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Jeffrey Longhurst

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"Can we Clean Their Guns for Em'?" Frame Analysis of Media Coverage Surrounding the Killing of African Americans by Police, a Comparison of four U.S. and International News Sources.

By

Jeffrey Longhurst

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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In

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College of Graduate Studies and Research

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”Can we Clean Their Guns for Em’? Frame Analysis of Media Coverage Surrounding the Killing of Unarmed African Americans by Police, a Comparison of four U.S. and International News Sources.

Jeffrey R Longhurst

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student’s committee.

Advisor: Dr. Christopher Brown

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Committee Member: Dr. Kebba Darboe

Abstract

Instances of unarmed African Americans being killed when encountering police officers have come to the forefront of the discussion about race and race relations in the U.S. This study investigates media framing to determine if there are elements of racism in media frames surrounding these events. This study seeks to determine the extent that the tenets of Critical Race Theory apply in news when comparing stories Fox News and CNN online articles with articles by Al Jazeera and BBC. The two cases chosen were the killings of Micheal Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland. Using critical frame analysis, I found that four themes: Gray’s illegal switchblade, Gray’s self-inflicted injury, age of #purge rioters, Gray family’s voice for non-violence. I found two themes in the Michael Brown case, detailing Brown’s encounter with Officer Wilson and Brown family’s voice for non-violence. The emerging media frames revealed tenets of Critical Race Theory such as unmarked, subtle, business-as-usual racialized framing in Fox News and CNN coverage. As CRT suggests, these frames were hidden and obscured yet throughout the twenty articles by Fox News and CNN, and only revealed when comparing the articles with those from Al Jazeera and BBC.

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Table of Contents

Abstract..... 3

Acknowledgments 4

Table of Contents 5

Chapter 1: Introduction 7

 Recent Minority Deaths 9

 Purpose of Study 11

 Objective of Study 12

 Précis of Chapters 14

Chapter 2: Literature Review 15

 Critical Race Theory 15

 Agenda Setting Theory 17

 Historical Framing of Minorities 24

 Framing of Minorities Today 25

 Framing Minority Athletes 27

 Media Framing 28

 Framing and International Events 30

 Policing 32

 Labeling Theory 35

 Black Lives Matter Movement 36

 Trayvon Martin and Minority Deaths 38

Chapter 3: Methodology 42

Chapter 4: Data Analysis 47

Gray’s “illegal switchblade”	49
Gray’s “self-inflicted injury”	58
Age of #purge rioters	62
Gray family’s voice for non-violence	66
Michael Brown-Ferguson	68
Detailing the encounter with Officer Wilson.....	69
Brown family’s voice for non-violence in protests.....	77
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	83
Implications for the study	84
Limitations of the Study.....	87
References	89

Chapter 1: Introduction

After being born in Cincinnati, I moved to New Orleans until the age of 3; then I lived in Miami until I was age 11, Brownsburg, Indiana to age 18, Nashville, Tennessee to age 21, Columbia, Maryland to age 29 and then Mankato, Minnesota ever since. The exposure and experiences living in these vastly different U.S. cities and American cultures gave me a unique perspective: however, it was not until completing my bachelor degrees in History and in Communication Studies that I realized the wrongful treatment of ethnic minorities in the U.S. What I learned about the enslavement and eventual extermination of native peoples in the Caribbean and South America for access to sugarcane farming and other labor was eye opening. The Atlantic slave trade was also astounding to me, but it was what I learned of what transpired over the past century that transformed my perspectives of race relations in the United States of America today.

The history of race relations from the 1850's until and during the Civil Rights Movement showed that the advancement and the treatment of racial minorities has made little to no meaningful progress considering the amount of time that passed. For example, other than the two U.S. Senators selected during reconstruction after the Civil War, there were no black U.S. Senators elected for over 100 years. The third black U.S. Senator was elected in 1993; and the fourth, Barack Obama was elected in 2011 (Senate History, 2017).

I also found many lessons that I had learned in school history were myths. One of these myths was that Rosa Parks was just a stubborn black woman who acted alone, refusing to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. While in fact she was actually an activist NAACP secretary and part of an organized effort. Claudette Colvin had

previously challenged the same segregation law but was bypassed by NAACP lawyers due to her being a teenager, being pregnant and not possessing the look that Rosa did by having skin that appeared middle class (Adler, 2009). It was with these considerations that I conducted and studied issues on race relations, which led to my interest in this thesis project.

In an earlier graduate research project, I studied media framing analysis of the media coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting in Florida. This project compared and contrasted international media with the U.S. media frames to determine if and what differences there may be in reporting. I found that international media framed the events much differently than U.S. media. The international sources demonstrated themes of gun violence in the U.S. similar to how the Wild West is depicted in entertainment. Other frames suggested the innocence of Trayvon Martin, who died at the hands of a vigilante, George Zimmerman, who murdered him in cold blood after being told by dispatch to not follow the young man. In the U.S. media, I found themes that framed Zimmerman as the de-facto white man in contrast to frames of Martin’s blackness, and many frames supporting and defending Zimmerman’s actions. These reports framed their analysis around Florida’s stand your ground gun law without considering the treatment of minorities. These U.S. media outlets failed to frame or highlight facts that although the police had Martin’s cell phone, they did not attempt to identify him before 24 hours when his family reported him missing. The media and police also left out information surrounding Zimmerman’s previous arrests for domestic violence, and violently resisting arrest.

This research demonstrated that the U.S. media did not report on or expose the dozens of actions, events, dismissals and oversights regarding the facts, investigation and prosecution throughout the year following the shooting. My research exposed the systematic inequalities that exist between how Zimmerman was treated and represented, and the wrongful treatment of Martin, along with legal delays or lack of actions and the dismissals of evidence.

Recent Minority Deaths

In the years after my research vast media coverage has surrounded many similar events involving deaths of African Americans at the hands of police. Some of these include the deaths of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, LaQuan McDonald and Walter Scott (Lee, 2017). While the death of African Americans at the hands of law enforcement is nothing new, there are ongoing public debates surrounding these instances that question whether the individuals were met with justifiable force, especially in the instances where the person was unarmed. With the recent increases in surveillance and individual access to recording devices such as cell phones, citizens can now monitor both police and others in new ways. Due to technology and social media, there can be little doubt that there will be further instances of similar events and news stories resulting in debates and protests on media coverage in the future.

There are some disturbing in-dismissible facts that can be found surrounding some of these cases. Some of these include the relationship between the police and African American Community since the police shooting of an unarmed 19 year-old black teenager named Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. In 2013 when the shooting happened the population of Ferguson, Missouri was just over 21,000 residents while

Ferguson courts issued 33,000 arrest warrants (Shapiro, 2014). Law enforcement approached citizens and especially racial minorities assuming that they probably had a warrant. A Department of Justice’s report on Ferguson found that although 67 percent of residents were African American, they received 92 percent of these warrants, and were 68 percent less likely to have court cases dismissed when compared to whites. African Americans were twice as likely to be searched despite being 26 percent less likely to have contraband and 100 percent more likely to be bitten by a police dog (Ehrenfreund, 2015).

There were also very disturbing facts found in Baltimore, Maryland after an unarmed Freddie Gray died at the hands of the Baltimore city police. A Newsweek article reported that that from 2013 to 2015, correctional officers at the Baltimore City Detention Center deferred over 2,600 incarcerated individuals due to severe injuries (Gorman, 2015). They refused them admission to the jail because of their injuries and need for medical treatment. Not only do these numbers indicate the likelihood of and obviousness of brutality, but calls to question of why these individuals were not taken directly to medical facilities. In addition, it is unlikely that any of the Ferguson or Baltimore residents knew these statistics or numbers, but only their own experiences with police as residents. The magnitude of facts such as these demand not only attention and concern, but also an explanation and solutions as well.

These events and surrounding media coverage have generated interest from our Presidents, the Department of Justice, minority leaders and around the clock dialogues on social media by large numbers of Americans. The events have also resulted in the formation of the Black Lives Matter movement, and dozens of meetings, marches, demonstrations, social protests and at times riots in cities across America.

Due to the facts I previously found in my Trayvon Martin study made these recent events and their media coverage central and interesting to me. Although Trayvon did not die at the hands of law enforcement but a neighborhood watch resident, it is my belief that I can take a similar approach of framing analysis and learn from U.S. and International media coverage of these events where minorities have been killed by police.

Purpose of Study

I intend to conduct research focusing on how power relations are visible in communication and how members of the dominant group control communication networks and protect their image or power while dismissing, ignoring, negating, or marginalizing other cultural groups. With this in mind, I also seek ways to expose injustice in society and search for ways that marginalized groups can experience more of the rights, privileges and responsibilities as other Americans that historically have experienced them. Although true equality is not a realistic goal in our country, progress rather than regress of minority treatment is my desired outcome.

While the U.S. Constitution suggests that equality already exists, the equal treatment operationally is not experienced by racial minorities, and it is communication practices in institutions such as courts, schools and media that have created, reinforced and perpetuated these imbalances throughout our young nation’s history. Historically racial equality has always been an uphill battle in varying degrees, making navigation through life, education, work, healthcare, society and our legal system more difficult. If we can learn what practices, techniques and strategies that are used by media to cause or perpetuate these inequalities, we can identify gatekeepers such as Communication scholars and members of media as well as techniques that can impact and change this

landscape over time. We then can then provide the necessary knowledge and education to develop techniques that can resist the reinforcement of inequalities in communication, media, culture and education.

Objective of Study

Communication scholars have researched the effects of news media for some time. Walter Lippman (1921) suggested that the environment we live in is too complex to understand, due to this we respond to the pictures in our heads or our pseudo-environment. Walter Lippman suggested that media agenda setting and framing provide us with a simpler model in news for us to understand which is similar to the pseudo-environment (Childs & Reston, 1959). According to Littlejohn and Foss (2011) agenda setting theory has two parts, the first examines general interests of importance while the other analyzes the parts, attributes or aspects of these that are important. A large part of agenda setting theory is media framing which tells us how to understand the story, through headlines, pictures, videos, how the story is told and textual features (Littlejohn & Foss).

This study provides attention to media frames in the context of coverage surrounding deaths of unarmed African Americans at the hand of police officers. I intend to uncover themes or trends showing how racial minorities may face and experience unbalanced news coverage in the mass media. The objective of my research is to learn through framing analysis how U.S. media frames minorities, the police, the community, and the debate around these events and determine if it reinforces existing power structures, and/or stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

This study also examines international news media coverage to examine how events surrounding the deaths of unarmed African Americans at the hands of police officers are framed internationally. I want to compare international news coverage of police shootings of unarmed African Americans with the U.S. media’s coverage. I want to use critical race theory (CRT) and whiteness theory to highlight news media frames that reinforce existing power structures in society. Derek Bell (1987) states that critical race theory seeks to demonstrate that what is seen as normal, in this case media coverage, actually contains a deep bias favoring white culture.

An example of recent CRT research about the home run race between Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire highlighted aspects of CRT (Butterworth, 2007). Michael Butterworth (2007) found media frames depicting McGwire as heroic, the man, hero of the year and the one everyone is rooting for. The framing of Sosa utilized words like Sammy Sequel, the underdog, happy to be here guy and the one who second-fiddled McGwire (Butterworth). CRT research suggests that these repeated differences in representation of minorities reveal disparities in treatments of minorities that remain unlabeled and normalized in everyday U.S. discourse.

Derek Bell (1995) also suggested that the civil rights movement gains made in law did not solve segregation or treatment issues in much of America. The laws mainly removed the labels of black and white in society and on paper (Bell). If media frame analysis can provide a greater understanding of these contexts, I can understand to what degree media framing can influence racial inequality in their reporting, and therefore in the minds of their audiences. I can also understand how critical race theory and whiteness

theory apply in these contexts of media coverage about the deaths of African Americans.

My research will seek to answer the following questions.

RQ1: How do BBC and Al Jazeera frames of the deaths and aftermath of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray differ from Fox News and CNN articles?

RQ2: What tenets of critical race theory are revealed in Fox News and CNN media frames when comparing with BBC and Al Jazeera coverage about these events?

Précis of Chapters

Chapter two consists of a literature review of theoretical related research and existing scholarship on agenda setting theory, and frame analysis. In addition, this chapter also presents existing scholarship on historic framing of racial minorities. The third chapter is the methods section, which presents frame analysis of media as my technique. My fourth chapter will contain the resulting themes that emerged in my frame analysis for both U.S. media articles and international articles. My final chapter will discuss important conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Communication scholars regularly contribute research to the study of race and racism. This literature review begins by canvassing the theoretical foundation of critical race theory and some existing research. Then I review agenda setting theory and media framing, how they operate and historical research on framing. Next I review recent empirical research that demonstrates how framing effects the audience’s attitudes about race, even when frames are applied to political elites such as President Barrack Obama. This review continues into framing research about minorities, minority athletes, social protests, and school shootings. I also review framing research surrounding coverage of Hurricane Katrina’s aftermath, framing in International media and events, and policing and police framing in media. Finally, I review existing research surrounding the events following the death of Trayvon Martin in Florida and Michael Brown in Ferguson Missouri.

Critical Race Theory

According to Richard Delgado (1995) critical race theory originated in the midst of the 1970s with contributions from Derrick Bell (an African American) and Alan Freeman (a white man). Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman and many others were distressed that the small progress from the Civil Rights Movement had stalled, and that individuals needed to understand that more subtle, unmarked yet deeply entrenched varieties of racism still existed. According to Delgado (1995), racism is normal in American society, and therefore it looks ordinary to Americans. In addition, changes to formal laws have only remedied the extreme forms of racism, not the business-as-usual forms minorities face every day.

According to Charles Lawrence (1987), racism is more complicated than a simple conspiracy of powerful elites or the delusions of ignorant bigots, but it comes from our history, experience, culture and assumptions that we make about the world. Critical race scholars and lawyers seek to develop new ways of continuing progress, as marches, protests, rallies and previous methods were losing traction. Some of these techniques include writings of biography, autobiography, stories with irony about civil rights and some comedy (Delgado). Critical race scholars reject that blindness to race will create equality (Valdes, Culp & Harris, 2002). CRT scholars also reject that racism is only an individual trait and not part of society or that racism can be fought while ignoring sexism, economic exploitation and other forms of oppression (Valdes, Culp & Harris). I intend to analyze my frame analysis of media coverage surrounding the killing of unarmed African Americans by police through the lens of critical race theory.

Some recent research utilized critical race theory (CRT) by examining media coverage of minorities in sports. CRT scholars view racism in society as part of our cultural and historical heritage, where attitudes, beliefs and ideas attach themselves to non-whites in negative ways (Lawrence, 1987). Because we live in this culture, these beliefs have attached themselves to us, yet we do not recognize our racism (Lawrence). Due to this, racism becomes unconscious to many Americans who view blatant acts of racism with disgust yet fail to recognize the normalcy of other forms in our culture (Ross, 1995). Critical race theorists seek to expose that the presence and power of unconscious racism in courtrooms, job interviews, conference rooms, and social encounters (Ross).

For example, recently NFL cornerback Richard Sherman made outspoken comments on live television to ESPN analyst Erin Andrews about being the best corner in

the game (Page, Duffy, Frisby & Perreault, 2016). This research explored how media frames and personal discussion (online comments) used this story and its reaction in a predictable pattern of racism and sexism through symbols, mediated dramas, and rhetoric, as CRT suggests (Page et. al, 2016). Sports and news media repeatedly broadcast this interview and the public gravitated to it due to what can be considered as the racial stereotype of an outspoken minority athlete. The content of the story had little substance with regard to football, but the media attached itself to the story with an innate sense of ratings, and America’s thirst for stereotypically framing people of color in an abrasive manner.

Brennan and Brown (2016) utilized CRT in evaluating media press coverage surrounding New York Yankee Alex Rodriguez’s use of performance enhancing drugs. The media coverage displayed themes of racism in describing Rodriguez as animalistic, criminal, a cornered animal, and a blind squirrel fighting an irrational battle, and not as intelligent as he thought he was (Brenan & Brown). As CRT suggests in it’s rejection of the U.S. being a post-racial society, the research demonstrated instance after instance of overt racism in contemporary sports media (Brennan & Brown).

Agenda Setting Theory

According to Childs & Reston (1959), in 1921, a well-known U.S. journalist named Walter Lippman formalized the concept called pseudo-environment. Lippman suggested that the environment we live in is too big and complex for us to deal with and that we cognitively reconstruct the environment into a simpler model to manage it in our heads, which he called the pseudo-environment (Childs & Reston). Like our environment, news media constructs stories by selecting, constructing and prioritizing

due to the complexity and number of issues and events. Lippman suggested the news media reconstructs stories, offering simpler models in reporting for us to make sense of, similar to our pseudo-environment in our minds, this is called agenda setting (Childs & Reston).

Because it would be impossible for the media to report to us every event and situation that occurs, they have to select what is newsworthy, why is the story salient (important), and is it significant? Called gatekeepers, media create and influence public knowledge of events and affairs through this agenda setting process (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). In 1972, McCombs and Shaw began doing research on the agenda setting effects that the media used on audiences during the 1968 presidential election. Their research found a very strong correlation between what the media was reporting on and what the public felt was important (McCombs & Shaw). After the next election McCombs and Shaw (1977) suggested that there are two parts of agenda setting; the first decides the topics are prioritized as important and newsworthy. The second level frames it, expressing what parts or attributes of the topic or issue is salient (McCombs & Shaw). Agenda setting also functions by giving repeated attention or emphasis on making certain topics and issues more salient in the minds of the audience, this process is defined as priming (McCombs & Shaw).

Audiences respond to agenda setting, framing and priming by allowing or delegating media to decide through frequency of reporting what issues are important, regardless of content, in a process called agenda cueing (Pingree & Stoycheff, 2013). Then through agenda reasoning, audiences internally sort out or determine what is useful in evaluating issue or problem salience (Pingree & Stoycheff). Audience cognition,

interest and need for orientation are other aspects that moderate the effect of agenda setting (as cited in Pingree & Stoycheff).

The media’s agenda is set by other news organizations, news sources, journalism norms and traditions, national leaders, significant contributors, and public relations representatives (McCombs, 2004). This agenda is also shaped by interactions between media sources, such as media sharing stories from elite news organizations, and wires, and inter-agency communication (McCombs).

The decisions of media professionals of what information from these sources to share and what not to share is called media gatekeeping (McCombs). Part of media agenda setting, gatekeeping describes the way news flows and among news sources such as newspapers, television, magazines, wire services and the internet (McCombs). Media influences other media as editors in smaller and local news sources decide what stories from other sources will be allowed through the gate (McCombs). The level of trust that consumers have in media can impact the effects of the media agenda on individuals and the public agenda. Gatekeeper trust is the degree in which consumers trust that news stories are credible, important, and that media contributed a systematic effort of accuracy and prioritizing in the material (Pingree & Stoycheff, 2013). High degrees of gatekeeper trust has been identified as a problem because it ignores other factors that can influence the topics (Pingree & Stoycheff, 2013). Some of these factors include the tendency of media to judge stories based on isolated events rather than continuing social problems and counting on drama, conflict, novelty and timeliness to gain ratings (as cited in Pingree & Stoycheff). Media are a business and requires an audience to exist. Therefore

media logic explains that news media will dramatize and sensationalize stories and events (Hulst, M.J., Siesling, M., Lieshout, M., & Dewulf, A.R.P.J., 2014).

Steven Reese (1991) suggested that internal and external forces that influence media agenda are a combination of internal programming, editorial or management decisions, influence from government officials, commercial sponsorship, and influence of socially and politically influential people. These influences and the time pressure reporters face result in the reporting of stereotypes (Gitlin, 1980). These stereotypes come from reporter’s work and social circles, sources, peers, superiors, friends, spouses and prestigious media (Gitlin).

Media’s influence on audiences is the strongest when media credibility is high; the audiences are searching for guidance, audiences share media values and there is little evidence to conflict with the story (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006). Media’s power of influence or persuasion in creating and perpetuating the public’s agenda is related to media’s relations with power centers, the elite class in society or culture which scholars suggest make media instrumental in the permeating the ideology of the dominant society into the public agenda (McCombs, 2004).

In the past 30 years vast changes occurred in both media sources and delivery due to the change from only network television and a few major newspapers, to the influx of cable television, internet news, and now social media sources. The availability of cable television and internet technologies places news sources and worldwide news at peoples fingertips and it has also allows consumers to participate in the dialogue in new ways. Researchers termed this new environment the network public sphere which forms new ways in which content is created and shared, creating a decentralized democratic

discourse (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). Traditional large institutional media produced by news corporations provides the foundation which is shared and repackaged by smaller news sources, bloggers, and commentators who supplement and react to these larger stories (Reese & Shoemaker).

These changes influenced the development of what researchers call the hierarchy of influences model (Reese & Shoemaker). The hierarchy of influences model suggests five levels that influence media producers: individual, routines, organizational, social institutions, and social systems (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). Each and all of these aspects in media production influence media reporting, which affects media agenda setting, framing and gatekeeping trust in the consumer in positive and negative ways.

Media agenda can also be influenced by and/or influence the public agenda in a reciprocal manner. According to Siune and Borre (1975), there are three kinds of agenda-setting effects, representation where media is influenced by the public, persistence where media agenda does little to influence persistent public agenda, and persuasion where media influences the public agenda. It is this third aspect where agenda setting influences the public in which my research is concerned. I want to analyze media texts to determine if there are themes and frames that reinforce the status quo of inequality in race relations. I want to identify in news media the unmarked discourses of racism that CRT scholars suggest is normalized in the way that we communicate in America. Analyzing and comparing domestic news texts with international media can reveal if the news that we consume demonstrates and normalizes a bias toward white culture, as CRT suggests.

In addition to aspects such as trust and credibility, some contemporary news sources use humor as persuasion. Recent research studied the effects of humor on agenda

setting effects on audiences. Examples of sources that use humor include Comedy Central’s original *Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, *The Colbert Report* with Stephen Colbert, and the *New Daily Show* starring Trevor Noah. In research comparing transfer of salience in traditional news versus comedy news, Kowalewski (2013) found that both had agenda setting effects. Kowalewski also found that hard news transferred issue salience more effectively, but comedy news was more effective when the consumer disagreed with the reporting on the issue.

As a critical scholar, it is important to evaluate the effect that power relations have on communication, especially with institutions like the media. According to Reese (1991) there are three main relationship types with regard to media and sources. These relationships are a high power media and high power source, high power source and low power media, high power media and low power source, and low power media and low power source (Reese). When both the media and source have high power, they possess a close working relationship that is mutually beneficial (Reese). However when equal powers disagree and collide, the relationship can be competitive or adversarial, as in the current political climate with President Trump and the media (Reese).

When a high power source encounters a low power media, high power sources influence the media agenda through manipulation or denial of access (Reese). An example of this would have been during the immediate aftermath of the attacks on September 11th, 2001. President Bush was a high power source as everyone was listening and he had information and intelligence unavailable to the media. The third type of relationship is a high powered media and low power source (Reese). In this case, the media is in control of their own agenda and this can result in marginalization, and other

ethical abuses such as privacy violations, or damage of reputation leaving the source with little recourse (Reese). This type of relationship occurs during protests or as in my research when minorities protesting police violence (Reese). The last relationship where both media and sources have low power is often found during local stories that are inconsequential or coverage after natural disasters, such as the initial local media coverage in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (Reese, Littlejohn & Foss).

Agenda setting theory suggests that the media can be effective in telling audiences what topics to think about. A second part of agenda setting called framing is said to be the selection and highlights of certain aspects of the story or parts of it (McCombs, 2004). Framing tells us how to understand the story, through headlines, pictures, videos, how the story is told, and textual features (Rhee, 1997). According to Hulst et al. (2014) framing deciphers between what is not important and what is about a particular situation or issue, connecting aspects of reality and forming a coherent whole. Therefore, framing breaks down the story without telling the whole story, giving consumers a version that media feels is important to them and what they believe consumers should know (Littlejohn & Foss).

According to Entman (1996) a frame selects and highlights parts of reality while obscuring others to tell a story about a problem, its causes, moral implications and remedies. Framing chooses certain aspects, highlighting or repeating what should be considered important by the consumer, and minimizing or omitting other aspects decided to be less important or irrelevant (Littlejohn & Foss). Media uses framing by telling stories of what is wrong and what needs fixing in a particular situation, and these stories create chains of causation, identify notions of responsibility and blame thereby steering

the consumer’s view (as cited in Hulst et al., 2014). While scholars do not believe that media creates new ways for consumers to think or internally evaluate stories, they do believe media arrange messages in ways that resonate with frames that have existed in the audience’s internal cognition and culture for some time (Littlejohn & Foss).

Historical Framing of Minorities

Media framing of minorities differently than whites in news is not something new. After a 1942 meeting between *Time Magazine* editor in chief and the University of Chicago president Robert Hutchins, the 1947 Hutchins Commission developed suggestions on how media should accurately present and report on different racial groups to one another (Kraeplin, 2008). The report suggested that “if people are exposed the inner truth of the life of a particular group, they will gradually build up respect and understanding of it” (Kraeplin, p. 76). According to Kraeplin (2008) minorities have not historically been gatekeepers in the newsrooms in the U.S., resulting in media coverage that is at best limited and often distorted.

Kraeplin (2008) studied historic newspaper coverage and framing of events surrounding racially motivated bombings in Dallas in 1950 when African Americans either purchased or considered purchasing homes in middle to upper class white neighborhoods. Since the 1947 Jim Crow zoning laws were determined to be unconstitutional, blacks began investing in white neighborhoods, resulting in whites responding with fear, anger and sometimes violence (Kraeplin). Kraeplin states that news coverage of these bombings framed the perpetrators as “arsonists” rather than white pro-segregationists in coverage while other coverage credited bombers with statements like: “no deaths or personal injury” (p. 82) and “credit can be given to the perpetrators for

probably wishing to intimidate and not kill or hurt” (p. 91). Here, the arsonist frame tends to dismiss the systematic racism cause or problem in society, while giving credit for no injury dismisses the magnitude of the crimes. Later, the Dallas mayor and city officials were described as being afraid of protecting *Negro* residents as that may be understood as encouragement for them to purchase homes in the area, which is another example of systematic racism (as cited in Kraeplin).

From February 8th to July 15th 1950, 25 homes were bombed, and it was not until 1951 that two suspects were arrested, likely only in response to business leaders concern on the effects on the business climate. This is a historic example of what critical race scholars call interest convergence, in which Derek Bell (1987) explains that dominant groups will support anti-racist policies when the policies seem to benefit them.

Some time later in 1967 President Lyndon Johnson formed the Kerner commission in response to the nation’s ongoing civil unrest. The report warned that media’s ignoring of blacks and other minorities in coverage was partially to blame for the country dividing into “two societies, one black and one white” (Kraeplin, 2008, p. 76). The Kerner Commission urged the media to both provide more and better coverage of minority communities as well as integrate minorities into the press.

Framing of Minorities Today

While today’s racial frames and racialized language are not as graphic or thick as they were decades ago, subtle communication messages such as metaphors, hints, visual elements and biased sources still effectively convey meaning to the audience (Yang, 2015). In addition, research of media effects utilizing psychology theories (Ramasubramanian, 2005, Tan, Li & Simpson, 1986, Tan & Fujioka, 1997) demonstrate

that negative stereotypical frames cause measurable negative feelings of fear, contempt, dislike, desires for avoidance and biased judgments in white consumers (as cited in Yang, 2015).

Since modern racism in communication is less blatant than in times past and more aversive, nuanced and subtle, symbolic racism measures are a valuable tool in media research (Ramasubramanian & Martinez, 2016). Ramasubramanian and Martinez claim that symbolic racism measures are the following attitudes of individuals: denial that discrimination persists, individual work ethic is tied to responsibility for outcomes, minorities (mainly African Americans) make excessive demands and gain undeserved advantage.

Recent research has evaluated media framing of President Barrack Obama and the impact that it has on symbolic racism. According to Logan (2011) media frames of President Obama present him as relatable to both black and white Americans by neutralizing his Black male identity with frames suggesting he is a guy next door type who demonstrates White American values. While researching framing of Obama, Ramasubramanian & Martinez (2016) utilized experimental research exposing participants with positive frames of news suggesting the President as popular and successful versus negative frames of unpopular and unsuccessful. They found empirical evidence that negatively framed news about the President increased the symbolic racist beliefs, anti-black affect and prejudicial feelings of respondents.

Many studies (Dixon, 2006; Bogle, 2001; Ertman & Rojecki, 2000) demonstrate African Americans are typically presented in media as unintelligent, unmotivated, aggressive, and often violent and criminal (as cited in Ramasubramanian & Martinez,

2016). This experimental empirical evidence not only proves that prejudice, stereotypes and racial attitudes are still existent in the thoughts of Americans, but that negative media frames of minorities have an impact by activating these attitudes and beliefs in consumers.

Framing Minority Athletes

There are Communication studies on news media framing of minorities (Dixon 2006, Oliver 2003) that find African Americans are generally framed as violent, dangerous criminals and are disproportionately represented as perpetrators, while whites are disproportionately (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman, 1990, 1992) represented as victims (as cited in Seate et al., 2010). In addition, according to Dixon (2000) heavy news consumers are more likely to view the world as a dangerous place and perceive African Americans as criminals (as cited in Seate et al.).

According to Rada & Wulfemeyer (2005) sports commentators have historically praised black athletes for aggressiveness, strength and natural ability while framing whites for their mental abilities and leadership qualities (as cited in Seate et al.). Recent studies on framing include studies of the media coverage of minority athletes, such as Jeremy Lin. McElroy (2014) found 4 prevailing themes that emerged in a textual analysis of media regarding the Asian American point guard for the New York Knicks. The coverage framed him as an oddity and underdog, a reminder of racism, a pioneer and agent of change and an antidote to blackness (McElroy). This research found that these frames ignored that African and Asian Americans were both underrepresented and marginalized; instead the coverage shed light only on the differences between the two

groups, basically pitting them against each other without regard for the white majority in society (McElroy).

Another study researched framing of athletes who were accused of a crime and its impact on perceptions of race (Seate, Harwood & Blecha, 2010). They found that while the accused black athlete’s framing did not impact existing views of their overall race (which may already be biased) and that heavy media consumer’s views were not vastly different from light viewers (Seate, Harwood & Blecha, 2010). However, they also found minority athletes framed in an accusatory manner were viewed as more culpable for their actions, and accusatory frames seemed to stick more on minorities in the minds of consumers (Seate, Harwood & Blecha, 2010).

In other research Gill (2016) studied frames in public online comments to news stories about the Ferguson Five. The Ferguson Five were five St. Louis Rams players who staged a silent pregame protest during the aftermath of the Michael Brown shooting. His content analysis found that twenty two percent of comments framed these protestors negatively, as “dumb jocks, thugs, morons, dumb as a box of rocks, hoodlums, woefully ignorant, uneducated, ill-mannered thugs, African American jocks and nothing more than sperm donors” (Gill, 2016, p. 405). Thirteen percent of the comments suggested that the five silent pregame football players should be punished (Gill). There were also a few positive frames like expressions of favor (4%), silencing of voices (4%), racial profiling (5%) and that other athletes or teams should join the protests (8%) (Gill).

Media Framing

The Communication Studies discipline is fairly saturated with existing scholarship on media framing in many contexts. Recent research reviewed newspaper

articles about social disorder in four cases over time. Researchers evaluated media coverage of two Belgian and two Dutch riots and protests in which there were accusations of police brutality against minorities in low income areas (van Hulst et al., 2014). The research found that initially, news articles utilized labels to garner attention while sensationalizing and dramatizing the content of the story (van Hulst et al.). Not until tensions cooled did the journalist situate the conflicts with background stories that provided a historical context of the events (van Hulst et al.). The researchers found recurring themes of frames depicting declining neighborhoods where the actual victims were the original inhabitants before the decline (van Hulst et al.). Protestors are framed as aggressors, hoodlums and later as outside protestors arrived, riot tourists (van Hulst et al.).

In research on media frames about school shootings in Columbine, Colorado, Virginia Tech and Red Lake High School in Minnesota, Park, S.Y., Holody, K.J., & Zhang, X. (2012) noted that there were frames of inclusion and frames of omission with regard to the coverage and race. Their study mentioned that the white shooters of Columbine had no mentions of their race, while the race of the South Korean shooter at Virginia Tech was prominent in reporting and in headlines (Park, et al.). They also noted that there was little media attention to the Red Lake shooting likely due to it being at a low-income American Indian reservation (Park et al.).

Furthermore, research in media coverage and images during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina found differences in the minds of readers about who was accountable for the disaster. White consumers were three times more likely to find the government responsible than other whites exposed to the same story with the pictures including

blacks (Ben-Porath & Shaker, 2010). Black respondent’s views remained similar regardless whether an image of minority survivors was included in the story (Ben-Porath & Shaker). When Black respondents were presented with a white image they were only six percent less likely to hold the government responsible compared with no image at all (Ben-Porath & Shaker).

Framing and International Events

Since the method that I intend to use for my research includes comparing and contrasting international sources with domestic news, I felt it was important to review research on the framing of international events in media, and international media. In research of media coverage about the U.S.-Iraq war, Guo et al. (2015) noted that U.S. media focused on frames related to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), international support, military planning, prospects of war and debates over a possible invasion. Chinese media framed the coverage in terms of Iraq’s military strategies, civilian casualties, economic costs, international relations and WMDs (Guo et al.). At the same time, media in the Arab world focused on destruction and violence while Swedish media focused on reactions by the international community (Guo et al.). The research also found high correlations of inter-media agenda setting attributes in media in the United States, China, Taiwan and Poland (Guo et al.). Inter-media agenda setting refers to media coverage influencing other media.

Ha & Shin (2016) compared media framing of the Arab Spring in conservative and liberally oriented South Korean newspapers. They found that conservative newspapers tended to place the cause of the Arab Spring in slightly higher degrees to dictatorships, civil war, and not being western-circle countries (Ha & Shin). Conservative

coverage also assigned blame in higher degrees to non-western regimes and opposition of citizens to their governments in Arab countries (Ha & Shin). In contrast, liberal news coverage framed causes as Arab economic security, the West’s intervention and social media slightly higher than conservative news (Ha & Shin). Liberal coverage assigned blame in slightly higher degrees to ruling governments and the West (Ha & Shin).

Muddiman, Stroud & McCombs (2014) recently researched the impacts of partisan framing differences by CNN and Fox News of the Iraq war on audiences. Their research empirically demonstrated that partisan agenda setting and framing are effective in impacting the views of consumers (Muddiman, Stroud & McCombs). The study predictably found that Fox viewers were more likely to be against troop withdrawal in Iraq while CNN viewers were significantly more likely to favor troop withdrawal, while viewers watching both displayed more moderate views (Muddiman, Stroud & McCombs). The research also determined that conservative viewers that did not watch Fox News were more likely to view the war as not worth the efforts or costs (Muddiman, Stroud & McCombs).

Groshek (2008) recently utilized frame analysis to compare and contrast online articles from CNN and CNN International. This is important especially due to the size of the audiences. CNN online reports 24 million monthly views while CNNI reports 198 million views per month. Groshek also noted that the public agenda (number of important issues) had not grown in size in a 40 year study, even though there were advances in education, information availability and an exponentially expanded media agenda. Groshek found that CNN online provided fewer stories to Americans than CNNI, at the ratio of 12.8-18.3, suggesting that international consumers receive richer and more

frequent reporting than Americans. In addition, Groshek (2008) also found that CNN online had twice as many articles with American frames, but fewer stories overall and more violently explicit photos than CNNI online. While deaths by minorities encountering law enforcement in the U.S. may seem unrelated to these differences, the differences in framing by U.S. media compared with international media are central to my research.

Policing

Reviewing research on policing is important considering the context of my study. I intend to utilize frame analysis of media coverage surrounding the events and deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray. Communication operates in similar ways with regard to context, power and the media despite differences in location. A recent content analysis of media and television coverage was completed focusing on the Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs (Pollack & Allern). The context of the news focused on criticism of policing surrounding the death of an African student in Norway at the hands of the police. Pollack and Allern argue that according to journalistic norms, part of the societal mission of news is to shine a critical spotlight on police as a public wielder of power over citizens. They sought to determine frames of the Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs in media, how systematic and extensive is the coverage, types of sources and what discourses characterized the public debate.

Pollark & Allern (2014) found two distinct, opposing discourses in media coverage between the police and those protesting the African student’s death. The police discourse included that the work is dangerous, they risk health and life and that at times regrettable accidents and consequences occur, but that they were forces to intervene, they

were fighting for their life and the African student’s violent resistance led to his death (Pollark & Allern). The opposing racism discourse was simpler, and stated that the killing was due to police brutality and that the brutal treatment was due to his African descent (Pollark & Allern). The most important findings related to my research are that the media frames bad cops as individual cases, ignoring systematic or organizational practices and cultures (Pollark & Allern).

In recent legal and contemporary problem reviews of research of shooting bias of civilians and police with regard to race (Sadler, Correll, Park & Judd, 2012). Their research cited studies of simulation results that indicate that both the 69 undergraduates and 224 police officers were quicker to shoot Blacks than Whites, Latinos or Asians (Sadler, Correll, Park & Judd). Lee (2016) listed other studies that reached contrary conclusions, Lee cites James, Klinger and Vila which found that 96 percent of officer’s implicit race-weapons association bias of Black men. Lee noted that the race weapons bias test data was collected from questions buried within other cognitive tests of police officers. In addition, she noted that participants in the shooter bias research misidentified tools as guns more often after being exposed to a black face, and guns as tools more frequently after seeing a white face (Lee).

Other research on police focused on vehicle searches based on race, ethnicity, and gender and gathered data from citizen reports rather than from law enforcement, suggesting a new triangulated scholarly understanding of this context (Lundman, 2004). Although gathering data from citizens rather than police is something new, the results demonstrated that of 7034 respondents with at least one traffic stop, police were largely

more likely to exercise searches on minorities, although these at best found a few instances of open containers of alcohol (Lundman).

Sklansky (2006) contributed research about the changing demographics of police departments with regard to race and gender over the past 35 years. They studied differences in competency, community, organizational effects and the ramifications of these changes with the introduction of minorities into policing. Sklansky’s research noted that in 1970, six percent of officers were African American and today in cities with populations over 250,000, twenty percent are African American and fourteen percent are Latino (Sklansky). He stated that a majority of New York City police academy graduates are racial minorities (Sklansky). Sklansky mentioned research that favors and other research that contradicts whether minority officers possessed special competencies of greater understanding and credibility in minority communities. He introduced evidence that suggests minority officers shoot as often, arrest as often and are more likely to receive citizen complaints (Sklansky). However, Sklansky qualified this with research by Colon and by Goldstein that black officers are expected to behave like white officers, and that over time cops and think like other cops submitting to pressures of conformity of values and orientation or eventually leaving the force.

With regard to community effects, Sklansky also found evidence that police departments with minority officers were viewed better by communities with minorities, and that black officers teamed with whites were less likely to use force. While there were historic warnings about police solidarity loss by diversity of the force affecting the law enforcement community, there is no evidence of this happening. Sklansky presumed that ramifications of diversity in policing is stated to de-politicize police solidarity, improving

aspects such as community policing, civilian oversight, participatory management internally and efforts to remove racial bias in enforcement.

Research on cities with 100,000 or more residents found that diversification of the police department had little impact on local homicides (Fan, 2014). However this research did find a strong consistent association with the likelihood of death caused by law enforcement based on the percentage of African American residents. This research found that since 1980, when department diversification began to impact police demographics, African Americans were somewhat less likely to die at the hands of police encounters. However, age adjusted data suggests that young blacks are still 2.8 times and young Latinos 1.8 times more likely to die during police encounters than whites (Fan).

Labeling Theory

Originally developed by Howard Becker (1963), Labeling Theory suggests that individuals that emerge as criminals over the course of many years through a process of breaking a socially constructed rule or law and being publically labeled as a deviant. Labeling Theory has four key concepts; crime is a deviant act socially constructed by those in power, not everyone that is deviant gets labeled as such, labeling has consequences such as self-fulfilling prophecies, and the theory believes that minor acts should not be labeled as deviant or crimes (“The labeling theory,” 2016).

After the initial label, the individual attaches the deviant label to themselves rather than to the act that they committed due to the response they receive from others. Over time the person gradually believes that they are deviant which may encourage further acts of deviance and associations with other individuals that commit these acts, such as drug users, groups or gangs, or those that steal. As the process continues and the

person further associates the deviant label to themselves, and further acts create a deviant career where eventually the person’s labeling of themselves as deviant transcends all other labels that they associate with themselves (“The labeling theory,” 2016).

Labeling Theory explains how deviant acts by those who are not in power in society result in individuals being charged with criminal acts for minor offences and encounter police frequently. Labeling Theory could be used to explain why Michael Brown and his friend were walking in the middle of the street or why Freddy Grey had several previous experiences with the police and decided to flee when he saw them. While my research is on systems of media framing and content and not individuals and their actions, Labeling Theory will be an important theory to consider gaining an overall understanding of the individuals and their roles in the events that led to the deaths and the subsequent media coverage.

Black Lives Matter Movement

The official BlackLivesMatter organization was founded by Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Alicia Garza (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017). Created after Trayvon Martin’s killer, George Zimmerman was acquitted of murder (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017), BLM believes that Trayvon’s murder was blamed on Trayvon by the police, media, court system and larger population. The BLM movement is an organized group of 36 nationwide chapters and a call to action against anti-black racism in U.S. society (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017). BLM goes beyond just the extrajudicial killings of minorities and is an effort to create a new black liberation movement (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017). BLM embraces those previously marginalized within these movements such as black queer and trans individuals, those who are undocumented,

those with criminal records, those who are disabled and women (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017).

The term #BlackLivesMatter is defined as a broadening of the conversation about state violence into a conversation about every way black people are intentionally deprived of basic human rights and dignity and left powerless by the state (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017). Examples of this deprivation include black poverty and genocide, the incarceration of 2.8 million black individuals and the subsequent burden black women face due to these examples (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017).

The goal of #BlackLivesMatter is to create a political project removing the hashtag from social media and taking it to the communities as a way of working toward a world where black lives are not intentionally or systematically targeted for demise (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017). The first official loosely organized #BlackLivesMatter protest began after the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson. Since that time dozens of subsequent protests have occurred in cities throughout the U.S. and worldwide after similar deaths, court cases, acquittals and anniversaries.

The Black Lives Matter movement has similarities and differences when compared to the Modern Civil Rights Movement from 1960-1968. The Modern Civil Rights Movement fought for equality with regard to legal segregation of places as well as social, political and economic inequalities (“Civil Rights Movement,” 2017). The Civil Rights Movement was spawned by leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Rosa Parks (“Civil Rights Movement,” 2017). The Civil Rights Movement fought to remove Jim Crow laws at the local and state levels that were aimed at keeping African Americans from places like bathrooms, theaters, train cars, classrooms and legislatures

(“Civil Rights Movement,” 2017). For the most part, the Civil Rights Movement and its leaders utilized civil disobedience and non-violent means to bring about change (“Civil Rights Movement,” 2017).

The Black Lives Matter movement and its leaders also seek to bring about change through non-violent means and civil disobedience. While many may believe that the Black Lives Matter movement is focused only on the deaths of minorities at the hands of police, the movement also seeks to bring about change in the criminal justice system and the mass incarceration of 2.8 million African Americans, many for non-violent offences (“BlackLivesMatter,” 2017).

Some scholars consider this mass incarceration of African Americans to be similar to the states Jim Crow Laws that the Civil Rights Movement fought against. According to Michelle Alexander (2010) today more African Americans are on probation, parole, in jails or prisons than there were African Americans in slavery in 1850 (p. 180). In *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander argues that the War on Drugs is responsible for the majority of these numbers due to its mandatory minimum sentences, 3-strikes laws, the over-policing of minority communities and the disparities between sentencing laws for crack cocaine when compared to powder cocaine (Alexander, 2010, p. 181-185). While many Americans recognize that African American fathers are often not present in the homes of their children, Alexander (2010) argues that few connect the mass incarceration of the men in these communities as the cause (p. 180)

Trayvon Martin and Minority Deaths

There is little existing academic research on the recent deaths of unarmed African Americans during encounters with police. According to Juzwiak & Chan (2014), there

was a seeming silence from protests in the aftermath of the deaths of Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood watch captain and Eric Garner by the New York Police. Then seven unarmed African Americans died due to police encounters during the summer of 2014 (Drazner-Hoyt, 2016). Two recent studies focused on the emerging counterpublic networks in the network public sphere (Drazner-Hoyt, 2016; Jackson & Welles, 2016).

Counterpublic networks are those created within social media networks such as Twitter individuals share stories, updates, perspectives and opinions, often labeling them with (#) hashtags. This new environment, encompassing the network public sphere forms new ways in which content is shared, creating a decentralized democratic discourse in which information online comments, tweets and hashtags provide the public agenda a new voice in the context of media agenda (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). This research argued that the subjectivity of the then deceased minorities and their voice was kept alive through these posts and comments. Some examples of these were comments and discussions on Twitter with labels of #Ferguson, #Hands up don't shoot, #BLM and others (Reese & Shoemaker).

Stephen Underhill (2016) utilized rhetorical homology and institutional critique to study statements by Ferguson police and others. He suggested that rhetorical homology and terms such as the urban jungle result in minority areas being policed with different rules and applications to people of color despite the universality of the law. Underhill's research suggested that Officer Wilson and the Ferguson law enforcement utilized rhetoric that established spatial boundaries allowing differing treatment of minorities. Rhetorical homology type descriptions of the area were words such as antipolice area, violence, gun activity, and drug activity. After noticing the unarmed teenagers in this area

walking in the middle of the street, he decided further surveillance and eventually confrontation was justified (Underhill). Wilson fired twelve shots at the teenager, two from within the vehicle and the remaining ten outside, 152 feet down the street, striking Brown seven times (Buchanan, et al., 2015).

The deaths of countless unarmed black men from encounters with the police are so commonplace in American society that news of these events have become normalized in our culture. Although these events may be included in news media more often than in past decades, the media coverage has a tendency to mute the voices of victims and their families while at the same time denigrating their character. The normalization of these killings demonstrates what critical race scholars describe as how racism is the status quo, normal way that our society functions, to such a degree that these treatments remain unmarked as what they are in our communications. The media reporting of these events and our minds have a tendency to automatically assume that when minorities are killed by the police they somehow did something to cause or deserve it. This is what CRT scholars would describe as the deep, ingrained racism within our culture that is so normalized it remains unmarked and unnoticed to Americans. CRT scholars consider that these practices of racism exist not only in the mind of a few ignorant individuals, but systematically throughout our law enforcement, media, residents and consumers.

CRT research can reveal these deep ingrained ingredients of systematic racism through the examination of news media constructions and frames, just as previous research has historically, and recently through studies of minority framing, minority athlete framing, framing of social protests, school shootings and even President Obama. Remember a frame selects and highlights parts of reality while obscuring others to tell a

story about a problem, its causes, moral implications and remedies (Entman). The frames in the above research demonstrate and reveal unequal treatment of minorities in media coverage by highlighting and repeating aspects of events, while omitting others and at times excusing the violent treatment of these individuals and groups. Major media is a hierarchical institution owned, controlled and designed by and for the benefit of America’s elite and powerful, not just the everyday consumers. Therefore, critically analyzing major media frames in coverage of the deaths of unarmed minorities encountering law enforcement and comparing frames in international media can reveal many of the tenets of critical race theory, forging an understanding of communication in this context. Below are the research questions that I would like to answer.

RQ1: How do BBC and Al Jazeera media frames of the deaths and aftermath of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray differ from Fox News and CNN domestic articles?

RQ2: What tenets of critical race theory are revealed in Fox News and CNN domestic media frames when comparing with Al Jazeera and BBC coverage about these events?

Chapter 3: Methodology

I am focusing this research on two cases, the articles on the events and aftermath of the unarmed Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson Missouri, and the death of unarmed Freddie Gray and aftermath in Baltimore, Maryland. Micheal Brown was an 18 year-old and recent high school graduate who encountered police officer Darren Wilson while walking in the middle of a street (Lee & Vicens, 2014). Officer Wilson stopped his squad car and confronted Brown and his friend, resulting in a physical struggle between Brown outside the car and Wilson inside the car (Lee & Vicens). Officer Wilson’s gun went off twice, and then Micheal Brown ran. The following events are unclear based on testimony, except that Micheal Brown was unarmed and Officer Wilson fired a total of 12 times (Lee & Vicens). Wilson struck Michael Brown five times, killing him (Lee & Vicens).

In the second case, Freddie Gray was fatally injured while in custody of the Baltimore City Police Department (Peralta, 2015). The facts that are known of the case are that Gray was arrested, placed in a transport van, and repeatedly asked for medical attention as the van travelled, making six other stops before arriving at the police station, where Gray was not breathing (Peralta). After what has been described as a “rough ride” in the van, Gray was then transported to an area hospital with severe neck injuries and later died (Peralta).

In this study, I examine these two events and their aftermath in international media to conduct a thorough evaluation, comparison and contrast with U.S. media. The artifacts that I will evaluate are from online news from CNN, Fox News, BBC and Al Jazeera. The search will acquire 30 articles from both CNN and Fox News on both Michael Brown and Ferguson, Missouri as well as 30 articles on Freddie Gray and

Baltimore, Maryland. The majority of these articles will focus on the timeframe of the initial confrontation through the protests, court cases, and the protest of one-year anniversary event. In both cases the officer(s) involved faced criminal charges and were later acquitted resulting in further protests. The reason these texts are important to analyze is that these are some of the largest, most well-known and contemporary news providers throughout the United States. In addition, these events set off protests and marches throughout the U.S., becoming a common dialogue in American discourses. Therefore, evaluating these texts for themes demonstrating the tenets of critical race theory can expose the unmarked aspects of racism surrounding these police shootings that would otherwise appear normal to consumers.

Cable News Network (CNN) is a very large news provider, which is politically left leaning (Democrat) and one of the largest television and internet news corporations with widespread U.S. and international viewership (Erickson).¹ Fox News Channel (Fox) is also a very large news provider, which is politically right leaning (Republican) and is also one of the largest television and internet news corporations in the world.² British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is a large, respected and publically financed news source with a large international viewership and is one of the most trusted news sources

¹ Cable News Network (CNN) is a large news provider, which is politically left leaning (Democrat) and owned by Time Warner Cable (Erickson, 2017).

² Fox News Channel (Fox) is also a large news provider which is politically right leaning (Republican) and owned by Robert Murdoch’s 21st Century Fox (Ray, 2017).

in the world (Mitchell, Godfried, Kiley & Eva Matsa, 2017).³ Al Jazeera is a large Middle Eastern news source and is the largest international news outlet in 20 Middle Eastern Countries and the Arab population worldwide (The History of Al Jazeera Television, 2017).⁴

My research questions focus on the differences in media frames of international and domestic sources surrounding the deaths and aftermath as well as using the differences to expose the tenets of critical race theory in U.S. media frames. The phenomenon of critical race theory suggests that U.S. media coverage will demonstrate that racism is not only an individual trait but is unmarked and deeply entrenched throughout society; the subtle yet business-as-usual way we communicate, appearing normal to Americans (Valdes, Cult & Harris; Delgado; Lawrence). Critical race scholars reject that blindness to race will create equality (Valdes, Culp & Harris). CRT scholars also reject that racism is an individual trait and not part of society or that racism can be fought while ignoring sexism, economic exploitation and other forms of oppression (Valdes, Culp & Harris).

³ British Broadcasting Corporation is publically financed in London, England and required to remain neutral; although it is ultimately accountable to parliament (Mitchell, Godfried, Kiley & Eva Matsa, 2017).

⁴ Al Jazeera (Arabic: The Peninsula) began with five years of government funding by Qatar in 1996, it's Al Jazeera America channel aired from 2013-2016, being terminated to low viewership (The History of Al Jazeera Television, 2017).

The best technique available to explore these research questions is to utilize Rein and Schön’s (1994) frame analysis, combined with van Hulst et al.’s narrative frame analysis. This method of frame analysis utilizes qualitative textual analysis of news media texts. As mentioned earlier, agenda setting has two parts. The first part decides what stories are important and newsworthy and to what degree a story needs repeated attention, and the second part is called media framing (McCombs & Shaw).

According to Entman (1996), a frame selects and highlights parts of reality while obscuring others to tell a story about a problem, its causes, moral implications and remedies. Framing chooses certain aspects, highlighting or repeating what should be considered important by the consumer, and minimizing or omitting other aspects decided to be less important or irrelevant. Media uses framing by telling stories of what is occurring in a particular situation. These stories create chains of causation, identify notions of responsibility and blame thereby steering the consumer’s view (as cited in Hulst et al., 2014). Using headlines, emphasis, textual elements, pictures, repetition or omission and other aspects, framing suggests the moral implications of a problem, assigning responsibility and blame, and suggesting remedies (Entman, 1996).

Rein & Schön (1994) developed their narrative frame analysis approach because the narratives are a commonly recognized format used in political institutions. The framing of these public problems by politicians or media to suggested in narratives of what ought to be done (Rein & Schön, 1994). The framing in these narratives guides audiences in analyzing the social problem and action (van Hulst, et al.). van Hulst et al. believed that since news is constructed by focusing on these questions. In this study, I use

similar questions to focus on how U.S. and international media framed the shootings of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray.

According to Rein and Schön (1996), a frame has an underlying structure, sets a boundary, represents a schema of interpretation and is a powerful narrative that guides analysis and action in life situations. There are two parts of a narrative; framing devices that tell how to think about an issue and reasoning devices suggesting what to do about the issue (Gamson, 1983). Rein & Schön (1996) describe these as the rhetorical frame, which suggests how to think about an issue, and the action frame that suggests what to do about the issue. By comparing and contrasting the emerging frames, I will determine if the frames and their repetition or omission reinforce and mask the status quo and inequalities in race relations, as CRT scholars would suggest. The selection and repetition of frames in news creation and consumption can make what is obvious go unnoticed and seem normal.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

I narrowed my data pool from 240 articles to 80, ten from each of the four sources for Freddie Gray and Michael Brown. When critically evaluating the articles, I found four major thematic differences with regard to the framing of Freddie Gray between Fox News, CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera articles. These differences fell into the following frames detailed in the paragraph below: In the first theme, “Gray’s illegal switchblade,” CNN and Fox articles framed Gray’s arrest was because he had an illegal weapon while BBC and Al Jazeera framed his arrest as illegal. In the second theme, “Gray’s self-inflicted injury,” CNN and Fox emphasized that Gray injured himself while BBC and Al Jazeera emphasized he was injured by police violence while in the van. In the third frame, “Age of #purge rioters,” CNN, Fox News and BBC media ignored that Twitter #purge rioters were young students while Al Jazeera specifically noted their age and police waiting for them outside of school. In the fourth frame, “Gray family voice for non-violence,” CNN and Fox News only utilized the Gray family’s voice only with statements of being against violence while BBC and Al Jazeera included many other family statements.

Gray theme # 1, “Gray’s illegal switchblade” explained: the reason for Gray’s arrest: Fox News and CNN framed the cause of Gray’s arrest as being due to his criminal record and fleeing police with an illegal switchblade in a high-crime area. BBC and Al Jazeera framed the cause of Gray’s arrest as him being illegally arrested due to being African American, legally fleeing and being falsely accused of carrying a switchblade that was a legal pocketknife.

Gray theme # 2, “Gray’s self-inflicted injury” explained: the reason and cause of Gray’s injury: Fox News and CNN framed the cause of Gray’s paralysis and death as being self-inflicted by throwing himself against the inside of the transport van. BBC and Al Jazeera framed the cause of Gray’s paralysis and death as being due to police violence while framing suggestions that he injured himself as impossible.

Gray theme # 3, “Age of #purge rioters” explained: the age and demographic of the Twitter #purge rioters: Fox News and CNN framed the age and demographic of the Twitter #purge rioters as being groups of roving gangs on a path of planned and organized destruction. BBC omitted any specific frames of the Twitter #purge protestors and only gave general descriptions of the protestors by including that some were violent. Al Jazeera framed the Twitter #purge rioters as being amazingly young school kids from 13-18 years of age, who were greeted at their dismissal from school for the day by police in riot gear and armored vehicles.

Gray theme #4, “Gray family’s voice for non-violence” explained: the framing of the Gray family’s voice only with statements of being against violence. Fox News and CNN only framed the Gray family’s voice by using statements made of being against violent protests while BBC and Al Jazeera framed the Gray family voice with broader descriptions of how they felt and for improving the community.

In my second case, I found two major thematic differences in framing in the media presentations and coverage of the Micheal Brown killing in Ferguson, Missouri in articles by Fox News, CNN, Al Jazeera and BBC. In the first theme, “Detailing Brown’s encounter with Officer Wilson” CNN and Fox News included long witness interviews with great event-by-event detail, while Al Jazeera and BBC simply framed that he was

unarmed and shot at 12 times before dying. The second theme, “Brown family’s voice for non-violence” Fox News and CNN utilized the framing of the Brown family’s voice solely with statements against violence while BBC and Al Jazeera included many other broader statements from the family on a number of other topics.

Brown theme #1, “Detailing Brown’s encounter with Officer Wilson” explained: The framing of the depth and detail of Micheal Brown’s encounter with officer Darren Wilson. Fox News and CNN framed Brown’s encounter with much greater detail, utilizing extensive statements from eye-witness accounts and giving a second-by-second description of events. BBC and Al Jazeera framed Brown’s encounter with officer Wilson generally as Brown being an unarmed teenager who was shot at 12 times by Officer Wilson and killed.

Brown theme #2, “Brown family’s voice for non-violence” explained: The framing of the Brown family’s voice only with statements about being against violence. Fox News and CNN primarily included frames of the Brown family voice by only utilizing statements from them about being against the violent protests. BBC and Al Jazeera both included frames of the Brown family’s voice as being hurt and being against police brutality in addition to just being against the violence.

Gray’s “illegal switchblade”

The events and actions of Gray and the police during Freddie Gray’s arrest were framed similarly in both the U.S. and International sources. Fox News, CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera all mentioned that Gray made eye contact with the bike patrol officers and fled on foot. He was apprehended and cuffed in a brief struggle, and then left on his stomach on the sidewalk until the police transport van arrived. Gray was then placed into the van,

which made six other stops, some to pick up other arrests during the ride to Baltimore City Jail central booking, where he was unresponsive. The reason for his arrest in the police report was based on a weapons charge, in this case the possession of “illegal” switchblade.

However, I found a clear difference in the framing and representation of the cause of the arrest and weapon’s charge surrounding the pocketknife. The BBC and Al Jazeera more often framed the arrest as “unwarranted” or “illegal” and when referencing the possession of the “switchblade.” They immediately clarified it that Gray was not carrying an illegal switchblade. The following is an example from Al Jazeera of this in a statement made by Marilyn Mosby, the Maryland State’s Attorney: “Mosby also said that the switchblade officers accused Gray of illegally carrying was in fact a legal knife, and there was no justification for his arrest” (“Baltimore policeman charged,” 2015, para 12). Marilyn Mosby, the Maryland State’s attorney for Baltimore, Maryland, became the prosecutor in the case against the six Baltimore City police officers. Al Jazeera also included a later statement from Mosby, the African American prosecutor: “They falsely accused him of having an illegal switchblade when in fact it was a legal pocketknife” (“Victory rally,” 2015, para 10). The BBC news articles followed a similar framing of the reason for the arrest and the possession of an illegal weapon: “State prosecutor Marylyn Mosby said that Gray was illegally arrested, assaulted and falsely accused of carrying an illegal switchblade” (“Freddie grays death,” 2016, para 4). Another mention of the pocketknife and arrest cited the following: “Ms Mosby said that is was a legal knife and therefore did not justify arrest” (“Freddie gray’s death,” 2016, para 6). BBC also mentioned the following: “Police commissioner Anthony Batts has also stated that it is

not clear why Gray was stopped by the officers as there is no law against running” (“Freddie Grays death,” 2016, para 5).

Why Gray ran could have been for a number of reasons, some of which we will never know since he was murdered. Labeling theory also explains why he ran. Labeling theory suggests that numerous past encounters and labeling of Gray as a criminal and deviant by society courts and law enforcement over time made him think he was a criminal and should therefore run. Labeling theory explains that over time these labels cause the individual to believe they are actually true. Gray’s whole life he grew up in an over-policed, low-income African American neighborhood and experienced instance after instance of being stopped, detained, arrested and punished for mostly minor drug related accusations. His whole world and it’s response toward him over time made him identify with society’s labeling of him as a deviant, influencing his actions to run despite not committing a crime. Both BBC and Al Jazeera framed the events of that day as Gray being “illegally” targeted due to being African American, illegally pursued, tackled, and detained. BBC and Al Jazeera also framed that once Brown was illegally apprehended, he was then illegally searched despite not committing any offense. He was framed as then being falsely accused of having an illegal weapon and arrested without warrant or committing any civil or criminal offense.

Media framing of the pocketknife was quite different in the U.S Fox News and CNN articles. Despite the fact that in news conferences, Baltimore City State’s Attorney Marylyn Mosby stated that Gray had a legal 3-inch pocketknife, Fox News and CNN articles repeatedly describes the charge and item as being an “illegal switchblade” (“Baltimore policeman charged,” 2015, para, 12). The international media from BBC and

Al Jazeera framed the arrest as illegal more often and when utilizing the term “switchblade” immediately qualifying the statement by saying the item was not in fact an illegal knife. For example, Fox news articles contained content such as the following: “According to court documents, Officer Garret Miller accused Gray of carrying a switchblade, which was discovered in Gray’s pocket after he was stopped” (“Justice Department opens,” 2015, para 17). Another example of framing of the switchblade in Fox News stated, “Police say they went after him after he fled at the sight of an officer in a drug-infested neighborhood. Why he ran is anyone’s guess. Police say they later found a switchblade in his pocket” (“A look at the known’s,” 2015, para 2). CNN articles followed similar framing of the cause for arrest: “Gray was arrested April 12 and accused of possessing an illegal knife” (Ellis, 2015, para 4).

The significance of framing and using the “switchblade” terminology in the U.S. news articles by Fox News and CNN revolves around media framing and CRT. As discussed earlier, media framing works by selecting and highlighting of certain aspects or parts of the story, in this case the knife that Gray had. Framing breaks down the storytelling, highlighting some aspects while obscuring others. In this case, Fox News and CNN framed the knife by repeatedly calling it an illegal switchblade, and rarely corrected it despite statements from the police chief and State Attorney. Then once it was announced in a press conference by State Attorney Mosby that it really was a legal knife, Fox and CNN obscured that by continuing with the switchblade frame.

These unmarked differences in framing hide and mask systematic racism and appear as the business-as-usual way that news sources in America are expected to report on this type of treatment of minorities. These media frames of assigning the term

“switchblade” to Gray are a form of racism that happens so often that it seems normal, right and expected in American society. To Americans, assigning the term “switchblade” to an African American becomes a normalized justification for the individual to be pursued, tackled, searched, detained, arrested and punished with incarceration and fines. The term “switchblade” operates to excuse the violent treatment he received. While on the surface the difference in framing between switchblade and knife may seem subtle to us as Americans, that is exactly how racism operates, and instance after instance of framing such as this, as you will see below, result in a much different experience for African Americans.

In the Freddie Gray case, all six police officers were charged and eventually acquitted. The officers were fired and charged with crimes ranging from assault to depraved-heart murder, which indicates the accused used deliberate malice and intent resulting in the injury and death of a person. The van’s driver received the depraved-heart murder charge. The media firestorm that erupted after the riots continued throughout the legal process due to the extensive media coverage initially and the fact that the six officers losing their jobs and being prosecuted was unprecedented. The Fox News and CNN articles also covered the trials very heavily which resulted in dozens of more in depth articles about different aspects of the case. It was later during this process where the U.S. media also dug deep into Freddie Gray’s past.

While completely omitted from the ten articles by Al Jazeera and BBC, CNN often brought up what they could find in public records, such as Grays’s record with law enforcement. While this may seem like a normal procedure in America, CNN was searching for something in Gray’s past that could be used to make his murder

insignificant. CNN was searching and reporting on anything that could be framed in a manner that minimized the significance of his death at the hands of police. In the U.S. culture if you are African American and have a lengthy arrest record your life is assigned less and sometimes no value. CNN never focused or looked for or considered events of “rough rides” with the police. CNN reported that they had found his criminal arrest records, which were extensive and mainly for minor drug offenses. CNN also found a civil settlement his family received due to lead paint poisoning in their rental house leading to problems for him and his sister in school. Some of the mentions were brief although the CNN article stated, “Police have said they detained Gray on April 12 over drug suspicions. He had been arrested in the past on drug-related allegations” (Brumfield & Marquez, 2015, para 34). Other information CNN framed of the public records on Gray was more detailed.

Gray also had a history of run-ins with the law. According to court documents CNN obtained, there were more than 20 criminal court cases in Maryland against Gray, and five of those cases were still active at the time of his death. The cases mostly involve drug related charges, but there are charges from March for second-degree assault and destruction of property. Gray was due in court on a possession charge on April 24. (Yan & Fantz, 2015, para 7)

CNN also reported the following:

Gray had been in and out of prison since 2009 for various drug cases, said Maryland Department of Corrections spokesperson Gerard Shields. In February 2009, he was sentenced to four years in prison for two counts of

drug possession with intent to deliver. Shields said he could not determine from records what kind of drug was involved. (Karimi, Berryman & Ford, 2016, para 11)

The following was also mentioned in a separate article on Gray’s past convictions:

“He had been in and out of prison since 2009 for various drug cases, according to the Maryland Department of Corrections (Yan & Fantz, 2015, para 8). CNN also discussed other background information such as losing his brother 18 months before Gray’s death to street violence, and talked about his romantic relationship. CNN also included the following negative frame in a statement from his brother-in-law.

When people come to buy narcotics or gamble or anything and they put their money in your hand, what makes you so bad? He had responsibilities. Responsibilities don’t stop because you don’t have a job. (Karimi, Berryman & Ford, 2016, para 14)

The terms utilized such as “in and out of prison,” and “more than 20 criminal court cases” put the importance of the story on Gray and marginalized his value. Gray was framed as a continual problem to society; therefore his death should be viewed as inconsequential. While there were dozens of instances where citizens were injured, paralyzed or killed in the back of transport vans, CNN and Fox News did not attempt or include these possibilities or facts in their framing. While in the above statement his brother-in-law was defending him, the frame is very negative and would be perceived as Gray being a “bad dude” to readers, and a menace to society in America. CNN reported these frames of Gray as a drug user and dealer who was an almost constantly repeating

offender, being in and out of prison and poor, unemployable and a person who justified selling drugs and breaking the law. CNN reported Gray’s record and his attitude as reported quote by his brother-in-law despite that they had nothing to do with his injury, death or the reason that the officers were being prosecuted. CNN basically was queuing the readers that Gray was a poor, African American loser that was a menace to society and would never amount to anything, therefore his life and death were unimportant and without value. CNN’s framing implies that there is no reason to protest and that no one would or should care about Gray. These frames work as a system of racism working through a process of communication that does not stand out or appear abnormal to American society or citizens due to its frequency and predictability. The systematic aim of these frames function to silence the voice of minorities resisting the violence of policing in their communities.

Fox News, on the other hand, contained very little information about Gray’s background or his family. Instead, Fox News simply reported his age of being 25 years-old, his race as being “black” and that there was a certain amount of “mystery” surrounding his injury and death. Fox News framing indicated that they just felt he was unimportant due to his black label and the only reason he was mentioned was because there were questions about how he was injured. Fox News focused more on the “illegal switchblade” frame, and “black” when describing him more than any other source. In the Fox News frame, they solve the “mystery” for their audience by blaming Gray for his own injuries, as I will show below. While CNN focused on Gray’s criminal background and run-ins with law enforcement, Fox News framed Gray’s death and the attention it was receiving as a mystery that they had a solution for, that he caused his own injury and

therefore the protests are illegitimate. While Fox News and CNN each framed Gray differently by using different language and descriptions, the end result in what they felt the reader should know was the same, that Gray was unimportant due to being black, a menace and that his life and death were of little value. Both sources utilized these framing elements to silence the voice of resistance and make calls for a return to the status-quo of society and therefore race-relations.

CNN news sources felt that the frames about Gray’s history with law enforcement would be a way to marginalize his existence, death and the larger voice of those protesting police harassment and brutality in Baltimore, and nationwide. However, BBC and Al Jazeera did not feel his previous encounters with law enforcement and record, nor being unemployed and a drug user were important aspects of the story. Instead, BBC and Al Jazeera felt that it was important to frame the story in ways that suggested he was pursued, apprehended, searched and arrested, then killed by the Baltimore City Police. BBC and Al Jazeera placed the importance of the story on him being killed by police. Only when comparing and contrasting the news articles are these frames revealed. These racialized frames are obscured in U.S. media as the normal way U.S. Americans and their media would understand or should understand the important aspects of these events. In America, race and wealth are key, key to what and who is important, valued and whose voice is heard, and whose voice should be ignored. Also, race is key in how individuals and groups are thought of, communicated about and with and therefore treated. These media frames are unmarked markers that don’t stand out and signal how people and events should be treated and understood. These frames steer the readers in this case as to

who and what should be important with regard to their race, while denigrating others. These frames also signal how conflicts about race and value can and should be handled.

Gray’s prior run-ins with the Baltimore City Police department were not in any way specifically a contributing factor to the injuries, paralysis and eventual death that was caused by the officers on that day. This suggests that our systems in the U.S., in this case, the media, and the way we communicate about and treat racial minorities camouflages these unmarked discourses in our everyday language, making it seem normal to us. These differences that are hard to see contribute to a largely un-equal and unfair treatment that denigrates African Americans and favors white society. The U.S. media contributes to and perpetuates racism in the minds of readers through framing minorities as being of less value, poor, violent, criminal and having no existing value or future. CNN and Fox frames reinforce in their reader’s minds that the existing treatment of minorities is normal, right and should remain the status-quo in America. While these may seem unsubstantial to the reader at this point, there are many other examples that follow.

Gray’s “self-inflicted injury”

The cause of Freddie Gray’s injury and subsequent death weeks later was also framed significantly differently in the U.S. news sources when compared to the international news sources. Fox News and CNN repeatedly reported frames that included suggestions that Freddie Gray may have caused his own paralysis and death. Al Jazeera framed the cause of death being the most violent by stating that: “Gray died on Sunday after sustaining multiple injuries which included three fractures in his neck vertebrae, a smashed voicebox and the severing of 80 percent of his spine (“Thousands protest,”

2015, para 1). BBC also framed the death by reducing the violence stating that: “Freddie Gray died on Sunday after suffering a fatal spine injury under unexplained circumstances after his arrest earlier this month (“Baltimore police custody,” 2015, para 1). Al Jazeera’s intent with their very specific frames of Gray’s injuries that included his smashed voicebox indicate that he suffered a very violent death from several injuries that were caused by police brutality. BBC’s frame does not include the extent of the injuries, only stating paralysis from an unknown reason without suggesting the false reason CNN and Fox used; however by doing this BBC also reduced the idea of great violence.

A Fox News article titled “Report: Freddie Gray may have intentionally tried to injure himself in police van” reported the following in the first line: “Freddie Gray, whose death triggered Monday’s rioting in Baltimore, may have intentionally tried to injure himself in a police van, according to another prisoner in the vehicle” (“Report: Freddie Gray,” 2015, para 1). The article also mentioned the unnamed prisoner said he heard Gray banging himself against the walls and believed he was intentionally trying to injure himself (“Report: Freddie Gray,” 2015, para 6). CNN also reported the second prisoners statement: “The news the second prisoner told police was in the Washington Post account that cites he could hear Gray banging against the walls and thought Gray was trying to injure himself” (McLaughlin, Almasy & Yan, 2015, para 5). The implication by Fox News and CNN that Gray injured himself excuses the six officers and the larger system of policing that caused Gray’s death. This is an active frame that silences the voices that are against his death, police brutality and those protesting nationwide.

While BBC did share this self-injury frame in one news article, they immediately recanted the possibility by utilizing an expert witness: “There has been a suggestion he intentionally injured himself, but a leading spinal surgeon told the BBC that would be impossible” (“Baltimore police custody,” 2015, para 3). Later, the same news article stated the following: “For someone to break their own spine is very difficult, impossible, Mr. Ranganathan said” (“Baltimore police custody, 2015, para 22). Another BBC news article mentioned the cause as a “high-energy injury” and stated “Gray’s injuries were similar to those suffered in shallow-water diving” (“Freddie gray died,” 2015, para 2). In this frame BBC is highlighting the great violence required to cause paralysis and death in a way of eliminating the possibility that Gray’s injury was self-inflicted, implicating the police officers. While the report about Gray possibly injuring himself was available, BBC or Al Jazeera rarely included it, and when they did it was immediately dismissed as impossible. This frame gives legitimacy to the voice of those protesting his death and police relations where Fox News and CNN frames silenced the voice.

Fox News and CNN repeatedly framed Gray’s death around the possibility that Gray injured himself. These frames came in the form of headlines and headers in the coverage in addition to the content. CNN and Fox News felt its importance as a key development in the story as a way of dismissing Gray’s death, police brutality, and the subsequent protests in a way that calls for a return to normalcy. The BBC and Al Jazeera frames and expert witnesses quoted by them suggest that the very notion of someone self-inflicting that type of injury while restrained was absurd. The notion that Gray may have been given a ‘nickel’ ride or a rough ride by the transport van was only mentioned a year

later by Fox News and CNN coverage in passing. Below a Fox News article stated the possibility of a rough ride in the van.

So how and when did the injury happen? That’s the big question. It’s not clear whether he got hurt during the arrest, the ride, or both. Police say he was in leg irons and handcuffs in the van but was not belted in, a violation of policy. That has raised suspicions that Gray was deliberately taken on a ‘rough ride’ to teach him a lesson and was injured when he got thrown around the back of the vehicle. (“A look at the knowns,” 2015, para 5).

Another CNN article stated, “Prosecutors contend Goodson took the unbelted Gray on a ‘rough ride’ which was described as a punitive measure police used against unruly subjects” (“Freddie Gray’s death,” 2016, para 7).

The U.S. news media simply preferred to frame that Gray caused his own injuries that resulted in the subsequent paralysis and death. By doing this these frames support the status-quo of race relations and excuse the individual police officers as well as the overall system and tactics of over-policing these neighborhoods. While CNN and Fox News chose to dig up and publish Gray’s court and arrest records, they never listed the long history and records of the rough ride injuries. Police van rough rides were well-known, just not in the media coverage. In fact giving a rough ride as a retaliatory measure for running, called a ‘foot tax,’ or for resisting and has caused many severe injuries, paralysis and deaths to residents in Baltimore and elsewhere (Donovan & Puente, 2015). Some of these injuries were minor; however, one person suffered a broken neck, another person suffered fatal heart attack, and three others were paralyzed including one where someone later died (Donovan & Puente, 2015). Some of these individuals, not all, won large

settlements in court, which were later greatly reduced due to limitations of settlements in Maryland to amounts between 20 to 400,000 dollars, not enough to cover legal or medical fees (Donovan & Puente, 2015). CRT would explain that the over-policing of minority neighborhoods combined with limiting the liability of police legal settlements are other unmarked unnoticed functions of racism in America, which directly place a lower value to the injuries and deaths of minorities.

Events such as the above are as an example of lost progress, where the supposed ‘equal under law’ determination does not result in the equal rights or treatment that it suggests. The over-policing of minority communities results in communities remaining poor with members more likely to have criminal records and be mistreated by policing with no recourse. In addition this over-policing is an unmarked way of reinforcing segregation on members of these communities. By excluding of injuries and deaths and presenting opposing frames the U.S. media also contributes to this. The media frames filter, mask, enable or ignore the disparities in treatment that these communities and individuals face though the over-policing and resulting incarceration of individuals for minor or non-violent offenses. The limits on liability of cities and municipalities in cases of police brutality, injury and homicide are one of these unmarked business-as-usual ways that violent relations are allowed and perpetuated.

Age of #purge rioters

On the day of Gray’s funeral, while in class area high school students created a Twitter hashtag #purge. A Twitter hashtag is a way of initiating a comment and sharing it, where others on the social media site can share it with their followers. In this case students in the neighborhood where Gray lived created and shared the Twitter handle

#purge early on the day of his funeral, calling for wild behavior such as vandalism and shoplifting after school let out. The handle said that there was a scheduled purge at 3pm on that day, when school let out. At the news of this #purge, Baltimore City police assembled outside of the local high school in riot gear with shields and armored trucks. When school let out, the students reacted in fear and anger at the presence of the police. Some damaged property, shoplifted and some threw rocks at police officers. Some of the police officers threw the rocks back at the students. This #purge and the subsequent events were framed drastically differently by the international sources compared to domestic, especially when comparing Al Jazeera reports with Fox News articles. For example, Al Jazeera reported,

Al Jazeera’s Shihab Rattansi said police assembled outside a high school in west Baltimore after being alerted thorough a Twitter hashtag, #purge that students wanted to protest over Gray’s death at 3pm. These high school students, they were 13, 14, 15, these kids came out and they were met by police who started throwing tear gas and pepper spray. It’s amazing how young these kids were, they were throwing stones. (“State of emergency,” 2015, para 20)

The above Al Jazeera frame revealed the astonishment of the reporter in the young age and treatment of the students as they exited the high-school and later. The frame also shows the amazement in that the teenagers were retaliating and throwing rocks at the police. The Fox News coverage on that same day was drastically different in comparison to the above Al Jazeera frame, not mentioning their age, or that police were camped outside of the school in riot gear and armored vehicles. Fox News coverage

defined their frame from a movie title. Fox News suggested the #purge meaning was a threat of organized rampant lawlessness, rioting, looting and threats of further violence.

The rioting, looting and threats of further violence followed the funeral of Freddie Gray, who died April 18, a week after being injured while in police custody. Gray, 25, was being transported in a police vehicle when he suffered injuries that proved fatal. On Monday, police said an online call was issued for a "purge" at 3 p.m. ET, starting at Mondawmin Mall and ending in the downtown area. The type of threat is based on a movie called “The Purge,” whose plot involves rampant lawlessness. (“Md. Gov calls,” 2015, para 12)

The Fox News frame above connects the previous “rioting, looting and threats of further violence” to both the Freddie Gray funeral and the students without mentioning they were students in class or their very young age. The frame suggests that the #purge was an organized continuation of the previous riots and plotted rampant lawlessness. The frame itself calls for a police response, yet it obscured who and where the response should be, just that it was necessary due to planned mayhem. The frame also omitted that the police response began at the local high school.

While the age, location, and demographics of the protestors were framed differently, only CNN and Fox News articles qualified the police response with police statements. CNN reported “The Baltimore Police Department/Criminal Intelligence Unit has received credible information that members of various gangs including the Black Guerrilla Family, Bloods, and Crips have entered into a partnership to take out law enforcement officers” (Yan & Ford, 2015, para 23). The Fox News article also mentioned

this: “A police source told Fox News several gangs, including Black Gorilla Family, Bloods and Crips all had “entered into a partnership to take out law enforcement officers” (“Md. Gov calls,” 2015, para 17). These U.S. media sources merged the police response to what was described as a ‘credible threat’ from gangs to the mention of the students while omitting the word students in the coverage. The gang’s reported alliance either happened at the same time the students planned their protest, or the Baltimore City Police unprecedentedly exercised an extremely heavy hand at a public school generally treated as a sanctuary elsewhere in the U.S. Including the term gangs removes responsibility for police using any excessive violence in the response to protestors and in this case school students. Regardless, the media included both elements in these articles by merging without separating them or even mentioning anything about what happened at the school. Fox New and CNN frames blended the gang’s credible threat and to the young students.

This framing show the way media communicates about instances such as this are deeply entrenched, obscured and unmarked racism in society (Delgado, 1995;Valdes, Culp & Harris, 2002). Fox News and CNN frames could not justify the fact that there were police in riot gear with shields and armored vehicles camped outside a high school waiting for children to exit. Therefore they excluded that in their coverage and connected the #purge students to the “credible threat” from the Black Gorilla Family, Bloods and Crips gangs taking out police.” In this was the framing resolved the stunning response where police were waiting outside the school. Racism is part of U.S. cultural and historical heritage, where attitudes, beliefs and ideas attach themselves to non-whites in negative ways (Lawrence, 1987). Because we live in this culture, these beliefs have attached themselves to us, yet we do not recognize our racism (Lawrence). The last

thematic frame involves the framing of the Gray family voice, what media included as relevant.

Gray family’s voice for non-violence

When critically evaluating the articles, it seemed that much of Freddie Gray’s history, other than the encounters with law enforcement, was omitted. Fox News and CNN failed to include frames about Gray’s family’s occupation, length and location of residence, church memberships or other demographics. Except for being against the violence, the voice of Gray’s family was largely absent from the U.S. coverage, omitting their voice, background, his girlfriend, family, except for his encounters with the police. The coverage seemed to more often report on what the Gray family mentioned or thought of the violence which was the only time Fox News and CNN frames felt their voice was valid.

Some examples of this framing began right after the night of riots that followed the Freddie Gray funeral. Domestic sources framed the Gray family’s statements against the violence, which were also repeated in later articles. A Fox News article quoted Gray’s twin sister: “My family wants to say, can you all please, please stop the violence, Freddie Gray would not want this” (“Protests turn violent,” 2015, para 3). CNN released similar remarks in their articles: “I want yall to get justice for my son, but don’t do it like this here, his mother told journalists” (Yan & Ford, 2015, para 7). The article also framed his twin sister’s voice but only with the following statement: “I don’t think that’s for Freddie, I think violence is wrong” (Yan & Ford, 2015, para 9).

The U.S. coverage tended to suggest that the riots were due to the death of Gray rather than the spark from years of mistreatment by police in the area. Framing the cause

of the unrest in Fox News and CNN as being due only to the death of Gray makes it much easier for the media frames to silence the voice of resistance by undercutting and using disparaging statements and framing of Gray. While the CNN and Fox News coverage did include some statements about oppression, Al Jazeera and BBC were more likely to imply that the protests were a result of more than what happened to Gray, as in the below instance of a quote by the Gray lawyer.

Gray’s family, who were hoping to organize a peace march later this week, condemned the violence, and said the problem of police brutality was not solely caused by police. “It’s about black men stepping forward and owning their own portion of the problem, we live here. We love it here. It’s not perfect. It’s like being in a bad marriage but we’re not getting a divorce. We love this city and we’re here to work as hard as we can and as long as we can until the problem has gone away,” the family’s lawyer, Billy Murphy said. (“State of emergency,” 2015, para 12)

The framing of the family being against violent protests was included in all four sources, however the BBC and Al Jazeera coverage did not utilize the frame nearly as much and they included other statements by the family more often. Fox News and CNN frames seemed to cover only the Gray family’s voice with frames of them being against the violence, omitting other issues within their statements. Other than utilizing their voice as a tool to quell or unravel the protests and outcry of the community and nation, the family’s voice was unimportant, therefore excluded. This would suggest that looking at this coverage is another example where discourses in media tend to obscure these unmarked elements of racism in the U.S. The above frames suggest that what is important

about Gray’s death is that the African American community take ownership and be proactive in repairing their community and relations with the police. In framing and covering the family in this way almost seems like media wants the family to say the violence is appropriate in a way that we can excuse the treatment of Gray, and African Americans as a whole.

Michael Brown-Ferguson

As mentioned earlier with regard to Michael Brown, the differences in framing between U.S. and international media frames centered on the encounter with Ferguson Police officer Darren Wilson and the use of Brown family statements to highlight the violent protests. While there were distinct differences in framing in the coverage of Micheal Brown and Ferguson, they were not quite as clear or strong as the themes in the Freddie Gray coverage. However, there were two main themes in framing differences between Fox News, CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera in the coverage of the Michael Brown case. The first centered on the framing of “detail in Brown’s encounter with Officer Wilson.” CNN and Fox News included long witness interviews with great event-by-event detail; while Al Jazeera and BBC simply framed that he was unarmed and shot at 12 times before dying. In the second theme “Brown’s family voice for non-violence,” I found Fox News and CNN utilized the framing of the Brown family’s voice solely with statements against violence, while BBC and Al Jazeera included many other broader statements from the family on a number of other topics.

Detailing the encounter with Officer Wilson

Eighteen year-old Michael Brown encountered Wilson when he and a friend, Dorian Johnson, were walking down the middle of a city street, less than one minute from Michael Brown’s grandmother’s house, where he was staying for the summer until he was to leave for college the next day (Missouri teen, CNN, para 14). The majority of the accounts in Fox News, CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera that there was some dialogue between the officer and two teenagers, and after the officer had passed he put his car in reverse, stopped next to them and some sort of struggle ensued between Brown and Officer Wilson. During that struggle, the officer’s gun went off, at which time Michael and Dorian got scared and ran. Officer Wilson pursued and either fired at Brown when his back was turned, or after he had stopped and turned around. Wilson fired twelve bullets, six of which struck Brown (Clark & Castillo, 2014, para 18). Brown’s body remained in the neighborhood street for five hours before investigators removed it, two to three blocks from his grandmother’s home (Robbins, 2014).

While there were not across the board differences between the four sources regarding the initial encounter, there were distinct differences in the specifics and amount of detail shared between each source in this case. The CNN articles went further into detail about Michael Brown explaining that he had just graduated from high school, that he was leaving for college the next day, had specific career entrepreneurial plans to be a heating and cooling engineer, was well liked by teachers and thought to be a “gentle giant” (Shoichet, 2014).

Friends and family said the teenager was ecstatic about starting classes at Vatterott College. "He looked forward to it so much. You didn't have to

tell him, 'Make sure you get to school.' He was ready," mother Lesley McSpadden told CNN. And he was proud to be setting an example for his younger siblings. (Shoichet, 2014, para 7)

While frames like the above do not directly describe the encounter with officer Wilson, CNN gives more of a background on the shooting victim than other sources. CNN also clearly had the heaviest coverage of witness testimonials including interviews of two contractors nearby and Dorian Johnson, Brown's friend.

The young men replied that they were "not but a minute away from our destination, and we would shortly be out of the street," Johnson told CNN. The officer drove away but stopped and backed up, almost hitting the pair, Johnson said. He said he wasn't sure what prompted the officer to return. Johnson told MSNBC the officer said something to the effect of "What'd you say?" "We were so close, almost inches away, that when he tried to open his door aggressively, the door ricocheted both off me and Big Mike's body and closed back on the officer," Johnson said. ("5 things to know," 2014, para 3-7)

The CNN frame regarding the initial encounter between Brown and Officer Wilson followed up by representing a later event from the same interview.

Johnson claims the officer grabbed Brown by his neck and Brown tried to pull away, but the officer kept pulling Brown toward him, he said. The officer drew his weapon, and "he said, 'I'll shoot you' or 'I'm going to shoot' " and almost instantaneously fired his weapon, hitting Brown, Johnson said. ("5 things to know," 2014, para 9-10)

Later in the interview, CNN reported the events that followed along with other witness testimony matching what Dorian Johnson stated.

Every casing found at the scene came from the officer's gun, Police Chief Belmar said, and witnesses say that after the officer initially fired, the two young men took off running. "I saw the officer proceeding after my friend, Big Mike, with his gun drawn, and he fired a second shot, and that struck my friend, Big Mike," Johnson said. "And at that time, he turned around with his hands up, beginning to tell the officer that he was unarmed and to tell him to stop shooting. But at that time, the officer was firing several more shots into my friend, and he hit the ground and died." This matches Crenshaw's and Mitchell's story. Crenshaw told CNN that Brown got about 20 feet away from the police cruiser before the officer shot him again. (“5 things to know, 2014, para 13-15)

However, an article 3 days later by CNN includes many of the above aspects of the above interview; CNN framed Officer Wilson’s side of the story through an anonymous caller, then qualified the truth of the account.

He says the boys were walking in the street; Wilson rolled the window down and told them to get out of street. Wilson may have called for backup when he pulled over. He heard the call for the strong armed robbery and saw the teens carrying something that might have been cigars. He pulled over and when he tried to get out of the car, twice he was pushed back into the car by Michael Brown. Brown then punched him in the face and Wilson reached for his gun. Brown grabbed the gun and at

one point had the gun pushed again Wilson's hip so Wilson pushed the gun away and the gun went off. Brown and his friend ran and Wilson got out of the car and pursued. He told them to freeze and Brown and his friend turned around. Brown started to taunt him, then bum rushed Wilson, coming at him full speed. Wilson started shooting. Wilson said the final shot was in the forehead and Brown fell two or three feet in front of the officer. (Robins, 2014, para 20-26)

The CNN report supports Wilson’s side of the story by an anonymous caller, by stating: “A source with detailed knowledge of the investigation into the shooting told CNN that “this account is accurate” (Robins, 2014, para 27). However, in an article 3 days prior, CNN debunked the notion that Wilson connected Johnson and Brown with the robbery: “Jackson said that the officer who shot Brown was not responding to a call about the robbery, but because he was “walking down the middle of the street, blocking traffic” (5 things to know, 2014, para 23). CNN later also utilized an unnamed “source:” “On Thursday, a source with detailed knowledge of the investigation told CNN that reports in the media that Wilson suffered a fractured eye socket from his reported scuffle with Brown are false” (Pearson & B Rumfield, 2014, para 15). These unnamed sources may indicate a cozy relationship between the media, in this case CNN, and individuals inside the police department. This “unnamed source” is likely a police officer and likely Wilson’s shift supervisor, who was also his girlfriend and bagged his weapon, or another commander in the department who interviewed Wilson. Both would be familiar with Wilson’s statement and have access to his reported injuries.

Fox News initially also had a supportive framing of Brown and the Brown family in comparison to the absence of representation in the Freddie Gray coverage, however, it was quite different from CNN. Unlike Freddie Gray, Brown had no court records to report therefore Fox News and CNN included what they had from an interview with Brown's grandmother. One example from Fox News explained: “My grandson never got into a fight, he was just looking forward to getting on with his life” (“Black teen shot,” 2014, para 17). Another frame is below.

Brown's grandmother, Desiree Harris, said she saw him running in her neighborhood Saturday afternoon. Just minutes later, she heard a commotion and went outside to check on it. She found Brown's body less than two blocks away. "When I got up there, my grandson was lying on the pavement. I asked the police what happened. They didn't tell me nothing." Harris said her grandson had recently graduated high school and was looking forward to the future. (“Black teen shot,” 2014, para 14-16).

Although the above Fox News provided a positive representation and framing of Brown does not include the specific encounter with Officer Wilson, it leads into the witness statements about Brown. Fox News, like CNN also included witness statements from Philip Walker that corresponded with Dorian Johnson's, Michel Brown's friend.

But Phillip Walker told the Associated Press that he was on the porch of an apartment complex overlooking the scene when he heard a shot and saw a white officer with Brown on the street. Brown "was giving up in the sense of raising his arms and being subdued," Walker said Monday. The officer "had his gun raised and started shooting the individual in the chest

multiple times." The officer then "stood over him and shot him" after the victim fell wounded. ("Police use tear gas," 2014, para 4-6)

Fox News also presented Gray's friend, Dorian Johnson's description with less detail than CNN, other than that they ignored the officer and were at the convenience store.

Dorian Johnson offered a similar account when he told KMOV-TV that he and Brown were walking home from a convenience store when a police officer told them to get out of the street and onto the sidewalk. Johnson said they kept walking, which caused the officer to confront them from his car and again after getting out of the vehicle. Johnson said the first time the officer fired, he and Brown got scared and ran away. "He shot again, and once my friend felt that shot, he turned around and put his hands in the air, and he started to get down," Johnson said. "But the officer still approached with his weapon drawn and fired several more shots." "We wasn't causing harm to nobody," Johnson said. "We had no weapons on us at all." ("Police use tear gas," 2014, para 7-10)

While Fox News, like CNN included statements from the police chief and his somewhat neutral description of the events, they contained more statements about the pending toxicology reports on both Wilson and Brown, as well as statements about non-lethal force such as tazers and body cameras. Since African Americans are represented as more likely to use alcohol and drugs in America, the toxicology frame suggests that these events would soon be explained with the likelihood that Wilson's actions would be justified. The following is an example of this framing: "Brown's mother, Lesley

McSpadden, said she didn't understand why police didn't subdue her high school graduate son with a club or stun gun, and that the officer involved should be fired and prosecuted” (“Police shooting,” 2014, para 14). Fox included this in another article as well: “She said she doesn’t understand why police didn’t subdue her son with a club or Taser, and she said the officer should be fired and prosecuted” (“Protest over black,” 2015, para 22). Rather than frame the magnitude of shooting at an unarmed teenager 12 times; Fox News frames implied that with more tools available a less violent form of subduing a black jaywalker might be used to quell the noise of protests. CNN frames also aimed to quell the “noise” of the protests and voice of minorities by using frames of the chain of events to focus away from the magnitude of 12 shots by also including vast detail to reduce the impact of the facts of the events.

The BBC coverage of the encounter contained many specific frames of police brutality and excessive force; however it contained much shorter statements from eyewitnesses, such as Dorian Johnson. An example of these frames in BBC follows: “Michael Brown, 18, was shot on Saturday in an incident widely seen as an act of police brutality” (“Michael Brown shooting: Ferguson officer,” 2014, 2014 para 2). Another example: “The shooting of the 18 year-old as he walked down a street drew allegations of police brutality among people in the mainly black suburb of Ferguson (“Missouri police tear,” para 4). Another frame included a resident’s voice unheard in any of the U.S. frames by Fox News and CNN.

“It’s just disheartening to hear that the police had to shoot that young man so many times,” one local resident said. “It’s just a case where we as a community don’t feel safe right now, not only in St. Louis but also any

other major city in the United States.” (“Michael Brown shooting Ferguson police,” 2014, para 14)

Note the above inclusion of voice and voice of the magnitude of the violence used on the Brown frame, which was absent in Fox News and CNN’s framing. Also the broadness given to the voice, which includes the entire African American community in the U.S., which Fox News and CNN could not utilize while silencing, therefore they framed the protests about only Brown. The BBC frames also contained several descriptions from eyewitness accounts, but had much fewer quotes compared to the domestic coverage. An example of this framing explained: “Eye-witnesses have said Mr. Brown raised his hands in a gesture of surrender before he was shot multiple times by Mr. Wilson (“Micheal Brown shooting,” 9-1, para 8).

The above BBC frames all gave voice to protestors of police brutality and highlighted the magnitude of the shooting with statements “it’s disheartening they had to shoot that young man so many times,” “we as a community don’t feel safe right now, not only in St. Louis but also any other major city in the United States.” They also highlighted Brown’s surrender with: “raised his hands in a gesture of surrender.” Fox News and CNN avoided statements like these from individuals expressing fear and distrust throughout cities in the U.S. This silencing the voice of the “other” is a form of racism.

Al Jazeera coverage also did not include the long sequence of events described by eyewitnesses like Fox News and CNN. These frames emphasized Brown being a black teenager fatally shot by police, near his grandmother’s house, and that he was unarmed, compliant and a victim of racism. The Al Jazeera descriptions of the events: “Tensions

flared in the U.S. state of Missouri after a black teenager was fatally shot by police, sending a crowd of local residents into a frenzy” (“Tensions high,” 2014, para 1).

Another framing followed: “Michael Brown, an 18 year-old high school graduate, was shot and killed on Saturday afternoon near his grandmother’s house by a police officer in the predominantly black St. Louis suburb of Ferguson” (“U.S. black teen shot,” 2014, para 2). The coverage also included frames that Brown was compliant and had his hands raised: “A witness in the case told local media that Brown had raised his arms to police to show that he was unarmed before being killed” (“U.S. police fire,” 2014, para 5).

Another compliant frame follows: “Witnesses say the teenager was non-violent and compliant at the time of the shooting and a victim of racism” (“National Guard deployed,” 2014, para 10). These frames emphasize that Brown was an unarmed black teenager in a mostly black neighborhood near his grandmother’s house and was killed by police due to racism. Frames of mostly black, unarmed, killed by police and racism were throughout the Al Jazeera articles pointing to race relations throughout the U.S.

The fact that the U.S. coverage by Fox News and CNN frames went into more detail with witness statements can come from a variety of causes. Obviously, some of these causes could be the availability of contacting a witness, like timeliness of request. Al Jazeera and BBC framed the magnitude and shock of the killing of an unarmed teenager by firing 12 times, where Fox News and CNN framed long chains of events to justify it.

Brown family’s voice for non-violence in protests

Similar to the coverage of Freddie Gray, U.S. media used frames of the Brown family of being for non-violence in the protests, while not including their voice with

regard to their occupations, history, or views of the community. However, degree of utilizing this frame was less than in the Gray case compared to the international articles. That being said, six of ten CNN articles contained this frame, also including the longest and most powerful statements. Of the ten articles per source, BBC only had utilized the Brown family’s statements against the violence in two articles. BBC used frames such as the quote by his sister and later by his parents calling for non-violence by the protestors.

The violence that they’re doing right now messing our community up, he wouldn’t have wanted, she added. We’re just keeping faith. We’ve got to hope and pray because if you don’t have hope and if you don’t have faith and if you don’t pray, we’re not going to get justice. (Michael Brown shooting: Ferguson residents, 2014, para 4)

In another article, BBC only used the non-violence in protests frame in passing in the following statement: “Michael Brown’s parents have called for calm and no return to the violence that marked the days after their son’s death” (Ferguson unrest, 2014, para 8). While there were over a dozen other frames of the Brown family’s voice regarding other aspects such as their emotional state and feeling of loss, the non-violence in protest frame was not as strongly utilized as it was in Fox News and CNN.

Al Jazeera also utilized the frame, and to an extent more often than BBC showing it in three of the ten articles.

Standing with supporters, including the Reverend Al Sharpton, Brown’s father said he wanted justice for his son but wanted it the ‘right way.’ I need all of us to come together and do this right, the right way, Said

Micheal Brown Senior, who wore a T-shirt showing his son’s baby picture. (Obama urges, 2014, para 8)

The next article contained the same frame including another statement from Brown’s father through the family lawyer: “No-one is going to condone violence,” he said. “Micheal Brown Senior has eloquently called for peace and calm. We all have a responsibility to protect the community” (Brown’s lawyer, 2014, para 3). The last frame utilized was the statement released by the family after Wilson was not indicted by the grand jury, and this was included in the frames in a different way in the CNN framing, as will be shown later.

We are profoundly disappointed that the killer of our child will not face the consequence of his actions. While we understand that many others share our pain, we ask that you channel your frustration in ways that will make a positive change. We need to work together to fix the system that allowed this to happen. (Jury decides not, 2014, para 5-7)

The coverage by Fox News used the Brown family for non-violent protests frame less often in their coverage of the Freddie Gray events in Baltimore. The frame of the Brown family nonviolence in Ferguson was utilized in only two of the articles. In this quote in speaking with Al Sharpton: “He also echoed pleas for peaceful protests by the NAACP and Brown’s father, Micheal Brown Sr., who told the crowd: “I need all of us to come together and do this right, no violence” (Police won’t release, 2014, para 5).

CNN used the frame of the Brown family for nonviolent protests more than any other source, in six of the ten articles that I selected. Some of the CNN frames utilized the same quotes from interviews that the other sources used, as follows: “They asked for

supporters to remain peaceful, something their son would have wanted. “No violence,” McSpadden said, “just justice”” (Shoichet, 2014, para 19). CNN also quoted the family stating:

The parents expressed appreciation for those who have taken to the streets of Ferguson to support them, while criticizing those responsible for looting and violence for doing nothing but causing more pain plus it’s shaming his name, Brown Sr. said. (Botelho, 2014, para 20)

CNN, like Fox News also included the printed statement released after the verdict by the Brown family. However, and as many may have seen repeated on television broadcasting, CNN included the emotional outbursts of anger by both of Micheal Brown’s parents when Officer Wilson was not indicted by the grand jury. This was the strongest and most graphic frame, as it was included in the article title: “Micheal Brown’s stepfather at rally: ‘Burn this bitch down!’” (Sanchez, 2014). The article described the headline statement as coming before an eruption of rage by some protesters, and was framed as a way of suggesting that the family support the riots and violent protests. At the time, there was vast television news coverage weighing whether or not he could be charged with a crime for inciting a riot. This frame was not as prevalent in the online articles that I reviewed after the indictment of Officer Wilson was declined.

Micheal Brown’s stepfather consoled the dead teen’s distraught mother after Monday’s controversial grand jury announcement and then turned to the crowd of demonstrators saying “Burn this moherf---er down” and Burn this bitch down,” according to a New York Times video. (Sanchez, 2014, para 1)

After the statement by Brown’s stepfather, the ensuing riots were the worst that they had been since the protests began. Firefighters struggled to contain many buildings that were set on fire. The reason that I chose the Brown family’s voice for non-violence frame was that in the coverage here and with Freddie Gray, the Fox News and CNN framed the family’s voice only to use as a tool to restore order and quiet the protests without giving value or attention to anything else they may have said or felt about the death, police brutality, race relations or the community. With this frame and by asking the family if they agree with the violent protests it seems that are also checking to determine if they can be blamed for the crimes of others. In the days and weeks that followed there was constant television attention to the outburst and calls from talking heads to the Missouri Lt. Governor Peter Kinder for his stepfather’s arrest for inciting a riot (Did he incite, 2014, para 22). Hand, Brown’s stepfather, was then under investigation by the Ferguson Police for inciting a riot, and many people present when he made his outburst were questioned (Did he incite, para 3-5).

The frame being so prevalent is concerning especially in the absence of voice given by U.S. media to the Brown family. It seems some U.S. media by Fox News and CNN only represented the family in statements about whether they were for the violence or not. This function of not including or valuing the Brown family’s voice or other details of their life functions as a way racism by othering and silencing their voice This is another way unfair treatment and racism is unmarked, obscured and appears normal in the way we communicate and treat minorities in the U.S. The BBC and Al Jazeera articles included more references to the family’s voice which exposed the omission by Fox News and CNN. It appears that from start to finish, the Fox News and CNN media

coverage was always searching statements by either the Brown or the Gray family so that they could excuse the treatment and the resulting deaths, while blaming the family for the violence.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this research comparing and contrasting media framing in U.S. Fox News and CNN articles with International news articles by BBC and Al Jazeera about Freddie Gray and Micheal Brown, there were some important findings. I found that some Fox News and CNN articles framed Freddie Gray’s arrest as justified, listing his extensive encounters with the police. The Fox News and CNN media frames suggested Gray caused his own injury and death while Al Jazeera and BBC suggested the cause was unknown or due to police brutality. Fox News and CNN ignored that the #purge rioters as being 13-18 year-old high school kids, and primarily gave voice to Gray’s family by reporting only statements when they spoke against violent protests. The U.S. Fox News and CNN’s coverage of the encounter between Brown and Officer Wilson was very lengthy and went into far greater detail than the Al Jazeera and BBC which framed simple graphic statements about the injuries and deaths. They explained that he was an unarmed teenage African American shot at 12 times and killed by a white police officer. The Fox News and CNN articles contained framing of the Brown family only with statements that they made about being against the violent protestors, omitting their voice about anything else regarding the death of Micheal Brown. Al Jazeera and BBC framed the Gray family’s voice about their hurt, distrust, and loss while including a couple statements of being against violent protests.

Framing tells readers how to understand the story, through headlines, how the story is told, textual features, deciphers between what is important or not, highlighting and repeating important aspect and minimizing or omitting the less important ones (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011; Entman, 1996; Rhee, 1997). The resulting differences in media

framing revealed many tenets of racism in obscured, unmarked, entrenched and so permeated throughout U.S. society that it appears very normal, in the way society operates. CRT suggests that racism operates through institutions and systems of communication in ways that are so common and sometimes subtly different that racism goes unnoticed (Delgado, 1995; Lawrence, 1987; Ross, 1995). This research found instances of U.S. media framing that systematically contributed to the obscuring of anything wrong with the results of the events and deaths of unarmed U.S. citizens. This research found BBC and Al Jazeera frames suggested the unnamed killing these of African Americans were a result of racism and police brutality in the U.S. and gave voice to the families and their loss.

Implications for the study

Utilizing frame analysis techniques to highlight differences in U.S. media and international sourced media that reveals that studying race and racism in the coverage of unarmed African Americans killed in encounters with police is very important. Fox News and CNN utilized assigned terms such as switchblade, weapons charge, injured himself; he wouldn't want violent protests, extensive criminal record to the victims extensively. At the same time, Fox News and CNN failed to find or include available statistics about police brutality such as the instances of injury in vans or the 3,500 deferrals from the city jail due to injury. They also excluded over policing in Ferguson resulting in 25,000 active arrest warrants in a community of 18,000 residents. Federal investigations by the Justice Department were completed on both Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore, Maryland. The Ferguson report detailed African Americans were impacted disproportionately in almost every part of the city's law enforcement system (Berman & Lowery, 2015). The report

included racist e-mails by police and court supervisors, repeated examples of bias in enforcement and a system of practices shaped by revenue instead of public safety (Berman & Lowery).

The Department of Justice made similar findings in Baltimore City. Some of what they found were 11,000 instances where those arrested could not later be charged in court due to the police not having probable cause to arrest them (Oppel, Gay-Stolberg & Apuzzo, 2016). In addition they found patterns and practices of conduct such as unconstitutional stops, searches, arrests, unfairly targeting African Americans, using excessive force and retaliation against people engaging in constitutionally-protected expression (Oppel, Gay-Stolberg & Apuzzo). While both reports achieved agreements with the cities to change these types of tactics, the pendulum of progress could swing the opposite direction due to the new leadership and President. An example of this is Attorney General Jeff Sessions recent signing of a federal program called equitable sharing, which allows local law enforcement agencies to receive 80 percent of their asset seizures back from the Federal government getting by state laws (Sainato, 2017).

I predict that Fox News and CNN will continue to frame events in a similar fashion as in these two cases in the future. While these frames appear as racism in this study, individual reporters and producers who do not recognize their racism will continue these types of frames. The desire for ratings and new technologies such as social media and cell phone cameras will make recorded instances of police brutality a hot news topic in the future. While there were not recordings of the deaths of Freddie Gray or Michael Brown, there will be recording of events in the future. While media frames can water down the voices against police brutality, these frames will not be able to erase what will be

seen in the videos. Every day, more minorities are possessing video recording devices and there are more on homes and businesses there is little doubt that there will be more recorded deaths at the hands of police that will keep the debate going. Also, as more police have vehicle and body cameras can provide the public videos of these interactions. Many videos of police interactions are now being uploaded to social media continuing the discussion about police brutality in a way that bypasses news media sources. Combined, these technologies will keep the discussion about police brutality at the forefront of race relations in the U.S. for the foreseeable future.

While the Black Lives Matter movement was a central element of the events in Ferguson and in Baltimore, it was not a central theme in the 40 articles I reviewed as it was not named even by Al Jazeera or BBC. The articles seemed to focus more on the violent protestors and property damage. Social media and technology will be powerful tools that BLM will use to coordinate efforts to reform society to prevent the continuation of actions that take the lives of citizens by police sworn to protect and serve them. While U.S. media sources such as CNN and Fox News do not currently give a lot of attention to BLM and the voice of minorities, social media will enable the voice of these citizens to be heard by those who will not ignore it.

Revealing how racism operates through systems of communication is important in that unmasking what is not readily visible to ordinary American citizens who participate in the same context where racism is hidden in plain day sight. While most Americans view blatant acts of racism by individuals with disgust and distain, these same individuals cannot recognize how minor differences in how we communicate and think contribute to and perpetuate the unequal treatment of minorities. This research shows that the way

systems of communication operate in American society is indeed much like a wave pool; individuals participate in and exercise racism, while its impacts vary with respect to racial group membership. As I reviewed over 200 news media articles prior to narrowing my sample, they all appeared similar, and it was not until they were critically analyzed that I found the ways media framing contributes to unequal representation and treatment of minorities. While difficult, this type of research can reveal systems of oppression that minorities face, how they operate and hopefully give light to ways in which they can be changed, while enlightening individuals and scholars with the desire to do so.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this study. I did not have the time or resources to visit the places or interview any individuals involved, whether it was media, individual residents, witness or others. However, I am familiar with the area neighborhood of row houses in Baltimore as the bus I took to work went through that neighborhood every day in the late 90s. That being said, it is my belief that utilizing media frame analysis by comparing these international news articles with U.S. media articles and considering differences in light of CRT was a strong and effective way of exposing how racism operated in American communication while remaining unnoticed. While utilizing frame analysis of recent media articles revealed many tenets of CRT, it limited the ability to understand if Baltimore or Ferguson were actually regressing with regard to racial progress, slowly progressing, or just stagnant with these events being a flashpoint. Many facts that I found through this research outside of media frames demonstrated astounding statistics such as Ferguson having more arrest warrants than people and 3,500 civilians having injuries too severe to be admitted to the Baltimore City Jail. While these statistics

are important tenets of CRT, they were not revealed through media frames in the 40 articles I reviewed. Frame analysis exposes racial frames in today’s media content, yet fails to enlighten us to how much ground has been won or lost in racial progress in these cities. Frame analysis also fails to tell us which direction the current state of affairs is going. In addition, it is impossible to determine what information was omitted from any of the sources frames. If it was possible to find out more from interview notes that were not published, these tenets of CRT and racialized frames would likely stand out stronger than in this study.

My recommendation for future research is that scholars should focus on cases similar to those of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray. Some of these unarmed minorities killed are Dontre Hamilton, Eric Garner, John Crawford, Ezell Ford, Dante Parker, Tanisha Anderson, Akai Gurley, Tamir Rice, Romain Brisbon, Jerame Reed, Tony Robinson, Walter Scott and many others (Quah & Davis, 2015). In addition, this study reveals that television media framing may uncover the hidden and everyday racism in a way that exposes a greater degree of racism in news media content. I believe that this research is critically important for the Communication Studies discipline, to show how studying racism in communication can counteract the unbalanced terrain that many underrepresented populations experience in America.

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