should recognize the “taxation by citation” scheme of which he was a victim for much of his life.#BlackLivesMatter” suggesting the concept of “crimes of poverty”, that I discussed earlier in the chapter. Another user said “If #KorrynGaines would have cooperated, she would still be dead. Let's not forget about

#PhilandoCastile or #SandraBland,” using Castile and Blands’ cases as an example that police use force no matter what, and similarly this user tweeted, “The @NRA hasn't defended legal gun owners, #PhilandoCastile and #KorrynGaines” bringing in themes of racial bias from the NRA as well as law enforcement.

Facebook Live and Mass Self-Communication:

Similar to Rodney King, Mike Brown, Dajerria Becton, and Alton Sterling, among dozens of other victims of police brutality, footage of Castile’s encounter with police acted as a flashpoint encouraging others to engage in citizen journalism. In a way, broadcasting from a cellphone is a modern day version of waving the red flag, a public warning that something is very, very wrong. “As a witness to the video, I thought this was really remarkably intelligent of her,” said Todd Gitlin, a professor of journalism and sociology at Columbia University. “Her boyfriend has just been shot, she’s alone in the world; he was killed, she’s alone in the world. Effectively she’s screaming—but she’s using a camera.”

Part of what makes citizen-generated videos so impactful, is its ability to add or change the lens through which the viewers see an event. With the advent of streaming-live, users are able to truly create a narrative, granting the public access to their unedited, raw viewpoint. Diamond Reynolds' Facebook Live video amassed millions of views within hours of being uploaded to Facebook, even after a glitch apparently took the video down temporarily. It was quickly used in news stations across the country both on and offline, underscoring the significant role of live-streaming video and broadcasting events as they unfold and the acceptance of amateur video in national news stories.

Steve Jones, a professor of communications at the University of Illinois at Chicago commented on the case that “You get to see stuff here that you don’t see on police cameras, at least ones that have been released that I’m aware of.” He continued that ,“an enormous number of people are going to be streaming live when they get pulled over or when they have any run-in with authorities.”

The advent of apps like Facebook Live, Twitter Live video, and periscope are making it even easier for ordinary citizens to become ‘pocket newscasters’ (Erkkinen, 2017). From the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, to the sit-in staged by Democrats in the House of Representatives to protest-stalled gun control legislation, "it is a game changer in how news is going to be disseminated," (Jones, 2016). While these examples were more planned out and performative ways of using live-streaming, there is also an emerging culture that encourages users to record and share everyday events. For instance, Ramsey Orta, the man that captured the recording of Eric Garner's death, explained that he was already using his phone before the police approached Garner in an interview with TIME, "I was already on my phone," Orta says. "I always seen them cops doing something to somebody else, so I figured I'd just record it."

Social Networking Sites that have incorporated live-streaming into their platform have both facilitated and responded to a sort of video or recording culture that has overtaken younger generations. This is exemplified by Ramsey Orta, who stated that because of the video he captured individuals were "pulling out their cameras and filming

police brutality around the world” (quoted in Mathias, 2016). The idea of yelling ‘worldstar’ as a fight breaks out and everyone grabbing their phone is unique to younger generations, because those before them were not able to record and share an event with such ease. Additionally, digital online platforms promote a recording culture through their structural design and interface. Facebook Live for instance, alerts your close network when you go live, bringing higher viewership to the video. Facebook Live also uses an algorithm that uses a non-chronological feed, so when Diamond Reynolds started her video, the more people that began viewing it the more likely it was to appear on less connected users feeds. Additionally, since Reynolds view was made public, users she was not ‘friends with’ were able to share the video to their own feeds, creating a wide network of viewership.

Change Post #PhilandoCastile

The day after the shooting death of Castile, Governor Dayton, a Minnesota Democrat, said: “Would this have happened if ... the driver and passenger would have been white? I don’t think it would.” Following his statement, several other political or public figures also spoke out in support of Castile and his family and brought up many of

the counternarratives that were most relevant to the case. Former Minnesota Senator Al Franken cited “systemic racial inequalities” and posited that “Philando did not deserve to die” in a Facebook post after the killing. Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon wrote a long facebook post about “The ubiquity of video cameras” and their ability to show America what African Americans have always known, the “shocking and horrifying regularity, African-American men and boys are the victims of the police — the very people charged with keeping all of us safe.” The president at the time, Barack Obama also spoke out about the recent killing by law enforcement in a statement after arriving in Warsaw for a NATO summit that, “When incidents like this occur, there’s a big chunk of our citizenry that feels as if, because of the color of their skin, they are not being treated the same, and that hurts, and that should trouble all of us...This is not just a black issue, not just a Hispanic issue. This is an American issue that we all should care about.”

When I first started doing research for this study over a year ago, I chose Philando Castile’s case because the officer that killed him had been charged with manslaughter and reckless discharge of a firearm, however shortly after drafting a proposal, Yanez was

acquitted of all charges. Before doing any research, I believed that since the video was so jarring and one-of-a-kind, that surely this would be the officer that was found guilty. I didn't account for the various layers of sociopolitical structures, historically discriminatory narratives that created the white-supremacist gaze, and all of the ways Black people have been left unprotected by the law. Philando Castile's mom elucidated on this in a comment to reporters after Yanez was found not-guilty, "The system continues to fail black people, and it will continue to fail you all."

Castile's fatal shooting death, the verdict and the protests that followed both have left their mark on Minnesota in the years following. According to MPR News, a local Minnesota News organization, Governor Mark Dayton called for \$12 million in funding to train law enforcement to better police diverse communities. This legislature was later approved. "However passing legislature and actual tangible change in communities is not the same thing.

In 2015 and 2016, 34 states and the District of Columbia enacted at least 79 policy changes and practices, according to a report released by the Vera Institute of Justice. That's nearly four times the amount that passed between 2012 and 2014. Reforms that legislators have passed include the following; banning the use of chokeholds (in Illinois), mandating data collection on traffic stops and officer-involved shootings, developing guidelines for body-worn cameras, creating requirements for crisis intervention training, and increasing transparency in investigations into the use of lethal force. In the final days of the Obama administration, the Justice department gathered data on police reform. On January 13, the DOJ released a report into abuses by the Chicago Police Department, and the day prior the DOJ reached “ a consent of decree” with the City of Baltimore to address egregious abuses of power. This was followed by several other binding legal agreements to reform police departments. While these all point to a promising path on the way to police reform, many of the Obama-era legacies of aggressively investigating and reforming police departments are in the process of being rescinded in the current administration, and while these legally binding agreements were

steps in the right directions, Black communities continue to be targeted by law enforcement nationwide.

5.5 CONCLUSION

"My son loved this city and this city killed my son and the murderer gets away."

Reynold's decision to record Castile's death was hardly a choice, it was her indictment of the established organizations that are supposed to document American events. She recorded because she knew no one else would tell the right story. The story only her and her 4-year-old daughter lived to tell. In an essay for The Atlantic, Alex Wagner argues that the "ubiquity of these videos, and the impulse to create them, isn't just a cautionary tale of media blind spots and technology's disruptive power" it's also a cry for help from the victims and the witness'. Using your cellphone is not only due to a "recording culture" it's also in response to marginalized groups finding ways to tell their stories that have been overlooked by mainstream media, to become a part of the media.

Although Castile's case resembled the deaths of the other cases in this study, it was also unique in several significant ways. Castile's case occurred one day after another

prominent case of police brutality, making the protests and outrage nationwide massive in scope, and it also happened only three months after the verdict came out not-guilty for another officer that killed a Black man in St. Louis. In response to that death and the national conversations about police brutality, the state had been addressing the concerns of its citizens. For instance, Jamar Clarks death resulted in calls to action from the public and political officials to address the use of force against minorities by police officers (“Minneapolis NAACP chief,” 2015; “Minneapolis Seeks Civil Rights Investigation,” 2015). Additionally, investigative journalists found that Castile had been stopped by the police an excessive amount of times, and that Castile was initially only pulled over because Yanez allegedly thought his “wide-set nose” matched the description of a suspect involved in an armed robbery-thus exposing the inherent suspicion of deviance before the officer even stepped out of his car. Castile’s shooting was also significant because of the recklessness of the shooting as both Diamond Reynolds and her 4-year- old daughter were in the car at the time of the shooting (“Girlfriend of Philando Castile,” 2016). And most importantly to my study, Reynolds’ livestreaming of the aftermath of the shooting also made the case unique. Castile’s last breath were immediately disseminated to the

world- launching an immediate social media and news media response before Castile was even pronounced dead by the police.

The racist perception of assumed guilt that has led to disproportionate numbers of Black people stopped, searched, incarcerated and killed at the hands of the police is why it is so dangerous to drive while Black and why it is so hard to subvert the white-supremacist gaze from those that get a hold of these numbers but lack the context in which they are created. Castile was profiled because of his nose, and then he was killed for ‘driving while Black. An in-depth discussion of the implications of the results, and where to go from here is presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

“What is striking about the role legal principals have played throughout America's history is determining the condition of Negroes. They were enslaved **by** law, emancipated disenfranchised and segregated **by** law; and finally, they have begun to win equality **by** law”.- Thurgood Marshall, Reflections on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, 101 Harv. L. Rev . 1, 2 (1987).

6.1 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The ubiquity of citizen-generated videos of police brutality has forced Americans, many of which had never before experienced negative interactions with the police, to confront the uncomfortable reality of the violence against Black Americans. Due to the bravery of ordinary citizens, pervasive distrust in the media and law enforcements narrative of police-brutality, and a culture that is equally encouraged by and facilitates the individual use of technology, the world was able to watch the protests in Ferguson, Dajerria Becton slammed to the ground in a bikini by an officer 3x her size, Eric Garner yell out “I can’t breath”, Walter Scott get shot eight times as he attempted to flee from an

officer, and Philando Castile take his last breaths in the car next to his girlfriend after trying to show an officer his I.D.

Each of these events, filmed by observers, and initially posted to a personal account online, would all be used by the news media and shown nationally, allowing the world to see police violently interact with Black people in ways that have not been so publicly documented since the civil rights movement, and that have completely shifted the angle and intention in which police narratives are produced and understood.

Despite the visceral reactions to citizen-generated videos and the expansion of the national conversation surrounding police violence, media studies research has yet to fully explore how emerging technologies and media, particularly media generated by citizens (such as when they record and share their encounters with police) is associated with perceptions of law enforcement. Additionally, while the contemporary scholarship on citizen-journalism and the public sphere is extensive, few studies look at how the emergence of citizen-generated videos of police brutality are evolving in a digital landscape, and then how this technological landscape has encouraged citizen feelings of efficacy. My work in this area represents an important first step towards addressing this

gap in the literature, and in understanding this potentially meaningful relationship between the individual uses of technology and the mainstream acknowledgment of police violence. Through a qualitative analysis of tweets and youtube comments surrounding three case studies of highly circulated citizen-generated videos, I found that the majority of users that viewed and commented on these violent police-citizen encounters harbored feelings of discontentment towards the police. Additionally, many of the users that criticized law enforcement recognized that the video was emblematic of an American structural violence, and not a “one bad apple” kind of situation.

I addressed three research questions to examine the relationship between new media and how the public observed these cases and those involved in the cases, particularly the police; 1) What are the implications of citizen generated videos of police brutality and/or shootings, on the publics’ perception of police and the victim?; 2) What roles have the rise of social media platforms and mobile technologies played on the conversations surrounding racial bias and police brutality on Black communities?; and 3) Have citizen-generated videos been able to bring more attention and awareness to the specific type of police violence facing Black women? I addressed these questions using a

CTDA method, which analyzed responses through a critical race lens, and the interface of the platforms through a technocultural lens, while conducting a discourse analysis. Each chapter addressed these questions in distinct ways, as shown in the following table:

Table 6.1: Similarities and Differences in Data

	Time	Gender & Age	Context	Findings
Chapter 3: Brown	August 2014- December 2014	Male, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unarmed • On the street • Only video of aftermath(videos in this study focus on protests in Ferguson) • Fatally Shot 	The case lead to a major hashtag campaign and sparked global protests and the Black Lives Matter Movement. My analysis showed most vicarious viewers of the protest were anti-police and use of force
Chapter 4: Becton	June 2015- July 2015	Female, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unarmed • Bikini-clad & after a disturbance at a pool party • Video capturing entire incident • Thrown aggressively to ground by officer 	The case was associated with #SayHerName, but widespread acknowledgement of the case did not exist to the extent it did in the other cases. My analysis showed most vicarious viewers of the protest were anti-police and use of force, but many also did not think this brutality was as extreme as the others.

<p>Chapter 5: Castile</p>	<p>July 2016- August 2016</p>	<p>Male, 32</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legally carrying a firearm • In his vehicle • Video was live-streamed • Fatally Shot 	<p>My main findings here were that the public was beginning to understand police brutality as a more structural issue. My analysis showed that again, anti-police and use of force was the most common response, but comments also showed themes of connecting multiple police brutality together, unlike in the Brown case.</p>
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In each case study, the most noted response fell under the categories that were anti-police, which I argue is a direct result of viewing these disturbing videos. Further, my results show that most responses that were anti-police, did not focus on the individual officer, but rather focused on the criminal justice system as a whole. Several important results inform the relationship between individuals watching videos of police-citizen interactions and their later perceptions of the police. My research establishes that citizen-generated videos carry uniquely influential capabilities that allow the viewer access to a perspectives that historically we have not had access to. The perspectives made possibly by citizen-generated videos mobilize a different narrative and conversation related to police-citizen encounters which also changed the lens in which these encounters are observed.

The counternarratives and networks were discovered through comments surrounding the case on both Youtube and Twitter, and elucidated through the many hashtags created alongside each case. I can make a cautious but significant conclusion that these counternarratives were greatly aided by the widespread use and capabilities of social media platforms and smartphones.

The first case study, which centered on the shooting death of Mike Brown and the Ferguson protests, I looked at various citizen-generated videos from the Activist DeRay McKesson. Researchers have found that hearing about personal negative encounters with police from close friends and relatives lowers individuals' confidence in police and can affect future interpretations of police behavior (Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). When you follow someone on Twitter or other SNS, you can begin to trust that person as you would someone you know in person. Moreover, if distrust in the media and/or law enforcement is already at a high, the reliance on a citizen-journalist can lead to viewing the case from their perspective. DeRay, like many camera-wielding citizens, was intentional about what he recorded and what he shared. His multitude of videos has consistently been linked to the counternarratives of peaceful

protesting in Ferguson, as well as exposing the reality of a militarized police during these peaceful protests (Freelon, Mcilwain, & Clark, 2016).

The second case study on Dajerria Becton was chosen specifically to examine the discourses created when a female is the victim of a widespread video of police brutality. While my findings here were consistent with the other chapters in that anti-police was the primary response found, many sub-themes separated this case from the others. The most prominent narratives found in this case study were racial disparities in the punishment of Black children, the neglect of Black women and trans-women in the national conversation, and the sexualization of girls. Additionally, the responses here demonstrated a strong sense of victim blaming. This could potentially be due to the fact that Becton was not killed like in the other cases, so the feelings regarding the case were less strong. However, I argue that it is also due to gender and the lack of national dialogue and knowledge of Black women and girls that are affected by police violence.

Philando Castile was the final case study, which focused on the live-streamed video of the aftermath of his shooting death. Diamond Reynolds sat in the passenger seat as she recorded the fatal incident live and shared it with the world. The most encouraging

finding here was that many of the responses showed a desire to connect this case to previous cases of police brutality- meaning that these videos potentially have lasting effects on perceptions of police. This was the most recent case in my analysis, which could be a factor in the high number of responses that related several cases of police brutality together. Additionally, Philando Castile was killed only one day after another highly viral video of a citizen shooting by police was released to the public.

This case was also followed by more proactive policy reforms than other cases in my study. I believe this is due to the building pressure from citizens and activists after witnessing video after video of disturbing footage of police brutality. Police violence against Black bodies is not new, but the vicarious viewing of this violence by the world is. This case study revealed that the pressure from citizens, activists, and several politicians, has lead to a push for criminal justice reforms on a national level.

In addition to the perceptions of police being affected by these cases, my findings revealed that SNS and the pervasiveness of a recording culture lead to the creation of several counter-networks that were also anti-police. Furthermore, the citizens that recorded the footage did feel that their voice mattered and my analysis showed that

each of them were intentional about their choice to pick up their phone, which is complimented by my finding that the emergence of SNS has lead to mass-self communication as well as promote the kind of counternarratives that the original recorder hoped for. This finding is supported by recent scholarship by Farmer and colleagues (2015), which examined the reasons why people engage in filming the police. Utilizing a survey based analysis of college students, Farmer et al. (2015) found that individuals felt that recording the police acted as a deterrent preventing excessive use of force by the officer and ensured a level of transparency that could lead to justice.

6.2 IMPLICATIONS

While many scholars have argued that cellphone cameras and smartphones have become a ubiquitous reality in contemporary society, many fail to mention the emerging reality of a ‘recording culture’ that has been both enabled by and lead to the widespread use of smartphones and accompanying technologies. Users have been accustomed to filming everything from the food that they eat, the vacations they take, to their everyday mundane experiences and then sharing this footage on platforms linked to global audiences. Although much of this personal video footage is primarily being used

for entertainment purposes, there are also many users that proactively film and share with hopes that their efforts and footage will bring some kind of attention or change to an issue. The latter half, carry the fundamental attributes of what is considered a citizen-generated video in this study.

The videos analyzed in my study have been able to offer the public a view of Black people as a victim of police brutality in ways that traditional media or police narrative have never offered, and therefore have, at some level, been able to change the perception about the use and abuse of power in society. Ordinary citizens have taken on the task of highlighting instances of police brutality in new and impactful ways, providing the public- especially those that have yet to personally be affected by police bias or brutality- with an opportunity to visualize these incidents as they unfold. Through these efforts, cellphone-wielding citizens are challenging institutionally driven narratives of police-citizen encounters and disrupting the media's reliance on police as the gatekeepers of information.

Police body cam footage is traditionally filtered through the police department, but citizen-generated videos often an un-retouched close-up from the viewpoint of the

witness in a more visceral and raw way. These users are enabled by their mobile device to partake in some kind of social movement, highlighting how individual use of technology and online digital landscapes are able to facilitate political engagement, contrary to early scholarship that referred to much of the hashtag movements as “clicktivism” or “slacktivism” (Butler, 2011). Further, while citizen-generated videos may help a movement solidify calls to action and a networked community of passionate individuals, they may also lead to the creation of allies of those who would otherwise be unaffected by the issue. Parry (2017) argues that this is observed through the white supporters in the Black Lives Matter movement,

“For whites who may not have any negative experiences (direct or vicarious) video recordings offer a visceral demonstration of the racial differences in treatment by police, and may in turn increase global support and awareness of the issues.”

Further, the continuous emergence of videos of police violence by citizens may cause officers to self-surveil themselves: Brown (2015) found that police officers behavior is affected by the presence of presence of citizens with mobile phones. Brown (2015) also found that the presence of a citizen journalist decreased the likelihood of use of force by the police. While video recordings have proven to be a valuable tool to help

citizens hold police accountable, most research surrounding BWC's is based on one study from 2012, of a sample of only 54 officers in Rialto. More recent research, like the Washington study conducted by David Yokum at the Lab @ DC, a team of scientists, and affiliates of the Metropolitan Police Department, found that there were no statistically significant effects on behavior when officers were wearing BWC's. However, Samuel Sinyangwe posited in a Twitter thread on October 23rd, 2017 after this research was released that apart from affecting police behavior, BWC's serve other important purposes: " Body cams are collecting new data that can help quantify & address issues that hadn't been focused on/addressed," and "Body cameras are providing evidence necessary to charge officers who've killed people." This is important because there were only three cases where police have been indicted for killing a Black person last year, two had body cam footage and the third had surveillance video.

Videos of police-citizen encounters hold several implications for marginalized groups that now have more power due to today's technology driven society. They have galvanized citizens and communities with common goals to organize events that have helped to keep these issues at the forefront of national conversations, assisted in the

recruitment of new activists that may have never experienced or understood the extent to which police violence occurs, helped to solidify counternarratives, and aided in individuals feeling like their voice, and their videos matter. These highly publicized videos and their associated cases have resulted in calls for accountability and transparency within police departments, for instance 98 police officers have been fired or resigned and some have been criminally charged for their actions (Baker, 2015; Laughland & Swaine, 2015; Miller et al., 2015; Southall, 2015). In December of 2014 the Obama administration even committed \$75 million to help police departments purchase 50,000 body-worn cameras after the Ferguson uprising (Hermann & Weiner, 2014).

However, the advent of the Internet nor the widespread use of mobile devices has been able to create a completely unique experience regarding community discussions. Instead, building from previous forms of communication, “the Internet has the potential to be used by marginalized communities to challenge, extend, and refashion already existent resistant communication practices” (Steele, 2018). This potential though, is often limited by the affordances of the platform. For Black users in particular, platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and blogs are often used to discuss and bring attention to issues in the

community that are of importance offline as well, especially on what has come to be known as Black Twitter. But even this space is an outgrowth of Twitter, and since online spaces generally mirror the social constructs that exist offline, discourse is often limited by the same constraints marginalized groups face in offline communication. While contemporary scholarship of counter publics and counter networks has illustrated that marginalized groups have been able to create their own alternative publics online in order to legitimize their communities' oppressions, the platforms that are being used to have these conversations has not yet fully appreciated the potential for change within the platform. Thus, many groups continue to be silenced due to the sites' algorithms and the way reporting harassment and spam is overseen.

Further, police violence is distributed disproportionately, with Black people being three times more likely to be killed by police than their white counterparts. This number does not take into account police brutality that does not end in death. As seen throughout the chapters, this violence, in practice, has been routinely justified by legal and administrative policies that govern how police profile individuals, stop and detain them, and when police can use force against civilians. In theory, police departments

establish rules regarding the use of force, which include the expectation and power to discipline officers who fail to uphold the department's standards. However in practice, none of the officers in my case study were charged and convicted of a crime.

While citizens, activists, political and media heads alike seem to agree that online movements and video evidence have worked together as a resource for police accountability and a reduction to bias and the horrific deaths at the hands of police, more technology cannot simply undo years of systemic oppression. If footage of police brutality is ever going to be a tool for accountability- a tool that is used to help charge officers for murder and prevent future murders- then it needs to be a part of the investigation process of a shooting. While still important, these videos cannot just be public voyeurism, it need to be used as evidence in internal, local, federal, and government police department investigations, legislative debates, and in criminal trials. This means that access to and use of these videos needs to be written into law, citizens must not be apprehended for taking these videos, and officers need to know that this can be used as evidence against them.

6.3 LIMITATIONS

Several limitations are associated with the research presented here. The first limitation lies in the sample sizes. Due to the scope of my study, I was only able to analyze up to 200 comments per chapter, meaning my sample size can not be representative of the entire ‘public’. Additionally, each video was shared to several platforms, on news media organization sites, and even televised in its route to virality, and therefore many of the public that watched these videos may have had different experiences if they watched it from a different source. Choosing to look only at the comments from YouTube or Twitter, I am also limiting to a sample that has internet access and some internet and social media skills that would enable them to post comments on YouTube or Twitter.

Additionally, this work draws heavily from Andre Brocks CTDA which is the qualitative method I used to code user responses for themes. While each response was measured against others through an iterative process, there is no verifiable way to ensure continuity. Further, there is no way for me to know whether people's responses were representative of their true opinions, and whether they were real people and not ‘bots’.

Lastly, Mental illness remains an area that has been largely overlooked over in police reform policies and in the overall discussion of police brutality against marginalized communities. In June of 2017, Seattle police shot and killed Charleena Lyles who was a 30-year-old pregnant woman suffering from mental illness. The Seattle Times reported that one of the officers was trained to use a taser, but did not have it on him. Keith Scott was 43 when police shot and killed him in Charlotte, North Carolina. His wife captured most of the last minutes of his life on camera, but the fatal moments when police actually shot him were not shown, as she ran away from the scene briefly, causing police to eschew from the wife's story. Although each of these deaths sparked waves of protests and more impassioned discourse about race relations between Black communities and deadly use of force by police officers, most of the outrage lacked the much needed conversation on how police deal with mentally ill citizens. Due to the scope of my study I am unable to include an entire case study on a mentally ill persons death, however, I hope this data will be useful to future researchers seeking to fill this gap in the literature.

6.4 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Few studies have specifically looked at how exposure to video recordings of police citizen encounters by a non-media affiliated person, may influence citizen support for policy change, such as the addition of BWC's, which is a common narrative found throughout my analysis. There is also a lack of literature on a citizens' willingness or desire to film the police, outside of broader discussions about citizen-journalism, and how this specific form of efficacy relates to an evolving and open use digital landscape. My study attempted to fill some of these gaps through analyzing the influence of the public's vicarious exposure to police brutality via citizen-generated videos in three different highly publicized cases, but a more expansive study, specifically focusing on calls for change and reform rather than perceptions of police is needed.

In 2015, The Washington Post created a database that catalogued every single fatal shooting by a police officer in the line of duty in the country. The data was categorized by the following factors; race, gender, weapon, BWC, age, state, mental illness, and fleeing the scene. Initiated in response to the unreliable data compiled by the federal government and in an effort to correctly record and hold police accountable, The

Post was one of few news organization that took comprehensive journalism to the next level in creating a clear cut quantitative display of the nations problem with police violence. Consistent with other analysis of American police killings, each year in their dataset reveals that most victims were men. While The Post should be acknowledged for the incredible work being done to track police killings, their lack of data on how police brutality can encompass much more than death, is one small piece in the puzzle that often erases women from the narrative. The framing of police brutality as death, even if unintentional, reinforces the notion that women are unaffected by police violence.

Further, while there is extensive research on BWC's that has argued for its nationwide implementation, there are several questions that must be answered and assurances in place before they would be effective. Firstly, when should officers turn their cameras on, and what happens to an officer that doesn't turn on his camera when they should've. Second, how long should BWC footage be kept and who has access to it? Third, how much weight is BWC footage given over individual testimony of a situation? And lastly, when do SNS like Facebook have to turn over their video to the police and are

they given agency to take the video down? These are just some of the considerations that need to be discussed in the future.

6.5 CONCLUSION

“The next shooting may not come tonight or tomorrow. By the math, though, every two days a black person of some age—14 or 18 or 43 or 37—armed or unarmed, sober or under the influence, resisting arrest or providing officers with identification will be shot and killed by an officer or officers. Video of the incident will likely be circulated. Protests will likely follow. But any sort of end to this violence remains truly unlikely.”- Vann NewKirk II

Slavery in the United States lasted about 240 years, the lynching era lasted for another 70, and Jim Crow took its place as the newest legal way to discriminate and devalue the lives of Black citizens. Today, Black people are still fighting for equality, but now we are asking for independent investigations, less cruel sentencing, more money for schools and not prisons, BWCs, racial bias police training, de-escalation police training, and the right to be seen as human. Since writing this conclusion, three recent videos of police brutality have showed up on my timeline, so I cannot lie here, and say that I am optimistic that social media or new technologies will be able to change this. Vicariously experiencing police brutality will never be the same as actually enduring it, and while the conversation these videos has encouraged and facilitated is important, every time another

Black person is being choked as the woman from a Waffle House in Alabama was on April 23rd, or attacked by a K-9 like a Black college-student that was handing out his business cards in a Houston suburb, or shot and killed like Tommy Lee a high school student in Seattle, it becomes harder and harder to gauge if the emergence of citizen-generated videos have the ability to make a tangible impact.

Despite my reluctance in optimism, it is clear that society is entering an age where they have chosen to surveil the police, rather than waiting on them to surveil themselves. As cell phone use expands, the digital landscape continues to enable citizens to share videos and content in new ways, and media convergence improves, citizens become more powerful and their citizen-generated videos will too. Each of the cases in my study gained some level of nationwide notoriety that increased the likelihood that both the public will be aware of officers excessive use of sometime deadly force and also that the officer will internalize the potential consequences of their actions and recognize that they are being supervised by the public. White Americans that have never encountered police violence have learned about the injustices within the criminal justice system and have become vicarious witnesses to the events. However, If you're a black

American forced over and over again to witness the killing of another black American, that is not witness; it is trauma.

Police footage and security camera footage given to police are no longer the sole visual narratives of police-citizen encounters, and the public as well as the corporate news media have presented alternatives to historically believed police narratives. Philando Castile, Walter Scott, Jordan Edwards, and Dajerria Becton among other cases are all examples of how quickly authorities alter their stories or suspend their officers in response to video evidence that challenge the police descriptions of the incident. Public pressure has continued to increase on investigative agencies, judiciary processes, and new policy enactment in order to build transparency between law enforcement and the public and to hold police accountable for their actions, but without changing the law, the national conversations surrounding police brutality are useless.

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