

THE MEDIA, PUBLIC PERCEPTION, AND POLICY DECISIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF
TWO RACIALLY DIFFERENT NEWSROOMS' COVERAGE OF BLM AND DACA

by

Chamian Y. Cruz

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Approved by:

Lynette M. Holman, Ph.D., Thesis Director

Garrett A. McDowell, Ph.D., Second Reader

Jennifer B. Gray, Ph.D., Departmental Honors Director

Jefford Vahlbusch, Ph.D., Dean, The Honors College

Abstract

Journalists tend to influence the public's perception of issues through priming, framing, and agenda setting (Power, Murphy, & Coover, 1996; Quinsaat, 2014; McCombs, 2014), because they often serve as the public's main source of information. Therefore, journalists are expected to uphold ethical and professional responsibilities. However, many researchers have found that journalists' biases and prejudices and the media's systematic structure can influence common journalistic practices such as word choice, which can further stereotype and stigmatize marginalized populations (e.g., Entman & Rojecki, 2000). In this study, I looked into the cycle between the media, the public, and policy decisions. The media influences the public's perception, which then influences their support for policies. I studied how racial and ethnic diversity in newsrooms affects the coverage of blacks in rhetoric about the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and Hispanic/Latino immigrants in rhetoric about Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). I utilized an online survey with established social science scales to measure perceived racism. I employed this survey with the *Tampa Bay Times (Times)*, a predominately White newsroom, and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC)*, a more ethnically and racially diverse newsroom. I also conducted a textual analysis on a sample of articles from each publication written nine months before Donald Trump was elected president to three months after his first State of the Union (SOTU) address. The purpose of the textual analysis was to identify any differences in word choice, frames, and other factors present in the journalists' coverage of BLM and DACA. Using these methods, I found that the ethnicity of journalists does influence coverage of blacks and Hispanic/Latino immigrants, that journalists cover DACA more sympathetically and ethically than BLM, and that specialized reporting leads to better media representation of these two groups.

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List of Abbreviations

AJC	Atlanta Journal-Constitution
AP	Associated Press
ASNE	American Society of News Editors
BLM	Black Lives Matter
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
MPV	Mapping Police Violence
MRS	Modern Racism Scale
PRS	Perceived Racism Scale
PRSL	Perceived Racism Scale for Latinos
SOTU	State of the Union
TDMN	The Dallas Morning News
Times	Tampa Bay Times

Introduction

Genetic research informs us that there is no scientific basis for different labels of race, that we all have African ancestors (Kolbert, 2018). The idea of race is merely a social construct, a concept created, maintained, and reproduced by society (Merenstein, 2008). Racism is a real problem in the U.S., in part because labels are used to delineate and separate people from one another, cleaving political and social divides. Racial issues also drive media and policy agendas. Discussion of race was prevalent in the media during Barack Obama's presidency and it only seemed to gain momentum with the election of President Donald Trump, who has consistently been at the center of controversy regarding his stance on immigrants (Dawsey, 2018) and blacks (Lowery, 2017). With Trump being so outspoken about his perception of minorities in the U.S., journalists face a dilemma on how to cover the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and advocacy for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). In the past, journalists have portrayed blacks and Hispanic immigrants under stereotypical roles. Researchers have identified in their studies some of the influences that affect journalists' news coverage decisions (e.g., Entman & Rojecki, 2000). The focus of this study, however, is specifically on the influence of journalists' race and ethnicity on news coverage of ethnic and race-related issues such as BLM and DACA.

Journalists alone are not to blame for the inappropriate coverage of BLM and DACA because the issue is complex. The influence of the media, as a structure, on journalists' news coverage decisions is greater than journalists' individual prejudices. Over the years, researchers have studied how different races and ethnicities, based on their learned prejudices, make judgments of other races or ethnicities in accordance with stereotypes (e.g., Leopold & Bell, 2017; Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Researchers have also shown that whites

indeed perpetuate stereotypes and different forms of discrimination. This largely impacts society because whites have controlled the majority of industries throughout history, resulting in more power and influence in society than any other race or ethnicity (e.g., Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Both of these factors play a role in the structural racism of the media. The Aspen Institute defines structural racism as:

A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with ‘whiteness’ and disadvantages associated with ‘color’ to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist (n.d., p. 1).

However, demographics in the U.S. have been changing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Blacks and Hispanics are the two largest racial or ethnic groups behind whites, with Hispanics being the principal drivers of U.S. demographic growth in recent years (Pew Research Center, 2017b). In 2016, it was estimated that 76.9% of the population was white, 13.3% was black or African American, and 17.8% was Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau). Between 2016-2017, the U.S. Hispanic population had a growth rate of 2% and the black population had a growth rate of .9% (Pew Research Center, 2017d). Yet, of 661 daily print and online-only news organizations surveyed in the 2017 American Society of News Editors (ASNE) Newsroom Employment Diversity Survey, minorities made up only 16.55% of the overall workforce. The workforce of the newsrooms surveyed was 83.16% white, 5.64% black, and 5.56% Hispanic (ASNE, 2017). Organizations also lacked diversity at the leadership level.

Within those organizations, 13.42% were minorities in leadership positions, while 86.47% were white (ASNE, 2017). Clearly, there is a disparity in the number of minorities in newsrooms compared to their overall U.S. demographic makeup.

It could be argued that American race relations could benefit from more black and Hispanic representation in the media and in other industries since blacks and Hispanics make up a majority of the U.S. racial and ethnic demographic behind whites – in fact, the white population growth rate has decreased .1% (Pew Research Center, 2017d). The media plays a role in race relations because it exerts an incredible amount of influence on culture, politics, and society as a whole (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). In this way, the media also influences the public's voting decisions by the way it influences the public's perception of race-related issues (Domke, McCoy, & Torres, as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication, 2003). With prevalent media coverage of BLM and DACA and the increase in demographic makeup of blacks and Hispanics in the U.S., it has become increasingly important to examine the factors that are present in the news coverage of these issues.

The focus of this study is solely on blacks in rhetoric about BLM and Hispanic immigrants living in the U.S. without legal permission in rhetoric about DACA. As defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term "rhetoric" refers to a type of mode of language or speech that can be insincere or use grandiloquent language (n.d.). Studying the rhetoric in discussion of BLM and DACA is an important endeavor for several reasons. First, evidence shows that arrest-related deaths are more common among blacks than any other race or ethnicity. This can be due to a number of reasons, but misconception and the criminalization of blacks play a role in the disproportionate number of incident of police brutality against blacks (Smiley & Fakunle, 2017). Supporters of the BLM movement seek to end police

brutality and to encourage a national debate about institutionalized racism within the American justice system (Leopold & Bell, 2017). Second, an estimated 800,000 immigrants living in the U.S. without legal permission have received DACA since it was first implemented in 2012 (Pew Research Center, 2017c). Although DACA recipients came to the U.S. from all over the world, more than nine-in-ten were born in Latin America and 94% of that number were born in Mexico, Central America, or South America (Pew Research Center, 2017a). Since Hispanics are one of the largest and most visible ethnic groups in the U.S. and since data shows that most DACA recipients come from Mexico, Central America, and South America, there is a tendency to associate DACA recipients with Hispanic or Latino immigrants. In addition, Trump tends to focus on immigration from Mexico in his rhetoric, further perpetuating the association (Reilly, 2016). Therefore, the focus of this study is on Hispanic/Latino immigration in regard to DACA. The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably in this study just as the U.S. Census Bureau does in reference to persons of Mexican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (2010).

Focusing on news coverage of the two largest minority demographic groups in the U.S., blacks and Hispanics, can lead to a better understanding of how these groups are regarded and treated in the U.S. Such knowledge can later guide research of how journalists have played a role in public perception of other and less researched racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. such as Asians and Middle Easterners. Although researchers have already contributed to general knowledge of the media’s influence on the public, it is important to revisit these studies to see if any changes have actually been made to improve coverage of blacks and Hispanics in the media. While journalists do not have an ordained responsibility

to advocate for social movements, they do have a responsibility to “seek truth and report it, minimize harm, act independently, and be accountable and transparent” (SPJ, 2014). Yet, there are many structural influences and pressures that affect how journalists function. Journalists have to balance such structural influences with the understanding that they are also trained and expected to act ethically. Analyzing the influence of race on coverage of BLM and DACA helps highlight whether the coverage of already marginalized populations, such as blacks and immigrants, is currently ethical, appropriate, and accurate.

Literature Review

Researchers have long studied the role of journalists in agenda setting, priming, and framing (e.g., McCombs, 2014). The three are interrelated and have some similarities. Both agenda setting and priming are about *which* topics are most salient in the media, while framing is about *how* topics are depicted (Weaver, 2007). McCombs defined the agenda setting theory as the ability of journalists to influence what topics the public sees as most important depending on salience, or the frequency that topics are presented (2014). Establishing the public agenda is the first stage in the formation of public opinion (McCombs, 2014). Like agenda setting, priming is also based on salience and is often considered an extension of agenda setting (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Scheufele and Tewksbury explained priming theory as the ability of journalists to shape the public’s considerations in making certain judgments by how often certain attributes are used to describe people or objects (2007). Priming is largely based on theories of network models of memory. According to these network models, journalists, through priming, can create interconnections in the public’s mind by creating associations between certain ideas and concepts (e.g., Collins & Loftus, 1975; Meyer & Schvaneveldt, 1971). When two concepts

are constantly presented as interconnected, these associations can be reinforced and strengthened over time (e.g., “black” and “criminal”). Much like a pump priming a well, researchers have shown that journalists can prime racial stereotypes (e.g., Power, Murphy, & Coover, 1996). Indeed, Roskos-Ewoldsen and Dillman Carpentier (2007) deduced in their meta-analysis of 63 priming studies that journalists do act as a prime, or a stimulus on which individuals base their impressions of a person or issue.

In addition, Quinsaat’s (2014) term “news frame” refers to how journalists apply attributes through words to certain groups or issues that can influence how they are perceived. One way that journalists create news frames is through second-level agenda setting, which is also about how topics are depicted. McCombs defined second-level agenda setting as the influence of properties, qualities, and characteristics that journalists use to describe objects or people in news coverage (2014). In second-level agenda setting, the tone that is used in those attributes is just as important in examining its influence on the public (McCombs, 2014). Journalists can set the agenda and prime the public through news frames, which are created from second-level agenda setting (McCombs, 2014). Research tells us that the effects of agenda setting, priming, and framing work in conjunction with the public’s predispositions and schemas that influence how they process media messages (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Journalists also have to deal with their own predispositions and schemas. Journalists’ predispositions and schemas influence how agenda setting, priming, and framing are used in their work. Certain predispositions and schemas can be so ingrained that journalists are not conscious of how they can influence their work.

Entman and Rojecki published a study in “The Black Image in the White Mind” in which they found that whites’ perceptions of blacks are largely based on media coverage

rather than on personal interactions and relationships (2000). The researchers analyzed coverage of blacks in network news, prime-time television, advertising, and Hollywood (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). They found that media images support the public's preconceived notions of blacks, but rarely push the public toward comity. Comity is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "courtesy, civility; kindly and considerate behavior towards others" (as referenced in "The Black Image in the White Mind, 2000). Entman and Rojecki argued that comity is a multidimensional concept that falls on a spectrum of racial thinking that ranges from racial comity and understanding, ambivalence, animosity, and outright racism (2000). They believed that reaching comity would be the only way for blacks and other minorities to be treated fairly and portrayed properly by the media (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). The full spectrum can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Spectrum of White Racial Sentiment (Entman and Rojecki, 2000)

	←Comity - - -	Ambivalence - - -	Animosity - - - - -	Racism →
	<i>Individual Diversity</i>	<i>Negative Tendencies</i>	<i>Stereotyping</i>	<i>Hierarchy</i>
Negative Homogeneity	Individual blacks, like whites, vary widely in traits	Black individuals tend more than whites to exhibit negative traits	Most blacks share a syndrome of negative traits	Blacks are a lower order of humanity than whites, with consistently negative traits
	<i>Empathy</i>	<i>Underestimation</i>	<i>Denial</i>	<i>Separation & Discrimination</i>
Structural Impediments	Discrimination remains prevalent, causing great harm to equal opportunity	Discrimination may occur in isolated individual instances	Anti-black discrimination is a thing of the past; whites now experience more racial discrimination	Blacks cannot attain equality no matter what society does; discrimination is therefore necessary
	<i>Political Acceptance</i>	<i>Political Concern</i>	<i>Political Rejection</i>	<i>Political Aggression</i>
Conflicting Group Interests	Fundamental interests of blacks and whites do not differ; cooperation	Black political power sometimes creates trouble for whites as a group;	Black political power extracts advantages at white expense;	Black political power poses grave dangers to whites as a

	possible and desirable	cooperation suspect	cooperation rarely to mutual advantage	group; cooperation dangerous
	<i>Comfort</i>	<i>Disquiet</i>	<i>Fear & Anger</i>	<i>Hatred</i>
Emotional Responses	Low intensity; positive or neutral feelings	Low intensity; oscillation from neutral to positive to negative	Largely negative; moderately intense emotions	Intensely and globally negative emotions toward blacks

There are many ways journalists perpetuate preconceived notions of blacks and BLM. Leopold and Bell studied the coverage of BLM in seven U.S.-based newspapers during a six-month period in 2014 (2017). They identified paradigms and other marginalizing techniques that journalists use in coverage of protests (Leopold & Bell, 2017). Protest paradigm is defined as “a pattern of news coverage that expresses disapproval toward protests and dissent” (Leopold & Bell, 2017, para. 5). Leopold and Bell found that language of crime, lawlessness, violence, blame for nearby acts of violence, and inflammatory quotes from bystanders and official sources were prevalent in their sample of articles (2017). In addition, journalists rarely discussed the key issues of BLM (Leopold & Bell, 2017). Instead, they used problematic news frames in coverage of protests such as the riot frame, crime story frame, carnival frame, and public nuisance frame (Leopold & Bell, 2017). According to Hertog and McLeod, a riot frame overemphasize lawlessness, danger, destruction, and disorder; a crime story frame focuses on specific criminal acts committed by participants in protests; and a carnival frame minimizes the social issue being protested and highlights more theatrical aspects of protests such as the waving of flags or wearing of coordinated outfits (1995; as referenced by Leopold & Bell, 2017). Lastly, the public nuisance frame (Di Cicco, 2010; as referenced by Leopold & Bell, 2017) emphasizes the downsides that affect a city or community when protests are not dangerous or criminal, such as long lines of traffic or the

imposition of a curfew. Such frames work to shift the focus from the disproportionate killings of unarmed black men and influence public perception of blacks and BLM.

Journalists often adhere to the paradigm because of a number of structural influences on the media. First, Leopold and Bell explained that news coverage has become routinized so that the same type of stories are covered and framed in the same way. Second, journalists are trained to use official sources to establish credibility even though official sources have a tendency to adhere to the paradigm as well (2017). This is because sources are often people in leadership positions or with a lot of influence, and whites disproportionately hold such positions (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Third, research suggests that problematic material arises from the interaction of the dominant culture, which is white-American culture in the U.S., and market pressures in the industry (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). For example, the hyper-competition in the media environment where supply substantially exceeds demand, has led to financial loss for many producers in the market. Hollifield and Becker (2009) suggest that this could increase the likelihood that journalists violate journalism ethics at both the organizations and individual levels. In addition, hyper-competition creates pressure for journalists to break news and to increase ratings, clicks, or subscriptions to gain public attention and to maintain profitability. Hyper-competition is a consequence of the media's reliance on advertising to remain profitable (Leopold & Bell, 2017). Lastly, traditional news values of impact, timeliness, prominence, proximity, novelty, conflict, and currency can also influence journalists to perpetuate stereotypes, negative perceptions, and different forms of discrimination (Leopold & Bell, 2017). As a result, the racialization of news coverage of BLM has primed the public to associate blacks with criminality and to discourage participation in BLM protests (2017).

Journalists can also further marginalize blacks by portraying them under a few limited stereotypical roles. Entman and Rojecki found that in general blacks are rarely portrayed as experts, even in stories concerning other blacks (2000). In fact, black voices were more prominent only in human-interest features, sports/entertainment stories, and discrimination reports, but rarely in stories of common interest to the majority of Americans such as disasters, foreign affairs, politics, science, and economics (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). In this way, journalists create a prototype of blacks as sports figures, entertainers, or as objects of discrimination (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Again, the portrayal of blacks under these frames and limited roles influences perpetuates generalizations (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Entman said the key to anti-black racism and prejudice is whites' tendency to lump all or most blacks into categories, or homogenizing (1992).

Like blacks, journalists have also long homogenized and marginalized Hispanics in news coverage. Entman and Rojecki agreed that Hispanics are one other minority group that in some respects are treated similarly to blacks (2000). Wilkinson even made the argument that a collaborative media advocacy effort would be more beneficial for black and Hispanic interests rather than for each to advocate for their own interests (as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). Collaborative advocacy could be beneficial because blacks and Hispanics share common political, economic, and social/cultural interests and concerns (Wilkinson; as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). According to Wilkinson, journalists tend to focus on issues that divide the two groups, such as competition for jobs and political power, or on mutual problems like crime, poverty, and low educational achievement (as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). Kraeplin and

Subervi-Velez's research provides evidence of how news coverage of Hispanics is similar in some respects to that of blacks (as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003).

Subervi-Velez conducted a number of content analyses to determine what and how topics concerning Hispanics were covered at *The Dallas Morning News (TDMN)* in the mid-1990s (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez; as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). At the time, the Hispanic population was considered the fastest growing minority population in the country, representing an appealing source of potential readers to newspapers (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). As such, *TDMN* attempted to lure more Hispanic readers by including more Hispanics and other minorities in their coverage, but the researchers concluded it had no real effect on what happened in the rest of the paper if minorities, in this case Hispanics, are only portrayed under limited, stereotypical roles (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). In their month-long content analysis of 218 news items, Mexico was mentioned 56% of the time in reference to a Spanish-speaking country or countries (as referenced in Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). In addition, sports was the most prominent topic of Hispanic coverage, so, not surprisingly, nearly a third of the individuals in all of the stories were athletes, followed by politicians or government officials (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). However, their results may have been influenced by the fact that their sample articles were from July, which coincided with the professional baseball season, a sport with many Hispanic players, and the annual conference of the National Council of La Raza, one of the nation's largest Latino advocacy organizations (as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003).

Therefore, journalists mainly featured Hispanics as athletes or entertainers rather than more legitimate newsmakers or “real people” (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). Kraeplin and Subervi-Velez believed there was a serious problem with portraying Hispanics mainly as athletes (as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). They said:

It may limit what young Latinos envision for their future by restricting the roles in which they see themselves. Where are the physicians, the architects, the teachers?

Others may argue that such a limited portrayal may perpetuate myopic stereotypes of Latinos among other ethnic groups simply by offering few alternative visions of Latino life (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003, p.120).

In addition, in order of prominence, Hispanics mostly played the role of subject/participant in the news, bystander, perpetrator or wrongdoer, expert or official, victim, and hero or role model (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). Journalists rarely portrayed Hispanics as criminals or as unskilled workers in their coverage (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). Therefore, the majority of stories casted Hispanics favorably, but stories that casted Hispanics negatively homogenized Hispanics (Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003).

In a different study, Domke, McCoy, and Torres looked at how the media’s priming of racial perceptions influences the public’s view on immigration and how that in turn influences their political views (as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication, 2003). They conducted the study on 172 undergraduate students and presented them with political

information on immigration that was either materially framed or ethically framed (Domke, McCoy, & Torres; as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). Information presented under a material frame focused on economics, expedience, practicality, or personal self-interest, while information presented under an ethical frame focused on human rights, civil rights, religious morals, or personal principles (Domke, McCoy, & Torres; as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). Domke, McCoy, and Torres found that over half of subjects interpreted the information under the material frame with solely material terms. Subjects with information under the ethical frame had mixed interpretations of the information, but were more likely to make ethical considerations. This meant that the ethical news frame added rather than replaced prior cognitions (Domke, McCoy, and Torres; as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). Under the material frame, subjects who perceived Hispanics as violent wanted to reduce immigration levels, whereas subjects who perceived Hispanics as nurturing, lazy, or less intelligent desired to maintain current immigration levels (Domke, McCoy, & Torres; as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). The last part of their findings was broken up into three parts: (1) demographic factors, perceptions of Hispanics, and position on the issue heavily influenced subjects’ assessment of whether or not immigration benefits the U.S. economy under a material frame, (2) interaction between media coverage and individual predispositions may be guided by the way individuals process information and subsequently make judgments, and (3) journalists significantly influence subjects’ interpretations of Hispanics in their evaluation of immigration on the economy through a material frame (Domke, McCoy, & Torres; as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003). Therefore, through their research,

Domke, McCoy, and Torres suggest that news coverage of politics indeed intersect with race relations (as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003).

Some of the researchers made suggestions that they believed would benefit the representation of blacks, BLM, and Hispanic immigrants in the media. Entman and Rojecki believed it would take significant change in the industry, not just increased consciousness of the media’s role in the framing of blacks, to better represent reality and to reach comity (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). They believed that structural forces had more bearing on the nature of news images than journalists’ race; therefore increasing diversity in the media would not lead to better, more appropriate coverage of blacks (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Entman and Rojecki conducted an impressionistic perusal of local news, encompassing 36 markets throughout the country and found that black anchors and reporters spoke from the same perspective as whites (2000). From a journalistic standpoint, the job does demand objective reporting, but Entman and Rojecki believed that black journalists could be objective and still offer a different perspective by focusing more on discrimination as a cause of black related crime and not just on the crime incidents themselves (2000). However, Leopold and Bell (2017) and Kraeplin and Subervi-Velez (as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003) did believe recruiting more Hispanics and other minorities as reporters, editors, and station managers was necessary to more accurately reflect modern social realities. However, Leopold and Bell believed that only having one or two black journalists in news organizations was not enough to make a difference (2017). As seen in the ASNE Newsroom Employment Diversity Survey, there are too few minorities in the media to have any significant influence on coverage of other minorities. Entman and Rojecki found in their research that most stories in network news focused on whites. Such news coverage

reinforces white's status and power hierarchy in the U.S. (2000). Heider suggested that it is common for whites to cover stories of interest to other whites because journalists tend to choose stories based on what impacts them personally, their interests, and their experiences (Heider; as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). Few whites are impacted by what impact minorities, which is likely why predominately white newsrooms sometimes dismiss stories of interest to minorities. By mainly covering stories of importance to whites and then framing minorities under limited, stereotypical roles, the media conveys the message that minorities are supplementary in the U.S. and cause trouble or need help (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Heider (as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003) also suggested that even when the few minorities who do work in the media want to cover issues of importance to other minorities, their voices are not always heard in the newsroom because they do not hold leadership positions that allow them to make decisions on stories, as was visible in the 2017 ASNE Newsroom Employment Diversity Survey. Furthermore, Heider said that black and Latino managers might not push story ideas about underrepresented communities because they learned in the newsroom's organizational culture that such stories are not valued (as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). In addition to increasing the number of minorities in news organizations, Leopold and Bell suggested monitoring for stereotypical and biased terminology before publication to help journalists avoid marginalizing and racializing coverage of protests (2017). Kraeplin and Subervi-Velez also recommended requiring media courses in high schools and universities to educate media consumers about the importance of diversity in the media (as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). Therefore, the race and ethnicity of news

personnel, news values, and the structural history of the media all play a role in the way minorities are covered.

Gaps in Literature

Although there is general consensus that the media plays a role in public perception of blacks and Hispanics, there is little consensus on the changes that are needed so that BLM, blacks, Hispanic immigrants, and DACA are portrayed outside of the regular stereotypical and discriminatory frames. Entman and Rojecki's "The Black Image in the White Mind" is referenced in many studies on this subject matter despite their belief that increasing diversity in newsrooms would not significantly impact coverage of blacks because blacks themselves perpetuate similar views as whites (2000). However, their book was written nearly two decades ago. Since then, demographics in the U.S. have changed, resulting in a need for further analysis. While Entman and Rojecki may not agree, other researchers (e.g., Leopold & Bell, 2017; Heider, as referenced in "Black and Brown Communication, 2003) agree that more minority representation is necessary in the media, particularly in leadership roles where more decision-making is involved.

Furthermore, most of the researchers (e.g., Leopold & Bell, 2017; Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in 2003) other than Entman and Rojecki (2000) failed to consider in their studies how the racial and ethnic makeup in the newsrooms affected their coverage of blacks and immigrants or Hispanics. Yet, many of them suggested that it could be beneficial to increase diversity in the media (e.g., Leopold & Bell, 2017; Kraeplin & Subervi-Velez, as referenced in 2003). Entman and Rojecki did study how black reporters and anchors covered issues related to blacks, but their study more heavily focused on how whites portray and perceive blacks (2000). Researchers like Entman and Rojecki (2000) and

Kraeplin and Subervi-Velez (as referenced in “Brown and Black Communication,” 2003) did discuss the role of minority sources in media coverage and their influence on public perception of them, but they missed the opportunity to study how minority journalists may be able to build rapport with minority sources, making them better sources. Since many of the studies were published before Trump became president in 2016, none of the researchers cited here examined how media staff cover race-related issues with a president whose rhetoric is often referred to as being racist (Eltagouri, 2018). Therefore, this is a good opportunity to study how news coverage of politics intersects with race relations.

Background on BLM

BLM is a social justice movement originally organized by three black women who aimed to create awareness about the disproportionate number of police brutality incidents against blacks. The movement started in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman, who was on trial for the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin on February 26, 2012 (Black Lives Matter, n.d.). However, the movement didn’t gain national and worldwide attention until 2014. Since then, the killings of unarmed black men have continued and no policies or legislation has been passed to help prevent this from reoccurring. In addition, coverage of BLM rarely includes context about the key issues. In 2015, Samuel Sinyangwe, data scientist and founder of Mapping Police Violence (MPV), began compiling data on police shootings across the U.S. Prior to this, no data from government agencies or crowd-sourced databases existed that had been merged or which comprehensively categorized police killings by race (Dalton, 2015). The Federal Bureau of Investigation, for example, hasn’t required state and local law enforcement to submit data on police killings even though the Death in Custody Reporting Act was signed into law in 2014, mandating this data be reported (Dalton, 2015).

The data that did exist before MPV was problematic. For example, the Bureau of Justice Statistics undercounted the number of police killings by more than 50% (Lartey, 2017). Data on MPV states that police killed 1,147 people in 2017. Of that number, 25% were black, a number larger than their population size in the U.S. (2018). In addition, 30% of black victims were unarmed in 2015 compared to 21% of white victims (MPV, 2018). Yet, the president and critics of the movement have generally cast BLM negatively.

Police brutality and acquittals of police officers continued after 2014, most notably in 2016 after the police shootings of Alton Sterling in New Orleans and Philando Castille in Minnesota. During the same year of Sterling's shooting, Trump said he believed that in some instances BLM was behind the killings of police officers (Diamond, 2016). In other instances Trump continued to frame BLM and its supporters as a threat (Diamond, 2016). In 2017, a rally turned violent when white nationalists, who were rallying in Charlottesville, Virginia, clashed with counter protestors. During the rally, white nationalists chanted things like "You will not replace us" and "White lives matter," to which counter protestors chanted things like "Black lives matter" and "Nazi scum off our streets" (McLaughlin, 2017). The event turned violent when a man drove his car into a crowd, killing one woman and injuring 19 others. Trump issued a statement on his Twitter saying that "hatred, bigotry, and violence on many sides" were to blame rather than singling out the white nationalists who staged the rally (McLaughlin, 2017). Trump's statements on BLM have received a lot of media coverage and have played a role in framing the movement.

The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter went viral in 2014. The hashtag was used to organize protests such as in Ferguson, Missouri, where Michael Brown was shot and killed despite being unarmed, as well as in New York City, where Eric Garner died of asphyxiation after a

New York City Police Department officer put him in a headlock while arresting him. The prevalence of the hashtag played a big role in the movement's overall strategy. In fact, on Twitter's 10-year anniversary the site published a list of the most used hashtags related to social causes. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was listed at number three. In 2016, The Pew Research Center analyzed Tweets that included the hashtags #BlackLivesMatter and #AllLivesMatter. The hashtag #AllLivesMatter arose in response to the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter between July 12, 2013 and March 31, 2016. The Pew Research Center found that the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter appeared on Twitter almost 11.8 million times and the hashtag #AllLivesMatter appeared 1.5 million times, which was about one-eighth as often as the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter (Pew Research Center, 2016). However, over time the hashtag moved in parallel with that of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter despite criticism that the hashtag was an attempt to silence or downplay the evidence that blacks face police brutality and are targeted in the criminal justice system at a higher rate than whites (Damiani, 2016). The Pew Research Center also found that between mid-2013 and March 2016, Tweets using the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter were generally used in a more supportive rather than oppositional context in reference to the movement (2016). The Pew Research Center found that 38% of the Tweets using the hashtag were positive, 11% were criticisms of the movement, 12% were neutral references, and 39% were either about general race issues, the 2016 presidential campaign, or miscellaneous (2016). Although the hashtag helped to create awareness, it did little to actually help advance the movement.

Background on DACA

Advocacy for DACA gained momentum in 2010 after immigrant activists living in the U.S. without legal permission began to lead anti-deportation campaigns. These

campaigns received substantially less media coverage and recognition compared to BLM until more recently (Durkee, Hope, & Keels, 2016). The Obama Administration started the program in 2012 to protect immigrants living in the U.S. without legal permission who were brought to the country illegally as minors from deportation. However, USCIS stopped accepting new applications for DACA in 2017 when Trump made the announcement that he would begin phasing out the program (Valverde, 2018). Under the program, immigrants who were approved received a Social Security Number, a work permit, and were allowed to apply for a driver's license (USCIS, n.d.). Requirements for the program included entering the U.S. before turning 16, not being older than 31 as of June 15, 2012, and residing in the U.S. continuously since June 15, 2007 (USCIS, n.d.). In addition, applicants had to be degree seeking or have graduated and could not have been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors (USCIS, n.d.). The permit was renewable after a two-year period and the application cost \$435, plus any legal fees. During the 2016 Presidential Campaign, Trump promised he would "immediately terminate" DACA if he was elected (Valverde, 2018). After the election, Trump seemed to soften up on his stance and said he wanted to work something out for Dreamers that would make people "happy and proud," but moved forward with phasing out the program in September (Valverde, 2018). Trump gave DACA recipients until October 5 to renew their permit.

After the announcement, Trump also gave Congress until March 5, 2018 to come up with a replacement immigration policy. In the next few months there was a lot of media coverage on DACA, particularly of protests in support of DACA, but there was also a lot of debate about the requirements that would have to be met in order for Trump to sign a proposed bill (Valverde, 2018). At times, Trump considered a legislative fix for DACA

recipients and their parents, while other times he said he wouldn't compromise without securing the border with a proposed wall between Mexico and the U.S. (Valverde, 2018). One event that received significant news coverage was Trump's meeting with lawmakers on January 11, 2018, where he reportedly said, "Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?" (Dawsey, 2018). Meanwhile, a lot was happening in the courts as well. At one point, a federal judge ordered that the government keep DACA on the same terms and conditions that were in effect before Trump's announcement (Valverde, 2018). The Trump administration appealed, but the Supreme Court later declined to take up the appeal, meaning DACA would remain in place until and if the Supreme Court took up the case (Valverde, 2018). Finally, on April 22, 2018 a federal judge ordered the government continue with DACA on the basis that the decision to end the program was "virtually unexplained" and "unlawful" (Sacchetti, 2018). The ruling was seen as a tough blow to the Trump administration's immigration efforts (Sacchetti, 2018). However, the federal judge gave the Department of Homeland Security 90 days to provide a more solid reasoning for ending the program (Sacchetti, 2018). Lastly, one of the most significant events that occurred in support of DACA was the government shutdown on January 20, 2018. The shutdown was partly in response to disputes over the future of DACA and whether or not to allocate funding toward Trump's proposed wall (Valverde, 2018). The shutdown ended two days later after Republicans promised Senate Democrats they would allow debate on the DREAM Act before February 8, the next funding deadline (Valverde, 2018).

Trump's actions on immigrants came as little surprise given that during his presidential campaign he said immigrants from Mexico "...are not our friend[s], believe me... They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume,

are good people” (Reilly, 2016). Since then, he repeatedly promised to build a wall along the Mexican border, which he claimed Mexico would pay for, in an effort to stop illegal immigration into the U.S. However, the *New York Times* reported that immigrants do not make crime worse in the U.S. (Flagg, 2018). In addition, the number of immigrants living in the U.S. without legal permission declined from 11.3 million in 2009 to 11 million in 2015 (Pew Research Center, 2017). Despite these facts, few other articles about DACA include this type of context. Without context about the key issues and the continuation of the president and other politicians in framing immigrants as criminals and as a burden to the economy, the public has been led to believe that this is the case (Flagg, 2018). In addition, during Trump’s first SOTU address, he called on Congress to work with him to come up with an immigration reform that would “defend Americans – to protect their safety, their families, their communities, and their right to the American Dream. Because Americans are dreamers too” (Begley, 2018). Critics compared this to saying “All Lives Matter.” As was the case with BLM, Trump’s statements on DACA have received a lot of media coverage and have played a role in framing public perception of those affected by DACA.

The Present Study

The purpose of the study was to contribute general knowledge about the influence of journalists’ race and ethnicity on the news framing of BLM and DACA. Print articles from the *Tampa Bay Times (Times)* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC)* between February 2016 and April 2018 covering BLM and DACA were compared. The two newsrooms were chosen based on their demographic makeup since the *Times* is less diverse than the *AJC*. The study consists of two components: (1) a textual analysis where key words were identified in coverage of BLM and DACA such as “illegal,” “immigrant,” “undocumented,” “violent,”

“criminal,” and “riot” and (2) a survey where perceived racism and perceived adequacy of BLM and DACA coverage by the two newsrooms was measured. The Perceived Racism Scale, Modern Racism Scale, and Perceived Racism Scale for Latinos/as were adapted to appropriately measure perceived racism of the staff at the *Times* and the *AJC*.

Between February 2016 and April 2018, journalists set the public agenda on immigration and race relations through constant coverage of DACA and BLM, but this is in part because the president has been outspoken about his views on these topics. Trump has constantly described immigrants as criminals (Reilly, 2016) and insinuated that blacks are violent (Arkin, Rafferty, & Sotomayer, 2017). It is possible that he has primed the public through marginalizing news frames and second-level agenda setting. Given what is known from decades of research about the media’s influence on public perception of race, it is worth studying any changes, if any, in the way journalists cover race-related issues today.

Consequently, this study began by posing three research questions:

RQ1: What words and frames are being used in coverage of BLM and DACA?

RQ2: Does a predominately white newsroom like the *Times* cover BLM and DACA differently than a newsroom that is more racially and ethnically diverse like the *AJC*?

RQ3: Are journalists at the *Times* and the *AJC* using any of the techniques suggested in past research to avoid perpetuating prejudices and stereotypes such as ethical news frames, providing context about the key issues of BLM and DACA, or hiring more minority newsroom staff, including in leadership positions?

Methodology

Textual Analysis Methods/Procedures

A textual analysis based on grounded theory (Creswell, 2007) was used to conduct qualitative research of the most commonly used words and news frames that journalists at the *Times* and the *AJC* use to address BLM and DACA in their articles. Much more than just identifying words and frames, a textual analysis helped to determine how diversity in newsrooms, and potentially other factors, may impact coverage of blacks and immigrants. The political climate in which the articles were written, February 2016 to April 2018, was taken into consideration and only articles where BLM and DACA was mentioned more than once were analyzed. With the amount of influence that the media exerts on the public, conducting a textual analysis also helped to determine how the media influences, reflects, and/or reveals a particular view of culture and society. Qualitative research was the most appropriate for this topic because it allowed for asking “open-ended research questions, wanting to listen to the participants we are studying, and shaping the questions after we ‘explore’...” (Creswell, 2007). This way, the results were based on both the participants’ perspectives and the researcher’s interpretations (Creswell, 2007). Lastly, grounded theory allowed for the opportunity to shape further research (Creswell, 2007).

A group of terms were inputted into the LexisNexis Database to determine which words, and therefore which frames were used in the sample articles from the *Times* and the *AJC* about BLM and DACA. For BLM, the terms “BLM,” “Trump,” “rights,” “demand,” “riot,” and “protest” were inputted into the database and grouped in four different ways. It was important to analyze how often the *Times* and the *AJC* used “demand” versus “rights” in reference to BLM because the two terms have different connotations. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term “demand” is defined as “something claimed as due or owed” (n.d.). In contrast, the term “right” is defined as “being in accordance with what is

just, good, or proper” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In addition, the terms “riot” and “protest” were analyzed since Leopold and Bell (2017) suggested in their research that using the term “riot” racializes BLM and its supporters. The same technique was applied for DACA.

The terms “DACA,” “Dreamers,” “immigrants,” “undocumented,” “illegal,” and “Trump” were inputted into LexisNexis and grouped four different ways. In this case, it was important to analyze whether the *Times* and the *AJC* were more commonly using “DACA,” or “Dreamers” to refer to the individuals who were brought into the U.S. illegally as minors. The term “DACA” refers to the administrative program implemented by the Obama Administration, while the term “Dreamer” was originally used to refer to the DREAM Act, which stands for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (AP Stylebook, 2017). The term “DACA” is the more neutral term of the two, while the term “Dreamer” can convey more sympathy for this group since associations can be made with the pursuit of the American dream (Begley, 2018). In addition, it was important to analyze whether the *Times* and the *AJC* more commonly referred to DACA recipients as “illegal” or “undocumented.” The term “illegal” is defined as “not according to or authorized by law,” while the term “undocumented” is defined as “not supported by documentary evidence” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Here, the term “undocumented” is the more neutral of the two, while the term “illegal” reinforces negative public attitudes to immigration (Brouwer, van der Leun, & van der Woude, 2017). These are two terms that are commonly used to discuss DACA recipients and immigrants in general. However, the Associated Press offers some guidance for journalists reporting on this topic.

Journalists should only use the term “illegal” to refer to an action, such as illegal immigration, not people, such as illegal immigrant (AP Stylebook, 2017). Instead of using

the terms alien, an illegal, illegals, or undocumented, journalists can use variations such as a person “living in,” “entering a country illegally,” or “without legal permission” (AP Stylebook, 2017). The term “undocumented” is also problematic because it does not precisely refer to the lack of required documents for legal residence (AP Stylebook, 2017). Furthermore, the term “DACA” should be used sparingly because it conveys temporary protection from deportation and not legal status. In addition, DACA should be described as an administrative program and not an executive action (AP Stylebook, 2017). Also, DREAMer or Dreamer should not be used to describe DACA recipients since it refers to the Dream Act, which offered similar protections as DACA, but was never actually approved in Congress (AP Stylebook, 2017). These AP rules were used as guidance in conducting the content analysis of articles written about DACA and BLM in the *Times* and the *AJC*.

Survey Methods/Procedures

An online survey using Qualtrics survey software was sent out to 96 people on the editorial staff at the *Times* and 107 people on the editorial staff at the *AJC*. Participants were recruited by email from a list pulled from the *AJC*'s website and a list provided by an editor at the *Times*. No incentives were used to encourage survey participation. In the consent form and the email, participants were told that the survey would contribute to general knowledge of the possible influence of race and ethnicity on journalists' decisions in news coverage. Only the responses from the completed surveys were analyzed for this study. In addition, the online survey was pretested on students at Appalachian State University, in the COM 3340 Journalism Ethics in a Free Society class. The pretest served to assess the readability and comprehension of the survey, clarity of the language being used, and to work out any kinks. The survey consisted of four measures: (1) perceived racism, (2) perception of newsroom

coverage of DACA, (3) perception of newsroom coverage of BLM, and (4) perception of newsroom diversity. The survey consisted of a total of 24 questions, one of which just asked for participants' consent to participate in the survey. Eight of the 24 questions had between three to 28 additional questions to go along with the appropriate scale that would measure perceived racism in different ethnicities. In addition, some of the questions in the scales were modified for this study to fit the topic and to make the survey brief. Only three of the five possible scales were used since only whites, blacks, and Hispanic/Latinos responded to the survey.

The MRS was used in this study to measure racial attitudes of whites toward blacks at the *AJC* and the *Times*. The MRS was developed based on the belief that everyone is treated equally regardless of race in the U.S. and individual perceptions rooted in cultural beliefs are driving racial inequalities (Merenstein, 2008). The scale consists of seven items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The original MRS has a Cronbach coefficient alpha of .82. The version of the MRS used in this study consists of a total of eight questions. This complete version of the MRS can be found in Appendix 2. The PRS, on the other hand, was used in this study to measure the frequency of perceived experiences with racism of blacks at the *AJC* and the *Times*. The version of the PRS used in this study only measured the frequency of exposure to racist events in three domains: (1) job settings, (2) public settings, and (3) racist statements. This version of the scale consists of 13 statements on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "don't know." Sample items include, "You have been called insulting names related to your race or skin color," for racist statements, "Waiters and waitresses ignore you and serve whites first," for racism in public settings, and "Because you are black, you're assigned to do the jobs no one else wants to do"

for racism on the job. The scale has a reliability coefficient of .96. The complete version of the PRS used in this study can be found in Appendix 3. Lastly, the PRSL is a modified version of the PRS. The PRSL was used in this study to measure perceived racism of Hispanics/Latinos at the *AJC* and the *Times*. This version of the scale consists of 21 items on a 7-point Likert scale. Participants reported how often they have perceived each event within the last year ranging from “not applicable” to “several times a day.” Only discrimination based on situational incidents was measured in this version of the scale. In addition, the scale covers racism in occupational settings, racism in public settings, and racism in general settings. Sample items for each setting include, “I have been passed up for promotions and benefits at work” for occupational settings, “I have been discriminated against, made to feel uncomfortable, or ignored because of my Spanish accent or because I don’t speak English well” for general settings, and “I have been treated unfairly by the police” for public settings. The PRSL has an internal reliability alpha ranging from .81 to .98 for frequency of exposure to incidents (Collado-Proctor, 1999). The complete adapted version of the PRSL used in the present study can be found in Appendix 4. Each item was scored, added, and divided by the number of items to find the overall score for each individual scale. Higher scores indicated either higher levels of Modern Racism, more frequent exposure to racism, or greater perceived frequency of racial discrimination.

Regardless of ethnicity, all reporters answered the demographic questionnaire, as well as questionnaires about their perception of newsroom coverage of DACA and BLM and about their perception of newsroom diversity. The demographic questionnaire consisted of 15 questions about the participants’ age, gender, birthplace, age when they arrived to the U.S., ethnicity, annual income, employment status, and party affiliation. The complete

demographic questionnaire used in this study can be found in Appendix 1. The other questionnaires were all based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” To measure the staff’s perception of coverage of BLM and DACA, participants were asked four questions in two separate sets of questionnaires. The items in these questionnaires were inspired by Leopold and Bell’s study (2017). The complete questionnaires can be found in Appendix 5 and Appendix 6. To measure the staff’s perception of newsroom diversity, participants were asked three questions. The complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix 7.

Textual Analysis Results

Using the LexisNexis database, it appeared that journalists at the *Times* wrote about DACA 30 times and about BLM 20 times during the selected time frame, whereas journalists at the *AJC* wrote about DACA 58 times and about BLM 21 times. Journalists at the *Times* mostly used the terms “Dreamers,” “Trump,” “immigrants,” and “illegal” in their articles. Journalists at the *AJC* mostly used the terms “DACA,” “Trump,” “immigrants,” and “illegal” in their articles. On the other hand, journalists at both the *Times* and the *AJC* most commonly used the terms “Black Lives Matter,” “Trump,” “rights,” and “protest.” In addition, journalists at the *Times* were more likely to use the term “Dreamer” and journalists at the *AJC* were more likely to use the term “DACA.” However, journalists at both newsrooms were more likely to use the term “illegal” rather than “undocumented” in reference to immigration. In regard to BLM, journalists at both newsrooms wrote more about blacks’ “rights” rather than “demands” and used the term “protest” more than “riot.”

Jeremy Redmon, an award-winning journalist with more than 20 years of experience reporting for newspapers, wrote 21 of the 58 stories about DACA for the *AJC* (*AJC*, n.d.).

Thirty of the 58 stories appeared on the first page of the newspaper. As for the *Times*, 12 of the 30 stories about DACA were either editorials or letters from readers. The stories written by actual reporters were not assigned to any single reporter or group of reporters. Marlene Sokol, education reporter, Steve Bousquet, Tallahassee bureau chief, and Alex Leary, Washington bureau chief, each wrote two stories about DACA, which were more stories than any other reporters wrote about the topic. In addition, 13 of the 30 stories about DACA appeared on the first page of the newspaper. The results were different when it came to coverage of BLM. In this case, only four stories were letters by readers in the *Times* and only two were editorials in the *AJC*. Adam C. Smith, political editor at the *Times*, was the only reporter who wrote more than one article about BLM. He wrote 3 of the 20 stories on the topic. Eleven of the 20 stories about BLM appeared on the first page of the *Times*. Greg Bluestein, political reporter, and Ernie Suggs, a reporter covering breaking news and investigative stories, were the only reporters for the *AJC* who wrote more than one story about BLM. Each reporter wrote two stories about *BLM* for the *AJC*. Thirteen of the 21 stories about BLM appeared on the first page of the *AJC*.

Overall, reporters included less context in stories about BLM than in stories about DACA. The reporters who wrote stories about BLM were more likely to just mention the movement in regard to specific protests, but very few went into depth about what supporters are trying to accomplish. Multiple stories in the *AJC* were about the kneeling of athletes during the National Anthem in support of BLM and about sources' belief that freedom of speech was being threatened. In contrast, stories in the *Times* were about politicians' reactions to the movement. Many of the politicians identified as Republican and spoke about the importance of supporting Blue Lives Matter and All Lives Matter instead of BLM. In

stories from both publications, few sources spoke positively about BLM. Instead, sources spoke about the disruption and violence of the protests, especially in letters from readers. In these stories, readers sometimes described BLM as chaotic, violent, anarchy, and a mindless mob. Readers also compared BLM to what they described as hate groups such as the New Black Panther Party, the Nation of Islam, and ANTIFA. Reporters also followed this frame in their articles such as by mentioning the fear of violence at protests and the use of riot gear and riot kits. However, few stories were about protests that actually turned violent, even though many reporters mentioned the number and nature of arrests.

On the other hand, coverage of DACA was more appropriate. Stories about DACA had more context because they included more data and background information about the program. Reporters at the *AJC* were also more likely than reporters at the *Times* to follow AP's guidelines. For example, reporters for the *AJC* were more likely to describe DACA as a program rather than as an executive action. Many of the articles in the *AJC* were also features about DACA recipients who feared about their future under the Trump administration or where writers called for compassionate immigration policies. Although there was some variety in the countries of origin of feature stories about DACA recipients, the majority was Mexican. DACA recipients were also often described under a material news frame by describing them as hard-working members of their communities who contributed to society in terms of taxes and education. Interestingly, some reporters even included details that highlighted DACA recipients' Southern culture or less foreign nature. About half of the other stories about DACA included politicians as sources. These sources were either compassionate toward DACA recipients, but blamed their parents for bringing them into the country illegally or were outright against any type of amnesty for DACA recipients and their

parents. The sources in the latter group were more likely to use the term “illegal immigrants” and to focus on the criminal records of immigrants living in the U.S. without legal authorization. Trump was mentioned in almost all of the stories from both publications about BLM and DACA, but more directly in stories about DACA because of his statements and actions regarding illegal immigration. Trump’s statements about BLM and DACA were almost always negative, except when he claimed to want to pass legislation that would benefit DACA recipients.

After Trump’s first SOTU address, journalists at the *AJC* wrote about DACA six times and journalists at the *Times* wrote about it two times. One of the articles in the *Times* is an editorial that calls on politicians to act on immigration legislation. The tone is overall positive and compassionate toward immigrants. Similar to other stories about DACA, the *Times*’ story focuses on two immigrants who have either contributed to the community or are family figures without criminal records. The other story is about how “Florida’s Republicans have been transformed by the ‘BUILD THE WALL!’ orthodoxy of President Donald Trump’s nationalist movement” (Mahoney, 2018). Neither one of the stories was written fully in accordance with AP’s guidelines. The reporter repeatedly used the phrase “unauthorized immigrants” in the first story and “Dreamers” and “undocumented immigrants” in the second story. The articles that appeared in the *AJC* after the SOTU address were about the need for immigration reform, Republican’s sense of betrayal from Trump’s change of tone on immigration, and hardworking immigrants without legal status.

Survey Results

Twenty-one of 209 possible responses were collected from the survey. Nine respondents were from the *AJC* and five from the *Times*. Five editors, five reporters, two

columnists, a photojournalist, and a data specialist responded to the survey. Many of them either covered general news, education, or politics. Seven males and seven females responded to the survey. The average term of employment was eight years and the average age of the staff was 40. Most respondents reported having a degree and an annual income of \$50,000-\$99,000. Most respondents also identified as independent for party affiliation. Nine respondents said they were U.S. citizens, while one was not, having arrived to the country at 36 years old. Six respondents identified as white, two as black, and two as Hispanic/Latino.

White respondents scored an 11 on the MRS, indicating low level of Modern Racism. Black respondents scored a 4.08 on the PRS, indicating low frequency of exposure to racism. Hispanic/Latino respondents scored a 4.24 on the PRSL, also indicating low frequency of experienced racial discrimination. Most respondents disagreed that BLM and DACA receive enough news coverage; agreed that framing BLM protests as riots and DACA recipients as “illegal aliens” emphasizes characteristics such as lawlessness; and disagreed that coverage of BLM and DACA go beyond certain incidents and includes context about the key issues. However, most respondents disagreed that white journalists cover BLM just as fairly as black journalists, while most respondents were neutral about the query that white journalists cover DACA just as fairly as immigrant journalists. On the questionnaire about their perception of newsroom diversity, most respondents disagreed that enough racial/ethnic minorities exist in today’s newsrooms, agreed that diversity would lead to more complete coverage of topics like DACA and BLM, and disagreed that increasing newsroom diversity would lead to biased coverage of topics like DACA and BLM.

Conclusion/Contributions

Information about the newsrooms' demographic makeup and the cities they are located in provides some insight to the potential influences behind the results. The *Times* is Florida's largest daily newspaper and is a print and online publication covering west-central Florida (n.d.). The *Times*' print version has 558,900 average daily readers and a circulation size of 239,913 (Nielsen Scarborough Report, 2017). Tampa's demographics are 64.5% white, 24.9% black, and 24.2% Hispanic/Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). In 2017, the *Times* had a 17.5% minority population and an 82.5% white population (ASNE). Of the percentage of minorities, 7.2% were black, 5.4% were Hispanic/Latino, 1.8% were Asian, .6% were Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2.4% identified as other (ASNE, 2017). No American Indians were employed at the *Times*. In comparison, the *AJC*'s print version has about 527,000 daily readers (The Washington Market, 2017) and a daily circulation size of 174,251 (Mondo Times, 2016). Atlanta's demographics are 40.4% white, 50.8% black, and 4.9% Hispanic/Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). In 2017, the *AJC* had a 34.3% total minority population and a 65.7% white population. Of that number, 23.1% were black, 4.5% were Hispanic, .7% were American Indian, 5.2% were Asian, and .7% identified as other (ASNE, 2017). The data shows that the *AJC* has the more diverse newsroom of the two and is located in a more diverse city. The data and results from the study provide noteworthy answers to the three research questions that were posed for this study.

The first research question asked about the words and frames that reporters at the *Times* and the *AJC* used in coverage of BLM and DACA. The results from the textual analysis demonstrated that reporters at the *Times* used less neutral terms with more positive inclinations, while reporters at the *AJC* used more neutral terms in accordance with AP's guidelines in coverage of DACA. In addition, journalists at both newsrooms used the more

neutral or positive terms when writing about BLM such as “rights” and “protest.” However, journalists at both newsrooms still used some of the problematic news frames and word choices outlined in earlier studies (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Leopold & Bell, 2017) such as the riot frame, crime story frame, carnival frame, ethical news frame, and material news frame. Although reporters from both newsrooms used a mix of frames, the most obvious ones were ethical and material news frames in coverage of people living in the U.S. without legal permission. The *Times* used the ethical news frame more often, while the *AJC* used the material news frame more often. Therefore, the *Times* did a better job with its reporting in pushing the public toward comity. Even though this study did not include survey data from readers about what issues are salient to them and what attributes they connect with DACA and BLM, past research demonstrates that journalists’ word choice and framing does play a role in second-level agenda setting and priming the public. Therefore, it is easy to deduce that news coverage of Trump’s statements regarding BLM and DACA played a noteworthy role in race relations in the U.S.

News coverage of Trump’s rhetoric about immigrants in the *Times* and the *AJC* often included statements about immigrants being criminals and about immigration rising in recent years. Yet, coverage of BLM continues to follow the protest paradigm, mentioned in Leopold and Bell’s study, with language of crime, lawlessness, violence and inflammatory quotes from sources and bystanders (2017). Reporters at the *Times* and at the *AJC* also rarely discussed the key issues about BLM, such as the continued disproportionate killings of unarmed black men and women by police officers. All of this adds up so that through their stories, reporters failed to push the public toward comity in regard to blacks. A main issue in coverage of both BLM and DACA by both newsrooms was the use of sources and the

publication of readers' letters that did not follow AP's guidelines, nor provided context for their inflammatory quotes. Therefore, word choice, news frames, and politicians' rhetoric all influence the public's perception of issues.

The second research question asked about whether or not there were any differences in news coverage about BLM and DACA between a predominately white newsroom and a more ethnically diverse newsroom. For one, the results show that journalists at the *AJC* wrote about BLM and DACA more than journalists at the *Times*, which is noteworthy because the *AJC* is the more diverse newsroom of the two. Although the *Times* was the newsroom with less racial and ethnic diversity of the two newsrooms, they seemed to have more variety in the racial and ethnic makeup of the reporters writing stories about BLM and DACA.

Although answers from respondents to the survey were kept anonymous, their race and ethnicity could be inferred to be Hispanic/Latino based on their first and last names. Some of the reporters were Octavio Jones, Juan Carlos Chavez, and Tony Marrero. It can be inferred that reporters at the *Times* were more likely to use terms such as "undocumented" and "Dreamer" in the articles because of their race and ethnicity. Although the reporters at the *Times* did not follow AP's guidelines and chose to use the less neutral term, they did use an ethical frame to discuss DACA. The first part of Domke, McCoy, and Torres' (as referenced in "Brown and Black Communication, 2003) conclusion to their study provides a reason for this. Since the *Times* had a higher Hispanic population in the city and the newsroom, demographic factors could have been a reason for the journalists' perception of Hispanics and the reason they chose to use an ethical frame in coverage of DACA. It is possible that by being exposed to and interacting with more Hispanics than journalists in Atlanta, that may have made reporters for the *Times* more sympathetic to how DACA recipients and

immigrants without legal authorization living in the U.S. were being treated. Furthermore, they may have identified with Hispanics or immigrants since there were more Hispanics working at the *Times*.

The results from the *AJC*'s coverage of BLM and DACA suggest something different. Since a single reporter wrote the most stories about DACA and used AP's guidelines the most often, the results suggest that it is beneficial for newsrooms to hire or train journalists to specialize on a single topic such as race-related topics. Through specialization, reporters come to better understand their sources and the people they write about and better represent them in their stories. Although the *AJC* was the newsroom with more diversity, Suggs was the only reporter who wrote about BLM more than once and was black. Suggs has experience covering civil rights and is the former national vice president of the National Association of Black Journalists (n.d., *AJC*). Suggs wrote articles about black veterans' reactions to NFL protests and about the self-ordained face of the BLM movement. Suggs interviewed more than a dozen black veterans for the first article who all but one supported the NFL protests (2017). In this article, Suggs (2017) offered a different perspective as a black reporter, like Entman and Rojecki (2000) suggested, by focusing more on the veterans' experience with discrimination rather than on the NFL protests. In the second article, Suggs focused on the criminal past and inconsistent claims of Sir Maejor who is the self-ordained face of the BLM movement (2017). Suggs wrote in the article that critics of Sir Maejor claim he actively works against the BLM movement because of his controversial tendencies (2017). Although the claims in the article are all backed up by evidence, Suggs did not provide context about BLM. On the other hand, Greg Bluestein, the other reporter who wrote two articles about BLM for the *AJC*, wrote one article that focused

on the killings of police officers and the fear of violence at protests in retaliation to BLM. The second article was about Trump's visit to Atlanta for the football game between the University of Georgia and the University of Alabama. Neither one of the articles included context about BLM, but included a lot of connections between BLM and disruption, violence, or police killings.

The results from the first and second research questions all add up to answer the third and final research question. Overall, reporters at the *Times* push the public toward comity by using an ethical news frame in coverage of DACA. Reporters at the *AJC* also push the public toward comity by providing context and by following AP's guidelines in coverage of DACA. Coverage can be improved, however, by using more diverse sources. As for coverage of BLM, no noteworthy changes were made from either newsroom. Journalists from both newsrooms continue to not provide context about the key issues regarding BLM and continue to portray the movement and Blacks as violent, for example. Lastly, even though the *AJC* was the more diverse newsroom, the difference in their coverage was not significant. The results from the survey and the textual analysis suggest that greater changes can occur if more minorities are employed in newsrooms. Therefore, as is, the media as a structure plays a significant role in influencing newsroom coverage of BLM and DACA, but since the ethnicity and race of reporters does play a role in coverage of the two groups, increasing newsroom diversity would create benefits in the long-term.

In conclusion, journalists at the *Times* and the *AJC* have pushed the public toward comity in their coverage of BLM and DACA, but are still influenced by structural racism in some aspects. For the most part, coverage of BLM and DACA was ethical and fair, but things such as AP's guidelines do play a role in hindering reporters from framing BLM and

DACA in a more positive light. Traditional news values such as impact, prominence, and conflict also drive journalists' coverage, which can lead them to focus on stories of crime and violence. In addition, only six companies own the majority of the media in the U.S., the six companies being Comcast, NewsCorp, Disney, Viacom, Time Warner, and CBS (Lutz, 2012). This has resulted in content homogeneity and/or editorial autonomy (Mohamed & Fleming-Rife, "Brown and Black Communication," 2003). As is the case in local and even national newspapers, the leaders at these companies are majority white, meaning that hiring more minority journalists and consciously seeking more minority sources may not be enough to change how minorities are covered in the U.S. media. That's been the case in recent years because minorities in the media do not yet have the potential to influence how the media works and what it values as a structure. As researchers such as Entman and Rojecki (2000) and Mohamed and Fleming-Rife (2003) suggested, organizational structural change is necessary. However, employing journalists of diverse races and ethnicities does make a difference. Consciously using news frames that push the public toward comity to reach readers of diverse ethnicities and races also makes a difference. Lastly, having a reporter or reporters specialize on a topic also makes a difference because it helps to reduce stereotypes, misinformation, and misrepresentation.

Limitations

The greatest limitations for the study were the time constraint and low response rate from the survey. It would've been possible to collect more survey data if the study had been started at least a semester in advance. Only 21 of 209 possible responses were collected from the survey of the editorial staff at the *AJC* and the *Times*, a 10% response rate. At least 25 responses from each publication were necessary to draw strong conclusions from the data.

However, it is not unusual to collect a low response rate from journalists since many of them are either working under deadline or they may be hesitant to answer personal questions in an effort to protect their privacy and objectivity. Also, because only six individuals responded to the Modern Racism Scale measures, and only two individuals responded to the Perceived Racism Scale and Perceived Racism Scale for Latinos measures, respectively, there was not enough data to conduct confirmatory factor analyses or to perform bivariate analyses. None of the respondents answered questions for the Asian American Racism Related Stress Index or the General Ethnic Discrimination Scale. Thus, only demographics and frequency data was reported. In addition, survey data was not collected from readers about what issues are salient to them or what attributes they connect with certain issues. Without a connection between the content and influence of the content, it was not possible to determine what role the *Times* and the *AJC* play in agenda setting. Funding for the study would've provided the opportunity to purchase respondents through Qualtrics to collect data from a target sample. This would've switched the focus to a more general sample rather than specifically of the *Times* and the *AJC*, but it would have guaranteed a greater, stronger response rate. Funding would have also provided the opportunity to access Gallup data.

Future Directions

Despite limitations, this study provides a starting point for future research. With stronger data, it could be easier to draw more significant conclusions about the influence of minorities in the media on public perception. To build on that, research can be conducted to study how the race and ethnicity of minority journalists influences their level of rapport with minority sources when covering race-related issues such as BLM and DACA. It's possible that the level of rapport also influences how minorities are portrayed in the news. In addition,

the focus of this study was on the local coverage of BLM and DACA by the *Times* and the *AJC*. However, the *Times* owns *Politifact* and a significant portion of the articles from the LexisNexis database were from *Politifact*. It could be beneficial to conduct a content analysis of the articles written for *Politifact* to compare the national coverage of BLM and DACA to local coverage.

In addition, other approaches could be taken to better the understanding of the impact of race and ethnicity on public perception. Future research could focus on how all black newsrooms cover similar issues to BLM and DACA for a predominantly black audience compared to newsrooms with more diversity or all white newsrooms. While an all black newsroom would also lack diversity, journalists working for such news organizations would be covering topics that are of importance to other minorities. The same type of study could be conducted on a majority Hispanic/Latino news staff that works for a Spanish news outlet and presents information for a majority Hispanic/Latino audience. Both of these approaches build on the current study. They are important endeavors because the minority population in the U.S. has continued to increase and it is important to understand what impact that may have on newsrooms throughout the country and the public. So long as the minority population continues to increase, discussion about the impact of diversity within organizations will continue.

Appendices

Perceptions of News Coverage of Minority Populations

Appendix 1

<<Demographics>>

1. What publication do you work for?
2. What is your job title?
3. If applicable, what beat(s) or topic(s) do you cover?
4. How long have you been employed in your current position?
5. What is your gender?
6. If you selected other gender, please specify.
7. What is your age?
8. What is your annual income?
9. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
10. What is your party affiliation?
11. Are you a U.S. born citizen?
12. If you were born outside the U.S., approximately at what age did you first come to the U.S.? (Approximate age in years.)
13. Are you Hispanic/Latino?
14. What is your race/ethnicity? (Regardless of how you answered the first question, choose one or more.)
15. If you selected other race/ethnicity, please specify.

Appendix 2

<<MRS>>

Using the following scale, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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1. Discrimination against racial/ethnic minorities is no longer a problem in the United States.
2. It is easy to understand the anger of racial/ethnic minorities in America.
3. Racial/ethnic minorities have more influence on education policies than they ought to have.
4. Racial/ethnic minorities are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.
5. Racial/ethnic minorities should not push themselves where they are not wanted.
6. Over the past few years, racial/ethnic minorities have gotten more economically than they deserve.
7. Over the past few years, the government has shown more respect to racial/ethnic minorities than they deserve.
8. Over the past few years, the news media have shown more respect to racial/ethnic minorities than they deserve.

Appendix 3

<<PRS>>

Using the following scale, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Scale:

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often	Don't Know
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1. You have been called insulting names related to your race or skin color.
2. When you go shopping, you are followed by white security guards or watched by white clerks.
3. You hear comments from whites expressing surprise at your or other "minority" individuals' intelligence or industriousness.
4. People "talk down" to you because you are black.
5. Waiters and waitresses ignore you and serve whites first.
6. You know of people who have gotten into trouble (gotten hurt, beaten up, shot) by whites (individuals, gangs, police, white hate groups) because of their race.
7. Because you are black, you're assigned the jobs no one else wants to do.
8. At work, when different opinions would be helpful, your opinions are not asked for because of your race.
9. You are watched more closely than other workers because of your race.
10. Racial jokes or harassment are directed at you at work.
11. You are ignored or not taken seriously by your boss because of your race.
12. A white co-worker with less experience and qualifications got promoted over you.
13. You are treated with less dignity and respect than you would be if you were white.

Appendix 4

<<PRSL>>

Please use the scale below to indicate how often you experience each of the following situations as a Latino.

Scale:

Not Applicable	Never	Seldom	Several times a year	Several times a month	Several times a week	Several times a day
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1. I have been passed up for promotions and benefits at work.
2. I have been given more work to do than people who are not Latino.
3. I have been given more responsibilities at work (e.g., participate in various committees, take on leadership roles, etc.)
4. I have experienced that Latinos who achieve (e.g., highly educated, high power job, middle to high income level, etc.) are viewed as a “special case” or “exception to the rule.”
5. I have been discriminated, treated with disrespect or ignored in public settings.
6. I have been refused housing or turned down for loans.
7. I have been treated unfairly by the police.
8. I have been suspected of shoplifting.
9. I have been discriminated against, made to feel uncomfortable or ignored because of my Spanish accent or because I don't speak English well.
10. I have been called names (e.g., spic, wet back, bean picker, etc.) or stereotyped.
11. I have heard negative comments about Latinos.

12. I have been treated with disrespect (e.g. talked down to, treated rudely, stared at, laughed at, etc.).
13. I have witnessed racism towards loved ones and friends.
14. I have been made to feel alienated or like an outcast in the U.S. community.
15. I have experienced that people who are not Latino feel threatened or angry when my Latino cultural pride is expressed (e.g. ethnic clothing, music, political stickers, national flag, etc.).
16. I have experienced that Latinos are perceived as a threat when we/they socialize with other Latinos.
17. I have been physically assaulted because I am Latino.
18. I have been blamed for U.S. problems or told to go back to my country.
19. People assume that I do not have legal status in this country.
20. I have experienced that Latinos who have more ethnic features (e.g., darker skin tone, more Indian or African features, etc.) experience more racism.
21. I have experienced that Latinos who look white are seen as an exception to the race (i.e., “Oh you’re different than those Mexicans”).

Appendix 5

<< Perception of Newsroom Coverage of BLM>>

Using the following scale, please answer according to your own newsroom's coverage of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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1. The BLM movement is covered enough.
2. Framing BLM protests as riots emphasizes lawlessness, danger, destruction and disorder.
3. When reporting on the BLM movement, enough journalists go beyond the lack of indictments to outline or analyze the key issues – police brutality, unfair policies, etc. – that helped spur the BLM movement and resulting protests.
4. White journalists cover the BLM movement just as fairly as black journalists.

Appendix 6

<<Perception of Newsroom Coverage of DACA>>

Using the following scale, please answer according to your own newsroom's coverage of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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1. DACA is covered enough.
2. Framing DACA recipients as “illegal aliens” instead of as undocumented “immigrants” emphasizes lawlessness.
3. When reporting on DACA, enough journalists go beyond the failure of the Senate to pass legislation on immigration to outline or analyze the key issues that affect “DREAMers.”
4. White journalists cover DACA just as fairly as immigrant journalists.

Appendix 7

<<Perception of Newsroom Diversity >>

Using the following scale, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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1. Using the following scale, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. There are enough racial/ethnic minorities in today's newsrooms.
2. Increasing newsroom diversity would lead to fuller coverage of topics like DACA and BLM.
3. Increasing newsroom diversity would lead to biased coverage of topics like DACA and BLM.

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