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**Framing Differences Between Local and National Media in the Trayvon Martin Case**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the difference in media representations in local and national news by examining the 2012 Trayvon Martin case between the parameters of February 26, 2012- April 12, 2012. In this case, an African American adolescent was shot and killed in Sanford, Florida, by a neighborhood watch coordinator by the name of George Zimmerman. Through a mix method approach, the research used content and discourse analysis as tools to analyze and gather data from the *New York Times* and *Orlando Sentinel* in the coverage of the case. Content analysis was used to give an overview of the data set, while discourse analysis helped describe the interpreted meanings that were constructed within the articles' text to shed light on media framing. To further examine the research question, the study also analyzed if there was a difference in the *Orlando Sentinel's* coverage before and after Trayvon Martin case became national news. The findings discovered that the *New York Times* emphasizes race more than the *Orlando Sentinel*. Further analysis showed that once the *New York Times* picked up the coverage on the Trayvon Martin case on March 16, 2012, there was a difference in the *Orlando Sentinel's* headlines and language used within their article. Additionally, the findings revealed that the news used its 'power' to subtly reinforce and maintain longstanding racialized stereotypes of Blacks with the use of media framing. The Trayvon Martin case gave me the opportunity to examine the complexity and dynamics of the creation of racialized stereotypes and how the 'powerful' role news plays in reinforcing, perpetuating, and creating discourses.

## Table of Contents

### **Abstract**

### **List of Figures**

<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	
2.1 News Values	5
2.2 Trayvon Martin	5
2.3 Race and News	10
2.4 Discourse	12
2.5 Crime Reporting.	13
2.6 Theory: Framing Theory	15
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>	
3.1 Method	19
3.2 Procedures	22
<b>Chapter 4: Findings/ Discussion</b>	
4.1 Content Analysis Findings/Discussion	29
4.2 Discourse Analysis Findings/Discussion	32
4.3 <i>Orlando Sentinel</i> , “George Zimmerman’s father My son is not racist, did not confront Trayvon Martin” by Rene Stutzman, March 16, 2012	37
4.4 <i>Orlando Times</i> “Trayvon Martin’s father: Family ‘betrayed’ by Sanford Police”	

Bianca Prieto, March 16, 2012	39
4.5 <i>The New York Times</i> “Justice Department Investigation Is Sought in Florida Teenager’s Shooting Death” by Lizette Alvarez, March 16, 2012	42
4.6 <i>The New Times</i> “911 Calls Add Detail to Debate Over Florida Killing” by Lizette Alvarez, March 17, 2012	44
4.7 Discussion on Cutcher’s Quotes	
4.9 Limitations/Future Research	46
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusion</b>	<b>50</b>
5.1 Role of Researcher	54
<b>References</b>	
Primary Sources	56
Secondary Sources	56
<b>Appendix</b>	
Guided questions used to identify frames in four selected articles	65

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1:** *Criteria used to select the four articles from both Orlando Sentinel and New York Times to analyzed in the discourse analysis* **26**
- Figure 2** *Content analysis (Phase 1) results of sixty-seven articles analyzing the racial descriptors of Martin and Zimmerman from the Orlando Sentinel (N=47) and the New York Times (N=20) between February 26,2012-April 12, 2012* **30**
- Figure 3** *Analysis of results comparing the Orlando Sentinel’s racial descriptors before and after The New York Times picked up coverage on the Trayvon Martin case (March 16, 2012)* **31**
- Figure 4** *List of Orlando Sentinels’ and New York Times’ dominant frames within the four articles analyzed during the discourse analysis (Phase 2).* **35**
- Figure 5** *Interviewees’ frames in “George Zimmerman’s father My son is not racist, did not confront Trayvon Martin” by Rene Stutzman, March 16, 2012* **37**
- Figure 6** *Interviewees’ frames identified in “Trayvon Martin’s father: Family ‘betrayed’ by Sanford Police” by Bianca Prieto, March 16, 2012* **39**
- Figure 7** *Interviewees’ frames in Alvarez (2012a)* **41**
- Figure 8** *Interviewees’ frames in Alvarez (2012b)* **44**
- Figure 9** *Mary Cutcher’s different frames identified and its effect of the larger frame in the three articles from both Orlando Sentinel and New York Times* **47**

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

I grew up in South Florida where hearing about the loss of young African Americans has become a norm. Since these tragedies repeatedly occur, I started to become numb to them until one affected me personally. When I lost a dear friend to gun violence in the Summer of 2016. My 23-year-old friend Alex lost her life when she was shot by random gunfire while attending a graduation party in Miami. The shooter remains unidentified. This tragic incident appeared on every news channel and media outlet for several weeks and stirred up a variety of emotions, perspectives, and theories on the event within the community.

When the news first broke out, the media refrained from sharing what I believed was vital information including her name, age, race, and where she was from. The gaps in the coverage led the public to create theories about why the incident occurred. Some theories included that she was involved in gang-related activities, or that she was a frequent party animal since she belonged to a sorority. Alex was a top ranked student who had recently graduated from nursing school and was actively involved in her community. Instead of focusing the public's attention on efforts to find the shooter, the news used distractors to try to justify why Alex was gunned down. What is worse is that there have been several similar incidents in the news, such as the cases of Michael Brown, Jordan Davis, Renisha McBride, John Crawford and Eric Garner in the last few years, where an African American adolescent who lost his or her life is portrayed negatively in the media (Lee, 2016; Weaver, 2016).

Of these incidents, one of the most well-known cases pertains to the death of Trayvon Martin. Seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin was killed on February 26, 2012, in Sanford, Florida, by George Zimmerman. That day Martin, wearing a gray hoodie, visited a local

convenience store to purchase a bag of Skittles and iced tea. On his way back, Trayvon was confronted by Zimmerman, then twenty-eight years old, who was serving as a neighborhood watch officer for the townhouse community. Zimmerman followed Martin in his truck and called 911. The operator told him to keep his distance from Martin and that police would be sent. Zimmerman continued to follow Martin; after losing track of Martin, Zimmerman decided to get out of his truck and to look for Martin on foot. At this point, an altercation occurred between Martin and Zimmerman that ended with Martin losing his life. Zimmerman was charged with second-degree murder but was found not guilty on all counts (Botelho, 2012). Although Martin was killed in Sanford, Florida, while he visited his dad, he formerly resided in Miami Gardens, thirty minutes from where I lived. His death created upheaval and increased racial division within the South Florida community.

Trayvon Martin's case brings to light the racial attitudes and injustice that happen in America daily (Hodges, 2015). The renowned American civil rights leader Malcolm X once said, "The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that is power. Because they control the minds of the masses" (Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 22). African Americans have struggled to have a representation of their experiences, stories, and lives in the media that they feel is accurate. With the progression of technology, media now have a stronger presence (Fitzgerald, 2014). Racism and misrepresentations become harder to combat because as Hall (2013) states, the media reinforces racial beliefs and stereotypes.

Exploring how the media portrayed Trayvon Martin, will help to reveal the ways in which the news has reinforced racial stereotypes of African Americans. Through this study, I

examine the differences and similarities pertaining to how the media has framed the Trayvon Martin case. I compare articles from the *Orlando Sentinel* and *The New York Times*. I bounded the study to articles that were released between the period of February 26, when the incident occurred, and April 12, when Zimmerman first appeared in court. This study was conducted to uncover the differences and similarities of the framing of race in local and national news. Local news is defined as news that is more connected to its community and their interest, whereas national news is defined as news that is focused on events that affect the country on a nationwide basis (Kaniss, 1991; Archetti, 2010). Though studies (Graeff, Stampeck and Zuckerman, 2014; Benash, 2014) have explored the ways that various publications differ in framing news, studies have yet to compare differences between local and national news in respect with the Trayvon Martin case. It will also give insight into how these two publications represent African Americans and those racialized as White. This study sought to answer the following questions:

**Research question: What terms did local and national news use to designate Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman's race during the coverage of Trayvon Martin case?**

**Sub-question: What are the differences and similarities between local and national news (specifically the *Orlando Sentinel* and *New York Times*)?**

**Sub-question: Is there a difference in the *Orlando Sentinel's* coverage before and after Trayvon Martin case became national news and if so, what is it?**

It is important to investigate the differences and similarities between local and national news because these publications have different audiences, different levels of impact, and operate within different realms, yet they both attest to providing their readers with trustworthy news and

the top headlines (The New York Times Co, 2017; Tribune Media, 2016). Thus, the identification of the differences and similarities between local and national news has yet to be taken up in research in regards of the Trayvon Martin case. My research questions may also reveal if the *New York Times* frames the Martin case to match national discourses. As well, If the *Orlando Sentinel* differs in its framing of this case, this study may indicate whether the *Orlando Sentinel* conforms its framing to match national news after national news has covered the case.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 News Values

‘News’ is defined as a “product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories” (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, & Roberts, 2013, p. 54). As MacDougall puts it:

At any given moment billions of simultaneous events occur throughout the world...All of these occurrences are potentially news. They do not become so until some purveyor of news gives an account of them. The news, in other words, is the account of the event, not something intrinsic in the event itself. (MacDougall as cited in Hall et al., 2013, p. 54)

Gaye Tuchman (1979) describes news as not only reflecting reality but helping to create it. News is also defined by Tuchman (1979) as a timely, noteworthy information about a recent incident, important finding, notable opinion, or upcoming events. Tuchman (1979) also describes news as “part of the very process through which the world is constructed and social meanings created” (p. 184). In addition, Tuchman (1979) also writes “that it is the meaning within the news that contributes to perpetually defining and redefining, constituting and reconstituting social phenomena” (p. 15). According to Hall et al. (2013), the media defines to the audience what significant events are taking place while offering an interpretation on how they want the audience to understand these events. Tuchman (1979) also describes news as a “depletable consumer product that must be made fresh daily” (pp. 82-83) with the main ingredients being facts.

The facts that are the ingredients of news are nothing but pertinent information gathered by professionally validated methods specifying the relationships between what is known

and how it is known...In news, verification of facts is both a political and a professional accomplishment. (Tuchman, 1979, p. 82-83)

However, according to Hall et al. (2013), “journalists will tend to play up the extraordinary, dramatic, tragic, etc. elements in a story in order to enhance its newsworthiness” (pp. 57-58). Due to this fact, news is a representation of a created reality of the world (Schudson, 2011), where people are making decisions in what to select as news and how to present it. This does not imply that the primary factor in distortion or framing is personal. Schudson (2011) states, rather than personally motivated, distortions “are socially organized... [and] built into the structures and routines of news gathering” (Schudson, 2011, p. 26).

As defined by Hall et. al. (2013), “news values provide the criteria in the routine practices of journalism which enable journalists, editors, and newsmen to decide routinely and regularly which stories are ‘newsworthy’ and which are not” (p. 57). Archetti (2010) refers to news values in relation to the news-making process, particularly in relation to how journalist can select what they consider as ‘newsworthy’ content from amongst the countless events that are happening in the world, to fill readers’ daily news gap (Archetti, 2010). Some factors that make news become newsworthy is its uniqueness, significance, prominence or its human-interest appeal (Hall et al., 2013). Hall et al. (2013) continue:

Things are newsworthy because they represent the changefulness, the unpredictability and the conflictual nature of the world. But such events cannot be allowed to remain in the limbo of the ‘random’- they must be brought within the horizon of the ‘meaningful.’ This bringing of events within the realm of meaning means, in essence, referring usual and unexpected events to the ‘maps of meaning’ which already form the basis of our cultural knowledge, into which the social world is already ‘mapped’. (p. 57)

Hall et al. (2013) also claim that that media respond to a new description of the situation, rather than a set of facts, which thus results in the creation of a social reality of crime. Likewise, exemplars are also used by journalist as a method to present events or personify an issue (Johnson-Cartee, 2004). Johnson-Cartee (2004) defines exemplars as “dramatized accounts on real events...which are then used to represent abstract forces, social issues, or entities” (p. 169). Exemplars, are considered to be a vital component in the construction of news stories (Johnson-Cartee, 2004).

Within this study, I examine the similarities and differences between local and national news during the Trayvon Martin case. Local news is more connected to its community and their interests. As Kaniss (1991) states, the “primary concern of local news is often different from that of national news” (p. 2). Local news plays a key role in determining how issues are cast before the local population, and how a city or region understands its problems, opportunities, and sense of local identity (Kaniss, 1991). Entman argues that local refers to people rather than places. (Goodrum, Godo, & Hayter, 2011). In other words, certain ethnic groups may be excluded from newspaper conception of their local area (Goodrum et al, 2011), whereas the aim of national news is to focus on events that affect the country on a nationwide basis rather than locally (Archetti, 2010). When differentiating local and national, the Pew Research Center (1998) states that “local news tends to rely on traditional straight news accounts and try to explain how things work more. National news is more interpretive and tries to put news into a larger perspective” (p. 1). According to Hall et al., the main aspect that distinguishes local journalism from national is the proximity of the local journalist to the community (Hall et al., 2013). Jenkins (2015) defines proximity as the “geographical ‘nearness’ of an event” (p. 62). Jenkins (2015) continues and claims that news that occurs within the geographical proximity of the news organization is more

likely get reported over news outside the news organization's proximity. In some occurrence, proximity might affect the positive, negative, or neutral portrayal of actors within news, especially if the new organization has relations or associated with the actors their reporting on (Neveu, 2002). Additionally, Gilliam (2002) states that the neighborhoods racial context sometimes influence the exposure to racialized stereotypes in news. Moreover, according to Gans (2004) and Kaniss (1991) national news organization tend to have larger markets with an audience that is more broad and diversified. In contrast, local news has a more restricted audience based on the area's demographic (Gans, 2004; Kaniss, 1991). The *Orlando Sentinel* circulation reaches the central Florida region, specifically targeting Seminole, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Volusia, Marion, Sumter, Flagler, and Brevard counties (The Tribune Media, 2016). Whereas the *New York Times* circulation reaches the metropolitan regions of the whole United States (New York Times Co, 2017). Additionally, in local news proximity to the new sources or events may affect the way journalists report news (Bulter & Gurun, 2012). For example, the reporter's loyalty or duty to the local community and reader places a different emphasis on the approach to the source and story and the way the story is used when published (Pollock, 2013). Furthermore, there is often a more thoughtful approach to local news, one that has a lesser attempt to sensationalize and a greater attempt to provide balance to varying sides of a story (Pollock, 2013). For these reasons, the differences and similarities between local and national news coverage of the Trayvon Martin Case are studied to better understand the variety of ways the media can frame one event.

## **2.2 Case Study: Trayvon Martin**

The news coverage of Trayvon Martin is a prime case to study for many reasons. The case sparked the interest of the American media to the extent that it became the top media story

during 2012 (Anderson, 2013). According to Pew Research Center, the Trayvon Martin case was one of the highest covered news stories with a racial component in the last seven years (Anderson, 2013). Most existing studies of the Trayvon Martin case have concentrated on examining media coverage of race and the impact of stereotypes on news content. For instance, a recent study conducted a content analysis to explore framing and media types in online messages by civil rights organizations during the Trayvon Martin case to observe differences (Brown, 2016). The findings revealed that the organizations could have utilized multimedia more to support activism (Brown, 2016). Graeff, Stampeck and Zuckerman (2014) also conducted a study on the Trayvon Martin case to understand the importance of online and offline media at different stages during the coverage. Their study found that “broadcast media remains an important amplifier and gatekeeper to news events. However, the study also found that “broadcast media is vulnerable to media activist working through participatory media to co-create the news and influence the framing of major events” (Graeff et. al., 2014, p. 18). Benash’s (2014) study on the Trayvon Martin case provided insight on how stereotypes of minorities were perpetrated in the news and discovered the great influence the partisan media had during the case. Though these studies discuss the presentation of race and media coverage during the case, there is insufficient research on the differences between local and national media coverage. Uncovering the differences and similarities will provide the necessary components to examine the variety ways the Martin and Zimmerman’s identities were framed and the role the media played in visualizing that. Documenting the presentation of race in the news is essential to understand how society views and identifies race (Hall, 2001).

### **2.3 Race and News**

To understand the relationship between race and the news, it is important to first examine the idea of 'race'. The structure of race is a category that this study challenges us to evaluate. The concept of race has historically been based on the following criteria that races are naturally unequal, linked to their biology, and physical features and behaviors are innate and inherited (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Though these concepts are arbitrary today, the biological foundation still manifests, where skin color, hair textures, nose width, etc. remain major markers of racial identity (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). According to the authors Smedley & Smedley (2005), "race is not biological based nor accurate, but fiction and is not a reality because it is used as a tool to discriminate" (p. 20). Therefore, race is not a result of biology but is a social construction (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). The construct categories of race, not only causes racism and discrimination but can also result in "white privileges" in society (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). White privilege is defined as a set of institutional benefits; granted to those who resemble the dominant race (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). The author McIntosh refers to white privilege as "invisible package of unearned assets that can count on cashing in day" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 1). The privileges, discrimination, and social construction of race indicate that news media is not exempt from processes involving racialization and racism thus the news should be examined.

One method in examining race is through the Critical Race Theory. The Critical Race Theory (CRT) "questions the very foundations of liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law") and contains an activist dimension (Delgado, Stefancic, 2001, pg. 2). It does not solely try to understand how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchy, but it attempts to transform it for the

better. The primary CRT model consists of five elements focusing on: the centrality of race and racism in society, the challenge to dominant ideology, the commitment to social justice, the central role of experiential knowledge, and the interdisciplinary perspective (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2001).

The UCLA School of Public Affairs (2009) states that “CRT recognizes that racism is engrained in the fabric and system of the American society” (as cited in Pappas, 2014, p. 278). CRT offers insights, methods and perspectives that guided my efforts to identify and analyze racism in the news media, and how it greatly affects concepts of self and group identity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The CRT also helps to guide us to the revelation of how racism and intercultural racism exist mainly at an unconscious level through naming and labeling within the media news (Solorzano et al., 2001).

Another essential notion to point out is the media’s access to power. Teo (2000) defines power as “a system of direct or negotiated relations that exist not only between individuals, but also between social and cultural spheres, and where the equilibrium can be created, maintained, or even destroyed” (p.20). The news media has the power to directly/indirectly influence political, social and cultural life of a society (van Dijk, 1993).

Furthermore, there is a pattern in the American media that continues to reflect and portray people racialized as Black, negatively (Clark, 1969). Clark (1969) has suggested four stages to how racialized minorities are represented in the media: non-recognition, ridicule, regulation, and respect. Fitzgerald (2010) defined the non-recognition stage, as the invisibility and non-existence of racialized minorities in the dominant media. The next stage is the stage in which minorities are ridiculed.

In the ridicule stage, a certain set of minority characters are portrayed as stupid, silly, irrational or simply laughable, demonstrating how media outlets were a method to control how African Americans were portrayed to the public as an approach to depict them in unfavorable positions in comparison to Whites. (Clark, 1969, p. 19)

Regulation is the third stage, where “minority characters are presented as enforcers or administrators of the dominant group’s norms” (Clark, 1969, p. 21). Clark notes in the regulation stage that after centuries of ridicule, Black characters were represented in limited socially accepted roles (Clark, 1969). Finally, respect is the stage that occurs when the minority group is presented in both positive and negative roles of everyday life (Clark, 1969). The stereotypical images of Blackness featured in the American media demonstrates a vast disconnect between those who control the images produced and those who watch (Coleman et al., 2016). Though the genre of news is governed by certain convention or criteria’s, the same structural factors that shapes sitcoms also shapes the news (Clark, 1969). Like sitcoms, the news can maintain and perpetrate racialized stereotypes images of Blacks. I will discuss the structural factors in the next few sections.

## **2.4 Discourse**

These stereotypical images comprise Discourse. Discourses are inherently ideological, representing the dominant group’s views, and are products of history (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2015). There is a difference in meaning between *Discourse* and *discourse*, also known as “Big D” and “Little d”. Little d is limited to language. Big D refers to systems, languages, other meanings, that affect one’s practices and norms, such as: behavior, attire, and habits, or in other words, *Discourse* influencing one’s daily life and identity (Gee, 1990).

Analyzing racialized Discourse in media helps examine the power relationships and dimensions between the actors within the news stories and the journalist. Power is often thought of in terms of direct physical coercion or constraint, and Teo (2000) previously defined power as “a system of direct or negotiated relations that exist not only between individuals, but also between social and cultural spheres, and where the equilibrium can be created, maintained, or even destroyed” in the previous section (p. 20). However, Hall (1997) describes power as “the ability to represent someone or something in a certain light within a certain ‘regime of representation’” (p. 259). In addition, power produces new Discourses (Hall, 1997). Stereotyping tends to occur where “there is gross inequalities of power” (Hall, 1997, p. 258). Although, power cannot simply be thought of in terms of one group radiating power downwards on the perceived subordinate or excluded group (Hall,1997). Discourse also examines the deeper meaning behind representation within text. It helps to unpack “what is not being said, but is being fantasized, what is implied, but cannot be shown” (Hall, 1997, p. 263)

Analyzing discourses can lead us to examine the consequences of social constructs such as racial identity. One of the main consequences that can derive from social identity is that some people benefit, and others suffer. In other words, there are invisible advantages that some people enjoy simply because they are White (May & Mumby, 2005). Examining discourse is used to observe the interactive and dynamic duality of race and representation to uncover hidden structures of racism. Examining the quality of certain discourses, allowed me to discover and look at the social groups who are being oppressed while demonstrating the interchangeable roles of race and power.

## **2.5 Crime Reporting**

African Americans have been framed stereotypically in crime reporting as well. Crime reporting helps to shape public opinion through the frequency of reporting a story and how the media present criminal participants and victims. The content of crime reporting has a direct influence on the public perception of other racialized groups and thus has been a controversial issue due to racial bias (Entman, 1990). There has been a push-pull conflict with how “African Americans are overrepresented as perpetrators of violent crime with arrest rates, but are underrepresented in sympathetic roles of a victim” (Media Representation and Impact on the Lives of Black Men, 2011, p. 24). There is an accumulating body of research that demonstrates similar patterns in the structure of crime reporting (Tamborini, Mastro, Chory-Assad, & Huang, 2000; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Dixon & Linz, 2000).

Tamborini, Mastro, Chory-Assad, and Huang (2000) write that “not only are African Americans more often shown as criminal suspects, but television news is also more likely to represent those African American suspects hand-cuffed, poorly dressed, and nameless” (p. 643), revealing that news reporting crimes involving racialized Black citizens are more comprehensive visual content than stories that involve White citizens (Tamborini et al., 2000). The study acknowledges how the portrayal of crime in news stimulates an anti-Black effect, or White animosity towards Black people (Tamborini et al., 2000). In a related study, Entman and Rojecki (2000) discovered that those racialized as White and accused of violence were more often referred to by their names, whereas, those racialized as Black were seen in forms of invisibility since they were more frequently seen handcuffed or physically restrained by police during a newscast.

Furthermore, an additional study conducted a content analysis of a random sample of local television news programming in Los Angeles and Orange County to observe the mass

representation of racialized Blacks, Latinos, and Whites as lawbreakers and law defenders. The two counties represent the primary metropolitan areas for the Los Angeles-based stations (Dixon & Linz, 2000). The study's inter-reality comparison revealed that Blacks and Latinos were more likely to appear as perpetrators compared to Whites (Dixon & Linz, 2000). Furthermore, the study revealed Whites were also overrepresented as law defenders (Dixon & Linz, 2000). Likewise, Tamborini et al. (2000) conducted a content analysis that examined the portrayals of people racialized as White, African Americans, and Latinos in the criminal justice system as representatives of the court and criminal television characters. Out of the 103 prime-time television programs, "90% of the African American criminal suspects were arrested opposed to the 53% of racialized White criminal suspects" (Tamborini et al., 2000, p. 639).

The collective studies demonstrate how the existence of stereotypes and racist attitudes are derived and how framing in crime reporting perpetuates those stereotypes and racist attitudes. Media framing gives the ability of the news to construct reality by explaining an event in a variety of ways and from different angles, though this concept will be further discussed in the next section (De Vresse & Nisbet, 2010, p. 189). Additionally, news broadcasting stations having the power to frame, also wield the power to create racist and stereotypical representations. Crime reporting participates in the various discourse about race, and one way the media participates in this discourse is through framing.

## **Theory**

### **2.6 Framing Theory**

One way to explore the different types of media representation in local and national news is through media framing. According to research, through frames and stereotypes, the media can

maintain and reinforce prejudice and racism (Roskos & Monohan, 2012). Framing theory helps to look at how the *Orlando Sentinel* and the *New York Times* created imagined realities and how they became social facts (Bedford & Snow, 2000). In the Trayvon Martin case, framing theory is used to show how media sources frame news stories using the evidence they do have to cast their narratives in a certain way. Framing involves “selecting a few aspects of a perceived reality and connecting them together in a narrative that promotes particular interpretation” (Entman, 2010, p. 391). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* by Erving Goffman (1974) explores frameworks and their relation to society. According to Goffman, framing “allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms” (p. 21).

Entman further modernized this definition by specifying that to frame a communicating text or message is “to promote certain facets of a ‘perceived reality’ and make them more salient such that it endorses a specific problem, definition, causal interpretation, of a moral evaluation” (Entman, 1993, p. 51). Similar to agenda-setting, a frame focuses a receiver's attention on a specific area of concentration that enables us to shape worldviews, but also expands and focuses on the essence of the issues at hand rather than on a particular topic (Entman, 2010). Media also construct social reality by “framing images of reality . . . in a predictable and patterned way” (McQuail, 1994, p. 331). According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), “media discourse is part of a process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists . . . develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 31)

Moreover, framing a story allows the author to decide what aspects of a news story receives the most attention by making one idea or aspect of an event stand among the rest (De Vresse & Nisbet, 2010). Nisbet and De Vresse state, "frames simplify complex issues by lending greater importance or weight to certain considerations and arguments over others" (De Vresse & Nisbet, 2010, p47).

There are a variety of ways to identify frames within news stories. Van Dijk (1988) describe the syntactical structure of news discourse as the "macro-syntax", that is characterized by inverted pyramid structure (p. 26). The 'inverted pyramid' is used to described the "sequential organization of the structural elements in news article's, where the most important or newsworthy information is located near the top and the least important near the end of the news article (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Teo, 2000). Examining the structural elements of a news article includes examining the articles' headlines and leading/concluding paragraphs (Pan & Kosicki,1993; Teo, 2000). Entman (1993) and Tankard's (2001) framing devices also helped in identifying frames within news articles. According to Entman, he identifies "the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" as framing devices to help examine and identify frames within newspaper articles (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Similarly, Tankard (2001) also identified headlines, and sub lines, quotes selection, and article conclusions as framing devices (Tankard, 2001).

Reflecting the inverted pyramid concept, headlines are considered to have a "privilege position" and "most significance" message in the news reports because they are the first things, and sometimes the only thing, readers see when reading a news article (Baicchi, 2003, as cited in White, 2010). Headlines can serve to, "lure or to entice readers to read the story, and at the same

time, they often provide readers with a snapshot of the reporter's handling of the story" (Johnson-Cartee, 2004, p. 165). Journalists present readers with what they themselves considered as newsworthy information that they want the reader to know within the headlines. According to MacRitchie and Seedat, headlines has the "ability to limit or enable the construct of a topic in a certain way" (MacRitchie & Seedat, 2008, p. 339).

News discourse and themes is also apparent through the frequent uses of descriptive words presented within text, which is further demonstrated in chapter five (Findings/Discussion) (Pan Kosicki, 1993). According to Pan Kosicki (1993), "lexical choices of words or labels...signifies the presence of a particular frame" (p.62). Pan Kosicki (1993) continues by arguing that the process of labeling within news reports demonstrates the cautious categorization done by newsmakers, which demonstrates a powerful cue of an underlying frame (Pan Kosicki, 1993). The lexical selections of words and terms hold great power in creating mental representation and perpetuate racial stereotypes within the news text (Pan Kosicki, 1993).

According to Schudson, "framing moves the analysis of the news away from the idea of intentional bias" (Schudson, 2011, p. 35). Schudson also adds that examining framing instead of bias, acknowledges the possibility that the news might speak in more than one sole voice (Schudson, 2011). Media framing gives the ability of the news to construct reality by explaining an event in a variety of ways and from different angles that influence how the audience may look at an event in a certain light, thus altering their mindset of an issue (De Vresse & Nisbet, 2010, p. 189). By exploring the way local and national news framed the Trayvon Martin case, this study will allow us to see how damaging media framing can be.

The framing theory relates to the study's main research question (**What terms did local and national news used to designate Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman's race during the coverage of Trayvon Martin case?**) in a variety of ways. As demonstrated in the literature review, the media has portrayed African Americans in a negative light. Although this practice is now seen in subtle forms that are still surfacing in sitcoms, films and our newscast, the framing theory can help identify these subtle frames, and bring it to the forefront. For this study, the framing theory helps to identify frames and understand how the *Orlando Sentinel* and the *New York Times* perpetrated stereotypes and racialize Zimmerman and Martin within their news reports. In the next chapter, I will be introducing the mix-method approach that I used to gather and analyze the data for the study.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

#### **3.1 Method**

This purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design and methodological approach. This chapter details the methods and procedures used to acquire and analyze data from the *Orlando Sentinel* and the *New York Times* during both phases of analysis (content and discourse analysis).

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used as my research paradigm. Within my paradigm, I used content and discourse analysis as tools to analyze and gather data from the *New York Times* and *Orlando Sentinel* in the coverage of the Trayvon Martin case. Discourse analysis can be described as the analysis of language that is "beyond the sentence" since it explains discourse on a macro-level and is effective in explaining social structures (Merrigan, Huston, & Johnston, 2012). Discourse analysis can also help in revealing the structural factors that shapes the news (Gee, 2012). According to Hyland and Paltridge (2011), "the task of

discourse analysis is to reveal the processes of misrepresentation at work in all their close linguistic detail” (p. 224). In simpler terms, Gee (2014) describes discourse analysis as the study in the language in use. There are two main approaches within discourse analysis (Gee, 2014). According to Fernandez and Lirola (2012) discourse analysis help “focuses on the manifestations of conflict, dominance and discrimination in relation to textual structures and contextual clues” (p. 2). One approach of discourse analysis is to look at the “content” of language being used (Gee, 2014). The second method is to pay attention to the text’s structure “grammar”, and how the structure functions to help meaning specific in context (Gee, 2014). For the purposes of the study I integrated both approaches, which will further be discussed in detail in the following section.

In contrast, according to Merrigan et al. (2012), content analysis can be described as revealing the “interrelations between texts, changes in text, new textual forms and new styles of distribution text that constitutes a discourse over time” (p. 178).) Content analysis can also be defined as “systematic reading of a body of text through compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding” (Stemler, 2001, p. 1). Whereas Bryman (2004) offers a broad definition of content analysis as “an approach to the analysis of documents and text, that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in systematic and replicable manner” (p. 181). All three of the definitions view content analysis as a quantitative method since the data will eventually be converted to frequencies. Though, according to Pope, Catherine, Mays, Nicholas, Popay, & Jennie (2007) in content analysis “qualitative skills and understanding is needed to develop the categories or themes which findings are to be fitted, and to also identify the relationship(s) between the raw data and

categories or themes”, which is where discourse analysis’s qualitative characteristics helped play a role (p. 49).

I am seeking to make interpretive claims — to understand how the news media contributed to and circulated different discourses about race — and not predictive claims. Therefore, qualitative methods are appropriate. Similarly, because I am seeking to interpret texts within a specific historical context, discourse analysis is an appropriate method. Other qualitative methods, such as focus groups or surveys, would provide data related to audiences, which do not figure into my analysis (Collins et al, 2006). According to Collins et al. (2006). Both content and discourse analysis are useful when comparing and identifying patterns and themes within the article (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Content and discourse analysis were great tools when analyzing complex cases, such as the Trayvon Martin case (Collins et al., 2006). Both methods, content analysis and discourse analysis allowed me to answer the following questions:

**Research question: What terms did local and national news use to designate Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman’s race during the coverage of Trayvon Martin case?**

**Sub-question: What are the differences and similarities between local and national news (specifically the *Orlando Sentinel* and *New York Times*)?**

**Sub-question: Is there a difference in the *Orlando Sentinel*’s coverage before and after Trayvon Martin case became national news and if so, what is it?**

The combination of the two methods in my research was to complement the qualitative analysis with a quantitative analysis to produce a comprehensive understanding within and across the corpus. This was done by drawing on the strengths of both methods while minimizing the weakness of both. In addition, utilizing both paradigms helped answer my research questions since the research was not confined to the limitations of a single paradigms (Collins,

Onwuegbuzie, & Sutton, 2006; Gray, Williamson, Karp, & Dalphin, 2012). For instance, within my study a quantitative paradigm permits numbers to be used to add precision words, whereas qualitative provided the advantages for words and narratives to be used to add meaning to numerical data (Collins et al., 2006). The flexibility also helped to interpret various aspects of the research topic which was essential in ensuring validity in the findings and making interpretative claims from those results. (Boyatzis, 1998). Using a mix-method approach as provided more insight and understanding that might have been missed if only a sole method was used (Collins et. al., 2006).

During the analysis process, content analysis was used to give an overview of the data set. While discourse analysis helped describe the interpreted meanings that were constructed within the articles' text to help shed light on media framing. The methodologies gave me the ability to study social life, such as the Martin case, without interfering in it and posing potential ethical risk to the study (Babbie, 1999). The methods allowed a close study of the way news stories are framed in a national and local setting. In summary, using a mixed method approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the framing, representation, power relationships and the construction of news during the Trayvon Martin case by providing aspects of qualitative and quantitative characteristics to help answer the research questions. In the following section, I will go over the practices, criteria, and guidelines I used when gathering, selecting, and analyzing data from articles from the *New York Times* and *Orlando Sentinel* in both phases of analysis.

### **3.2 Procedures**

I used articles published in the *Orlando Sentinel* and *The New York Times*. The *Orlando Sentinel* provided local news and *The New York Times* provided national news. In time frame and geographic region, these two newspapers were selected because they have a wide readership and

contain a variety of articles on the subject. According to *The Huffington Post*, *The New York Times* had the second-highest total average circulation in 2012 with 1,865,318 (“USA Today Becomes Most Widely-Circulated Daily Newspaper in America,” 2013). Both the *Orlando Sentinel* and *The New York Times* are available through LexisNexis Academic database.

I used both publications’ websites along with LexisNexis Academic database to retrieve articles about the event. To narrow the potential articles for analysis, restricted the time parameters from when the incident took place on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to when the coverage change focus once the trial began on April 12<sup>th</sup> 2012.

My focused was to solely analyze the hard news articles from both *Orlando Sentinel* and *New York Times*. Soft news is usually subjective in view, thus is why I chose to focus solely on hard news in the articles I retrieve to evaluate the journalist implicit claims to objectivity (Reinemann et al, 2011). To ensure validity I categorized the news stories I retrieved as ‘hard’ and ‘soft’. According to Reinemann, Stanyer, Scherr, and Legnante (2011), hard news is any news reported right away and takes a factual approach where a report presents fact in a detached and unemotional manner. Conversely, soft news includes human-interest pieces, commentary and analysis reports, and stories that deals with topics of entertainment, arts and culture, and celebrity news (Reinemann et al, 2011).

Based on the time parameter of February 26th, 2012 to April 12, 2012, I retrieved twenty-two articles from the *New York Times*, and eighty from the *Orlando Sentinel*. Of the articles retrieved, sixty-seven were hard news articles and thirty-five were soft news articles. I excluded soft news articles such as opinions articles, question and answer format news reports, letters to the editor, blogs, and live chats responses. In addition, because I can only read in the English language, I excluded articles that was not written in English. I also excluded non-English

articles to keep the article's language consistent in the data set. A total of sixty-seven articles were analyzed within the study. Methodologically, the analysis involved two phases. The first phase consisted of content analysis and the second phase comprised of discourse analysis.

### ***Phase 1: Content Analysis***

In the first step of content analysis, I read through every single article (N=67) from both newspapers and counted each time racializing descriptors (“African American,” “Black,” “White,” “white and Hispanic,” and “Hispanic”) appeared for Martin or Zimmerman. Observing lexical choices of word choice and labels made within news articles is an important aspect of news discourse construction (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). The racializing descriptors served as an index of power and helped examined the power relationships with the actors within the articles and the journalist. After the content analysis was completed, I used an Excel spreadsheet to organize the articles by publication, date, author, title, and racializing descriptor (“African American,” “Black,” “White,” “white and Hispanic,” and “Hispanic”) to interpret the data. I then analyzed patterns in the frequency of each descriptor (how often each descriptor was used) over time and compared the results for each publication.

### ***Phase 2: Discourse Analysis***

#### ***Part 1***

Following the completion of the content analysis in the initial examination, a discourse analysis was then implemented. The content analysis was used in the first phase to help to retrieve information from the articles and to examine which terms across the articles were most important. Based on that, the discourse analysis was used to give a qualitative account of the language and how it was used in the text to identify the articles’ frames.

In the first step of the discourse analysis, I read through each of the sixty-seven articles once more to see if there existed a change in the *Orlando Sentinel*’s article’s frames once the *New York Times* picked up the Martin coverage on March 16, 2012. To see if changes occurred in the *Orlando Sentinel* news articles, I highlighted the difference in framing I saw within the

articles' headlines, word choice, and syntax. Aware that I would be selecting four articles to critically examine and identify frames and themes in the next phase of analysis, I took notes on common themes that I noticed within the sixty-seven articles to help ensure these themes were represented during the selection process of the four articles.

### ***Part 2***

In the second part of the discourse analysis, four articles that best serve as representation of the main themes and patterns found in the corpus were selected. The analysis of individual stories provides a fine-grained account of the broader patterns you observe in the quantitative section (Collins et al., 2006). This entails a micro-analysis of each article's use of racialized descriptors, quote selection, combine with a macro analysis of the article's significance of date and examining if the articles allows me to make a comparison of the two publications (**figure 9**). Two articles were chosen from the *Orlando Sentinel*, and two articles were form the *New York Times*. Figure one demonstrates the criteria used during the selection process of the four articles.

**Figure 1:** Criteria used to select the four articles from both *Orlando Sentinel* and *New York Times* to analyzed in the discourse analysis.

Criteria for Article Selection for Discourse Analysis	
Publication/Date/Title/Author	Criteria
<p><i>Orlando Sentinel</i> 3/16/12</p> <hr/> <p><b>Title:</b> “George Zimmerman’s father: My son is not racist, did not confront Trayvon Martin” <b>By:</b> Rene Stutzman</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Racial Descriptors</li> <li>-At least 3 interviewees quoted</li> <li>-Common Interviewee: Mary Cutcher</li> <li>-Significance in date – One of the first articles released one <i>New York Times</i> picked up coverage on 3/16/12</li> <li>-Ability to compare/contrast <i>Orlando Sentinel</i> v. <i>New York Times</i></li> <li>-Representation of common themes of found in data set (N=67)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Orlando Sentinel</i> 3/16/12</p> <hr/> <p><b>Title:</b> Trayvon Martin’s father: Family ‘betrayed’ by Sanford Police <b>By:</b> Bianca Prieto</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Racial Descriptors</li> <li>-At least 3 interviewees quoted</li> <li>-Common Interviewee: Mary Cutcher</li> <li>-Significance in date- One of the first articles released one <i>New York Times</i> picked up coverage on 3/16/12</li> <li>-Ability to compare/contrast <i>Orlando Sentinel</i> v. <i>New York Times</i></li> <li>-Representation of common themes of found in data set (N=67)</li> </ul>
<p><i>New York Times</i> 3/16/12</p> <hr/> <p><b>Title:</b> Justice Department Investigation Is Sought in Florida Teenager’s Shooting Death <b>By:</b> Lizette Alvarez</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Racial Descriptors/terms notion race</li> <li>-At least 3 interviewees quoted</li> <li>-Common Interviewee: Mary Cutcher</li> <li>-Significance in date- First article covering the Trayvon Martin case</li> <li>-Ability to compare/contrast <i>Orlando Sentinel</i> v. <i>New York Times</i></li> <li>-Representation of common themes of found in data set (N=67)</li> </ul>
<p><i>New York Times</i> 3/17/12</p> <hr/> <p><b>Title:</b> 911 Calls Add Detail to Debate Over Florida Killing <b>By:</b> Lizette Alvarez</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Racial Descriptors</li> <li>-At least 3 interviewees quoted</li> <li>-Ability to compare/contrast <i>Orlando Sentinel</i> v. <i>New York Times</i></li> <li>-Representation of common themes of found in data set (N=67)</li> </ul>

Once the four articles from both the *New York Times* and the *Orlando Sentinel* were selected, I used discourse analysis to examine and identify common themes and frames. As mention previously, I examined the “content” of language being used and the text’s structure

“grammar”, and how the structure functions to help meaning specific in context (Gee, 2014). I used a set of guided questions (**See Appendix**) for each article to help me identify any discourse and frames within the article. The influence of the design of the guided questions were based on Entman (1993) and Tankard’s (2001) framing devices. Entman and Tankard recognized the articles’ headlines, sublines, leading/concluding paragraphs, quote selection, syntax, and the presence and absence of keywords and phrases, as framing devices (Entman, 1993; Tankard, 200). Similarly, Teo (2000) describes examining headlines and leading/concluding paragraphs as the ‘inverted pyramid’ since the “most important or newsworthy information is located at the top and the least important at the bottom” (p.14). During the analysis, I specifically examined quotes selection from interviewees, headlines, patterns and arrangements of words, syntax, and articles’ leading paragraphs and conclusions as framing devices, but first looked the articles’ headlines and examined the language in use. I checked whether the headlines included racial descriptors to describe Martin or Zimmerman and if the headlines used neutral terms. Similarly, I also used the same criteria when examining the language within the article’s texts. As stated in the framing theory section (**Section 2.5**), headlines are considered to have a “privileged position” and “significance” in news reports because they are the first things, and sometimes the only thing, readers see when reading a news article (Baicchi, 2003, as cited in White, 2010). Overall, the guided question served as a guide to help examine and identify the article’s frames and answer the question posed by Goffman: “What is it that’s going on here?” (Goffman, 1974, p. 8.)

Through discourse analysis, the present study discovered seven dominant frames:

1. Stand Your Ground Law
2. Defense for Zimmerman
3. Race

4. Attribution of Responsibility
5. Injustice
6. Mistrust in Police
7. Empathy for Martin or Zimmerman

I used Entman's (1993) explanation of the purpose and functions of frames to help designate names and categorize for the seven primary frames I identified. Entman (1993) identified four basic functions of a frame: (a) defining a problem, (b) establishing the cause, (c) assigning responsibility, and (d) suggesting possible solutions (p.52).

The process of identifying and naming the four article's frames took several steps. I first read through each of the four articles five times to get a general understanding of the news reports overall context. Next, I read each article at least eleven more times and took notes on any reoccurring themes and patterns and took notes on my observations. Then, with the use of the guided questions based off Entman's (2003) and Tankard (2003) framing devices, I read each article of the printed guided question next to me to I can critically analyze the articles several times per the questions. Based off my notes from the analysis, I used Entman's explanation of the four function of the frames to help create designated frames for each frame. Now that I discussed the research design and procedures, in chapter four I will discuss the findings from the content and discourse analysis.

## **Chapter 4: Findings/Discussion**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings from the content and discourse analysis. Then afterwards, in four separate sections, I will critically analyze the four news articles that was selected from the *Orlando Sentinel* and *New York Times* for the discourse analysis and further dissect each one.

### **4.1 Content Analysis Findings/Discussions**

As previously mentioned, content analysis helps to analyze discourses of power that occur at the micro level, whereas discourse analysis helps to analyze discourses occurring at the macro level. Figure 2 provides an overview of the content analysis conducted on sixty-seven articles from the *New York Times* and *Orlando Sentinel*. The chart (**Figure 2**) reveals the commonly used racial descriptors that were used in each publication. In the first phase of analysis, the content analysis revealed that the *New York Times* used more racial descriptors to describe Martin and Zimmerman than the *Orlando Sentinel*. Descriptors such as “Black” were used 55% to describe Martin, whereas in the *Orlando Sentinel* the term was used 26% of the stories. In both *Orlando Sentinel* and the *New York Times* “African American” was not used at all to describe Martin. Additionally, the *New York Times* used the terms “white and Hispanic” (15%) and Hispanic (25%) to describe Zimmerman, while the *Orlando Sentinel* only uses the descriptor “Hispanic” (4%). However, overall Martin’s race was reported more frequently than Zimmerman’s race in both local and national news. It is also important to point out that the content analysis revealed that the descriptor “White” was not mentioned within any of the articles in the *New York Times*, while the descriptors such as “Black”, “Hispanic”, and “white and Hispanic” were. The absence portrays “White” as being the “norm”, since the *New York Times* only mentioned race when identifying a perceived minority race. Squires (2007) states that

the absence of ‘whiteness’ within news reports “reinforces the unacknowledged standards and norm against which Blacks [and other racialized minorities] are measured” (p. 80). This exemplifies the Critical Race Theory at work, where the theory demonstrates how “white identities and [their] privileges are structured, renegotiated, and maintained by the mass media” (Squires, 2007, p.78).

*Figure 2 Content analysis (Phase 1) results of sixty-seven articles analyzing the racial descriptors of Martin and Zimmerman from the Orlando Sentinel (N=47) and the New York Times (N=20) between February 26,2012-April 12, 2012*

<b>Content Analysis</b>				
	<b>Orlando Sentinel (N = 47)</b>		<b>The New York Times (N= 20)</b>	
<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Black	12	26%	11	55%
African American	0	0%	0	0%
White	4	9%	0	0%
Hispanic	2	4%	5	25%
white and Hispanic	0	0%	3	15%
None	21	45%	8	40%

*Figure 3 Analysis of results comparing the Orlando Sentinel’s racial descriptors before and after The New York Times picked up coverage on the Trayvon Martin case (March 16, 2012)*

<b>Orlando Sentinel’s Articles Usage of Racial Descriptors</b>				
	<b>(Number of articles = 5) Before 3/16/12</b>		<b>(Number of articles = 52) After 3/16/12</b>	
<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Black	3	60%	9	17%
African American	0	0%	0	0%
White	4	80%	0	0%
Hispanic	2	40%	0	0%
white and Hispanic	0	0%	0	0%
None	1	20%	24	47%

Content analysis also allowed me to analyze lexical terms that were used to help create Martin’s and Zimmerman’s identity. Interestingly, the racial descriptors “white and Hispanic” was used to describe Zimmerman in the *New York Times* articles, but was not used in any of the *Orlando Sentinel* articles. This can be seen in a March 16, *New York Times* article by Alvarez (2012a), where she describes the February 26 incident.

Nearly three weeks after Martin was killed in a small city...a few indisputable facts remain: the teenager, who was black, was carrying nothing but a box of skittles, some money and a can of iced tea when he was shot. The neighborhood crime watch volunteer who got out of his car and shot was white and Hispanic. He has not been arrested and is

claiming self-defense” (Alvarez, 2012a, “Justice Department Investigation Is Sought in Florida Teenager’s Shooting Death”, *Orlando Sentinel*).

the choice of the lexical terms helps make discourse within the news more apparent (Pan Kosicki, 1993). Therefore, the results demonstrate the over-lexicalization of Martin’s and Zimmerman’s race helps to “parallels their sense of powerlessness to articulate an identity for themselves, and therefore submitting to the public’s portrayal of them” (Teo, 2000, p. 23). Moreover, the lexical selections of words and terms hold great power in creating mental representation of Martin and Zimmerman and perpetuating racial stereotypes within the news text (Pan Kosicki, 1993). During this analysis process, content analysis was used to give a micro-analysis of the terms within the articles. Now in the next section, discourse analysis will demonstrate how it helped interpreted the meanings of these terms in order to help shed light on the articles underlying frames.

#### ***4.2 Discourse Analysis Findings/Discussion***

Now that I discussed the results from content analysis (Phase 1) I will now discuss the findings from discourse analysis (Phase 2). I will first analyze the results for first portion of the discourse analysis to examined if there existed a change in the *Orlando Sentinel’s* article’s frames once the *New York Times* picked up the Martin coverage on March 16, 2012. Afterwards, in four separate sections, I will investigate the second portion of the discourse analysis where I critically analyzed four articles selected from both *Orlando Sentinel* and the *New York Times*.

##### ***Part 1***

In the first step of the discourse analysis, I read through each of the sixty-seven articles once more to see if there existed a change in the *Orlando Sentinel’s* articles’ frames once the *New York Times* picked up the Martin coverage on March 16, 2012. To see if changes occurred

in the *Orlando Sentinel* news articles, I highlighted the difference in framing I saw within the articles' headlines, choice of lexical terms, and syntax. The findings revealed that the *Orlando Sentinel*, which began reporting the incident on February 29, 2012, focused on the February 26 shooting and ensuing police investigation, whereas the national news, the *New York Times* focused mostly on social and political issues. Further analysis showed that once the *New York Times* picked up the coverage on the Trayvon Martin case on March 16, 2012, there was a difference in the *Orlando Sentinel*'s headlines and language used in the article. For example, here are some examples of headlines that demonstrate how a March 13 article uses more neutral verbs in their headlines compared to a March 20th article, which uses the verb "slaying" to describe Martin's death

- March 13, 2012 (Before *New York Times* picked up coverage) "Trayvon Martin Shooting case goes to State Attorney Office Today" (Stutzman, 2012)
- March 20, 2012 (After *New York Times* picked up coverage) "Trayvon Martin's girlfriend speaks out about final moments before teen's slaying" (Hernandez, 2012).

As mentioned in the literature review, headlines can serve to "lure or to entice readers to read the story, and at the same time they often provide readers with a snapshot of the reporter's handling of the story (Johnson-Cartee, 2005, p. 165). Interestingly, rather than the *Orlando Sentinel* maintaining a frame that is more neutral, the *Orlando Sentinel* started using phrases such as "slain" to describe Martin's death in their headlines and as well as within their news reports.

The implications of the word "slaying" is further demonstrated in an *Orlando Sentinel* article "Trayvon Martin's father: Family 'betrayed' by Sanford Police" by Prieto. In the article

Prieto uses the term “slaying” when she describes Martin as "slain teen,” and is also used by Martin's mother, to describe her son's death. Using the word "slain" rather the word "killing" or "shooting" creates a more volatile death and dramatizes the incident while building empathy for Martin at the same time. Though the term “slain” or “slay” is often used for leaders who are assassinated, it is also usually associated when describing a killing of an animal (The slain dragon) (Green,1999). Thus, dehumanizing Martin, and subtly comparing Martin to an animal. Within media, Blacks are sometimes perceived as animals, and specifically mostly compared to apes and monkeys (Green, 1999). According to Plous and William (1995), Blacks are sometimes perceived as “mentally inferior, physically and culturally unevolved, **and ape like in appearance**” (as cited in Green, 1999, p.795). As stated in the four stages of media representation in the literature review, the ridicule stage was where Blacks were often portrayed in unfavorable stereotypical roles such as monkey or ape. Thus, portraying blacks as simply laughably and silly in comparison to Whites (Clark, 1969; Green 1999). This pattern of the term “slain” is seen again in an a *Orlando Sentinel* article, where the journalist describes Martin’s mother as “the slain’s teen mother” and his dad as “Tracy Martin father of slain teen” (Brieto, 2012). These examples of discourse highlight the news media’s power in subtly reinforcing and maintaining longstanding racialized stereotypes of Blacks within their news reports (Teo, 2000).

## ***Part 2***

Now that I discussed the results of the first part of the discourse analysis. I will show how the previous section raises questions that this section can answer. The content analysis was used in the first phase to help to retrieve information from the articles and to examined which terms across the articles was most important. Based on that, the discourse analysis was used to give a

qualitative account of the language and how it was used in the text to identify the articles’ frames.

**Figure 4** List of Orlando Sentinels’ and New York Times’ dominant frames within the four articles analyzed during the discourse analysis (Phase 2).

Discourse Analysis of Articles’ Frames				
Date	Publication	Author	Title	Dominate Frame
3/16/12	<i>Orlando Sentinel</i>	Rene Stutzman	George Zimmerman’s father: My son is not racist, did not confront Trayvon Martin	Defense for Zimmerman, Self-Defense/Stand Your Ground
3/16/12	<i>Orlando Sentinel</i>	Bianca Prieto	Trayvon Martin’s father: Family ‘betrayed’ by Sanford Police	Injustice/Mistrust in Police
3/16/12	<i>New York Times</i>	Lizette Alvarez	Justice Department Investigation Is Sought in Florida Teenager’s Shooting Death	Stand Your Ground Law/Self Defense & Race
3/17/12	<i>New York Times</i>	Lizette Alvarez	911 Calls Add Detail to Debate Over Florida Killing	Attribution of Responsibility

Figure 4 described the seven discovered frames discovered during second portion of the discourse analysis: - Stand Your Ground Law, Defense for Zimmerman, Race Relations, Attribution of Responsibility, Injustice, Mistrust in Police, and Empathy. As mention in the literature review and methodology, the frames were defined with the help of constructed guided questions, based on Entman’s (1993) and Tankard’s (2001) framing devices (See Appendix).

Entman and Tankard identify headlines, sublines, leading/concluding paragraphs, quote selection, syntax, and the presence and absence of keywords and phrases, as framing devices (Entman, 1993; Tankard, 200). In addition, I used Entman's (1993) explanation of the purpose and functions of frames to help designate names and categorizes for the seven primary frames.

Several key discoveries emerged from the discourse analysis. Within each news article, there was a dominant frame that was supported by the interviewees' frames. Data revealed that the dominant frames cast the witness's frames in a different light. This is further demonstrated when journalist Prieto, Stutzman, and Alvarez all interviewed the witness Mary Cutcher within their news reports and positioned her statements within the article's principal frame. This analysis also demonstrated how the use of terms, syntax, and quote selection helped make underlying frames in new article more apparent. In next four sections, I look at four news articles, two from the *Orlando Sentinel* and two from the *New York Times*. I give each article its own section to further dissect my findings.

**4.3 Orlando Sentinel, “George Zimmerman’s father My son is not racist, did not confront Trayvon Martin” by Rene Stutzman, March 16, 2012**

*Figure 5 Interviewees’ frames in “George Zimmerman’s father My son is not racist, did not confront Trayvon Martin” by Rene Stutzman, March 16, 2012*

Interviewees’ Frame	
Interviewees (1)	Frames
Mary Cutcher	Self-Defense
-Robert Zimmerman	Defense of Zimmerman/Race
Cheryl Brown (neighbor witness, teenage son)	Self-Defense
Sanford Police	Trust in Police

‘Defense for Zimmerman’ was the dominant frame in this article. The article described Zimmerman’s father explaining how his son was treated unfairly by the media and public following the February 26 incident. The article described how Zimmerman’s father believed that his son was exercising his right to “Stand his Ground” (Stutzman, 2012). Stutzman included a quote from Zimmerman’s father, Robert, stating that the “depiction of his son in the media has been cruel and misleading” and that “everyone should be outraged by the treatment of George Zimmerman in the media”. Stutzman also incorporates the racial relations frame by including Robert Zimmerman’s letter to the public. Within the letter, Robert states "George is a Spanish-speaking minority with many black family members and friends”, demonstrating his attempt to defend his son against some of the public’s claims that Zimmerman racially profiled Martin.

Moreover, Mary Cutcher’s unchanged statement appeared in more than one of the articles I analyzed in the discourse analysis. Therefore, because of this pattern I will be critically

analyzing Cutcher's frame to illustrate how the dominate frames influence the secondary frame within news reports. In the March 16 article, witness Mary Cutcher's frame was used to support the 'defense for Zimmerman frame.' The frame used by Crutcher's frame was 'self-defense/mistrust in police', which implies that she believed Zimmerman did not use self-defense at the time of the February 26 shooting. Cutcher states, "I know this was not self-defense. There was no punching, no hitting going on at the time, no wrestling" and claims that the police ignored her witness statement. After Crutcher's quote, Stutzman included a statement from the police stating "they tried to interview her without success, and this time, she wrote a very short sworn statement for her roommate that was consistent with Zimmerman's account." Including the quote from the police serves as a rebuttal and discredits Crutcher's reliability as a witness by demonstrating her inconsistent statement of the shooting and her unwillingness to cooperate with the police.

**4.4 Orlando Sentinel “Trayvon Martin’s father: Family ‘betrayed’ by Sanford Police” by Bianca Prieto, March 16, 2012**

**Figure 6** Interviewees’ frames identified in “Trayvon Martin’s father: Family ‘betrayed’ by Sanford Police” by Bianca Prieto, March 16, 2012

Interviewees’ Frame	
Interviewees (2)	Frames
Mary Cutcher	Attribution of responsibility self-defense
Najee Muhammad	Injustice/distrust the police
Sybrina Fulton	Empathy for Trayvon/injustice
Florida self-defense attorney Benjamin Crump	mistrust in police
Nathalie Jackson Martin’s family attorney	attribution of responsibility

‘Injustice’ and ‘mistrust in police’ were the two dominant frames in the second *Orlando Sentinel* article “Trayvon Martin’s father: Family ‘betrayed’ by Sanford Police” by Bianca Prieto. The article was about Martin’s family feeling betrayed by police because they believed their son received an unfair investigation and that that the police were siding with Zimmerman (Prieto, 2012). Martin’s father helps in setting the tone of the two frames, ‘injustice’ and ‘mistrust in police’, when he states, “It’s a shame that [Trayvon] not getting any justice...I feel betrayed by the Sanford Police Department, and there's no way I can still trust them in investigating this crime”.

The article also includes a quote from Sybrina Fulton, Martin's mother from a press conference where she states "it's been a nightmare...I don't understand why this man has not been arrested". In addition to the quote, Prieto included visual descriptors of Fulton addressing reporters "with tears in her eyes" and being "embraced by her other son, Jaharvis Martin." The correlation of the visual descriptors is noteworthy because it helps build empathy for Martin's death by setting a visual stage of how sad Martin's mother looked over losing her son. Correspondingly, towards the end of the news story, the "attribution to responsibility" frame is presented with two interviewee quotes from Najee Muhammad, a group activist leader, and Nathalie Jackson, Martin's family lawyer, describing the community outrage over the incident. The injustice frame is further supported with a call-to-action towards the end of the news report, where Stutzman included where a local student petition against Zimmerman will be held. The use of visual descriptors furthers empowers and supports the underlying 'Injustice' frame of the article.

In previous article, Mary Cutcher's frame was used to support the 'defense for Zimmerman frame' (Stutzman). In this news article, Cutcher's frame was used to support the article's dominant frames and contrasted Stutzman's (March 16) article. Before introducing Cutcher, Prieto includes a quotation from a Florida defense lawyer, Benjamin Crump where he claims that the police department has taken Zimmerman's side in the investigation.

If the Sanford Police continues to engage in this unsavory fashion, we will assist with filing an official complaint with the Department of Justice for witness tampering, witness intimidation and obstruction of justice...The police job is to obtain all statements whether they like them or not...Police cannot interfere with an ongoing investigation, to deter future witnesses from coming forward. (Prieto, 2012)

Following Crump’s ‘mistrust of the police frame,’ Prieto placed Cutcher’s account of the shooting. Cutcher claims that she heard a child crying and a gunshot followed by seeing “Zimmerman crouched over the boy’s body” when she went outside to check the noise. Cutcher then continues and states, “I thought it was common sense that Zimmerman would be arrested...that was not self-defense.” Unlike Stutzman, Prieto gave more background information regarding Crutcher. Describing her as "someone who lives in a townhome near where Trayvon was shot" and an "a single mother who works full-time and goes to school". Providing a background information on Cutcher helps build up her credibility as a trustworthy witness, which were traits that the previous *Orlando Sentinel* article refrained from mentioning (Stutzman).

**4.5 The New York Times “Justice Department Investigation Is Sought in Florida Teenager’s Shooting Death” by Lizette Alvarez, March 16, 2012**

*Figure 7 Interviewees’ frames in Alvarez (2012a)*

Interviewees’ Frame	
Interviewees (3)	Frames
Mary Cutcher	Attribution of responsibility self-defense
Nathalie J. (Martin family lawyer)	Attribution of responsibility
Chief Sanford Police	Defends Zimmerman, claims self-defense
Benjamin Crump (Martin lawyer)	Mistrust in Police/Injustice
Martin’s Parents	Mistruth of police
Brian Tannebaum self-defense lawyer in Florida	Stand Your Ground Law Martin’s father’s sympathy for Martin/injustice

The article titled “Justice Department Investigation is Sought in Florida Teenager’s shooting death” by Alvarez recounts the February 26<sup>th</sup> shooting. ‘Stand Your Ground Law/self-defense’ and ‘Race’ were the primary frames utilized in the article based on how early it was placed in the news article. For instance, in the beginning of the article, the related ‘gun control’ frame is displayed when the ‘Stand Your Ground law’ frame is further supported by Brian Tannebaum’s statement, a criminal defense lawyer in Florida, when he states, “Stand Your Ground is a law that has really created a wild west type environment in Florida...it allows people to kill outside their homes, if they are in reasonable fear for their lives. It’s a very low standard”. Tannebaum’s quote was placed directly after Alvarez described the Stand Your Ground law where he states, “Florida’s self-defense law known as Stand Your Ground, grants immunity to people who act to protect themselves if they have a reasonable fear they will be killed or seriously injured”.

Additionally, following the lawyer’s statement was a quote from the Benjamin Crump, Martin’s family lawyer, where he states “had Trayvon been the person who was the triggerman, they would have arrested him from Day 1 and they wouldn’t have given him bail and he would be sitting in jail...Zimmerman is free and sleeping in his own bed at night”. Here the racial frame is projected in the lawyer’s statement, since he insinuates race played a role in Martin being profiled and the non-conviction. The lawyer suggests this by juxtaposing Zimmerman experience of getting arrested to a hypothetical experience in the case Martin was arrested.

Like many journalists Alvarez used the shooting as a platform for political and social debate over the Stand Your Ground law and gun control. As Hall et al. mentioned in the literature review, the key factor that differentiates local journalism from national is the proximity of the local journalist to the community (Hall et al., 2013). As stated, proximity is defined as a

“geographical ‘nearness’ of an event”, and could affect the way journalists shape their news reports (Jenkins, 2015, p. 62). Significantly, by the *New York Times* using the shooting as platform for social issues, this study further provides support that national news’ aim is to focus on events that can be translated to an issue that holds a national interest of the country (Pollock, 2013).

Both Martin and Zimmerman was used as exemplars, especially in the national press. As mentioned in the literature, exemplars are considered a vital component in the construction of news (Johnson-Cartee, 2004). The case being used to illustrate social ills caused it to lose touch with the actual case itself, resulting in Zimmerman and Martin to stand in for larger social issues. According to Brosius, national journalist, frequently use exemplars to present a story or personify an issue (Brosius, 2003). For example, Alvarez utilizing Martin and Zimmerman to sensationalize the national issues of gun control and the right to stand ground causes Martin and Zimmerman to lose their human nature within the new report.

Furthermore, opposing to the previous article by Stutzman, where she framed Cutcher as an unreliable witness, this new article used Cutcher statement to support the dominant frame of ‘attribution to responsibility’ and ‘mistrust of police’ frame. Alvarez states, “Mary Cutcher and her roommate said they heard Trayvon pleading. They heard a gunshot. They rushed outside and saw Mr. Zimmerman standing over the teenager. Ms. Cutcher said she “did not think it was self-defense and added that the police took only a brief statement, despite her efforts”. Here the ‘mistrust in police’ frame is further supported by Alvarez framing Cutcher as a reliable and concerning witness who was turned away from law enforcements. Contrary to the previous article by Stutzman, where she uses a similar quote from Cutcher, but framed it differently to discredit Cutcher as witness. This reveals how authors can use the same interviewees in their

news reports, but use their news reports' dominate frame to shape the interviewees' frames differently from one another.

**4.6 The New Times “911 Calls Add Detail to Debate Over Florida Killing” by Lizette Alvarez, March 17, 2012**

*Figure 8 Interviewees’ frames in Alvarez (2012b)*

Interviewees’ Frame	
Interviewees (4)	Frames
Spokesperson of Police	Mistrust in Police
Zimmerman’s dad:	Defense for Zimmerman
Martin Mother, Sybrina Fulton	Empathy for Trayvon

Alvarez also wrote a March 17 article in the *New York Times* titled “911 Calls add detail to debate over Florida killing”, describing the new 911 recording from the February 26<sup>th</sup> shooting, where ‘attribution of responsibility’ and ‘race’ appeared as the dominant frames. In the article, the *New York Times* frequently used the word “hood” to describe Martin’s clothing. Alvarez describes Martin as a "black teenager wearing a sweatshirt, with the hood draped over his head” (Alvarez, 2012b). When describing the incident Alvarez states, “He [Zimmerman] spotted a young teenager wearing a sweatshirt, with a hood draped over his head. Mr. Zimmerman, a 28-year-old Hispanic man, trailed him a bit”. Alvarez also included Zimmerman’s statement from the 911 recordings where he tells the dispatcher that “this guy looks like he’s up to no good or on drugs or something”.

The term “hoodie” is a vernacular term associated with a hooded sweatshirt. (Bell, 2017). Whereas in the United Kingdom (UK) the word “hoodie” can be perceived as a symbol of

resistance, especially during and after the UK's 2011 summer riots. However, in America and Europe, the "hoodie" can serve as a representation of violence and young criminals (Bell, 2017). Using the term "hood" or "hoodie" to describe Martin can serve as a subtle way to support the article's overall 'race' frame, since the term can be perceived as evoking racial stereotypes. The rhetoric of Martin's hoodie focused on the political issues such as race relation and gun control.

This same notion is also seen with the term "gated community". The term "gated community" appeared within the news article when recounting the incident. Alvarez states:

The 911 calls from a gated community in Sanford, north of Orlando, culminate with a faint voice in the distance crying and pleading for help. A gunshot was being heard, and then silence. Mr. Zimmerman told the police that he shot Trayvon in self-defense. There have been no arrests for the case. The unarmed teenager, who carried Skittles and a can of ices tea, was walking to the home of his father's girlfriend from a convenience store.

The terms "hoodie" and "gated community" are not neutral terms, even though they appear neutral within the articles. The terms represent the racialized discourse that is occurring within the article. The terms "hoodie" and "gated community" was placed right before Alvarez introduced Zimmerman stating "This guy looks like he's up to no good or on drugs or something" and Alvarez describing Zimmerman getting out his vehicle to approach Martin "with his licensed 9-millimeter pistol". The two terms placed before the two quotes further helps support the frame of race relation and gun control. Similar to the term "hoodie", rather than using racial descriptors, the term "gate community" is also used subtly in the news stories to evoke the ideas of race without using racial terms. Both terms were used as embedded methods of perpetuating stereotypes about Blacks.

Likewise, towards the end of the article Alvarez included a quote from Fulton, where she states, “I listened to the tapes and it just broke my heart again to hear him [Martin] screaming for help and pleading for his life, and he was still murdered...there is no question in my mind that is his voice”. Including Fulton quote not only creates empathy for Martin, but the use of the phrases “murder” and “pleading for life” supports the ‘attribution of responsibility’ frame, where Fulton is blatantly placing the blame of the loss of her son on Zimmerman. The pattern of Cutcher’s unchanged statement being framed differently in the articles, illustrates how the dominate frames influence the secondary frame within news reports. Though, the continuous framing of Cutcher’s statement left her to be ‘powerless’ to the media portrayals of her. This notion will further be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.7 Discussion of Cutcher’s quotes**

There is a recurring presence of Cutcher’s statements across all four articles analyzed. The repeated presence of Cutcher’s statement is worth noting as it demonstrates how the articles dominate framed was used to shaped the interviewees’ frame within the news reports. Cutcher’s statement was taken as face value, but based on the articles dominate frame, the journalist appeared to leave out additional details about the witness. Though Cutcher’s statement remains the same within the articles, the journalist would place Cutcher statements within the articles to shape her frame and to have it align with the article’s primary frame. By doing this, it resulted in Cutcher’s words to carrying different weights from one article to another.

**Figure 9** Mary Cutcher's different frames identified and its effect of the larger frame in the three articles from both *Orlando Sentinel* and *New York Times*

Mary Cutcher's Different Framing			
Article	Quote from Cutcher	Article's Frame	Effects of larger frame on Cutcher
<b>Rene Stutzman, March 16, 2012</b>	"I know this was not self-defense. There was no punching, no hitting going on at the time, no wrestling"	-Defense for Zimmerman	The "defense for Zimmerman" frame discredits Cutcher's frame, which causes Cutcher's quote to not support dominant frame  Cutcher's quote was placed before a quote from the police: "they tried to interview her [Cutcher] without success, and this time, she wrote a very short sworn statement for her roommate that was consistent with Zimmerman's account." Demonstrating Cutcher's unwillingness to cooperate with the police and her inconsistent statements which further discredit Cutcher as a witness
<b>Bianca Prieto, March 16, 2012</b>	"I thought it was common sense that Zimmerman would be arrested...that was not self-defense."	-Injustice -Mistrust in police -self-defense	Contrary, to the <i>Orlando Sentinel</i> article by Stutzman, we see Cutcher in a positive light, which helps supports the overall frame of the news story
<b>Lizette Alvarez, March 17, 2012b</b>	(indirect quote) "Did not think it was self-defense and added that the police took only a brief statement, despite her efforts".	-Attribution to responsibility -Self-Defense	Cutcher's quote helps to support the article's frames and place blame on Zimmerman

Overall, the study allowed me to examine the interplay of relationships between power and the media, Martin, Zimmerman, and the actors within the stories by demonstrating how the media reinforces the status quo of society. The continuous framing of Mary Cutcher's quote demonstrates how 'powerless' the interviewees become once their quotes framed to align with the article's primary frame. Demonstrating that interviewees are entitled to their experience when giving their statements to journalist, but are in a sense 'powerless' since they are not entitled in their opinions. According to Teo (2000), the use of quotations becomes "a gatekeeping device that admits only the people in power and influence...while shutting out the opinions and perspectives of the deemed by society to be powerless" (p.13). Teo (2000) also states that framing devices can become "powerful ideological tool to manipulate the interpretation ...of people and events" (p. 22). Thus, while the news media furthers empowers the 'powerful' through framing devices, it depowers the racialized minorities (Entman, 1993; Teo, 2000).

The four articles all exemplified how "powerless" Martin's and Zimmerman's are by the media depictions on their constructed identity and the incident that took place February 26, 2012. Essentially, through the study's findings, it portrayed the different forms of power. With the use of framing, the journalists have the power to push a particular frame of an event and the power to create and maintaining racial identities of actors in the stories. The findings also reveal how discourses reproduce structures and the relationships of power. Moreover, what these findings demonstrates is the way logics of different discourses shape journalists' stories and contain the potential contradictions that arise when the witnesses give accounts that differ from those of people in power.

#### **4. 8 Limitations and Future Research**

There are two primary limitations to this study. First, the sample includes only two publications, the *New York Times* and *Orlando Sentinel*. The study is limited to articles pertaining about the shooting that took place on February 26th, 2012 to Zimmerman's first appearance in court on April 12th, 2012. However, this study was not meant to be representative of all media coverage of this incident, as the study only examined two news publications in the pre-determined time frame. In the future, a broader and larger sample size would be necessary to determine if the results could be generalized to all newspapers. Second, the study was limited to print newspapers. Consequently, it cannot shed light on journalist working for magazines, broadcast television or radio whom may have also framed race and crime in the Trayvon Martin case during the period of February 26, 2012- April 12, 2012. Furthermore, future researchers should increase the scope to include more national and local newspapers from more regions or include variety types of media in the analysis.

## Ch.5 Conclusion

Now that I unpacked my research question and discussed the literature review, theory, research design, and findings, in this section I will summarize the main points, discuss the significance of the study, and describe the questions my analysis raised that can be implemented for future research.

The study aimed to shed light on the media depictions and framing of the Trayvon Martin case between local and national news. The *Orlando Sentinel* provided local news and *The New York Times* provided national news. I used the framing theory as the theoretical framework, and a mix method approach as my research design to help me analyze my research questions. In the mix method approach, I utilized both content and discourse; content analysis helped to analyze discourses of power that occur at the micro level, whereas discourse analysis helps to analyze discourses occurring at the macro level. Content analysis investigated the terms in local and national news used to designate Martin and Zimmerman's race during the coverage of Trayvon Martin case. The terms served as indexes of power, and were analyzed because it portrays the specific ways words are deployed to reflect power relations. Moreover, the descriptor "White" was not mention within none of the articles in the *New York Times*, while the descriptors such as "Black", "Hispanic", and "white and Hispanic". The absence portrays "White" as being the "norm", since the *New York Times* only mentioned race when identifying a perceived minority. Additionally, the findings revealed how news media used its power to subtly reinforce and maintain longstanding racialized stereotypes of Blacks, by using the term such as "slain". Lastly, the over-lexicalization of Martin's and Zimmerman's race shown in the findings exemplifies

Martin and Zimmerman as ‘powerless’ by the media depictions of their constructed identify and on the incident, that took place on February 26, 2012.

The following two-sub questions were used to analyze framing to further examine my main research question.

**Sub-question: What are the differences and similarities between local and national news (specifically the *Orlando Sentinel* and *New York Times*)?**

**Sub-question: Is there a difference in the *Orlando Sentinel*’s coverage before and after Trayvon Martin case became national news and if so, what is it?**

The first portion of discourse analysis revealed that the *Orlando Sentinel*, focused on the February 26th shooting and ensuing police investigation, whereas the national news, the *New York Times*, focused mostly on social and political issues. The findings further support the concept that in local news there is often a more thoughtful approach with a lesser attempt to sensationalize and greater attempts to provide balance to varying sides of a story (Pollock, 2013). This is related to proximity, where it affects how local reporters approaches the source and the manner the information is framed when it’s published (Pollock, 2013). Further analysis showed that once the *New York Times* picked up the coverage on the Trayvon Martin case on March 16, 2012, there was a difference in the *Orlando Sentinel*’s headlines and language used in the article. For instance, a March 13th article from the *Orlando Sentinel* headlines are “Trayvon Martin Shooting case goes to State Attorney Office Today” (Stutzman). Compared to a March 20<sup>th</sup> article (*Orlando Sentinel*) titled “Trayvon Martin’s girlfriend speaks out about final moments before teen’s slaying” (Hernandez). The March 13th article’s headlines demonstrated that neutral verbs such as “shooting” were used, compared to the March 20<sup>th</sup> article that used verbs such as

“slaying” to describe the incident within the headlines. The term “slain” or “slay” is usually associated when describing a killing of an animal (the slain dragon) (Green,1999). Thus, dehumanizing Martin, and subtly comparing Martin to an animal. As stated in the four stages of media representation in the literature review, the ridicule stage was where Blacks were often portrayed in unfavorable stereotypical roles such as monkey or ape. Therefore, portraying blacks as simply laughably and silly in comparison to Whites (Clark, 1969; Green 1999). These findings suggest that the news media has the power to subtly reinforce and maintain longstanding racialized stereotypes of Blacks within the news.

Furthermore, discourse analysis also revealed how both Martin and Zimmerman were used as exemplars in during the news coverage. Martin and Zimmerman were used a means to help national journalists attain and portray their frame of the issue. The Trayvon Martin case being used to illustrate social issues caused it to lose touch with the actual case itself, resulting in the creation of conditional worth for both Zimmerman and Martin. As indicated by Brosius, national journalists frequently use exemplars to present a story or personify an issue (Brosius, 2003). Though, doing, so causes actors such as Martin and Zimmerman to lose their human nature within the news reports.

Moreover, the second portion of discourse analysis discovered how news articles based on the same event conveyed a different frame with the use of selective quotes, lexical choices of words, syntactical structures, and the omission of information. Within the four articles analyzed from the *Orlando Sentinel* and *New York Times*, discourse analysis revealed seven dominant frames: - Stand Your Ground Law, defense for Zimmerman, racial, attribution of responsibility, injustice, mistrust in police, and empathy for Martin or Zimmerman-. In each news article, there was a dominant frame that was supported by the interviewees’ frames. The dominant frames

helped shaped the interpretation and frame of the witness frame. This is further demonstrated when journalist Prieto, Stutzman, and Alvarez all interviewed the same witness Mary Cutcher within their news reports and framed her statements per their article's primary frame (**Figure 9**). The continuous framing of Mary Cutcher's quote demonstrates how 'powerless' the interviewees become once their quotes are framed to align with the article's primary frame. Demonstrating that interviewees are entitled to their experience when giving their statements to journalist, but are in a sense 'powerless' since they are not entitled in their opinions.

This study is significant for several reasons. The Trayvon Martin case opened doors for discussions on race-relations issues, and a national conversation on gun laws and the controversial *Stand Your Ground* law in the United States. Unfortunately, shootings still occur every day in the United States, and cases such as the Trayvon Martin case is important to examine since it affects members of society in all distinctive ways. For a young South Floridian teen, the Trayvon Martin case demonstrates the issue of safety when encountering someone with a level of authority or power within their own neighborhoods. For other non-minority Americans, the case revealed that patterns of misrepresentation and categorization of race that still occurs today. The present study shows that the "news media serves as an amplifier for producing and reproducing the unequal power retain in society: (Teo, 2000, p. 44). Examining how local and national news framed the Trayvon Martin case, allowed us to see how detrimental and powerful media framing can be. Though, by this study bringing news discourse to the forefront, it metaphorically removes the media power to "subtly reinforced stereotypes" within the news (van Dijk, 1993).

The present study's analysis raised several questions for future research. My findings revealing how journalists framed Cutcher's unchanged statement raised the question on how often interviewees become 'powerless' within news coverage. For future research, it would be interesting to expand the data set and include a variety of local and national news publications and analyze how Mary Cutcher's, or any additional repeated interviewees, quotes are framed during the Trayvon Martin case. Moreover, the multiple frames of Mary's Cutcher quote signifies the different voices that exist within one news publication. With that said, it would be noteworthy for future studies to specifically speak to the journalist and editors to get their motives behind their news report and to see if it aligns with their news report's dominant frames.

Additionally, our study revealing how the news media could perpetuate and maintain racialized stereotypes of African Americans raised a question on the effect on the readers. Therefore, for future studies it would be interesting to examine this research question: *Can racial attitudes in news media lead to the creation of obstacles and challenges for African Americans?* Framing in news has such complexities and scholars should be promoted to continue further research to understand its nuisances.

### ***5.1 Role of Researcher***

As mention in the introduction, I previously experienced being on the other side media due to an unforeseen circumstance, but this circumstance allowed me to look at the data from a critical perspective. I have been a resident of South Florida for 20 years, and within those years have visited Orlando to visit family and friends. I personally knew friends and people within the South Florida community who knew Trayvon Martin due to attending the same high school, Michael J. Krop, as him or knowing his friends or family. Although I did not live in Sanford or

Orlando during the shooting, I was aware and witnessed the high racial tensions and community divide over laws, such as Stand Your Ground and gun control, within the community.

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## Appendix

### *Guided questions used to identify frames in four selected articles*

#### *Journalist Frames:*

Overall: What is the nature of the event (Slaying, self-defense, etc.)?

- Specific aspects of the story I analyze to identify article's frame:
  - Headlines: Specific aspects of the story I examined was the articles' headlines. I looked if the headlines included racial descriptors to describe Martin or Zimmerman. I also examined if the headlines used loaded words or phrases such as slayed, black hooded sweater, and white gated communities within the headlines. (Define loaded words)
  - Syntax: Examined the type of information journalist placed first in the news report, the introduction, and what the journalist left for later on in the news report. I also analyzed the journalists' placement of the interviewees' quotes and statement within their news report. If a common interviewee was used in more than one news report, I then examined what was included in the interviewee's statement and what was left out.

Article as narrated story:

- Is there a protagonist? If so, who? What in the story identifies this person as the protagonist?
  - i.e. The protagonist can be identified through the interviewees' statement

within the articles or the articles, along with the specific people the journalist uses as the main actors and interviewees within a news story.

Also by examining how language is used to talk about or to describe the protagonist.

- Is there an antagonist? If so, who? What in the story identifies this person as the antagonist?
  - i.e. The antagonist can be identified through the interviewees' statement within the articles or the articles, along with the specific people the journalist uses as the main actors and interviewees within a news story. Also by examining how language is used to talk about or to describe the antagonist.
- What is the nature of the conflict between protagonist and antagonist?
- What happens in this story?

Frames of those interviewed:

Overall: What is the nature of the event (Slaying, self-defense, etc.)?

- Headlines: Specific aspects of the story I examined was the articles' headlines. I looked if the headlines included racial descriptors to describe Martin or Zimmerman. I also examined if the headlines used loaded words or phrases such as slayed, black hooded sweater, and white gated communities within the headlines. (Define loaded words)
- Syntax: Examined the type of information journalist placed first in the news report, the introduction, and what the journalist left for later on in the news report. I also analyzed the journalists' placement of the interviewees' quotes and statements within

their news report. If a common interviewee was used in more than one news report, I then examined what was included in the interviewee's statement and what was left out.

Article as narrated story:

- Is there a protagonist? If so, who? What in the story identifies this person as the protagonist?
  - i.e. The protagonist can be identified through the interviewees' statement within the articles or the articles, along with the specific people the journalist uses as the main actors and interviewees within a news story. . Also by examining how language is used to talk about or to describe the protagonist.
- Is there an antagonist? If so, who? What in the story identifies this person as the antagonist?
  - i.e. The protagonist can be identified through the interviewees' statement within the articles or the articles, along with the specific people the journalist uses as the main actors and interviewees within a news story. Also by examining how language is used to talk about or to describe the antagonist.
- What is the nature of the conflict between protagonist and antagonist?
- What happens in this story?

#### **Relationships between Frames**

- How does the journalist incorporate the different frames into his or her story??
- How does he/she position the interviewee in relation to the story and to each

other?

- Does the story support what they say? Contradict what they say?

### **Racial Descriptors**

- How do the journalist and the interviewees use different racial descriptors?
- How does their use enable the different frames you have identified?