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Framing Effects in a Competitive Environment: Black Lives Matter versus President Trump

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### **Abstract**

How is public opinion in the United States affected by the president and the Black Lives Matter social movement's competing frames on racial inequality? Political elites have used frames to shape public opinion on a multitude of issues, showing success in select and specific conditions. However, it seems that competition, a moderator of framing effects, is always present in politics, especially between a social movement and president. I expand upon the theory that, in competitive environments, repetition or recent exposure increases a frame's accessibility in memory, therefore the "loudest" of the two frames is the one that influences opinion. To examine this claim, I conducted a content analysis to discern the frames presented frequently by the elite actors and I conducted a survey experiment measuring the influence of each frame on public opinion compared to a control group. I found that when presented with either the Black Lives Matter's racism frame or President Trump's law and order frame, opinion shifted favorably towards the existence of racial inequality and less hostility toward black Americans. This adds to the limited literature on the impact of social movements' frames on public opinion as well as the consequences of unpopular presidents on public opinion.

## Introduction

In 2013, the Black Lives Matter Global Network began as a response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, the murderer of the unarmed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, and has since evolved into a member-led political intervention and affirmation of the humanity of African Americans, their contributions to society, and their resilience in the face of deadly oppression. The 2016 presidential election presented a setback for the movement, but the feeling seemed to be mutual. Social movements like Black Lives Matter represent antagonism for political elites, especially presidents. They signify divisive issues likely to polarize a president's supporters, they question a president's commitments, and they link an administration to militancy in the eyes of some, and ineffectiveness and timidity in the eyes of others, threatening electoral punishment (Miroff 1981, 2). Notably, though, the two present problems for each other because they are competing for the public's limited attention, both attempting to define issues in terms that shape public opinion in their favor.

Framing holds considerable currency throughout the social sciences (Entman 1993; Benford and Snow 2000). Citizens' opinions are shaped by elite messages, yet they pay little attention to politics. When called to make an opinion, they retrieve information that is available and immediately accessible in memory, and frames aim to determine which of these considerations come most easily to mind. Elites have found success in shaping opinion through the framing process (Zaller 1992; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997a; Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997b; Druckman and Jacobs 2015; Chong and Druckman 2007a; Lecheler and Vreese 2011). Specifically, though, modern presidents and social movements alike require favorable public opinion to go forward with their agendas and to legitimate their actions, and they rely heavily on framing to mold the public in their favor (Edwards 2009; Benford and Snow 2000).

Because of their often-antagonistic relationship, their frames are typically competing with each other. Which frame does the public rely on to form opinions on the issue? It seems that the president's frame would take the lead because the office stands as the highest elected political office of our American democracy. However, the person holding office, and their popularity, is variable. Does their frame still appear more credible than a motivated insurgency of the mass public when they lack popularity? The current political divide on racial inequality in the United States perfectly paves the path for analysis of these questions, as strong competing frames, one from a social movement and the other from an unpopular president<sup>1</sup>, both aim to define the issue to the public. This leads me to the question driving this research: When competing frames on racial inequality, one from President Trump and one from the Black Lives Matter movement, are present, which frame reaches the public most frequently and how is public opinion affected by exposure to the competing frames?

These questions are important within themselves and for advancing the knowledge on framing. For one thing, opinion on racial equality between blacks and whites has shifted since 2014. A 2015 Pew Research Center poll found roughly six-in-ten Americans (59%) feel the country needs to continue making changes to achieve racial equality, up 13% from the 2014 response to the same question. Furthermore, 32% of Americans believe the country has made the changes needed to give blacks equal rights with whites, dropping 17% from how Americans felt toward this question in 2014 (Pew 2015). What is fascinating is that 2013 was the birth year of the Black Lives Matter Global Network (BLM). As the movement has persisted, public opinion has shifted in its favor. Studying the impact of BLM's and President Trump's frames on public opinion could find implications linked to this shift. Additionally, little is known of the impact

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<sup>1</sup> 38% approval rating as of November 2017 <http://news.gallup.com/poll/201617/gallup-daily-trump-job-approval.aspx>

that presidential frames have on shaping public opinion, but even less is known about how movement-sponsored frames affect public opinion (Edwards 2009; Pizmony-Levy and Ponce 2013). My study aims to add to both bodies of literature.

Procedurally, I develop this paper in distinct steps. First, I review the literature on the framing process, how presidents and social movements utilize framing for their individual goals, and background information on the Black Lives Matter Global Network, with my theoretical expectations on framing effects and competition interwoven. Following the literature review, I present my hypotheses. Then I state my methodology. In this section, I consult my content analyses, discuss my survey experiment used to measure the effects of competing frames on public opinion. I lastly review my results and offer some concluding remarks.

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Expectations**

Public Opinion and Issue Framing. Public opinion is determined by three factors: variations in information from political elites, or persons who devote themselves full time to some aspect of politics and public affairs, individual differences in attention to this information, and individual differences in political values and predispositions (Zaller 1992, 6). What elites say, how they say it, and how it is interpreted defines American public opinion. However, the public never receives a complete account of important events and developments in the political world. Rather, they receive highly selective and stereotyped views of what has taken place (Zaller 1992, 7). These frames work to determine what the public keeps informed about and how they take sides on issues.

To frame is to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communication, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”

(Entman 1993, 52). Framing is used to influence opinion, but the process is distinct from mere persuasion. Whereas outright belief change requires new information to change the previously held belief, frames operate by activating information already at the recipients' disposal and storing it in long-term memory (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997b). Frames, then, affect the weighting of information rather than represent a change in belief.

An avenue through which the public receives most of these framed views of the political world is the media. Mass media contribute largely to the public's learning and accepting of beliefs, norms and rules that govern political life (Graber and Dunaway 2015, 300). Although most individuals cannot recall from memory specific facts and forget specific details of news stories after drawing conclusions from them, repeated exposure to news over time allows for individuals to become aware of significant political problems and appreciate their basic significance. That is not to say every individual will be exposed to the same presentation of significant problems, though. Media sources are biased in their presentation of events, leading to differing frames that play on emotional tone or content, that are defined by the structural aspects of the media system's reliance on easily digestible and appealing news that will retain mass audience, or that make an attempt at partisan persuasion of audiences (Graber and Dunaway 2015, 362). Media work hard to determine what issues individuals find most significant and rank highly on their agenda of political concern, and the public uses this as guidance, but rarely follows it slavishly (Graber and Dunaway 2015, 285). Further, scholars have found direct effects of media on what people think about, "not only because news outlets set the content of what people view or read, but because they structure how that content is thematically delivered" (Engel 2013, 412).

The media determines what individuals find important, but in order for an individual to use the framed information in opinion formation, it must be both available and accessible to the individual (Chong and Druckman 2007a). Presumably, frames featured recently and/or repeatedly will be relatively accessible to viewers, thus having a greater potential to be called upon when forming opinions (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997a, 568). Opinion, then, is a function of accessible considerations, where the flow of framed information determines which considerations are salient (Zaller 1992, 36). Chong and Druckman (2007a) have summarized this framing process to three consecutive steps (110). First, a frame must be available, meaning stored in memory, for use to an individual. Second, the consideration must be accessible, and its knowledge must also be “ready for use.” Last, the context or motivation may cause the frame to be consciously weighed against other frames as an individual decides the applicability of their accessible interpretations.

Studies on framing have shown success while uncovering moderators to desired outcomes. Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997a), in testing the differences in local news outlets’ portrayal of Ku Klux Klan (KKK) rallies and their influence on viewer tolerance, show framing a KKK controversy as a “free speech issue” successfully tilted opinion in the group’s favor, while the label “public safety issue” tilted opinion in the opposite direction. Additionally, Zaller (1992) examines framing of racial attitudes, finding that when virtually all elites accepted some notion of inferiority of other racial groups, the public followed. As elites began shifting their stance on racial issues, public opinion did too, proving that elite cues can shape even racial opinions, which appear to be among the most deeply felt of mass opinions (Zaller 1992, 13). His examination highlights that when elite opinion is consistent, the public sees events from that point of view, with the most politically attentive more likely to adopt the elite position. When elites divide, they

enjoy less success in shaping public opinion, as the public tends to follow the elites sharing their general ideological or partisan predisposition, with the most politically attentive mirroring more sharply the ideological divisions among the elites (9).

Political sophistication, or an individual's level of knowledge on general, factual political information, is also thought to moderate framing effects, though the empirical evidence is still inconsistent (Zaller 1992, 1; Lecheler and Vreese 2011, 966). At one end, scholars argue that politically sophisticated individuals have the ability to comprehend and integrate a framed message into their already existing stockpile of thoughts, so they must be affected more by a frame. Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson (1997b) support this, finding that individuals with higher levels of content-specific and general political sophistication were impacted more by the framing of welfare recipients, spending on the poor, and spending on AIDS than less informed individuals. However, the other end of the debate characterizes higher levels of political sophistication with the resistance of frames, as these individuals potentially have considered the targeted issue sufficiently enough to withstand a framed message (Lecheler and Vreese 2011, 966). Higher political sophistication often includes strong attitudes and prior opinions as well. Prior opinions generally reduce framing effects by increasing one's resistance to disconfirming information, as seen, for instance, in individuals with strongly shaped attitudes on gay rights being less amenable to gay rights frames alternative to those values (Chong and Druckman 2007a; e.g. Brewer 2001). Standing at a middle ground, Zaller (1992) labels those most susceptible to framing effects as the "moderately aware," or those who are sufficiently motivated, who display vulnerability to be framed, and are knowledgeable enough to also integrate the framed message (19). These individuals may pay attention, indicating some sophistication, yet lack the resources to resist.

A final and inevitable moderator of framing effects is competition. Citizens receive competing frames for each issue thrown at them in the political world, but little is known of the dynamics of framing in competitive contexts (Chong and Druckman 2007b). Previous literature reveals two possibilities as to how individuals respond to competitive frames. The first focuses on the relative volume of competing messages, positing that the loudest frame, or one repeated most frequently, will have the greatest influence on opinion. This view renders the strength of the frame irrelevant, because individuals simply embrace the frame that comes easiest to mind (Chong and Druckman 2007b, 104). The alternative possibility relies on the strength of the frame, positing the strongest frame as most influential, regardless of repetition. Strength is increased from factors such as its delivery from a credible source, how well it resonates with consensus values, and if it does not contradict strongly held prior beliefs (Chong and Druckman 2007b, 104).

There is little theoretical insight discerning the conditions when either possibility matters, or which frames will prevail in various competitive situations. Given the withstanding ambiguity, many studies have used a one-sided design, presenting respondents with one of two competing frames, then, consistent with Chong and Druckman's (2007b) proposed standard for measuring competitive framing effects, comparing each framed condition to a control condition. The control condition serves as a baseline preference against which to judge the impact of the framed conditions. The frames are effective if the opinions of those receiving the frames differ significantly from the opinions of those in the control group; an insignificant difference indicates the frames are ineffective (Chong and Druckman 2007b, 107).

Framing has found success in shaping public opinion, though elite division, political sophistication, and competition can moderate the effects. Public opinion is a factor of available

and accessible considerations, largely defined by the flow of information and the way it is presented in the media. Because repeated or recent exposure increases availability and accessibility, the frame that is disseminated most frequently from the media and that individuals are recently exposed to should impact opinion.

Presidential Framing Efforts. With democracy as the anchor of legitimacy for American governance, presidents are expected to be responsive to the will of the people, pressuring the White House to invest considerable resources on focusing the public's attention toward issues it wishes to promote and on encouraging the public to see its proposals for dealing with those issues in a positive light (Edwards 2009, 182). Framing is advantageous to presidents because it demands little of the public, as its goal is not to persuade or convince citizens to change basic values or become experts on detailed policy proposals (Edwards 2009, 191). Rather, their aim is to encourage the public to think of the issue or event in terms of already-existing values but weighted in a more favorable way. Given the simplicity of framing, it is less susceptible to distortion by journalists and opponents than direct persuasion, which favorably serves the president as well (Edwards 2009, 191).

Framing attempts are as old as the Republic, but their success in shaping public opinion is not so clear (Edwards 2009). Indirectly, Cohen (1995), on the subject of presidential rhetoric and the public's agenda, found that the public responds to the emphasis presidents accord to different policy areas, further noting that any mention of a policy will increase public concern and awareness of it. Although this says little as to whether the public adopts the president's policy stance, it confirms that the salience of an issue increases with presidential mention and would seem to suggest a degree of effectiveness in framing. Additionally, the public should respond to elite cues so long as they need information to evaluate an issue, the source offering the

information is credible, and the information is easily accessible to them (Eshbaugh-Soha and Linebarger 2014, 355). Because the office itself has proven to bestow at least some credibility onto the speaker, such that the public listens to what the president deems important, presidential cues should impact the public (Eshbaugh-Soha and Linebarger 2014; Cohen 1995). However, popularity is a variable aspect of credibility. Scholarship has noted that popularity may enhance a president's credibility with the public, and although the effects are modest, evidence does point to a conditioning effect of popularity on the ability of the president to lead public opinion on foreign and civil rights policy areas, but no impact on public opinion over the economy and quite confusing results regarding domestic policy (Cohen 1999).

What is known directly of their success is that it is selective and conditional, whereas presidents should expect the most success in leading opinion on issues that are new, as the public is less likely to have predispositions on them (Druckman and Jacobs 2015; Zaller 1992). Thus, the president has an opportunity to develop support among the public before opposition arises. For instance, Lyndon Johnson found success in leading public opinion with his War on Poverty initiative, as it was new to the public (Druckman and Jacobs 2015). Their effects on opinion, though, are only temporary. Opinion shifts in response to presidential leadership may quickly fade as issues slip into the background, the realities of daily life confront issue positions, or a clearer understanding of the implications of support for the president for basic values clarifies policy options (Edwards 2009, 199).

Framing plays a large role in presidential efforts to shape public opinion, but president-sponsored frames are not immune to the standard moderators of framing effects. Specifically, their unique position in the political world attracts competition. One specific political actor that likely provides a reoccurring source of competition are social movements. Social movements

aim to make salient divisive issues, draw attention to controversies more likely to polarize rather than unify a president's supporters, call into question a president's commitments, and threaten electoral punishment by tying an administration to either danger or a sense of weakness and inefficiency (Miroff 1981, 2). How their frames differ from that of a president's and how effective they are is necessary for understanding which frame dominates public opinion.

Social Movements' Framing Efforts. Social movements are organized, collective efforts that join together individuals who share a common goal in sustained action against political or state authorities (Tarrow, 2007 [1998]). These groups seek ideological and structural changes in society, and prefer to achieve these changes through mass mobilization, confronting issues directly, and attracting public attention and controversy (Miroff 1981). The social and political transformations that social movements wish to produce require organized, collective, and motivated insurgencies of ordinary people, and they gather such insurgencies through frames.

Framing has come to be known as a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements, as the process helps to define problems, advocate ways to solve them, and recruit members (Benford and Snow, 2000; Irons 2009, 462). Movements use three types of frames to achieve their goals (Benford and Snow 2000; McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink 2004). Diagnostic frames provide the source of causality and identify the blame of the problem or issue in order to convince potential recruits that social change is desirable (Benford and Snow 2000, 616; McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink 2004, 656). Prognostic frames provide a proposed solution to the problem or a plan of attack and the strategies for carrying out the plan, working to convince potential recruits and current adherents that social change is possible. These frames, though, are constrained by the competitive climate in which movements exist, so they often include refutations of the logic or efficacy of solutions advocated by opponents as well as a

rationale for its own remedies (Benford and Snow, 2000, 617). Last, motivational frames echo a call to action of supporters and bystanders, or a rationale for engaging in collective action (Benford and Snow 2000; McVeigh, Myers and Sikkink 2004). Together, these framing tactics work to “translate vaguely felt dissatisfaction into well-defined grievances and compel people to join the movement to do something about it” (Buechler 2000, 41 qtd. in McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink 2004, 656).

Social movements attempt to enhance the effectiveness of their frames through resonance (Benford and Snow 2000, 619). The more a frame resonates with its intended audience, the more likely it will be stored in memory and used to shape opinion. Two factors play into the resonance of a social movement’s frame: credibility and relative salience. Credibility focuses on the status and knowledge of the frame deliverer, and the consistency and empirical verification of the frame in the real world (Benford and Snow 2000, 619). A frame that contradicts its claims, relays unbelievable or faulty claims to prospective adherents, or is issued from articulators whom lack status and knowledge is not credible and will not resonate with the public. Additionally, relative salience encompasses the centrality, the experiential commensurability, and the narrative fidelity of a frame (Benford and Snow 2000, 619-22). The beliefs, values, and ideas associated with the frame need to be central to the lives of the audience, correspond to personal, everyday experiences, and align with the larger cultural influence of the target of mobilization to be perceived as relatively salient, and further resonate to the degree of accessibility in memory when the time comes to opine on the issue.

Frame resonance may fall short of its goal because of counteraction from political elites. Social movements develop outside of the institution, among those who lack access to political change, so the culture they exist in is largely defined by political elites (Irons 2011). To win over

the public, a frame ideally needs to resonate with the larger cultural context disseminated by elites, and have elite allies present to assist in the resonance of the frame with the public (Irons 2011). The need for elite allies may even lead a movement to shift their frame away from the original, as seen with the Indiana KKK endorsing Calvin Coolidge in the 1924 presidential election as an attempt to gain a direct link to policy change, though he opposed the movement's economic agenda – an agenda that initially helped the movement mobilize and recruit members (McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink 2004).

Despite the need for resonance, aligning with a president is not an easy task as the two often have an antagonistic relationship (Tichenor 2007, 241). Presidents aim to remake the political order on their own terms and for their own purposes while the contentious reform agendas of strong insurgent movements pose the threat of interrupting or ruining the best-laid executive plans. They enjoy a state of social order and economic tranquility while movements have strong incentives to exploit disorder and governmental vulnerabilities. Presidents as well echo their message to constituents showing hostility toward movements organized by and on behalf of people excluded from full human rights, political participation, or basic economic protections while movements cater to a constituency that embraces conceptions of social justice far more radical than the mainstream. Given these inherent differences, presidents typically hold strong incentives to minimize, disregard, or even repress the demands of movements, although movement leaders have occasionally enjoyed a “bully pulpit” as commanding as that of the rhetorical presidency, competing with the White House to shape the public discourse and opinion (Tichenor 2007, 242).

This command of the public that competes with the White House is not extensively covered in the literature, and it is unclear how movements' frames affect public opinion. In a

lone study that claims to tackle this question, Pizmony-Levy and Ponce (2013) found framing of same-sex marriage as a part of the larger civil rights movement or a part of the gay and lesbian movement had no significant effect on public opinion. However, this says little of how effective a movement's frame is, but rather says more of public opinion towards the movements in general. Additionally, the results of one case lack generalizability. This further highlights the need for more studies looking specifically towards how movements' frames shift public opinion, instead of simply equating the issues to different movements.

Presidents and social movements both disburse frames to the public, creating a competitive environment for opinion formation. Citizens need and use information from elites to form their opinions but pay little attention to politics. When called for an opinion, they reach to whatever ideas are immediately accessible and available in memory, correlating with those they are regularly or recently exposed to (Zaller 1992). Because of this, when the public is presented with conflicting problem definitions, the frame that individuals are regularly exposed through the media and that they are most recently exposed to should have the greatest influence on opinion. Black Lives Matter Global Network. Originating in 2013 in response to the acquittal of the George Zimmerman, the murderer of the 17-year-old unarmed African American teen, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi created a Black-centered political will and movement-building project called #BlackLivesMatter (Black Lives Matter 2017). As the hashtag project gained momentum, it became utilized as a platform and organizing tool, eventually moving from social media to the streets, creating a movement that gained national recognition during demonstrations following police-involved killings in 2014. Black Lives Matter (BLM) now stands as a decentralized, member-led global network, with over 40 local chapters in the United States. Beginning as a call to action in response to state-sanctioned violence and anti-black

racism, BLM continues to exist as an “ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise” (Black Lives Matter 2017). In contrast to their ancestor movements, BLM works to fill the void of inclusion and diversity, aiming to employ a new vision of what Black leaders can look like, capitalizing on the leadership of women, and queer and transgender individuals (Black Lives Matter 2017). The movement’s directives aim to ensure that black people live with the full dignity of their human rights, where their lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise, and they do not plan to stop or be reigned back until they achieve their goals.

Although BLM existed some years before President Trump’s presidency, his strict law and order ideals resist and defame BLM. Whereas BLM presents society as inherently set up for the demise of blacks, President Trump echoes the existence of freedom and equality for all, especially those law-abiding citizens, possibly inducing among white Americans the stereotype of African-Americans as criminals (Peffley, Hurwitz, and Snider 1997, 31). Additionally, BLM recognizes and denounces violence inflicted by law enforcement officers while President Trump strongly supports law enforcement, complimenting their performance and presence in our society. The two frames are clearly competing for the public’s attention. However, the definition repeated most recent or at a heavier volume should be the frame that resonates with the general public and is reflected in public opinion. With my theoretical expectations in mind, I propose the following hypotheses:

*Black Lives Matter Hypothesis (H1):* Exposure to the racism frame should increase support for the prevalence of racial inequality in the United States.

*Trump Administration Hypothesis (H2):* Exposure to the law and order frame should decrease support on the prevalence of racial inequality in the United States.

## Methodology

In exploring the effects of the frames presented by BLM and President Trump, I first conducted three content analyses to measure my independent variable, the frames of racial inequality used by each elite source, then I conducted a survey experiment. From the results of my content analyses, I created two experimental stimuli, one using each elite sources' frame, and, consistent with Chong and Druckman's (2007) proposal for measuring competitive framing effects, I created a control group stimulus as well, followed by a series of survey questions to measure my dependent variable, public opinion after being exposed to one of the frames.

### Content Analysis

Black Lives Matter Analysis. The content I used to analyze the frames employ by BLM were blog posts and press releases published directly from and available on the websites of seven organizations that were stated explicitly on the Black Lives Matter Global Network website (<https://blacklivesmatter.com>) and the Movement for Black Lives website (<https://policy.m4bl.org>), a name that BLM stated as an alternative for the movement, as local leaders and members of the united front of the Black Lives Matter global network, between January 20, 2017 and September 30, 2017, the chosen time frame for my study.<sup>2</sup> Because BLM deems these organizations as the local leaders of their member-led movement, I took their messages as the official communication sources of the movement. I chose to start my time frame at January 20, 2017 because I was only interested in the way the movement discusses racism and racial issues during President Trump's presidency, so starting at the day of the inauguration made logical sense. The time frame ends with September 30, 2017 because I wanted the effects from the white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia that happened on August 12, 2017 to

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<sup>2</sup> Black Youth Project 100, Organization for Black Struggle, Hands Up United, Black Alliance for Just Immigration, Project South, Southerners on New Ground, and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights.

be fully captured in the discourse utilized for this study. Seven organizations were included in my sample, as these were the only organizations from the stated leaders of the movement that had published blog posts or press releases during my chosen time frame.

Again, my unit of analysis was all blog posts or press releases addressing racial issues, implications, and actions necessary at the national level written by and published by my elite sources within the time period of January 20, 2017 to September 30, 2017. Written statements on these organizations' websites that were advertising for local events or posts that solely discussed events happening in one city were not included, as they did not discuss national implications. If a post contained a section discussing a past historical event or racism at a point in history, the historical discussion was not coded. However, discussion of how the historical moment related to present time was coded. The population consisted of 19 blog posts and press releases and I coded the entire population. I coded each publication according to its main topic, the number of times each frame was used throughout the publication, and the tone of the publication towards the group discussed. Each publication was coded for one overarching topic and one overarching tone but they were coded according to all the frames employed. I coded for latent content because it relies on the underlying meaning of the content, which, for my study, is more beneficial in identifying the frames used by each elite source. See Appendix A for the BLM codebook and code sheet.

There were six main topics present in the population: policy initiatives, incidents, addressing blacks, addressing whites, freedom and equality, and anniversaries. From the 19 publications coded, 37% focused on topics related to policy initiatives, with over half centered around criminal justice reform, while others included education and immigration reform and the federal budget. 21% of the population focused on incidents, most commonly shootings or the

election and inauguration of President Trump. 16% of publications coded were about anniversaries of speeches, acts, or shootings, and their implications for current racism. 11% of the population addressed black people directly, through a letter format as well tips for self-care, while the remaining 15% of the population, split evenly into 5% for each, focused on the topics of freedom and equality, addressing white people directly, and the Trump Administration, which was coded in the “other” category.

The frames identified fell into seven categories: racism, within-group unity, the Trump Administration, law enforcement, white Americans, black Americans, and other. The frame presented most (36%) was the *racism* frame. The *racism* frame included discussion of oppression and exploitation of black people, such things as “we [blacks] are the first to carry the slack and the last to receive the benefits,” talk of undeserved murders or robberies of black people, the intentional defunding of predominantly black schools, underrepresentation, and references to systematic racism. Also included are calls for freedom and equality, racial equity, and black liberation, as they indicate that these concepts do not currently exist. The second most echoed frame, dominating 28% of frame occurrences, is the *within-group unity* frame. Content included in this frame were phrases like “we must ban together,” “we can only help each other by supporting each other,” “we need to take care of us as we always have,” and others with similar underlying meanings as well as times when the author of the publication addresses the reader or community as family and use that signal collectivity, such as “we love you,” or “we are here for you.” The remainder of the frames were presented much less. The *law enforcement* frame, occurring at 10%, consisted of talk of unfair treatment from the police, sentiments toward mass criminalization and imprisonment, predatory policing strategies, building alternatives to the police state, and discussion of police shootings. The *Trump negativity* frame (9%) included

sentiments felt towards President Trump or about the rhetoric used by the Administration, such as relating him to a newfound king, disapproval of his strong law and order ideals, discussion of him being largely offensive to oppressed groups, calling his actions a “spree of stupidity,” and voicing the opinion that the Administration is attempting to convince black people that their lives are not worth fighting for. The *black people* frame (8%) includes phrases such “brave and brilliant people,” “sanctity of black life,” “leaders” in reference to the black communities, and “just being black.” The *white people* frame (8%) points to discussion, mostly unfavorable, of white people, including talk of white supremacy, includes phrases like “our culture still exalts white supremacy,” frustration towards white people, and discussion relating white culture to the idea of superiority. The *other* frame (1%) consisted mostly of nods toward the failing governance or the current systems in place are ineffective.

[Figure 1 approximately here]

Tone was coded as positive, negative, mixed or neutral/unidentifiable based on the publication’s sentiment toward the group of discussion. 84% of the population addressed the group of discussion using a negative tone, while 16% of the population used a positive tone is addressed the group of discussion. No publications included in the population for this study produced a mixed tone or used a neutral or unidentifiable tone, also alluding to the fact that all publications I analyzed did address a group, whether it be themselves or an outgroup. Those publications presenting a negative tone directed it towards groups such as police, President Trump, law enforcement more broadly, and white people. All of the publications that used a positive tone directed it toward black people or the community in general.

President Trump Analysis. To discern the frame President Trump employed towards present racial inequality in the United States, I looked to transcripts of presidential discourse retrieved

from The American Presidency Project (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>) between the dates of January 20, 2017 to September 30, 2017. My unit of analysis included all discourse, meaning the Inaugural Address, the State of the Union Address, weekly addresses, press briefings, speeches, and remarks, from the president, however it did not include executive orders, as the text of executive orders is very structured and I felt the frames used were best discerned from discourse that was more personalized and that provided context in a more casual manner. Because of the volume of presidential speech and the wide array of topics discussed, I thought it was best for my analysis to select four words that were prominent in the BLM publications, and analyze the frames the president used in a speech, address, or remark when each word was present. I was not focused solely on the frame used in the context of just that word, rather all the frames utilized in the given text when one of the four words was present. I chose the words “violence,” “law enforcement,” “protest,” and “oppression.” Broken down by word, “violence” gave me 63 viable transcripts, “law enforcement” produced 64, “protest” resulted in 14, and “oppression” gave me 19, making the population 160 transcripts. For my sample, I coded one transcript from each month in my time period of each word.<sup>3</sup> In total, my sample included 28 transcripts, nine from the words “violence” and “law enforcement” and five from the words “protest” and “oppression.”

For each transcript, I coded the length in word count, the audience, all of the frames used in the speech, remark, or statement, and the tone toward the main group of, discussion. I identified the following nine frames present in his discourse: unity, law enforcement, racism, law

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<sup>3</sup> To select a transcript, I numbered the viable transcripts for each month of each word, then used an online random number generator, with parameters set for the number of viable transcripts in each month. Because of overlap in transcripts among words, when I randomly selected one that was already coded, I removed it from the number of viable transcripts, then renumbered and generated a new number. In months when the only transcript was already coded, I skipped that month, as there was not another to code. “Protest” and “oppression” were not used in a transcript every month of my time period of analysis.

and order, patriotism, public safety and security, government responsiveness, and threat/fear. I included an “other” category as well for the frames used at a lesser volume that did not fit into one of the identified frames. Like with the BLM publications, I coded for latent content, which proved especially useful in discerning the frames used by President Trump as he hardly ever explicitly addressed the frames by their proper name. His word choices and the order of his sentences, though, implicitly revealed his attempts at framing the discussion. The code sheet and code book used for the content analysis of President Trump’s discourse are in Appendix B.

The mean length of transcript was 2,609 words. 54% of the sample addressed the general public as the intended audience, 21% were directed towards specific states, these being speeches given at rallies in specific states, 18% directed the message to Congress, and the remaining 7% fell into my “other” category, each addressing specific segments of the public, one being attendants of an NRA leadership forum and the other sheriffs.

As for the frames used most heavily, the *law and order* frame, the *patriotism* frame, and the *unity* frame captured nearly 60% of the total frames used throughout the entire sample, enjoying 21%, 20%, and 18% respectively. The *law and order* frame encompassed speech stressing the importance of laws, keeping the peace, capitalizing on or complimenting the “law abiding citizens” of the United States, the Administration’s desire to restore the rule of law, talk of preventing conflicts and fixing the “lawless chaos” the president inherited, referencing specific amendments of the Constitution, and the dependence of liberty on the rule of law. The *law and order* frame also included the topics of crime and violence, as I found them to be discussed in a way that reinforced the need to restore law and order throughout the country. The *patriotism* frame consisted of any phrases that highlighted vigorous support for our country. This included compliments to the American citizens, favorable talk of the freedom in our

country, renewal of the American spirit, returning the power to the American citizens, American are free to follow their dreams, and any referenced to the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness that this country promises. Phrases or passages centered around bridging divisions, healing wounds, and unifying our country, working together to achieve a desired outcome, and referenced to inability to meet goals without a sense of togetherness all fell under the *unity* frame.

Holding a lesser percentage of the overall frames utilized, each at 11%, were the *public safety* frame and the *government responsiveness* frame. The *public safety* frame covered references to the necessity or the desire of safe communities, restoring safety in America, improving safety, as well as references to the military. Any mention or underlying promise of providing for the wishes and desires of the American people fell under the *government responsiveness* frame. The *law enforcement* frame (8%) encompassed favorable speech regarding the people of law enforcement as well as the job they are doing, including hints that their job will be getting busier with the stricter crack down on law and order, and negative discussion of violence toward law enforcement. The *threat/fear* frame (7%) entailed potential assaults on our democracy, comparison of the United States to a third-world country, discussion of unfavorable outcomes if the action proposed is not followed through with, and descriptions of terrorism. The frame with the smallest percentage of total frames discussed, 2%, was the *racism* frame, which received phrased condemning racism, bigotry, and racial violence as well as a statement that racial issues have gotten better or stayed the same since his inauguration, and referring to the alt-left groups as troublemakers and stating the presence of fine individuals in the alt-right/neo-Nazi groups. My *other* category received 2% of the frames used as well, and things such as the system is ineffective or unfair, and the United States is being taken advantage of.

[Figure 2 approximately here]

Like with the BLM publications, tone was coded as positive, negative, mixed or neutral/unidentifiable based on the publication's sentiment toward another group of discussion. 82% of the transcripts presented a negative tone towards other "out-groups" as could be described. Some of the groups that were discussed from a negative tone were Democrats, the media, terrorists, and, in one instance, courts. 11% of transcripts had a neutral or unidentifiable tone, as these transcripts did not actually focus on a group. 3.5% of transcripts had a positive tone, and the one transcript that holds this percentage focused extensively on the police force as their group of target and 3.5% as well gave off a mixed tone.

Newspaper Analysis. To assess which elite frame media disseminated most frequently to the public, I analyzed newspaper articles published by *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal* between January 20, 2017 and September 30, 2017 in all sections of the paper, excluding Opinion or Op-Ed categories, Editorials, Book Reviews, Style/Art categories, and Briefings. I chose these three sources for a couple reasons. I chose *The New York Times* because it is the "most influential elite newspaper in the United States that not only sets the agenda for many other U.S. news media but also has a significant impact on U.S. national policy" (Xu 2013, 2417). As it is the "paper record" of the United States, I felt it necessary to analyze how this source framed the issue (Harlow and Johnson 2011 qtd. in Gottlieb 2015, 9). I chose the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* as an attempt to capture articles that are likely to have appealed to citizens across the ideological spectrum. The *Washington Post* represents an ideologically left-leaning source and caters to a more liberal audience. Conversely, although the *Wall Street Journal* could be classified more of a centrist news source when discussing its bias, it stands as the national newspaper with highest percentage of trust and

highest percentage of use among mostly conservative and consistently conservative respondents, according to a 2014 Pew Research Center study (Pew 2014). I felt these three sources were sufficient for analysis of national newspaper content that reached both sides.

I used LexisNexis to gather my articles from *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and ProQuest to acquire the *Wall Street Journal* articles, as they were not available through LexisNexis. To assess the population of articles relevant to my study, I first filtered each source to only show articles between January 20, 2017 and September 30, 2017, then used five different searches to narrow in on only articles that centered around the theme of racial inequality. The searches I used to filter the articles were “All Lives Matter”, “Blue Lives Matter”, “Trump” then inside of that search I further filtered the search with “police brutality,” “Black Lives Matter” then “race” inside of that search, then “Trump” to further filter the search, and lastly I used the search phrase “Black Lives Matter” then “Trump” inside of that search, then “protest” to further filter the search. Each article pulled using these searches had the search phrase or the entirety of the combination of search phrases in them. These searches made my population 318 articles in total, 19 from the *Wall Street Journal*, 233 from *The New York Times*, and 66 from the *Washington Post*. For my sample, I coded all 19 of the *Wall Street Journal*, as there were not very many and they were separated from *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* articles, and I combined *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* articles together, numbered them, and used a random number generator to randomly select articles, selecting about 42% of the total *New York Times* and *Washington Post* articles. My sample was 145 articles, 19 from the *Wall Street Journal*, 97 from *The New York Times*, and 29 from the *Washington Post*.

Each article was coded for the length in word count, the search phrase used in the article, the framing of the article, and the tone towards the main group of discussion. Some articles

contained more than one of the searches. When that was the case, I coded the article for all search phrases present in the article, as I felt it important to know which phrases the public is seeing the most. For the framing section of the coding, I took the main frames found from the Black Lives Matter content analysis<sup>4</sup> and those from President Trump's content analysis<sup>5</sup> and looked for each of those in the newspaper articles. Several articles used a combination of the two elites' frames throughout the piece, however, if an article used more of the Black Lives Matter frames than those of President Trump's, it was coded as an overall frame of Black Lives Matter, and vice versa. An article that did not use any of the frames found in the previous content analyses or the subject of the article was not related to racial inequality was coded in the No Frame/Neutral category. The code sheet and code book used for the content analysis of the newspaper articles is in Appendix C.

The mean length of article was 1456 words. 43% of the sample contained the search combination of "Black Lives Matter," "Trump," and "Protest," 29% had the search combination of "Trump" and "police brutality," 22% had the combination "Black Lives Matter," "Race," and "Trump," 4% included the search "Blue Lives Matter," and 2% included the search "All Lives Matter" in the article.

As for the overall frame disseminated most to the public, the Black Lives Matter frame dominated 67% of the articles while the Trump frame and no frame/neutral frame each consumed 17% of articles in my sample. This means that the BLM subframes, or the frames found in my content analysis of solely BLM publications, were used at a greater volume in more of the articles than President Trump's subframes. When taking a closer look at the frequency of

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<sup>4</sup> Racism, within-group unity, the Trump Administration, law enforcement, white Americans, black Americans, and other.

<sup>5</sup> Racism, unity, law enforcement, law and order, patriotism, public safety and security, government responsiveness, threat/fear, and other.

the BLM subframes used compared to all the subframes used, both BLM's and President Trump's, the two most prominent subframes were the *Trump negativity* frame, holding 45% of the total frames used, followed by the *racism* frame, dominating 25%. Articles were coded in the *Trump negativity* frame if the coverage highlighted weaknesses of President Trump's character and how these characters have affected his presidency, negative citizen backlash from his comments or actions, attributions to emboldening white supremacy, violence, and hate speech, and quotes or statements making him look unknowledgeable, incompetent, or overall unfit for job. An example of a *Trump negativity* frame that appeared in *The New York Times* was,

Mr. Trump has been under fire for how he has publicly addressed bloody demonstrations by white nationalists over the weekend. Promoting a cartoon of a person being run over by a train appeared to belittle the attack by a driver who ran into a crowd of counterprotesters, leaving a 32-year-old woman dead on Saturday and 19 others injured. (Sullivan and Haberman, 2017)

An example of the *Trump negativity* frame that appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* was,

The president also recently told a group of sheriffs that the murder rate is the highest in 45 or 47 years. Actually, crime hovers near multidecade lows, despite a recent uptick in the murder rate: While the rate of 4.9 murders per 100,000 residents in 2015 was up from 4.4 murders per 100,000 in 2014, that was well below its peak of 10.2 murders in 1980. (Reinhard 2017)

Articles were coded as using the *racism* frame if they took specific action to point out race as a factor of unfair treatment, expressed favoritism or approval of people protesting against racial inequality, highlighted attempts to mask unfounded bigotry or racism, and addressing the ongoing oppression black people experience. An example of the *racism* frame found in the *Washington Post* was,

Many local and state officials opposed to Confederate monuments say that all those gallant Southern generals astride horses represent efforts to promote white supremacy. The Confederate Memorial features slavery outright, rendering them under the command of masters in perpetuity. "It's a memorial that says the people who fought to keep a boot on your neck and to keep you as property are heroes," said Jeffery Robinson, director of the Trone Center for Justice and Equality with the American Civil Liberties Union. Robinson, who is black, called it "a monument to men who fought for the proposition that they own people who looked like me and then treat them as less than human." (Shapiro 2017, A01)

Following the *Trump negativity* and the *racism* frames, the remaining BLM subframes were used to a much lesser extent in my sample of newspaper articles. The *within-group unity* frame dominated 14% of the total subframes used and focused predominantly on individuals from all movements and organizations coming together for the fight against racial inequality, police brutality, or President Trump. The *law enforcement* frame held 7% of the frames used, with examples of this frame being references to racial profiling or unfair treatment enforced by police and expressing opposition for police officers not getting convicted for the unwarranted killing of black people. The *black people* and *white people* frames each represented 3% of the total frames used, including generalized thought of black people as a whole, i.e. "We as black people are just trying to be treated as human beings, and our lives are valuable" from the *New York Times* (Knopper 2017, 6), in the *black people* frame, and statements or quotes that attributed white supremacist values to white people as a whole, i.e. "We showed that our [white nationalist] movement is not just online but growing physically. We asserted ourselves as the voice of white America" from the *New York Times* (Fausset and Feuer 2017, 11), in the *white people* frame. 4% of the frames fell into the *other* category, which mainly included negativity

towards right-wing thoughts and values that were not specific enough to fall into other categories.

Although an overall Trump frame was not used nearly as much as an overall BLM frame, many articles that received an overall frame coding of BLM still did contain the Trump subframes found in my content analysis of his presidential discourse, just at a lesser volume than the BLM frames. In particular, the *law and order* frame and the *patriotism* frame were very prominent, just as I found from my presidential discourse content analysis, dominating 22% and 21% of the total frames used, respectively. The *law and order* frame encompassed speech promoting adherence to the rule of law, favorable statements on stricter punishments, and emphasis on the guaranteed protection of rights. An example of the *law and order* frame from the *Wall Street Journal* was,

President Donald Trump said during his campaign that all those convicted of killing police would get the death penalty under his administration, and one of his earliest executive orders called for harsher punishments for violence against law-enforcement personnel. (Reinhard and Elinson 2017)

Articles containing the *patriotism* frame included statements favoring respect for the country over the right to peacefully protest, which was almost exclusively found in articles about the NFL players kneeling, locking arms, or not coming onto the field at all during the playing of the National Anthem to protest racism and police brutality as well as President Trump's negativity towards the act. An example of the *patriotism* frame from the *New York Times* was,

“Disrespecting our national anthem and flag in the name of social injustice is the highest form of hypocrisy,” Mr. Havard [Louisiana state legislator] said in a statement. “It is time the taxpayers quit subsidizing protest on big boy playgrounds. I believe in the right to protest but not at a

taxpayer subsidized sporting event.” (Belson 2017)

Aside from these two subframes, the remaining subframes discerned from President Trump’s discourse received much less attention. The *law enforcement* frame dominated 14% of the total frames used, highlighting support for law enforcement and statements favoring the job they are doing. The *other* subframe held 13% and included broad left-wing negativity that did not fit elsewhere and compliments to President Trump that did not fall smoothly into the other subframes. With 10% of presence, the *threat/fear* frame included references to current or potential violence, mainly from Black Lives Matter protesters, specifically in one instance a quote was featured comparing Black Lives Matter protesters to the Ku Klux Klan. The *public safety* and the *racism* frames each held 6% of the total frames used, including speech favoring increased spending and assurance to protect people during rallies under the *public safety* frame and praise or favoritism towards political elites whom accept the ideals of racism or state that racism is not a current issue over those that criticize them under the *racism* frame. The *government responsiveness* frame (5%) included compliments towards President Trump’s connection with his supporter and equated violent acts from counterprotesters as justification for President Trump’s statements that both white nationalists and their counterprotesters were at fault for the violent rally in Charlottesville. The *unity* frame appeared the least (2%) and included quotes expressing favorability toward President Trump’s desire for unity and his denunciation of people who seek to attack people because of their religion, because of their gender, because of the color of their skin.

[Figure 3 approximately here]

Just as in my previous content analyses, tone was coded as positive, negative, mixed, or neutral/unidentifiable based on the articles sentiment toward the main group or individual of

discussion. Contrary to the mainly negative tone found in both the Black Lives Matter publications and President Trump's discourse, the tone of the newspaper articles toward their main group or individual of discussion was slightly more positive than it was negative, with 42% and 32%, respectively. Further, 15% of articles in my sample had a neutral or unidentifiable tone and 10% expressed a mixed tone. The main group of discussion throughout my sample was protesters, encompassing both white nationalist protesters and Black Lives Matter protesters or groups that favor their values, with other groups or individuals being speakers or authors invited to talk at universities, President Trump, citizens, and police.

These results importantly uncover how each elite source aims to give off their message and how the public receive the message most frequently through the news media. BLM, through their publications, strongly highlighted the unfair treatment of black Americans and racial conflict and provided a strong sense of unity among those who are presumptively being mistreated. However, their message translated a little differently when disseminated through the media. Their message of existing racism still came off strong, but negativity towards President Trump was found to portray their message the loudest. Conversely, President Trump aimed to emphasize his strong law and order ideals and adherence to patriotism in his discourse, and the media portrayed his message the same, highlighting these two subframes of his the most. These results show how each frame is delivered to the public most frequently and revealed how I needed to formulate the stimuli of my survey experiment to accurately depict each frame.

### **Survey Experiment**

Participants. To test my hypotheses that exposure to the racism frame should increase support for the prevalence of racial inequality in the United States (*H1*) and exposure to the law and order frame should decrease support on the prevalence of racial inequality in the United States (*H2*), I

conducted a survey experiment to see if the frames derived from BLM and President Trump affect opinion on racial inequality in the United States. My survey was administered to a sample of 179 college students from The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. To gather my sample, my survey was distributed to a number of professors across departments, whom then had to option to make the survey available to their classes and offer extra credit for its completion upon their discretion. Participation from the students was voluntary and subjects could drop out at any time during the survey, but, as mentioned, extra credit for completion was an option. The sample included students ranging from ages 18 to 45 at all stages of their college careers, with 51% first year, 16% second year, 19% third year, 13% fourth year, and 1% fifth year students. The sample was 15% male and 75% female.<sup>6</sup>

Procedure. Upon beginning the survey, each respondent was randomly assigned to either one of two experimental groups or to a control group. I combined information from three news articles from NBC News and the findings from my content analysis to create the two experimental stimuli assigned to the experimental groups, one stimulus representing BLM's *racism* frame and the other representing President Trump's *law and order* frame. The framed articles were each a paragraph long and centered around an altercation between a black man, Mr. DeAndre Harris, and a group of white men during the white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, resulting in Mr. Harris charged with felony assault. Each also mentioned President Trump's response to the rally as well. The *racism* frame described the altercation in a way that pinned the black man as not at fault yet punished for the entirety of the event. It addressed President Trump's response to the rally as ineffective and further stated that Black Lives Matter activists blamed President Trump for the violence against anti-racist protesters that took place during the rally. The *law and*

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<sup>6</sup> The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga has approved this research project # 17-168.

*order* frame portrayed the same altercation as the fault of multiple men who were all blamed and arrested for the violence, including Mr. Harris, and capitalized on President Trump's response condemning the violence and highlighting that all individuals from all sides involved in the violence would be punished, as he promised to restore law and order. I created a control stimulus as well. The control stimulus was a three-sentence summary of the event, stating the actors in the altercation and that President Trump responded to the rally, but contained no frame. The wording of all stimuli is located in Appendix D.

After respondents read their respective article, they were prompted to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire first measured my dependent variable, public opinion after recent exposure to a frame, by asking five questions related to the altercation all read about. The questions asked respondents to state, using a feeling thermometer ranging from zero to ten, how much of the blame for the altercation was due to Mr. Harris, how much they supported the felony assault charge Mr. Harris received for his involvement in the altercation, how effective President Trump's response was denouncing the rally, and how representative they felt that this event was of racism in America today. Also measuring my dependent variable, I asked participants, in two separate questions, how much of the violence that took place during the rally as a whole did they think blacks were responsible for creating and how much of the racial tension that the rally arose from did they think blacks were responsible for creating. These two questions were not measured using a feeling thermometer, but in a multiple-choice format with four choices: all of it, most of it, some of it, or none of it. Following the frame manipulation questions, I asked five open-ended political knowledge questions, then finished with demographic questions, including measures for party identification and political ideology, both on seven-point Likert scales, trust and accuracy

of news sources in general, rating as mostly liberal, mostly conservative, or neither of six national news networks, year in school, major, and age. The questionnaire is in Appendix E.

My measures have validity. Regarding face validity, it makes logical sense to use the results of my content analysis to create frame stimuli, then have respondents complete an opinion survey. This method has been used in several previous studies and it is reasonable for me to use this measure for my research. For criterion-related validity, the level of support or opposition for the presence of racial inequality in the United States is the external criteria that this measure relates to. The level of construct validity for my measures is not as high as I hoped, as will be discussed in my Finding and Analysis section, because my frame stimulus for the *law and order* frame did not accurately predict the outcome of opinions as less supportive and more negative towards blacks. Content validity exists because my measures cover the possible meanings of the concepts fit for my study. I could have asked a large amount of questions regarding the incident that respondents read about in their stimuli, but asking every possible question was not necessary. I asked two questions linking the black man to violence and crime, both common stereotypes, as well as one question about effectiveness of President Trump's actions, then three questions more broadly about racism, racial violence, and racial tension as a whole.

### **Findings and Analysis**

Due to mortality of respondents after beginning the survey,<sup>7</sup> 33.5% of respondents received the control stimulus, 36.3% received the *law and order* stimulus, and 30.2% received the *racism* stimulus. Randomization in all three groups worked, meaning the difference between the means of political knowledge, party identification, ideology, gender, age, and year in school in each of the three groups was not significant.

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<sup>7</sup> 24% of respondents started the survey but withdrew before completing.

The first part of my questionnaire measured for my dependent variable, public opinion after recent exposure to a frame. Recall that I hypothesized exposure to the *racism* frame sponsored by BLM to increase support for the existence of racism in the United States (*H1*) and exposure to the *law and order* frame presented from President Trump to decrease support for the existence of racism against black Americans in the United States (*H2*). A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of the frames on racial attitudes, showing significance for three of the six measurements. The effect of the frames was not significant on attitudes about the effectiveness of President Trump's response to the rally,  $F(2, 176)=.752, p=.473$ , how representative the fight between the black man and the group of white men and its outcome was to overall racism in America,  $F(2, 176)=1.184, p=.309$ , or how much of the overall violence that took place during the rally was created by blacks,  $F(2, 176)=.834, p=.436$ . However, the effect of the frames on attitudes about who to blame for the incident was significant,  $F(2, 176)=10.949, p=.000$ , as well as the effect on the support for the felony assault charge given to the black individual,  $F(2, 175)=15.155, p=.000$ , and the effect on attitudes about the amount of racial tension that the rally arose from was the responsibility of black Americans,  $F(2, 175)=3.303, p=.039$ .

For the question of how much blame should be given to the black man for the violent confrontation, the control group placed the white men and the black man at equal blame, with a mean score of 5.56 and a standard deviation of 2.41 on the scale of 0, the white men completely the blame, to 10, the black man completely the blame. As hypothesized, the respondents exposed to the *racism* frame placed the other men more at blame for the situation, with a mean score of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 2.24. However, those exposed to the *law and order* frame did so as well, with a mean score of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 2.55. I expected those exposed to

the *law and order* frame would place greater blame on the black man, but both frames actually caused a shift of blame away from the black man and towards the white men.

[Figure 4 approximately here].

Similar results were found with support for the black man's felony assault charge. The respondents in the control group were supportive of the felony assault charge, with a mean score of 6.15 and standard deviation of 2.76 on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicated strongly oppose and 10 indicated strongly support the felony assault charge. The *racism* frame, as expected, shifted opinion towards opposition for the charge, with a mean of 3.26 and standard deviation of 2.76. The *law and order* frame shifted opinion towards opposition as well, counter to what I expected, with a mean of 4.25 and standard deviation of 3.02. The *law and order* frame did not shift opinion as much as the *racism* frame, but the difference was still significant.

[Figure 5 approximately here]

Lastly, for the question of how much of the racial tension that the rally arose from was the responsibility of blacks, on the 4-point scale of 0 meaning not much at all, 1 meaning some of it, 2 meaning all of it, and 3 meaning all of it, the mean for the control group fell at .86 with a standard deviation of .73, leaning most toward only some of the responsibility attributed to blacks. When presented the two frames, the means of both groups fell more towards not much responsibility at all, with the mean of the *racism* frame being .59 with a standard deviation of .57 and the *law and order* frame being .58 with a standard deviation of .70.

[Figure 6 approximately here].

These findings mean that when presented with any frame, no matter if the frame portrayed the event as unjustly punishing a black man for the entirety of an act of racial violence, or if the frame portrayed the event as a law and order concern and those who acted violently

were deserving of punishment, opinion shifted sympathetically toward the black man. There are a few reasons that could have motivated these findings that hurt its generalizability. For one thing, the sample as a whole was very politically sophisticated, with 64.2% answering at least four of the five political knowledge questions on my survey correctly, and a quarter of my sample were Political Science majors. Additionally, my survey was sent to multiple American Government classes, which had covered priming, framing, and agenda setting. These two factors could have made my sample more attuned to current political events, specifically the white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, and to what was happening in the questionnaire. Although some studies have shown that political sophistication should not deter, but rather should make individuals more susceptible to framing effects, others have found that higher sophistication increases resistance to disconfirming information, and the empirical evidence on the immediate effects of political sophistication are still inconsistent (Chong and Druckman 2007a; Lecheler and Vreese 2011, 966). My findings could have been predicated by the high sophistication of the sample.

Additionally, the lack of effective framing from the *law and order* frame could have been motivated by President Trump's low popularity. Scholarship has noted that popularity may enhance a president's credibility with the public, thereby placing unpopular presidents' framing as either not affecting public opinion or actually repelling public opinion (qtd. in Cohen 1999, 58). The effects of popularity are modest, but evidence points to a conditioning effect of popularity on the ability of the president to lead public opinion on foreign and civil rights policy areas (Cohen 1999). Race being a civil rights issue, the explicit mention of President Trump along with his sponsored frame could have actually repelled opinion, explaining why the findings were counter to what I expected.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the effect of two competing frames on racial opinions in the United States. Specifically, how is public opinion of racial inequality in the United States affected when competing frames, one from President Trump and the other from the Black Lives Matter social movement, are present? Uncovering the answer to this question was twofold. I first discerned the most prominent framing of racial inequality in the United States used by each elite actor. Then I created two framed stimuli and a control stimulus, and administered a questionnaire, randomly giving respondents one of the three stimuli followed by a battery of questions about the stimulus, their political knowledge, and demographics. I found that the presence of both the BLM *racism* frame and President Trump's *law and order* frame caused opinions to shift, but in a way that supported the existence of racial inequality and presented less hostility towards black Americans.

Although my findings are important for the existing body of literature, external validity is lacking. My sample was very politically sophisticated, unlike the general public. If the sample was 179 adults whom did not attended college, the results could very well not be the same. Additionally, we know that presidents have a greater opportunity for effective framing when they are presented with new issues, when the public is more likely to not have predispositions about them (Druckman and Jacobs, 2015). If my study was replicated using a different, popular president and with a new issue, the results could as well be much different than what I found. For the same reasons my study lacks external validity, my results should be generalized with caution.

Addressing internal validity, my survey experiment has internal validity, but my content analyses rank lower in comparison. For my survey, respondents received the frame, then their opinion was assessed, satisfying temporal order. The change in the frame preceded the change in

opinion between the control group and the two groups that received frames. Covariation existed for the *racism* frame, as opinion shifted expected upon frame presentation, but was not present for the *law and order* frame because opinion shifted opposite of expected. Nonspuriousness was satisfied, as randomization into each group was effective and I was able to treat each group as if they were the same. As for my content analysis, I created the codebook and code sheet on my own and I was the only person coding the articles. I did not test the reliability of my materials with another coder, therefore I cannot fully state that internal validity is present.

However, my design can be replicated. Another researcher could create a codebook, code sheet, and survey experiment similar to mine. It is hard to predict whether or not another research would have similar findings. My study did have limitations. My sample was much more politically sophisticated than the national population. Additionally, I could not conduct a pre-test of prior racial opinions and did not include a question like such on my questionnaire. This would have been beneficial in gauging individual differences in opinion upon receiving a frame. However, I found that framing of racial inequality matters. BLM's frames are effective for favorably shaping public opinion, but so are frames that mention and portray President Trump's sentiments, and that is important for understanding the fate of racism in the United States.

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## **Appendix A: Code Book and Code Sheet for Black Lives Matter Content Analysis**

### **Code Book**

UNIT OF ANALYSIS: Blog posts or press releases written by and published by the following Black Lives Matter and Movement for Black Lives self-stated leaders and members of the united front: Black Youth Project 100, Organization for Black Struggle, Hands Up United, Black Alliance for Just Immigration, Project South, Southerners on New Ground, and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights within the time period of January 20, 2017 to September 30, 2017. Posts advertising for local events or addressing one specific city should not be included. Sections of posts discussing historical living conditions or events should not be coded, however, discussing their effects on modern-day life or behavior should be coded.

SOURCE: Check the name of the organization that the text is from:

1=Black Youth Project 100

2=Organization for Black Struggle

3=Hands Up United

4=Black Alliance for Just Immigration

5=Project South

6=Southerners on New Ground

7=Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

TITLE: Give the title of publication. If no title, leave it blank.

DATE: Give the date of publication. If no date, leave it blank.

LENGTH: Give the word count of each text.

TOPIC:

1=Policy discussion:

2=Specific Incident

3=Addressing Black people directly (letter format, using all “we, us” language):

4=Addressing white people directly

5=Freedom/Equality

6=Anniversary

7=Other:

IF POLICY:

1= Criminal Justice

2= Education

3= Immigration

4= Other

IF INCIDENT:

1=Shooting

2=Other

DISCOURSE/FRAMES: Count number of times the underlying meaning of these words are present.

1=Racism/racial inequality

Examples: Oppression and exploitations of Black people, mentions of slavery; we are the first to carry the slack and the last to receive the benefits; murder, rob and exploit black people at their will; intentionally defunded; underrepresented; systematic racism;

dehumanization and extermination of black people; anti-racism, racial equity; freedom; equality; social hierarchy; black liberation.

## 2=Within-group unity

Examples: banning together; we can help each other by supporting each other; collectivity; we need to take care of us as we always have; (addressing as) family; black love; we are an opposing force to the empire.

## 3=Sentiments about Trump/Administration

Examples: addressing trump or his administration; leader; newfound king; orange Muppet, Congress; law and order system; Trump is largely offensive to many oppressed groups; they try to convince us that our lives are not worth fighting for; spree of stupidity.

## 4=Law enforcement

Examples: talk of unfair treatment from the police; discussing police, mass criminalization, or imprisonment; violence toward police.

## 5=Discussion of white Americans

Examples: calling things “white culture”; white supremacy; frustration towards white people; culture still exalts white supremacy: superiority issues.

## 6=Discussion of black Americans

Examples: brave and brilliant; black people are not responsible solely for liberation of ourselves; just being black; viewed as monsters; lives and livelihood depend upon ability to wage an effective struggle for civil and human rights; sanctity of black life.

## 7=Other:

TONE: tone toward other groups

1=positive

0=mixed

-1=negative

-2=neutral/unidentifiable

### Code Sheet

SOURCE

- Black Youth Project 100
- Organization for Black Struggle
- Hands Up United
- Black Alliance for Just Immigration
- Project South
- Southerners on New Ground
- Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

TITLE

DATE

LENGTH

TOPIC

- Policy Discussion
- Incident
- Addressing Black Americans
- Addressing White Americans

Freedom/Equality

Anniversary

Other

IF POLICY

Criminal Justice

Education

Immigration

Other

IF INCIDENT

Police Shooting

Other

DISCOURSE/FRAME

Racism

Within-Group Unity

Trump Administration

Law Enforcement

White Americans

Black Americans

Other:

TONE

Positive

Mixed

Negative

Neutral/Unidentifiable

## Appendix B: Code Book and Code Sheet for President Trump Content Analysis

### Code Book

UNIT OF ANALYSIS: Transcripts that include one of the four words “violence,” “law enforcement,” “protest,” or “oppression” from weekly address, press briefings, speeches and remarks from President Trump during the time period of January 20, 2017 (Inauguration Day) until September 30, 2017, retrieved online from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>.

TITLE: give the title.

DATE: give the date.

LENGTH: give the word count.

AUDIENCE:

1=General public

2=Specific State (if speaking at a rally or something)

4=Addressing Congress

5=Other:

SEARCH WORD:

1=violence

2=law enforcement

3=protest

4=oppression

CONTEXT OF WORD:

## DISCOURSE/FRAME:

## 1=Unity

Examples: any phrase implying bonding together; “we will bridge our divisions, heal our wounds, and unify our country”; “if we work together, there is nothing we cannot achieve”; unite; bring us together; “all people who cherish life must unite in finding, exposing, and removing these killers and extremists and, yes, losers.”

## 2=Law enforcement

Examples: amazing law enforcement; most important mission is the law enforcement mission; officers have not been allowed to do their jobs properly; (addressing the ICE and Border Patrol officers) you guys are about to be very busy doing your jobs the way you want to do them; must work with, not against, the people of law enforcement; restore safety by supporting law enforcement; the American people love you [law enforcement], I want you to know that patriotic Americans of all backgrounds truly support and love our police; cops protect people because they love people; every drop of blood spilled from our heroes in blue is a wound inflicted upon the whole country; we are living through an era in which our police have been subject to unfair defamation and vilification; attacks on our police officers are a stain on the fabric of our society.

## 3=Racism

Examples: racist violence; bigotry; racism is evil; we are reminded of our nation’s path toward civil rights and the work that still remains to be done; we condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry, and violence, phrases denying racism; discussion of the alt-right groups; “race issues have gotten better or the

same since I took office”, referring to alt-left as trouble makers and stating there are “fine people” on the alt-right/neo-Nazi side.

#### 4=Law and order

Examples: importance of laws and keeping the peace; law abiding citizens; restore the rule of law of the United States; [laws] will be enforced and enforced strongly; “I am asking all of you to enforce the laws”; used to reward those who broke the law; the world is in trouble, but we are going to get it straightened out; current state is lawless chaos; our liberty depends on the rule of law; talking about the Constitution or amendments; reduce violent crime; “we are going to get the bad ones out: the criminals, drug dealers, gang members, and cartel leaders.”

#### 5=Patriotism

Examples: compliments to America/American citizens, mentions of freedom, I want to thank the American people, all around the world amazing people, American is a nation of believers, a free country, we will flourish as long as our liberty flourishes, one beautiful nation, free to follow their dreams, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, renewal of the American spirit, set free the dreams of the people, I have called this model—the model that you've been watching, the model that's created so much value, the model of bringing back jobs and bringing back industry—I called it the American model, keep out those who have tried to pull us apart (baseball one), only making stuff in this country, people are in charge of their own destiny, we are ruled by our citizens here in America, return power to the people,

#### 6=Government Responsiveness

Examples: any phrase alluding to the government serving the American people; “We are here to work for you-and only for you-the American People”; “I will deliver for you, the American people like you’ve never seen before”; we hear you, we see you, you will never be ignored again; “I promise as President dignity and equality for everyone”; asking God for the wisdom to serve the public; “I have no higher duty than to protect the lives of the American people”; keeping promises; fairness; fighting for every American who has been left behind.

#### 7=Public Safety and Security

Examples: want safe communities for everyone, without fear or violence; restore safety in American; security and protection; starting today we will improve the safety in our country; when it comes to public safety, there is no place for politics; keeping America safe means rebuilding our defenses; investing in more military; stop the human trafficking, drugs, the wrong people from coming to our country; immigration security is national security; my highest duty as president is to keep America safe.

#### 8= Threat/Fear

Examples: acts of violence and assaults on our democracy; comparing the United States to a third-world country; catastrophic price increases if nothing is done; discussing ISIS murders; when you ban guns, only the criminals will be armed; drugs are poisoning our youth.

#### 9=Other:

TONE

1=Positive

-1=Negative

2=Mixed

0=Neutral/Unidentifiable

### Code Sheet

TITLE

DATE

LENGTH

AUDIENCE

General Public

Specific State

Congress

Other

SEARCH WORD

Violence

Law Enforcement

Protest

Oppression

CONTEXT OF SEARCH WORD

DISCOURSE/FRAME

Unity

Law Enforcement

Racism

Law and Order

Patriotism

Public Safety and Security

Government Responsiveness

Threat/Fear

Other:

TONE

Positive

Mixed

Negative

Neutral/Unidentifiable

## Appendix C: Codebook and Code Sheet for Newspaper Content Analysis

### Code Book

**UNIT OF ANALYSIS:** Newspaper articles published by the New York Times, Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal between January 20, 2017 and September 30, 2017 in all sections, excluding Opinion, Op-Ed, Editorials, Book Reviews, Style/Art categories, and Briefings, retrieved from Lexis Nexis and ProQuest, filtered using the searches “Black Lives Matter > Race > Trump,” “All Lives Matter,” “Blue Lives Matter,” “Trump > Police Brutality,” and “Trump > Black Lives Matter > Protest.”

**SOURCE:** Check the box that marks the source of the article.

- Washington Post
- New York Times
- Wall Street Journal

**TITLE:** Type the full title of the article.

**DATE:** Type the date of the article.

**LENGTH:** State the length in word count of the article.

**SEARCH:** Check the box of the search used to locate the article being coded. “>” indicates that search word was used within the search of the word before.

- All Lives Matter
- Black Lives Matter > Race > Trump
- Blue Lives Matter
- Trump > Black Lives Matter > Protest
- Trump > Police Brutality

**FRAME:** Most articles are about a certain event, person, or group of people/organization and the frame is found by looking at how the event, person, or group of people/organization is being portrayed. Read the article, marking the number of times each of the frames listed under “IF BLM” and “IF TRUMP” is used throughout the article, then decide the overall framing of the article based on the number of times the categories of each frame were used. If the article isn’t about race, protest, or anything pertaining to the topic of study, code as No frame/Neutral and do not mark anything in the following section.

- Black Lives Matter:
- Trump:
- No frame/Neutral

**IF BLM:**

Racism/racial inequality:

Within-group unity:

Trump negativity:

Law Enforcement:

White Americans:

Black Americans:

Other: (Type other frame here)

IF TRUMP:

Racism

Unity:

Law and Order:

Law Enforcement

Patriotism

Government Responsiveness

Public Safety and Security

Threat/Fear

Other: ( Type other frame here)

TONE: Check the box that represents the tone toward the main group of discussion.

- Positive  
 Mixed  
 Negative  
 Neutral/Unidentifiable

GROUP OF DISCUSSION: State the main group of discussion throughout the article.

### Code Sheet

SOURCE

- Washington Post  
 New York Times  
 Wall Street Journal

TITLE

DATE

LENGTH

## SEARCH:

- All Lives Matter
- Black Lives Matter > Race > Trump
- Blue Lives Matter
- Trump > Black Lives Matter > Protest
- Trump > Police Brutality

## FRAME

- Black Lives Matter
- Trump
- No Frame/Neutral

## IF BLM:

Racism/racial inequality  
 Within-group unity  
 Trump negativity  
 Law Enforcement  
 White Americans  
 Black Americans  
 Other frame:

## IF TRUMP:

Racism  
 Unity  
 Law and order  
 Law enforcement  
 Patriotism  
 Government Responsiveness  
 Public Safety and Security  
 Threat/Fear  
 Other frame:

## TONE

- Positive
- Mixed
- Negative
- Neutral/Unidentifiable

## GROUP OF DISCUSSION:

## Appendix D: Wording of Stimuli

### *Law and Order Frame*



#### **Charlottesville White Nationalist Rally Violence Prompts State of Emergency**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia: White nationalists and counter-protesters clashed violently in Charlottesville, Virginia, and a car plowed into a group described as "anti-racist" demonstrators, killing one person and injuring 19 others, authorities and witnesses said. There were several cases of violence and arrest, one case being Mr. DeAndre Harris. Harris, a 20-year-old African American man, was involved in an attack by a group of white men in Charlottesville rally and was charged with felony assault on Tuesday. The last that many people saw of Harris was images of blood pouring from his face and scalp as he stumbled from the scene of the brawl. But after months of remaining relatively incognito, as his supporters continue to push for the arrest of the other white men involved in his attack, Harris became one of the men charged with a crime. A white man involved in the brawl that day said he was injured by Harris, and authorities drew up an arrest warrant. When the White House was asked to clarify the remarks on the events taken place in Charlottesville, an official said, "The president was condemning hatred, bigotry and violence from all sources and all sides. There was violence between protesters and counter protesters today." Once the violence had mostly come to an end, President Donald Trump denounced the clashes, stating "Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held accountable." "As a candidate, I promised to restore law and order to our country, and our federal law enforcement agencies are following through on that pledge," Trump added. "In times such as these,

America has always shown its true character: responding to hate with love, division with unity, and violence with an unwavering resolve for justice.”

### ***Racism Frame***



#### **Man Attacked in Charlottesville Charged with Assault in Unexpected Turn**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia: White nationalists and counter-protesters clashed violently in Charlottesville, Virginia, and a car plowed into a group described as "anti-racist" demonstrators, killing one person and injuring 19 others, authorities and witnesses said. There were several cases of violence and arrest, one case being Mr. DeAndre Harris. Harris, a 20-year-old African American man, was attacked and brutally beaten by a group of white men in Charlottesville rally and was charged with felony assault on Tuesday. The last that many people saw of Harris was images of blood pouring from his face and scalp as he stumbled from the scene of the brutal beating. But after months of remaining relatively incognito, as his supporters continue to push for the arrest of the other white men involved in his attack, Harris became one of the men charged with a crime. A white man involved in the brawl that day said he was injured by Harris, and authorities drew up an arrest warrant. Activists in the Black Lives Matter movement blamed President Trump for the deadly violence against anti-racist protesters that resulted from the rally. Although Trump has denounced the violence inflicted by white supremacists, his failure to namecheck white supremacy as the culprit is an insufficient response, activists and leaders stated. “While the president significantly contributes to the lack of safety that black folks experience and are to blame for incredible harms inflicted on communities of color, they are symptoms of white supremacy and racism,

which are far greater enemies than just one administration,” the BLM Network said in a statement. “We stand with the people of Charlottesville who are fighting for a world in which the inherent justice of all people is honored.”

### **Control Stimulus**



### **Charlottesville Rally Violence: At Least One Killed, Several Injured**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia: White nationalists and counter-protesters clashed violently in Charlottesville, Virginia, and a car plowed into a group of demonstrators, killing one person and injuring 19 others, authorities and witnesses said. There were several cases of violence and arrest, one case being an attack involving Mr. Deandre Harris and group of men resulting in Harris being charged with felony assault on Tuesday. Following the events, President Trump nationally addressed the issue.

## Appendix E: Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions about the news article that you read.

1. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means Mr. Harris is completely the blame for the violent confrontation and 0 means the other white men are completely the blame for the violent confrontation, who would you consider is to blame for the violent confrontation?
  0. The other men are completely the blame
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  5. Equally the blame
  - 6.
  - 7.
  - 8.
  - 9.
  10. Mr. Harris is completely the blame
2. On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means you strongly support Mr. Harris' felony assault charge for his involvement in the events that took place in Charlottesville and 0 means you strongly oppose Mr. Harris' felony assault charge for his involvement in the events that took place in Charlottesville, how would you rate Mr. Harris' felony assault charge using this scale?
  0. Strongly Support
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  5. Neither Support nor Oppose

6.

7.

8.

9.

10. Strongly Oppose

3. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means that President Trump's response to the events taken place in Charlottesville was extremely effective and 0 means that President Trump's response to the events taken place in Charlottesville was extremely ineffective, where would you rate President Trump's response on this scale?

0. Strongly Ineffective

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. Neither Effective or Ineffective

6.

7.

8.

9.

10. Strongly Effective

4. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 means this event is strongly representative and 1 means this event is strongly unrepresentative, how representative of current racism in the United States would you rate this event?

0. Strongly Unrepresentative

1.

2.

- 3.
  - 4.
  5. Neither Representative or Unrepresentative
  - 6.
  - 7.
  - 8.
  - 9.
  10. Strongly Representative
5. This article highlights just one example of the many violent confrontations taken place during the rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Thinking broadly about the rally as a whole, how much of the violence that took place do you think blacks are responsible for creating?
1. All of it
  2. Most of it
  3. Some of it
  4. Not much at all
6. Again, thinking about the rally in Charlottesville as a whole, how of the racial tension that the rally arose from do you think blacks are responsible for creating?
1. All of it
  2. Most of it
  3. Some of it
  4. Not much at all

I would like to ask you a few questions about the government in Washington. Many people are too busy to keep up with these topics, so if you don't know the answer, just skip the question.

7. How many years are there in one full term of office for a United States Senator?

8. What political office does Mike Pence hold?
  
9. Which political party currently has the most member in the U.S. House of Representatives?
  
10. How many times can an individual be elected President of the United States under current laws?
  
11. Who is the current Speaker of the House?

I am going to end with a few questions about yourself.

12. Do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent, using the following scale?
  1. Strong Democrat
  2. Weak Democrat
  3. Independent, leaning towards Democrat
  4. Independent
  5. Independent, leading towards Republican
  6. Weak Republican
  7. Strong Republican
  8. Don't Know
  
13. In terms of ideology, do you think of yourself as liberal, moderate, or conservative? Where would you place yourself on the following scale?
  1. Extremely Liberal
  2. Liberal
  3. Somewhat Liberal

4. Moderate
  5. Somewhat Conservative
  6. Conservative
  7. Extremely Conservative
  8. Don't Know
14. How much of the time do you think you can trust news sources to report the news fairly?
1. Just about always
  2. Most of the time
  3. Only some of the time
  4. Almost never
  5. Do not know
15. In general, do you think the national news programs such as ABC, NBC, and CBS gets the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?
1. Gets the facts straight
  2. Often inaccurate
  3. Do not know
16. For each news source, please indicate if you think each is mostly liberal, mostly conservative, or neither in particular.

	Mostly Liberal	Neither	Mostly Conservative
NBC News			
ABC News			
CBS News			
CNN News			
Fox News			
MSNBC News			

17. What year are you in school?

18. What is your major?

19. In what year were you born?

20. Please indicate your gender

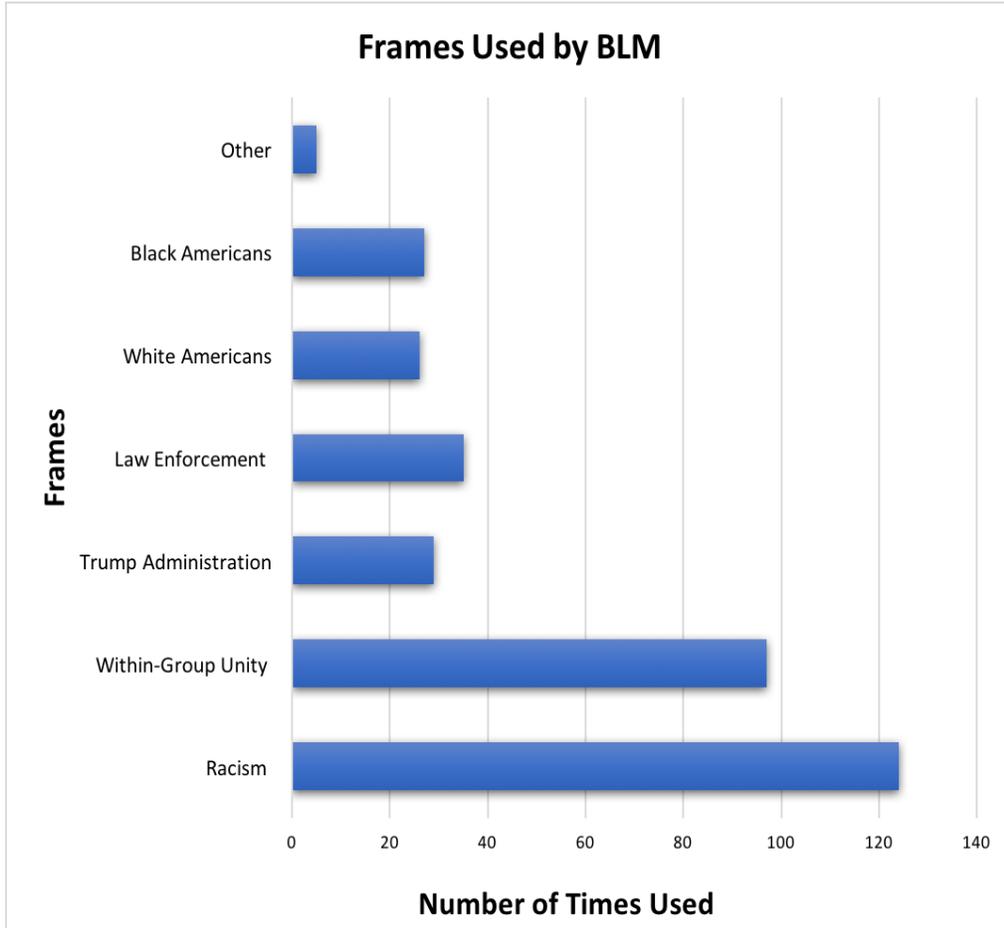
1. Male

2. Female

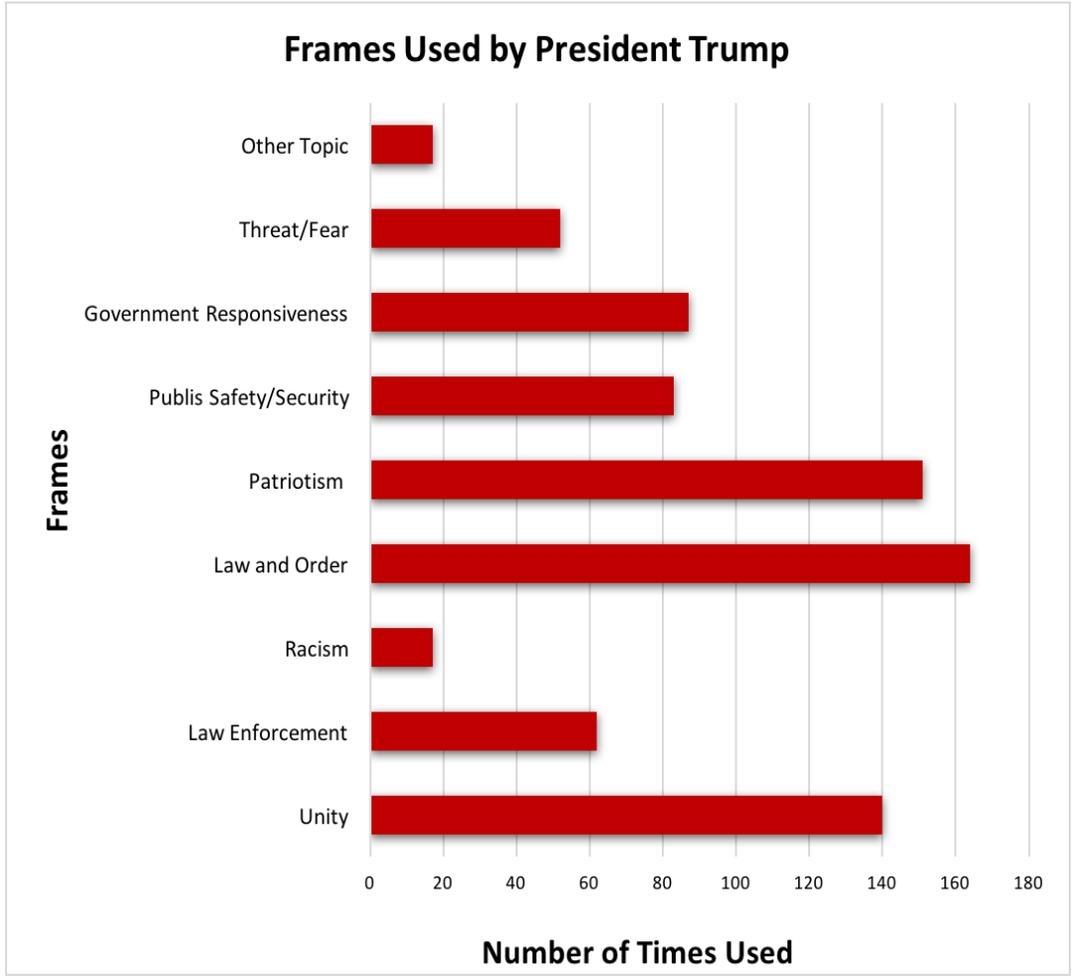
21. If you are taking this survey for extra credit, please state whose class you are in.

22. What is your UTC ID? This will be used in no way other than to indicate that you have completed the survey so you can receive extra credit.

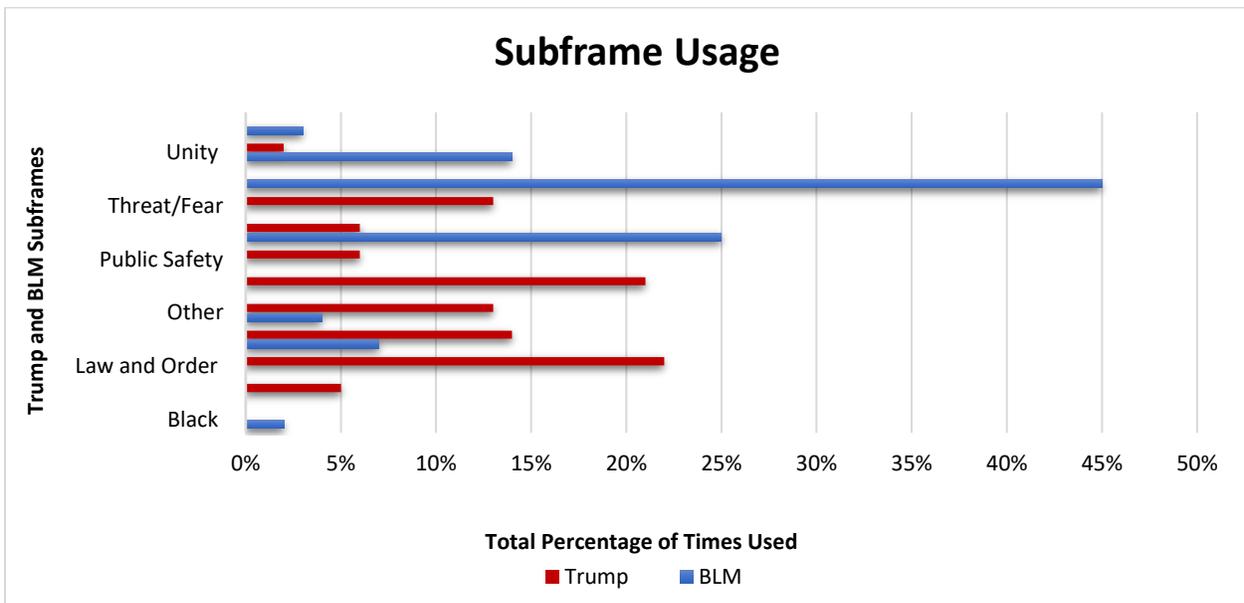
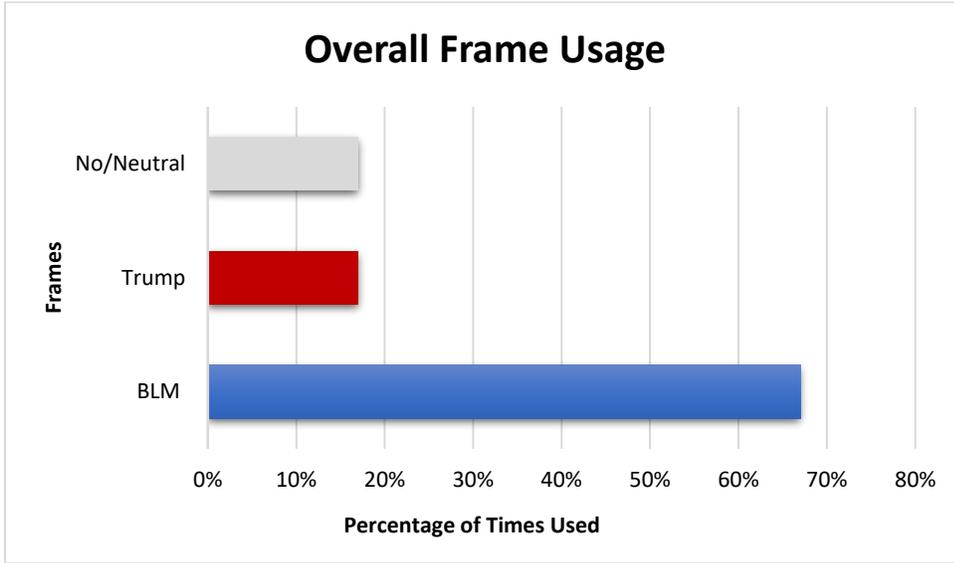
**Figure 1:** Frames Used by Black Lives Matter



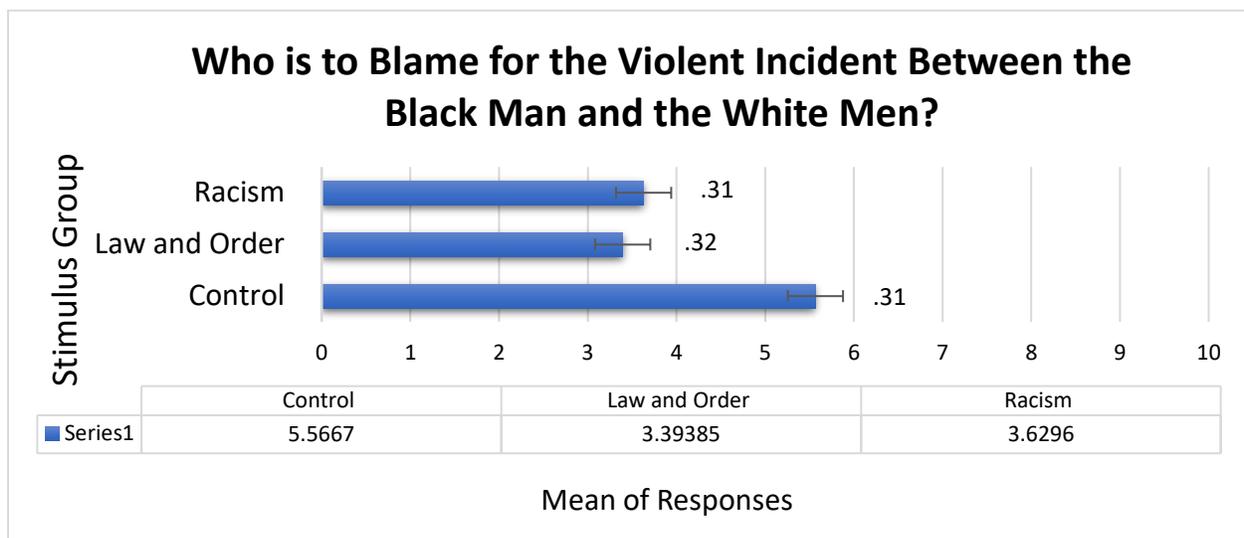
**Figure 2:** Frames Used by President Trump



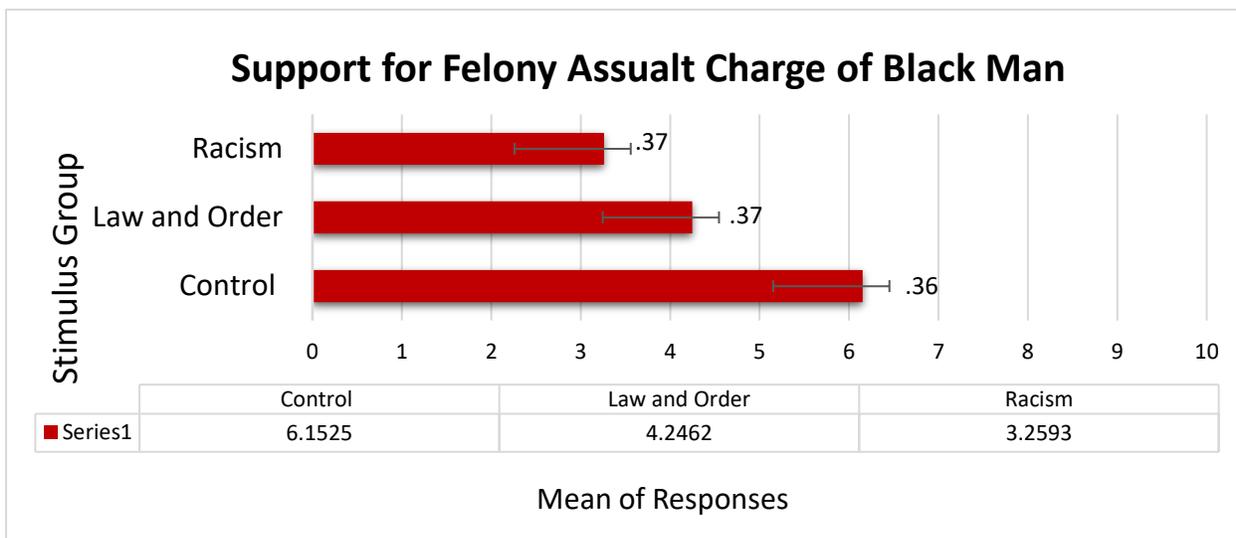
**Figure 3: Frames Used in the Newspaper Content Analysis**



**Figure 4:** Survey Responses to the Question “Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means Mr. Harris is completely the blame for the violent confrontation and 0 means the other white men are completely the blame for the violent confrontation, who would you consider is to blame for the violent confrontation?”



**Figure 5:** Survey Responses to the Question “On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means you strongly support Mr. Harris’ felony assault charge for his involvement in the events that took place in Charlottesville and 0 means you strongly oppose Mr. Harris’ felony assault charge for his involvement in the events that took place in Charlottesville, how would you rate Mr. Harris’ felony assault charge using this scale?”



**Figure 6:** Survey Responses to the Question “Again, thinking about the rally in Charlottesville as a whole, how of the racial tension that the rally arose from do you think blacks are responsible for creating?”

