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Media Framing, Violent Protest, and Race
A Comparative Analysis of *The Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*' coverage of the
Ferguson Protests

Introduction:

The death of the 18-year-old black teenager Michael Brown and the ensuing protests, some of which turned violent, in Ferguson Missouri, received international news coverage. For many around the world, it represented a deep-rooted hypocrisy within the United States: while they are critical of other country's human rights records, they don't give enough attention to their own glaring internal problems such as racism.¹ This is a legitimate critique, and consequently, this paper will turn inward and do exactly that by examining the events in Ferguson that sparked such outrage. However, because so many people around the world learn about events like Ferguson through news coverage and not by actually being there, *and* because, as authors Thomas Nelson, Rosalee Clawson, Zoe Oxley tell us, "a major function of the news media is to inform the public, that is, to provide reliable new information that shapes our beliefs about important people, places, and events,"² it is critical to examine exactly *what* information people receive through the news. Thus, this analysis will examine the news media coverage of the protests in Ferguson Missouri by addressing the central question of: How, and to what extent, do news media sources and the frames they employ affect the portrayal of violent protest and race in the United States?

This question will be responded to through by employing framing theory as well as one of its sub-theories, media framing theory. This theory will be applied to the protests in Ferguson

¹ Dudziak, Mary L. 2014. "Ferguson from Afar." *Foreign Affairs*, /08/21.

² Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review* 91 (3): page 577.

as a case study by examining news coverage of the events there by the New York Times (NYT) and the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) in August, 2014, November 2014, and March 2015. These months were chosen because they include critical junctures in the Michael Brown case; his shooting, the no indictment decision of Darren Wilson, the officer responsible for the shooting, by the Grand Jury, and the release of two reports about Ferguson by the Department of Justice.³ The NYT and the WSJ were chosen because they are two of the most prominent newspapers in the United States. Ferguson was chosen as a case study for a few reasons. Although already mentioned, one is that it has received a significant amount of news attention, even on an international level.⁴ Additionally, it represents one of the most critical catalysts in black activism and social movement mobilization in recent years in the United States. Lastly, it also led to a much larger conversation about police brutality, violence, and racism in the United States.⁵ Although there are other strong cases, such as those of Trayvon Martin or Eric Garner, the Michael Brown case in Ferguson is of equal relevance. In the context of the case study and framing theory, both of which will be discussed in more detail later, three hypotheses are examined. The first hypothesis is that the frequency distribution of the number of articles published per month will show peaks for the months that have the most dramatic and violent events for both newspapers. The second hypothesis is that, within each month, there will be larger frequencies of content on the days closest to the most dramatic events and violent protests for both newspapers. The third hypothesis is that, within the selected months, the content of the new stories published on the days with the highest frequency of story publication will use frames that decontextualize the violence and the protests, as well as frames that de-racialize the

³ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." , -08-10. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/11242108/Ferguson-timeline-of-events-since-Michael-Browns-death.html>.

⁴ Dudziak, Mary L. 2014.

⁵ Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. "The Gangsters of Ferguson." *The Atlantic*, Mar 5.

shooting, thus removing it from the larger context and conversation in the United States.

Decontextualization in all of the cases is understood to be when the newspaper does not explain the motivations behind the protests, but how this is understood in context will be explained at the beginning of the analysis of each juncture.

This analysis is significant for a number of reasons. As authors Jackie Smith, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald argue, the larger public learns about deprivations and injustices, for example, through mass media coverage,⁶ which means that what people perceive to be important and the most pressing is shaped by that same coverage.⁷ Consequently, understanding the ways in which two major newspapers in the United States present one such issue says a lot about the way their consumers will *perceive* such events, and what they will even *perceive to be events at all*. An additional point of importance that author David Snow argues is that framing is critical to the mobilization of social movements.⁸ Essentially, people have to see grievances and have to want to make change in order for movements to form and to develop. Consequently, the way that people see an event like Ferguson can have an effect on their subsequent mobilization, or lack thereof. While this paper does not analyze mobilization, or public understanding for that matter, it is important to consider because its results have an effect on both of those elements. To comprehend how people understand things, act, and react, it is necessary to first know *what they know*, which is why examining media coverage is so crucial.

Before this analysis moves to a more in depth analysis of the literature, it is first essential to examine the methodology that was employed to collect the data for the analysis. Although

⁶ Smith, Jackie, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald. 1996. "Accessing Public, Media, Electoral, and Governmental Agendas." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, McCarthy, John D (John David) and Mayer Zald N., 291-311. Cambridge England]; New York: Cambridge England; New York : Cambridge University Press. Page 296.

⁷ Tuchman, Gaye. 1978. *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: New York: Free Press. Page 2.

⁸ Snow, David A. 2004. "Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields." *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*: 382-383.

already mentioned, August 2014, November 2014 and March 2015 are the three critical junctures that data was collected from because they each include a key moment in the Michael Brown case. Within each critical juncture, for both the WSJ and the NYT, the following steps were performed. First, within the newspaper's internal search function, the words "Ferguson, Missouri" (comma included) were searched for the months of August 2014 through March 2015. To be clear, one could also search for other terms such as "Ferguson, Mo," "Ferguson" or "Michael Brown," but for this study, "Ferguson, Missouri" was chosen." The intention of this search was to identify all of the articles published for not only the months representing the critical junctures, but also the surrounding months, in order to then create a frequency chart of the distribution. The second step was to, within the three months selected, do a manual count of the number of articles published per day based on the same search term as used in the first step. The intention of this was to create a distribution of the frequency of articles published per day within the months. It should be noted that there were date sorting issues which resulted from some articles being published online before they were put into print, meaning that some articles had two dates of publication. To deal with this, as an example, articles published online on the 20th in the NYT but published in print the next day, the 21st, were counted for the 21st and *not* the 20th. This means that articles published online on the 21st but put into print the 22nd were counted as the 22nd. Articles only printed online the 21st were counted as the 21st. This was done for both newspapers for all three months when applicable. Lastly, based on the distribution resulting from the manual counting, a day with the most articles published was chosen for each newspaper and the articles that were published on that day were coded for their content to identify frames.

Specifically, the titles and thumbnails—a thumbnail is a one or two sentence summary of an article that the paper provides online—were coded for their frames by examining word choice

and content. The titles and thumbnails were chosen because they represent what, at quick glance, the newspaper wants the readers to know about the article and, consequently, what is transpiring in the world. The content examined was, when applicable to the article, the way the protests were portrayed, the way that police were portrayed, the way Michael Brown was portrayed, the way Darren Wilson was portrayed, and any other variables that stood out as reoccurring and relevant. The content addressing the protests and the police were understood to be related to violence, where the content about Michael Wilson and Darren Wilson were understood to be related to race. The exact framework, with a more detailed list of the themes that were examined, can be found in appendix D.⁹ While it is recognized that bias cannot be eliminated totally, this regimented coding framework helps reduce it. As this analysis transitions to a more thorough examination of the context of the Ferguson protests, another research issue—separate of the data collection bias—should be acknowledge. Because the Ferguson protests were only a few years ago, there does not exist a substantial body of peer-reviewed literature on what actually transpired. Additionally, although peer-reviewed, what does exist is based on newspaper articles. The issue here is that, in writing a paper on news media framing of a protest, it is paradoxical to use *news media sources* to write a background summary. To avoid framing the events in any particular way, a diverse range of sources was selected to try and paint the nearest to objective story possible.

Background:

Before the theoretical literature at the core of this analysis can be examined, it is first necessary to discuss the timeline and context of what transpired in Ferguson. It all began August

⁹ Appendix D: coding framework.

9th, 2014 when white police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed an 18-year-old unarmed black teenager, Michael Brown. It was six days after the shooting that Wilson's name was released. At the time, there were many disputes over what actually transpired when Brown was shot, where some witnesses claimed that Wilson had shot Brown while his hands were raised, which resulted in intense backlash.¹⁰ After he was shot, Brown's body was left on the street for four and a half hours, which only exacerbated people's fury. Because of these details, many believed that this was an act of murder driven by racism, which resulted in outrage that was expressed by people taking to the streets in protest.¹¹ Some of these responses were peaceful, while others were violent.¹² The day after the shooting, as tension grew, there was violence in the streets which started with local businesses being looted, and escalated to violent confrontation with police. On and off, this conflict continued for the next several days,¹³ with two police cars being set on fire,¹⁴ but it was exacerbated when the police department finally released Darren Wilson's name at the *same time* that they released a tape that appeared to show Brown stealing from a convenience store. This video was heavily criticized because it depicted Brown as a "miscreant,"¹⁵ and his family accused the police department of trying to "assassinate his character."¹⁶ While the protests continued to gain momentum, "police departments from greater St. Louis equipped with surplus military gear converged in Ferguson."¹⁷ However, their mobilization and action in response to the protests was

¹⁰ Mitchell, S. David. - *Ferguson: Footnote or Transformative Event Symposium: Policing, Protesting, and Perceptions: A Critical Examination of the Events in Ferguson*. Page 950.

¹¹ Haj, Tabatha Abu El-. 2015. "Defining Peaceably: Policing the Line between Constitutionally Protected Protest and Unlawful Assembly. (Policing, Protesting and Perceptions: A Critical Examination of the Events in Ferguson)." *Missouri Law Review* 80 (4): page 961.

¹² Mitchell, S. David. Page 950; Araiza, José Andrés, Heloisa Aruth Sturm, Pinar Istek, and Mary Angela Bock. 2016. "Hands Up, Don't Shoot, Whose Side are You on? Journalists Tweeting the Ferguson Protests." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16 (3): page 305.

¹³ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." -08-10.

¹⁴ *Why Ferguson Burns* 2014. Vol. 299 Nation Company, L. P.

¹⁵ Kong, Dejun Tony and Donelson R. Forsyth. 2016. *Leading through Conflict : Into the Fray*. Basingstoke, England ; New York, New York: Basingstoke, England ; New York, New York : Palgrave Macmillan. Page 159.

¹⁶ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." -08-10.

¹⁷ Kong, Dejun Tony and Donelson R. Forsyth. 2016. *Leading through Conflict : Into the Fray*. Basingstoke, England ; New York, New York: Basingstoke, England ; New York, New York : Palgrave Macmillan. Page 160.

condemned because of how forceful and violent it was. In fact, the police not only used armored vehicles, smoke canisters, and tear gas to dispel the crowds,¹⁸ but also equipment that was designed for the *wars* in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁹ Despite this police response, the clashes reached such a level that Missouri Governor Jay Nixon mobilized and deployed the National Guard on August 18th. They were removed three days later, the 21st of August.²⁰ Governor Nixon also received criticism for the decision to deploy the National Guard in the first place, because, as some argue, it reflected an outlook of protestors which equated them with criminals and terrorists; as an existential threat to the state.²¹ That criticism aside, tensions remained elevated and September 4 marked “nearly a month of protests and heightened police responses.”²² This is the end of the first critical juncture.

While tensions had been reduced and there was a period of calm, by mid-November it began to rise again. This was a product of a looming decision; would the Grand Jury indict Darren Wilson for the murder of Michael Brown? By November 17, Governor Nixon declared a state of emergency in preparation for the possibility of unrest such as that seen in August following the looming decision.²³ When the decision was finally released on November 25, it was that Wilson would not be indicted because the investigation had concluded that there was not enough evidence to convict him on federal charges. Additionally, the Jury said that evidence corroborated Wilson’s claim that Brown was the first to aggress.²⁴ With that in mind, the Grand Jury’s approach to the case was widely criticized, which meant that the decision was put into doubt for many people.²⁵

¹⁸ Mitchell, S. David. Page 950.

¹⁹ *Why Ferguson Burns* 2014.

²⁰ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." -08-10.

²¹ El-Enany, Nadine. 2015. "Ferguson and the Politics of Policing Radical Protest." *Law and Critique* 26 (1): 5.

²² Mitchell, S. David. Page 951.

²³ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." -08-10.

²⁴ Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. "The Gangsters of Ferguson." *The Atlantic*, Mar 5

²⁵ Mitchell, S. David. Page 950-951.

This resulted in protests throughout Ferguson. These protests included smashed cars, stores being looted, and roughly a dozen buildings set on fire.²⁶ Tensions eased as time passed, however, and this time the situation remained calm until March 2015, when the Department of Justice released two reports on the events in Ferguson. The first backed up the grand Jury's decision after months of examination.²⁷ The second of the two, an analysis of the police department and the municipal system in Ferguson, was *scathing*.²⁸ It recommended an overhaul of the entire system, which had a deeply ingrained culture of racism.²⁹ As a result of the reports, protests again erupted, which on March 12 resulted in the death of two police officers.³⁰ The events in November, and those in March, represent the second two critical junctures in this analysis because of how important the Grand Jury's decision, the Department of Justice's reports, and the subsequent protests, are. While there are many more details to these events, there is now a background that is sufficient to contextualize the events that are covered in the articles collected for the analysis. Thus, the analysis will now move to a review of the literature.

Literature Review:

Due to the limited scope of this paper, it will unfortunately not be able to examine framing theory in its fullest detail. Instead, while it will briefly touch on the central concepts as well as critiques of them, the bulk of this analysis will focus specifically on the news media as a key framing actor, how the media frames events, for whom, and why. In order to do this, the question must be asked: what is framing? At a base level, as author Erving Goffman explores, framing is

²⁶ Taylor, Alan. "Violent Protests in Ferguson, Missouri - the Atlantic.", accessed Dec 9, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2014/11/violent-protests-in-ferguson-missouri/100860/>.

²⁷ Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. "The Gangsters of Ferguson." *The Atlantic*, Mar 5

²⁸ Mitchell, S. David. Page 952.

²⁹ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." -08-10; Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. "The Gangsters of Ferguson." *The Atlantic*, Mar 5

³⁰ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." -08-10;

an attempt at answering the question of “what is it that’s going on here?”³¹ The answer to this question, and thus the base of framing analysis, focuses on the construction of meaning and reality. Due to the fact that, as author David Snow claims, “meanings do not automatically or naturally attach themselves to the objects, events, or experiences we encounter,”³² it is instead attached through “interactively based interpretive processes.”³³ Thus, as author Robert Benford asserts, *framing* is the process through which “meaning is negotiated, contested, modified, articulated, and rearticulated.”³⁴ Authors John McCarthy, Jackie Smith and Mayer Zald add to this by bringing attention to an implicit assumption that is coupled with such a claim, which is that “interpretations of reality are socially constructed.”³⁵ Thus, to sum this up on a more general level, this is to say that reality is subjective and actors engage in the process of framing in order to construct their own version of reality. In connecting events and ideas in a certain manner, a concept referred to as frame articulation, the resulting picture that is created represents a particular, and unique, construction of reality.³⁶

While this is at the moment a very abstract concept, authors Robert Benford and David Snow posit more concrete ways in which, for example, social movements engage in this framing process. They claim that framing can be diagnostic—the identification and of a problem—prognostic—the articulation to the proposed problem—or motivational—the call to action.³⁷

³¹ Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: New York: Harper & Row. page 8.

³² Snow, David A. 2004. "Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields." *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*: page 384.

³³ *Ibid.*, page 384.

³⁴ Benford, Robert D. 1997. "An Insider's Critique of the Social Movement Framing Perspective*." *Sociological Inquiry* 67 (4): page 410.

³⁵ Smith, Jackie, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald. 1996. "Accessing Public, Media, Electoral, and Governmental Agendas." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, McCarthy, John D (John David) and Mayer Zald N., page 292. Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge England ; New York : Cambridge University Press.

³⁶ Benford, Robert D. and David A. Snow. 2000. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: page 623.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 615-617; Snow, David. 2013. "Framing and Social Movements." *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political and Social Movements*: page 1.

While these are *all* crucial elements that involve negotiating meaning, this paper will be focused on what would be most directly linked to diagnostic framing because its focus is on how events/problems are articulated. While in Benford and Snow's case their discussion was applied to social movements as actors, other authors engage in a discussion of the *many* different actors that are involved in this framing process., who have been, up until now, implicit in this analysis. David Snow states that some of these actors involved in framing are "movement adherents (e.g., leaders, activists, and rank-and-file participants) and other actors (e.g., adversaries, institutional elites, media, social control agents, countermovements)."³⁸ This is to say that is not only social movements that are involved in framing and the creation of meaning, but also governments and other authority structures, media sources, and any other interested members of the public.³⁹ The reason that understanding the different actors involved is important is that, as McCarthy, Smith and Zald demonstrate, the agendas of each of these actors are not the same.⁴⁰ As a result of this, when discussing framing, it is crucial to understand the different interests at stake for each actor involved, because what they put forward "may bear little resemblance to any 'objective' realities,"⁴¹ and is instead reflective of their agendas. With some of the possible actors in mind, this analysis will focus its attention on the print newspaper media as an actor to better understand how their news making process, as well as other assorted influencing variables, effect the way that they frame reality considering their unique position as a source of information in society.

Since the news media will be the focus of the remaining discussion in this paper, it is necessary to briefly preface the dynamics of the relationship between the media and its consumers, and to critique framing theory. One of the key points here is that, as authors William

³⁸ Snow, David. 2013. Page 1.

³⁹ Snow, David. 2004. Page 384.

⁴⁰ Smith, McCarthy, Zald. 1996. Page 293.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, page 293

Gamson and Tim Baylor discuss, one must be careful not to fall into the trap of viewing media frames as being *injected* into their consumers because the relationship is more complex than that.⁴² Benford adds qualification to this in his critique of framing by emphasizing how frames are not fixed *things*, but instead are constantly evolving.⁴³ Consequently, as author Mayer Zald states, it is vital to think of the relationship between the media and its consumers as being inexorably linked in a larger cultural context.⁴⁴ The two affect each other substantially. In continuing with the theories of Gamson, he says that, “on the one hand, we have a system of media discourse that frames events and presents information always in some context of meaning. On the other hand, we have a public of interacting individuals who approach media discourse in an active way, using it to construct their own personal meanings about public events and issues.”⁴⁵ This must not be confused with the assumption that news frames have *no* influence on the consumer, however. Instead, the disagreement in the literature is about the *degree* to which frames influence consumers. As author Gaye Tuchman asserts, “because news imparts a public character to occurrences, news is first and foremost a social institution.”⁴⁶ In contrast to this, as Thomas Nelson, Rosalee Clawson, and Zoe Oxley show by discussing how different frames effect viewer tolerance of a Ku Klux Klan rally, the news frame does have an impact on the consumer’s opinion.⁴⁷ Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld take this a step further and claim that the

⁴² Gamson, William A. 1988. "The 1987 Distinguished Lecture: A Constructionist Approach to Mass Media and Public Opinion." *Symbolic Interaction* 11 (2): page 162; Baylor, Tim. 1996. "Media Framing of Movement Protest: The Case of American Indian Protest." *The Social Science Journal* 33 (3): page 242.

⁴³ Benford, Robert. 1997. 415.

⁴⁴ Zald, Mayer, N. 1996. "Culture, Ideology, and Strategic Framing." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by McCarthy, John D (John David), Doug McAdam and Mayer Zald N., page 270. Cambridge England] ; New York: Cambridge England ; New York : Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁵ Gamson, William. 1988. 162.

⁴⁶ Tuchman, Gaye. 1978. *Making News : A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: New York : Free Press.

⁴⁷ Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review* 91 (3): 567-583.

news frame has *more* influence in its relationship with the public.⁴⁸ This idea is supported by McCarthy, Smith, and Zald.⁴⁹ At a base level though, what is most important is to understand that the relationship between the news media and their consumers is not static and the degrees of influence vary considerable. With this in mind, in now moving to a discussion of the news media as an actor in framing, it should be made clear that the majority of this analysis will not focus on the relationship between the news media and the public, but instead it will center upon what the media does to frame events.

One of the reasons that media is so critical to examine as a central actor in the framing process is that, as discussed by McCarthy, Smith, Zald, the size of a “newshole” is limited, which means that there is a selective process in which certain topics are chosen to be covered, and others are not.⁵⁰ As author Todd Gitlin says, this process has created journalistic frames which define what, according to the news, a story, event and protest are.⁵¹ This process of selection is a first and central step in how the media engages in framing and meaning construction, and will be referred to as “newsworthiness.” McCarthy, Smith, Zald add to this aspect of the theory by introducing the concept of news pegs, which are stories that are deemed *more newsworthy* than others simply due to how interesting people think they are. Events that are more sensational (such as violence) or events that revolve around well-known people are more likely to get covered, because more people will be interested in the content.⁵² Essentially, events that are easier to dramatize show a higher correlation of media coverage and concern.⁵³ Nelson,

⁴⁸ Gamson, William A. and Gadi Wolfsfeld. 1993. "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528: page 116.

⁴⁹ Smith, McCarthy, and Zald. 1996. 295.

⁵⁰ Smith, McCarthy, and Zald. 1996. 297.

⁵¹ Gitlin, Todd. 2003. *The Whole World is Watching : Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley, CA : University of California Press. Page 3.

⁵² Smith, McCarthy, and Zald. 1996. Page 297.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, page 296.

Clawson, and Oxlyey contribute to this idea by showing how Ku Klux Klan demonstrations so easily attract attention because of how dramatic they are.⁵⁴ Tim Baylor's analysis of the American Indian protests which were from 1968 until 1979 adds further nuance to this idea. He says that not only "the more extreme and dramatic the event, the greater likelihood of media coverage"⁵⁵ but also that that this coverage can systematically ignore violence *against* movements as well as consideration of their motivation. All of this results in a construction that makes the American Indian Protest look unnecessarily violent because their violence appears to be unjustified and out of control.⁵⁶ This concept is central to the arguments presented in the analysis section, and should be given special attention. Ryan Kirkby and his analysis of the Black Panther Party adds even further evidence to this case by explaining the portrayal of the Black Panther Party.⁵⁷ These two examples, however, raise another critical point, which is that not only does violence get extra attention, but at a more micro level, it distracts from the larger context and decontextualizes protests. This, then, brings us to another integral element of media framing theory.

While these theorists demonstrate that reality is framed by *what* is selected as an event and written about, the news media also engages in framing through *how* they portray events through specific wording and content. As Gamson and Wolfsfeld show, journalists, who are key actors in the news making industry, play a central role in this process because "they choose a story line in reporting events, and media commentators develop arguments and images that support particular frames."⁵⁸ These journalists also play the role of gatekeeper, "deciding which

⁵⁴ Nelson, Clawson, and Oxlyey. Page 569.

⁵⁵ Baylor, Tim. 1996. "Media Framing of Movement Protest: The Case of American Indian Protest." *The Social Science Journal* 33 (3): page 243.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, page 249.

⁵⁷ Kirkby, Ryan J. 2011. "'The Revolution Will Not be Televised': Community Activism and the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971." *Canadian Review of American Studies/Revue Canadienne D'Etudes Américaines* 41 (1): page 26.

⁵⁸ Gamson, William A. and Gadi Wolfsfeld. 1993. Page 116.

frames will be graded standing and selecting what quotes to emphasize.”⁵⁹ What this means is that not only do they select *what* to cover, but they also select *how* to cover it. This is important because, as authors Dennis Chong and James Druckman discuss, a change in phrasing, even down to a few words, can have a huge impact on the way that people react to certain information.⁶⁰ Although Gitlin makes the claim that journalist do not consciously engage in this framing process,⁶¹ the degree to which they actively engage in this is up to debate. What is important, however, is that the theorist demonstrate that this framing effect *does* occur within the news media.

While an uncountable number of frames exist, an example of the specific frames and the message they portray is discussed in the context of Hurricane Katrina where authors Donald Haider-Markel, William Delehanty, and Matthew Beverlin show that the news coverage of the hurricane often uses a racist frame. Specifically, the coverage emphasizes the black victims, represents them negatively, emphasizes their poverty, and portrays them as looters whereas the white victims are portrayed as survivors.⁶² In another analysis by author Colleen Mills, this one of the same case study that this paper uses, Ferguson Missouri, she analyses how Fox news disseminates racist frames through their coverage. Specifically, the five frames she discusses are “blaming the black victim, blaming black leaders, blaming the black community, blaming black protesters, and blaming the “politics of racial division.””⁶³ The point of their analyses is to show how deeply racist framing can affect the portrayal of events. This is further evidence to the claim

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, page 119.

⁶⁰ Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Theory." *Annu.Rev.Polit.Sci.* 10: page 104.

⁶¹ Gitlin, Todd. 2003. Page 112.

⁶² Haider-Markel, Donald, William Delehanty, and Matthew Beverlin. 2007. "Media Framing and Racial Attitudes in the Aftermath of Katrina." *Policy Studies Journal* 35 (4): 589-590. *Note: author citations removed to improve flow.*

⁶³ Mills, Colleen E. 2017. "Framing Ferguson: Fox News and the Construction of US Racism." *Race & Class* 58 (4): Pages 41-51.

that, not only does media frame through how it selects what to cover (as was shown in an earlier paragraph), it also frames in the *way* it talks about what it has selected.

A last element to the theory that will be briefly discussed are the factors that affect frame resonance. Central to this is the idea that, as Gamson states, official frames are likely to receive more attention and get the benefit of the doubt over non-official sources.⁶⁴ This means that, frames that come from reputable sources as well as frames that resonate with cultural values are more likely to shift people's opinions.⁶⁵ Benford and Snow add to this by asserting that consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility for the frame articulators are all crucial variables when we are talking about the resonance of a frame. If people do not trust the source, the frame will be less likely to take hold because people will be mistrusting of the source.⁶⁶ Thus, working with the assumption that the news media is a consumer good, it is logical that the news media would employ frames that are given or validated by more credible sources.⁶⁷ With all that in mind, while there are many more variables that can be examined in the general framework of framing literature, as well as more the more specific media framing literature, there is now enough background to understand the analysis. This paper will now move to an analysis of the events and protests (sometimes violent) in Ferguson, Missouri following the death of Michael Brown, through employing the framework from this literature. It seeks to show how the New York Time's and the Wall Street Journal's framing of the event vary over three critical junctures.

⁶⁴ Gamson, William. 1988. 169.

⁶⁵ Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. Page 112.

⁶⁶ Benford, Robert D. and David A. Snow. 2000. Pages 619-620.

⁶⁷ Baylor, Tim. 1996. Page 250.

Analysis:

This paper will now move to its fourth section, an analysis of the primary data, which will be broken down into three subsections: an analysis of the frequency distribution of all the months between August 2014 and March 2015, an analysis of the frequency distribution within each of the three months selected, and an analysis of the articles published on the highest frequency days for each newspaper for each month. In now turning to the overall distribution, the results are slightly complex. It is clear that for the WSJ, the three highest spikes in publication are August, November and *December*, with March coming in a close fourth. The frequencies are 76, 63, and 29 and 28 respectively. The same spikes can be seen in the NYT, with the frequencies being lower at 71, 26, 25 and 17 respectively.⁶⁸ This does not obviously confirm the first hypothesis, which is that the frequency distribution of the number of articles published per month will show peaks for the months that have the most dramatic and violent events for both newspapers. However, this can be easily explained because, while December comes in third over March for both newspapers, the Grand Jurys decision and subsequent protest against it occurred at the *end* of November,⁶⁹ which means that coverage likely spilled into December, resulting in higher publication frequencies. As a result of this, it is safe to confirm the first hypothesis. In examining these distributions in the context of media framing theory, the data demonstrates that both the NYT and the WSJ clearly focus their attention in the months where the most dramatic and high profile events occurred. This exemplifies the idea posited by the theory in that the news media's first step in framing reality occurs when they chose what is "newsworthy," or in other words, what deserves coverage.⁷⁰ Furthermore, as the theory tells us, meanings do not automatically

⁶⁸ *Appendix A*: figure one.

⁶⁹ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." -08-10.

⁷⁰ Smith, McCarthy, and Zald. 1996. Page 296-297; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxlyey. Page 569; Gitlin, Todd. 2003. Page 3.

attach themselves to events, but this focus on more dramatic events by the news media is their engagement in *attaching* meaning.⁷¹ This is to say that, in focusing their publication attention on the months with the most important events, the news media is defining the events that happened in those months as not only the most important, but also as *what happened*. What this means is that, for an outsider who is not actually in Ferguson, the months with the most violent protests and the most important decision are representative, to a certain extent, of *their* reality, despite a systematic lack of coverage on the days and months where nothing occurs.⁷² Not only that, but disproportionate coverage for the most dramatic events makes it seem like Ferguson was in constant violent turmoil despite the reality being much more complex. By covering the events in this way, both the WSJ and the NYT attach certain meaning to what happened. As stressed by the theorists, one must be careful not to assume a disproportionately strong influence of the media frames on the consumers,⁷³ but the frames exist all the same.

Interestingly, in moving to the second section of this analysis, a similar trend is mirrored in the internal frequency distribution for the selected months of August, November and March. First, the WSJ shows a peak of eleven articles on the 18th, with the 19th having seven published, and the 20th and 21st each having nine articles published. The NYT shows similar trends, although slightly lower publication numbers. Their peak is on the 21st with nine articles, but the 18th through the 20th have eight, six and six respectively.⁷⁴ In again relating this back to media framing theory, it agrees with the conclusions drawn in the first section of the analysis. The highest concentration of article publication is not on the day that Michael Brown was shot, but instead between nine and eleven days later when the protests had escalated to a more dramatic

⁷¹ Snow, 2004. page 384; Smith, Jackie, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald. 1996. Page 292; Benford, Robert D. 1997.

⁷² Appendix A: figures one through four.

⁷³ Gamson, William A. 1988. Page 242; Benford, Robert. 1997. 415; Zald, Mayer, N. 1996. Page 270.

⁷⁴ Appendix A: figure two.

stage and the National Guard arrived.⁷⁵ These same trends are confirmed in November, with peaks in coverage right after the Grand Jury decision and the ensuing protests,⁷⁶ and in March after the Department of Justice report was released and two Police officers were shot eight days later during protests.⁷⁷ This shows us that both the WSJ and the NYT focused their attention on the days when tension was rapidly escalating and when the most violent and dramatic events occurred;⁷⁸ days when there was violence and clashes with the police. Thus, by focusing so much of their content on those days, the events that took place on those days received disproportionate attention over the less dramatic days, and consequently have a disproportionately strong impact on the constructed reality of what happened. This is not to claim that the articles on those days *only* focused on the protests, but this analysis will now move to a third section that will analyse the content of the articles published on the peak days in more detail.

In now moving to section three, this analysis will be broken up into three sections, which will include a comparison of each newspaper's violence and race related content for each critical juncture. Specifically, four subjects are examined: the protests, the police, Michael Brown, and Darren Wilson. For the first juncture, August 18th was as the peak for the WSJ with eleven articles. The peak for the NYT was August 21st with nine articles being published. It must be first said that of the 11 articles analyzed for the WSJ on their peak day, two were eliminated because they were both summaries of the day types of articles that did not include a discussion of Ferguson in the title or the thumbnail. The 18th was still used as the peak. In turning first to violence, the data supports the first part of the third hypothesis (in brackets), that, within the selected months, the content of the new stories published on the days with the highest frequency

⁷⁵ Sanchez, Raf. 2015. "Ferguson: Timeline of Events since Michael Brown's Death." -08-10; Kong, Dejun Tony and Donelson R. Forsyth. 2016. Page 160; Mitchell, S. David. Page 950; *Why Ferguson Burns* 2014.

⁷⁶ *Appendix A*: figure three.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*: figure four.

⁷⁸ Smith, McCarthy, and Zald. 1996. Page 296-297; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxlyey. Page 569; Gitlin, Todd. 2003. Page 3.

of story publication will use [*frames that decontextualize the violence and the protests,*] as well as frames that de-racialize the shooting, thus removing it from the larger context and conversation in the United States. While not all of them, three of the nine articles in the WSJ, and two of the nine in the NYT decontextualize the violence.⁷⁹ Context was understood as the protests being in some way linked to the shooting of Michael Brown. Of interest here is that the NYT has two less articles than the WSJ that focus on the protests and violence.

In examining this portrayal more closely, while both newspapers did decontextualize the violence in some of their articles, an interesting trend emerged in both the WSJ and the NYT. Of their articles that decontextualized violence, the language used was much stronger, including words such as “riot,” “racial unrest,” “clashes,” and “help restore order” in the WSJ and “chaos” in the NYT.⁸⁰ In contrast, the articles that contextualized the violence used words like “unrest” in the WSJ, and “tensions ease,” “greatly improved” and “unrest” in the NYT.⁸¹ This demonstrates how critical content choice is. It also demonstrates that both newspapers employ two distinct frames for violence in their portrayal of the protests. One, a decontextualized violence frame, portrays the protestors as extremely violent because the disassociation with the protests and the motivation for them makes the violence seem unnecessary, and the language makes the violence appear more extreme. Interestingly, in two of the articles that decontextualize the violence in the WSJ, the arrival of the National Guard is mentioned,⁸² which further hyperbolizes the events by making it seem that the violence is so out of hand that not even the police can handle it. This parallels clearly with Tim Baylor’s contribution to the theory in the context of the American Indian Protests, which demonstrates how the news media’s focus on violence often

⁷⁹ *Appendix B*: data summary

⁸⁰ *Appendix B*: data summary

⁸¹ *Ibid.*: data summary.

⁸² *Appendix C*: raw data

decontextualizes the original reason for protest and makes the violence look unjustified.⁸³ In contrast, the contextualized violence frame frames the violence in a much less extreme way, and the added context justifies it to a greater extent. Interestingly, in the one NYT article that mentions the National Guard, it is when they are leaving,⁸⁴ which gives the appearance of improvement and reduced tensions. In sum, both of these frames represent two different realities of what transpired in Ferguson. While their effects differ, what is clear is that the theory presented in the literature review clearly explains how word choice and subject choice can frame reality differently. Even minor word choice differences clearly affect the severity with which the protests in this juncture are framed,⁸⁵ and this is important because a central part of the news making process involves journalists deciding what to emphasize when they write.⁸⁶

Before moving to the second critical juncture, this analysis will touch briefly on the second part of the third hypothesis (in brackets): within the selected months, the content of the new stories published on the days with the highest frequency of story publication will use frames that decontextualize the violence and the protests, [*as well as frames that de-racialize the shooting,*] thus removing it from the larger context and conversation in the United States. It should be mentioned that Darren Wilson's name was not mentioned in any of the articles in the first juncture.⁸⁷ The WSJ includes race in zero of the five articles that Michael Brown is mentioned in, and the NYT includes race in one of its four articles that mention it,⁸⁸ which leads to the conclusion the hypothesis is supported. While the theory demonstrates that much more conservative news sources disseminate blatantly racist frames,⁸⁹ such obviously racist frames are

⁸³ Baylor, Tim. 1996. Page 249.

⁸⁴ Appendix C: raw data.

⁸⁵ Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. Page 104.

⁸⁶ Gamson, William A. and Gadi Wolfsfeld. 1993. Pages 116-119

⁸⁷ Appendix C: raw data.

⁸⁸ Appendix B: data summary.

⁸⁹ Mills, Colleen E. 2017. Page 39-56.

not evident in the content of the titles and thumbnails in this analysis. However, as the theory tells us, it is not only what is said, but also what is not said that is important in framing.⁹⁰ Thus, by *not* including race in their titles and thumbnails, the newspapers are spreading a frame of disassociation, or of de-racialization, by which they are, whether intentionally or not,⁹¹ disconnecting the shooting from a larger race conversation.

This analysis will now move to the second critical juncture, November 2014. In turning again to violence, both newspapers differ. It should also be noted that the WSJ's peak was 13 articles more than the NYT in this period.⁹² Of the WSJ's 18 published articles on November 25, eleven of them included frames for violence, and of those eleven, nine of them contextualized it while two decontextualized it.⁹³ The NYT on the other hand, which only published five on its peak day of November 26, decontextualized the violence in all three of the articles that addressed it.⁹⁴ Context was understood as the protests being in some way linked to the shooting of Michael Brown, or the decision of the Grand Jury. This means that the WSJ weakly supports the first part of the third hypothesis because, while it still has decontextualized frames, they are far fewer than the contextualized ones. In contrast, the NYT fully supports the hypothesis. In looking deeper, the WSJ used language such as "fresh/renewed unrest," "vandalism and violence," and the idea that peaceful protests devolved into violence in its contextualized cases.⁹⁵ In comparison, the decontextualized cases for the WSJ used language like "damage," "protests," and a contrast between destructive and peaceful protests. The NYT used language such as "violence," "chaos" and "unrest."⁹⁶ This is important because it demonstrates how the clear separation in the types of

⁹⁰ Goffman, Erving. 1974. Page 8; Benford, Robert D. and David A. Snow. 2000. 615-617.

⁹¹ Gitlin, page 112.

⁹² *Appendix A*: figure three.

⁹³ *Appendix B*: data Summary

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*: data summary

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: data summary

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*: data summary

language used in the first critical juncture is not mirrored in this juncture, and the resulting distinction in the severity of the images created by the frames is not as clearly present. An additional point of interest is that in the two articles where the WSJ discusses the National Guard's involvement, context is given,⁹⁷ which makes all of the responses seem more reasonable. The events are not simply portrayed as violence met with extreme government force, but instead protest motivated by the desire for justice met by a state trying to prevent the same violence seen in August. On the other hand, the two times that the NYT mentions the National Guard, it is decontextualized,⁹⁸ which hyperbolizes the violence by making it seem so extreme that it is beyond police control.

While the language differences are not as apparent as with the first critical junctures, it is safe to conclude that through both language and the inclusion of the National Guard without context, the NYT confirms the theory that the news media focuses on violence and dramatic events, which result in the dissemination of a decontextualized/unjustified violence frame. The WSJ, on the other hand, offers context that justifies, or at least explains, the motivations for the protests to a greater extent in the majority of articles, although not all of them. One explanation for the increase in articles that contextualize the violence can be connected to the Grand Jury as an actor in the decision. The theory tells us that official and credible sources are likely to resonate with the readers more because people will trust them.⁹⁹ Additionally, the theory tells us that, "the news is above all a consumer good."¹⁰⁰ Thus, if the WSJ is interested in pleasing its consumers, it would make sense that it would include more content that relies on the credibility of the Grand Jury because their consumers will be more likely to receive it positively. This

⁹⁷ *Appendix C*: raw data

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*: raw data.

⁹⁹ Gamson, William. 1988. 169; Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. Page 112; Benford, Robert D. and David A. Snow. 2000. Pages 619-620.

¹⁰⁰ Baylor, Tim. 1996. Page 250.

differs from August where there was only speculation, and no official evaluation of what happened, which means the news media sources would be less likely to take a stance because they did not have a credible source to back up such a stance. Why the NYT did not also contextualize more in the second juncture remains a question and, in any case, the influence of this factor on the WSJ remains only speculation.

Now turning to the second part of the third hypothesis, this analysis will address the framing of race. For the WSJ, in the eleven articles that mention Michael Brown, six of them mention his race, while five do not. The NYT, on the other hand, mentions race in both of the articles that he is in.¹⁰¹ In contrast, of the articles that mention Darren Wilson in the WSJ, only one mentions his race, while ten do not. The NYT mentions his race once, and does not once.¹⁰² This is of interest because in the first juncture, it was shown how newspapers de-racialized the topic by hardly mentioning Michael Brown. Instead, in this juncture Michael Brown's race is mentioned with a significantly higher frequency. This may be indicative of the news media now trying to situate the events within a larger conversation about race in the United States, which would counter the second part of the third hypothesis. With that in mind, the de-racialized frames do still exist, so it is concluded that the hypothesis is weakly supported. The lack of mention of Darren Wilson's name, on the other hand, confirms the second section of the third hypothesis with much more certainty. Exact explanations for this difference would, require further analysis, but a potential explanation is racism. For example, although his race was only mentioned once in each newspaper, the fact that he was not-indicted was mentioned eleven times between the two papers,¹⁰³ which has an overwhelming effect of portraying him as innocent. Michael Brown, on

¹⁰¹ *Appendix B*: data summary.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*: data summary

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*: data summary

the other hand, was only mentioned as *unarmed* six times between the newspapers,¹⁰⁴ which has the effect of associating his guilt with his race.

In moving to the third and final juncture, March 2015, the analysis will be shorter because there were far fewer articles published for both newspapers in this juncture. In first examining violence, the NYT does not address it in either of the two articles published on their peak day of March 13th. The WSJ, on the other hand, mentions it in three of their five articles, and decontextualizes it in all of them. Context was understood as the protests being in some way linked to the shooting of Michael Brown, the decision of the Grand Jury, or the release of the Department of Justice's reports. Words such as "endless clashes," "protests," and "quietly" are employed in the articles.¹⁰⁵ While the fact that the articles are decontextualized in the WSJ confirms the first section of the third hypothesis in this juncture, the language used changes the frames from the previous two frames. Again, in reference to the importance of word choice in framing,¹⁰⁶ it should be noted that the language here frames the protests in a less violent way than the "chaos" described in earlier junctures. However, one cannot remove this from the theoretical framework that demonstrates how the decontextualized frame still removes the actions from their motivation and justification, which gives them the appearance of being irrational.¹⁰⁷

While none of the articles in this juncture discussed Michael Brown and Darren Wilson, racial frames were still present in a few instances, which denies the second part of the third hypothesis. Specifically, rhetoric in the WSJ employed racist blame attribution frames. In fact, one article discussed a need to "mend the community" and another referenced how Mayor

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*: data summary

¹⁰⁵ *Appendix C*: raw data.

¹⁰⁶ Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. Page 104.

¹⁰⁷ Baylor, Tim. 1996. Page 249.

Giuliani of New York blamed Obama for the shooting of the police and other unrest.¹⁰⁸ The first article is an example of a frame known as blaming the black community, and the second is an example of a frame known as blaming black leadership. These are two racist frames that are clearly presented in the theory.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to the WSJ's racist frames, the NYT employed a frame in two of its articles that, while possibly implicit in the second juncture was explicit in this one, connects the events in Ferguson to a greater conversation about race and civil rights in the United States. These two starkly different frames present distinct constructions the events in Ferguson. Where the WSJ frames the events as one that attributes blame to race, the NYT frames the events in a way that makes the events part of a larger issue of civil rights in the United States.

Conclusion:

This analysis will now move to its fifth and final section, which will offer concluding remarks and ideas for future research. First, on a large scale, the data clearly confirms the first hypothesis, that the newspapers will have the highest frequency of article publication on the months with the most dramatic and violent events.¹¹⁰ The data also confirms the second hypothesis, that within the months with the highest frequency of article publication, the newspapers will focus their attention on the days with the most dramatic and violent events.¹¹¹ The data for the third hypothesis, that the content of the new stories published on the days with the highest frequency of story publication will include frames that decontextualize the violence and the protests, as well as frames that de-racialize the shooting, thus removing it from the larger context and conversation in the United States, confirm the hypothesis, however, with less

¹⁰⁸ Appendix B: data summary.

¹⁰⁹ Mills, Colleen E. 2017. Pages 41-51.

¹¹⁰ Appendix A: figure one

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*: figures two through four.

strength than the first two. In the first juncture regarding the first element of the hypothesis, violence, it was clear that both the NYT and the WSJ demonstrated the use a decontextualized frame in half of their articles that address the protests and violence, thus confirming the hypothesis. Additionally, the difference in the language used between the two different frames, as well as the inclusion of the National Guard as a discussion point, was shown to exacerbate the image they portrayed. The second part of the third hypothesis was also confirmed by the data because Michael Brown's race was only mentioned in one of the one of the nine articles he was mentioned in, which indicates the use of a de-racialized frame by the news sources. In now moving to the second juncture, the data showed an increase in the use of a contextualized frame for the WSJ, while a decreased use for the NYT. Thus, the NYT again confirms the first part of the third hypothesis, while the WSJ *weakly* confirms it. Interestingly, while the decontextualized frames, their language used, and the way in which the National Guard was presented did exacerbate the image that was consequently portrayed, the difference in severity of language in comparison to the contextualized cases was not as severe as it was in the first juncture. It must also be noted that the inclusion of the Grand Jury as an "expert source" was identified as a potentially crucial influencer on framing. Additionally, in this juncture it was concluded that the data, while still demonstrating a de-racialized frame for Michael Brown, did so to a reduced extent. In contrast, Darren Wilson, who was mentioned in this juncture, only had his race mentioned once. Thus, the data, while still including de-racialized frames for Michael Brown, show weaker support for the second part of the third hypothesis. The coverage of Darren Wilson, on the other hand, confirms the hypothesis. In examining the third juncture, only the WSJ addresses the protests and violence, and it decontextualizes it in all of the articles, again confirming the first part of the third hypothesis. With that in mind, the language was again less

severe than it was in the first juncture. Neither Michael Brown nor Darren was mentioned in this juncture, but the presence of racist blame attribution frames in the WSJ was noted.

In now turning to the next part of the conclusion, this analysis will address a research issue and recommendations for future research. First, one must be careful not to overstate the conclusions. While they are informative, a much larger sample size would be needed to make more definitive conclusions. With that in mind, a recommendation for further research would be to explore further the reason behind the WSJ having a consistently higher publication frequency than the NYT, which is something that this analysis did not attempt to answer. Another recommendation for future research would be to take a much larger sample size of articles in the critical junctures. For example, instead of selecting only the peak frequency days for coding, it would be much more informative to select the five days with the highest publication frequency, or the ten highest days. Additionally, it would also be informative to select from the months that were not selected as critical junctures, such as September, October, December, January, and February in order to better explain differences in framing between the most dramatic days and the quieter ones on a deeper level than simple publication frequency. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how media frames reality. Taking this even further, another possible direction to take further research would be to not only code the titles and thumbnails of the articles, but also the actual content of the articles in order to be able to draw comparisons between the frames used in each. Another recommendation would be to take all of these ideas and to apply them to different newspaper sources. This, for example, could be a selection of papers from different parts of the United States, or even newspapers from other countries. Included in this could also be local newspapers, which could be used to draw parallels between the local, national, and international conversations about other related events.

Other possible directions to take future research would be to examine the other end of the frame: the consumers. First, a discussion of how these frames effect the mobilization of social movements, and future protests, is of critical importance. While it was discussed in the theory section that the relationship between the news media and the consumers was not one of injection, a more nuanced understanding of that relationship would have significant analytical value.¹¹² Thus, in future research it will be important to examine exactly how that relationship functions to determine if it is truly mutual, or if there is an imbalance, and if so, where and when is this imbalance found. In sum, this paper represents merely a starting point for what could be an extremely large and influential future body of research.

¹¹² Gamson, William A. 1988. Page 162; Baylor, Tim. 1996. Page 242; Benford, Robert. 1997. Page 415; Zald, Mayer, N. 1996. Page 270.

Appendix A: Frequency charts

Figure one: Article publication count by title search term “Ferguson, Missouri” in the WSJ and the NYT from August 2014 until March 2015

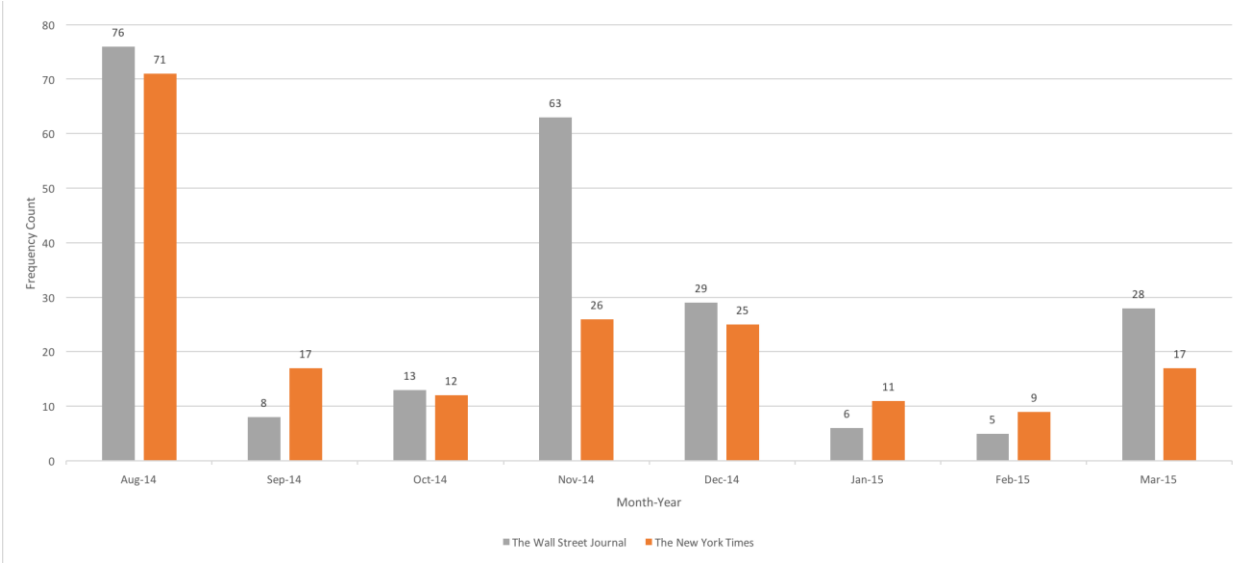


Figure two: Article publication count by title search term “Ferguson, Missouri” from August 2014

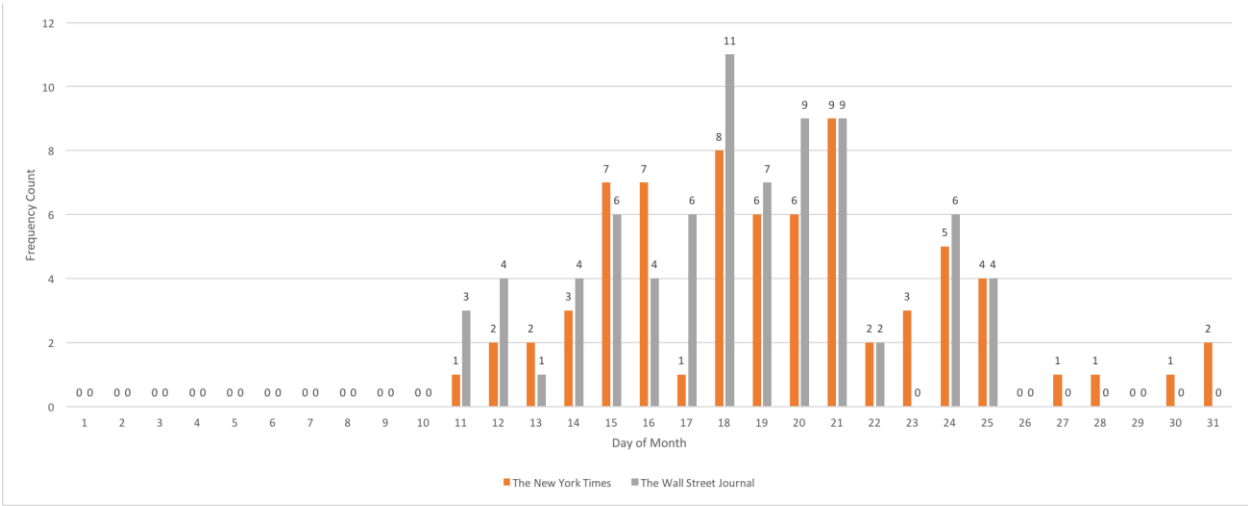


Figure three: Article publication count by title search term “Ferguson, Missouri” from November 2014

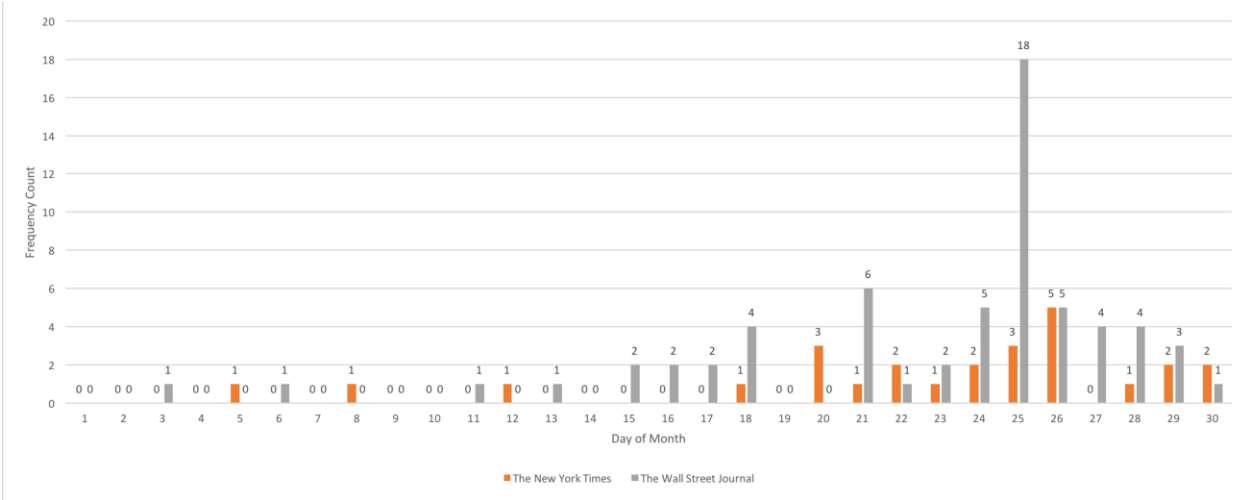
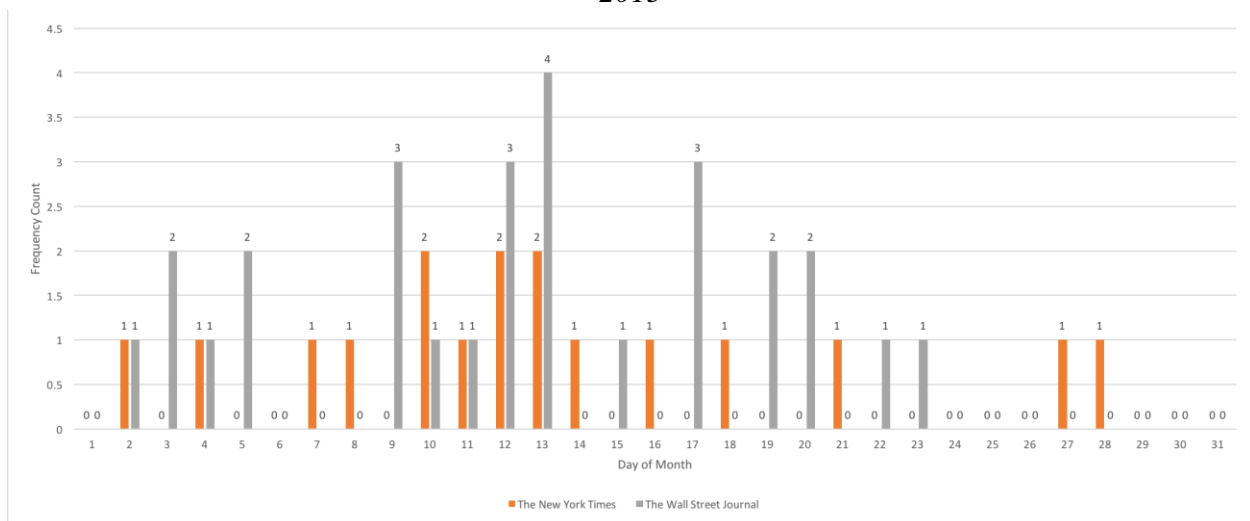


Figure four: Article publication count by title search term “Ferguson, Missouri” from March 2015



*Appendix B: Data summary***August 2014**

1. WSJ-two articles omitted!
 - a. Violence
 - i. 3 contextualized
 1. unrest
 - ii. 3 decontextualized
 1. riot, “roiled by racial unrest” “clashes between police and protestors” National guard needed to “help restore order”
 - iii. 3 don’t discuss
 - b. Police
 - i. called to make arrests in shooting, questioning militarization, national guard mentioned but not police (2), officer identified as shooter, but no name was given.
 - c. Michael Brown
 - i. Race mentioned (0), race NOT mentioned (5), age mentioned (2) age not mentioned (3), unarmed (1), NOT mentioned (4)
 - d. Darren Wilson
 - i. Name not yet released
 - e. Introduction of experts—medical examiner mentioned 2 times
 - i. Obama mentioned once
2. NYT
 - a. Violence
 - i. Contextualized (2)
 1. “tensions ease” “greatly improved”
 2. “as tensions ease on Ferguson’s streets” “unrest”
 - ii. Decontextualized (2)
 1. Protests, 103 taken into custody—23 from out of state. Residents bothered-decontextualized
 2. “chaos in Ferguson is fueled by a tangle of leadership”
 - iii. (5) don’t discuss.
 - b. Police
 - i. Questions of how fairly police treat different racial groups, police abuse and racial injustice
 - ii. National guard, no police mention
 - c. Michael Brown
 - i. Race mentioned (1), NOT mentioned (3), age mentioned (1), NOT mentioned (3), unarmed (1), NOT mentioned (3)
 - d. Darren Wilson
 - i. White policeman (1)—name not yet released
 - e. Other?
 - i. Larger picture discussion, related to NY, conditions of journalism globally, activism on a national level—others, but no common theme

November 2014

1. WSJ
 - a. Violence
 - i. Contextualized (9)
 1. “Fresh unrest,” “violence,” “protests,” “protestors” “no excuse’ for violence”, “vandalism and violence”—Obama. “peaceful protestors...gave way to looting and arson “renewed unrest” “Obama called for peaceful protests”
 - ii. Decontextualized (2)
 1. “Ferguson business owners survey the damage” “protests” “peaceful protest” “sunrise prayer vigil” “counterpoint to the destruction and looting that took place Monday night”
 - iii. don’t discuss (7)
 - b. Police
 - i. National Guard presence increased (2), Obama called for “restrained response from law enforcement,” use of tear gas, NYPD trying to avoid “similar unrest”
 - c. Michael Brown
 - i. Race mentioned (6), NOT mentioned (5), age mentioned (8), NOT mentioned (3), unarmed (5), NOT mentioned (6)
 - d. Darren Wilson
 - ii. Race mentioned (1), NOT mentioned (10) non indictment mentioned (9), NOT mentioned (2)---in one of the two he is framed as “he feared for his life” “would not have done anything differently”
 - i.
 - e. Elite Source—How does the jury’s presence as an elite source effect the framing?
 - i. Other interesting ideas: questioning of jury through criticizing/examining the legal process?
 - ii. One article blames black on black violence as “the other tragedy in Ferguson”—is this trying to distract attention?
2. NYT
 - a. Violence
 - i. Contextualized (0)
 - ii. Decontextualized (3)
 - iii. don’t discuss (2)
 - b. Police
 - i. As the Missouri National Guard bolstered its presence and the police became more assertive, law enforcement officials effectively squashed much of the chaos from a night earlier.
 - ii. National guard troops deployed
 - c. Michael Brown
 - i. Race mentioned (2), NOT mentioned (0), age mentioned (2), NOT mentioned (0), unarmed (1), NOT mentioned (1)
 - d. Darren Wilson
 - i. Race mentioned (1), NOT mentioned (1) non-indictment mentioned (2), NOT mentioned (0)

- e. No trends
- March 2015**
1. WSJ
 - a. Violence
 - i. Contextualized (0)
 - ii. Decontextualized (3)
 - iii. don't discuss (1)
 - b. Police
 - i. Clashing with protestors, diffusing tension, chasing leads/continuing investigation (discussed twice-makes it seem like the police are trying harder to find justice)
 - c. Michael Brown
 - i. n/a
 - d. Darren Wilson
 - i. n/a
 - e. Obama blamed by Giuliani for police shootings
 2. NYT
 - a. Violence **n/a**
 - i. contextualized
 - ii. decontextualized
 - iii. don't discuss
 - b. Police
 - i. n/a
 - c. Michael Brown
 - i. n/a
 - d. Darren Wilson
 - i. n/a
 - e. President Obama on Thursday said that whoever shot at police officers in Ferguson, Mo., this week are "criminals" and should be arrested, but added that their actions should not detract from the civil rights issues that have been raised"
 1. Obama used as expert, Kimmel used also
 - ii. Editorial board
 1. "Housecleaning among the town's political leadership is necessary, but bigoted practices are not limited to that troubled municipality"

*Appendix C: Raw data***August 18, WSJ**

1. Peters and Dolan
 - a. Contextualized--Framed in the context of justice—protestors want justice--“unrest”
 - b. Authorities called to make an arrest
 - c. Race not mentioned for MB, age not mentioned
 - d. n/a because name not released
 - e. mention of mother
2. National Guard Moves into Riot Hit U.S. Town—no thumbnail summary
 - a. Riot, decontextualized
 - b. National Guard presence—absence of police
 - c. N/a
 - d. N/a
 - e. n/a
3. Nelson
 - a. “called on a community roiled by racial unrest to seek understanding rather than "holler" at each other”—decontextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. President Obama calls for “understanding”, Attorney General Eric Holder Mentioned
4. Dolan and Shallwani
 - a. National Guard—help restore order, clashes between police and protestors--decontextualized
 - b. National Guard arrives but no police mention
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. Governor Jay Nixon was the one who lifted the curfew
5. Peterson
 - a. N/a
 - b. Militarization of police, lawmakers reconsidering policy, scrutiny of police department, “forceful police tactics
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. n/a
6. Gallo
 - a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. race not mentioned, age not mentioned—racial divide between blacks and whites over the issue mentioned
 - d. n/a
 - e. n/a
7. The 10 point?

8. Barrett and Dolan
 - a. “protests march,” “more than a week of unrest”—contextualized
 - b. police officer did the shooting, no explanation why
 - c. Unarmed 18-year-old, race not mentioned, shot six times
 - d. n/a
 - e. n/a
9. Barrett
 - a. “unrest,” context
 - b. Shot by police officer
 - c. Teen, 18-year-old, race not mentioned
 - d. n/a
 - e. Former NYC medical examiner as expert
10. Shallwani
 - a. n/a
 - b. Police officer did the shooting
 - c. no age, no race— “no sign of struggle in Michael Brown’s shooting” but he was shot at least six times
 - d. n/a
 - e. Former NYC medical examiner as expert
11. Dipso Jure

August 21, NYT

1. Vega and Thee-Brenan
 - a. n/a
 - b. Question of “how fairly the police deal with each group and rising feeling that race relations are in trouble”
 - c. “unarmed black teenager”
 - d. “white policeman”
 - e. n/a
2. Barro
 - a. n/a
 - b. police abuse and racial injustice
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. discussion of democratic candidates—makes the conversation larger
3. Bosman, Apuzzo and Santora
 - a. “tensions ease” “greatly improved”--contextualized
 - b. national guard pulling out, no mention of police
 - c. no race, no age
 - d. n/a
 - e. Prosecutors face obstacles bringing civil rights charges
4. Davey, Vega
 - a. “chaos in Ferguson is fueled by a tangle of leadership” --decontextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a

- e. Discussion of leadership in the “white establishment” and the “black community”
- 5. Wines and Fitzsimmons
 - a. Protests, 103 taken into custody—23 from out of state. Residents bothered-decontextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. “local protest in Missouri Grows into a center of national activism”
- 6. Robles
 - a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. no race, no age
 - d. n/a
 - e. Discussion of lawyer presenting the case to the grand jury. He “defends objectivity”
- 7. Somaiya and Haughney
 - a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. harsh environment for reporting “from Missouri to Syria”
- 8. Grynbaum and Stewart
 - a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. Relates article to a case in New York where a man in police custody was killed, chokehold case
- 9. Blinder and Robertson
 - a. “as tensions ease on Ferguson’s streets” “unrest”—contextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. no race, no age
 - d. n/a
 - e. n/a

November 25, WSJ

- 1. Grand Jury Decision Sparks Fresh Unrest in Ferguson
 - b. “Fresh unrest, “violence” contextualized (in the wake of none indictment decision)
 - c. National Guard presence tripled
 - d. no age, no race
 - e. no race, no indictment mentioned
 - f. n/a
- 2. Bashan
 - a. n/a

- b. n/a
 - c. no age, no race
 - d. n/a
 - e. compared to Eric Garner case
3. Morales
- a. “protests over decision in Ferguson, MO” “commissioner William Bratton (NYPD) called violence in Ferguson “very disturbing”--contextualized
 - b. NYPD mentioned, work with protestors in NY to avoid “similar unrest”
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. n/a
4. Kesling and Shallwani
- a. “Ferguson business owners survey the damage” “protests” decontextualized
 - b. “tear gas from police and rocks thrown by vandals”
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. owners out with brooms and dustpans preparing for another possible night of protests, paints them as victims?
5. Bauerlein
- a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. unarmed black teenager
 - d. race not mentioned, “he feared for his life” “would not have done anything differently”
 - e. n/a
6. Tau
- a. Obama on Ferguson: “no excuse’ for violence”, “vandalism and violence” “unrest” contextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. Presence of Obama as an expert
7. Jones and Palazzolo
- a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. “law and evidence titled in Ferguson police’s favor”
 - e. n/a
8. Riley
- a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. “Homicide is the leading cause of death among young black men, and 90% of black murder victims are killed by other blacks,” “the other Ferguson tragedy”
9. Kesling, Peters, Shallwani

- a. “protests” contextualized
 - b. National Guard presence tripled—governor’s decision
 - c. unarmed 18-year-old
 - d. no race, jury decides to not indict him
 - e. Is the jury used here, and in the other articles as an “expert/ elite” source?
10. Kesling and Barrett
- a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. no race, no indictment decision mentioned,
 - e. no indictment—are civil rights charges warranted?
11. Shallwani
- a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. Black, teen
 - d. No race, no indictment mentioned
 - e. Brown family criticizes legal process—questions authority of source?
12. Ferguson Grand Jury Transcripts Show Widely Varying Witness Testimony
- a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. no race, no age
 - d. no race, non-indictment **not** mentioned
 - e. carrying testimony—puts “expertise” of jury into question
13. Kesling
- a. “peaceful protest” “sunrise prayer vigil” “counterpoint to the destruction and looting that took place Monday night”—decontextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. Peaceful protest lead by clergy
14. Lazo, McWhirter, MacMillan
- a. “protests broke out in a number of US cities”—contextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. black teenager
 - d. no race, no indictment mentioned
 - e. n/a
15. Lazo, McWhirter, MacMillan
- a. “protestors turn out in U.S. cities following Ferguson decision” “protests broke out”—contextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. black teenager
 - d. no race, no indictment mentioned
 - e. n/a
16. Kesling, Peters, Shallwani
- a. “peaceful protestors...gave way to looting and arson”—contextualized
 - b. n/a

- c. unarmed black teenager
 - d. white police officer, no indictment mentioned
 - e. n/a
17. Kesling and Peters
- a. “renewed unrest” contextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. unarmed, black teen
 - d. no race, non-indictment mentioned.
 - e. “flash point over race and justice during weeks of turmoil this summer”
18. Tau and Nelson
- a. “Obama called for peaceful protests” --contextualized
 - b. called for “restrained response from law enforcement”
 - c. unarmed 18-year old, no race
 - d. no race, non-indictment mentioned
 - e. Use of Obama as an “expert”

November 26, NYT

1. Healy
- a. “chaos” “still tense, grows calmer-decontextualized
 - b. As the Missouri National Guard bolstered its presence and the police became more assertive, law enforcement officials effectively squashed much of the chaos from a night earlier.
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. n/a
2. Wines
- a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. black teenager
 - d. white police officer, non-indictment mentioned
 - e. “the nation remains deeply divided about the justice system”
3. Weiser
- a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. no race, no indictment mentioned
 - e. “mixed motives”—“Some legal scholars charged that what looked like transparency and neutrality cloaked the county prosecutor’s real goal — to ensure that no indictment of the police officer occurred.” Attempt at delegitimizing the expert source?
4. Apuzzo
- a. “protests” “limited options to calm the unrest”—decontextualized
 - b. n/a
 - c. unarmed black teenager

- d. n/a
 - e. Attorney General used as expert/elite—makes the protests seem out of control because he “helped soothe” before
5. Davey and Fernandez
- a. “Monday night’s violence”—decontextualized
 - b. 2000 troops deployed by the governor--“expanded their role in keeping the peace.”
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. n/a

March 13, WSJ

1. Kesling
- a. n/a
 - b. Law enforcement has been chasing ‘scores’ of leads but has made no arrests in the shooting of two Ferguson, Mo., police officers early Thursday morning, according to local police.
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. Discussion of police taking action to pursue leads—essentially, unlike with August, the article discusses how the police are trying to find answers
2. Kesling
- a. “seemingly endless clashes between police and protestors”—decontextualized
 - b. clashing with protestors
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. Candidates for city council discuss how to “mend their community”—implies brokenness
3. Giuliani Blames Obama
- a. “police shootings, other unrest” decontextualized
 - b. blames Obama for police shooting
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. Obama is to blame for the police shootings in Ferguson, Missouri, and other disturbing events because he sets the tone for the nation.
4. Kesling
- a. “protests pass quietly a night after officer shot”—decontextualized
 - b. “police tactics diffused tension”
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. Investigation into shootings continue—still discussed here

March 13, NYT

1. Shear
 - a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. President Obama on Thursday said that whoever shot at police officers in Ferguson, Mo., this week are “criminals” and should be arrested, but added that their actions should not detract from the civil rights issues that have been raised”
 - i. Obama used as expert, Kimmel used also
2. Editorial Board
 - a. n/a
 - b. n/a
 - c. n/a
 - d. n/a
 - e. “Housecleaning among the town’s political leadership is necessary, but bigoted practices are not limited to that troubled municipality”

Appendix D: Coding framework

1. How is the violence portrayed?
 - a. Is it contextualized?
 - b. Decontextualized?
 - c. What words are used? I.e. aggression, aggressor
 - d. Riot vs. protest
2. How is Michael Brown portrayed?
 - a. Unarmed vs. not unarmed
 - b. Is race mentioned? Black teenager versus police officer—white not mentioned.
3. How is Ferguson portrayed?
 - a. Unrest?
 - b. Disordered?
 - c. Seeking justice?
4. How are the police Portrayed?
 - a. Brutality
 - b. Peacekeepers?
5. Other variables?

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