Wayne State University Dissertations

1-1-2017

Mass Shootings As Issue Management Exigencies And Focusing Events For Public Policy Debates

Melvin Gupton
Wayne State University,

MASS SHOOTINGS AS ISSUE MANAGEMENT EXIGENCIES AND FOCUSING EVENTS FOR PUBLIC POLICY DEBATES

by

MELVIN GUPTON

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2017

MAJOR: COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Approved By:

_____
Advisor   Date

_____

_____

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Sylvester Gupton, Sr. who taught me through example the dignity of making an honest living to support one's family. I also dedicate this work to my esteemed brother, U.S. Airman Sylvester Gupton, Jr., who suddenly passed away right before this work was completed. In addition, I dedicate this dissertation to one of the most supportive parents alive, my mother Lizzie Mae Gupton. Thank you mom for supporting me through the formative years while I was a cub scout, Boy Scout, safety patrolman, science fair contestant, White House intern, and even a city executive.

Finally, I want to thank the remaining seven of my siblings and closest friends for their support and encouragement throughout this process. Angela Gupton, Martha Gupton, Lizzie Patterson, William Lesure, Louise Bennett, Karya Hunt, and Daisy Hill, you are the best. To Joseph Forney, the tech guru, for your unconditional support and uncommon wisdom; integrity is your signature strength and is contagious. To Pizarro Lovelace, the international traveler, for calling me "Doctor" years before I wrote a single word of this dissertation. You, sir, are a godsend who brings balance and laughter to a world in need. To Wilner Badere (in memoriam) for teaching me much of what I know about finances and the value of honing a global perspective. To Willie Walker, Tom Goss, Arthur Brown, Carl Wilson, Gary Greene, Georgia Boyd, Jennifer Davis, Martha Leverett, James Petty, Ronald Collis, Charles Ohno, Cylenthia LaToye Miller, Cynthia Bell, Janisse Green, John King, Calvin Sharp, Dorothy Quinn, Lester Gayden, Jackie Cooper, Christopher Raup, Anthony Darden, Ray Ellison, Bonnie Bizzell, and Kenneth Cockrel, Jr., my friends and respected mentors, thank you for your example of ethical and dedicated public servants and consummate professionals. To countless friends, relatives and students not mentioned here, I thank and honor you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, I would like to thank a cadre of esteemed and dedicated professors: Dr. Larry Miller, Dr. James Wesley Ward, Dr. Pradeep Sopory, Dr. Fred Vultee, Dr. Hayg Oshagan, Dr. Joseph Dunbar, Dr. Reginald Gerlica, Dr. William Trapani, Dr. Geneva Smitherman, Dr. Walter Edwards, Dr. Alvin Aubert, Dr. Karl Gregory, Dr. Howard Thurman, Dr. Shawn Long, Dr. B. J. Allen, Dr. Linda Hagin, Dr. Lee Meadows, and Dr. Alvin Aubert (in memoriam) for modeling a love of scholarship, love for students, teaching excellence, and genuine mentorship. You all sacrifice much more than anyone can imagine. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

xi

www.manaraa.com

CHAPTER 1 - MASS SHOOTINGS ACTIVATING PUBLIC POLICY DEBATES

Mass shooting incidents involving the largely indiscriminate killing of multiple victims in public spaces have been on the rise since 2008. In fact, from 2009 through the December 2012 tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut where 20 first graders were killed in their elementary school, FBI researchers maintain that the number of fatal mass shootings has tripled (McCormack, 2014). The rate of shooting incidents resulting in multiple homicides increased from "one every other month between 2000 and 2008 (roughly five per year) to more than one per month between 2009 and 2012," (Blair, Martaindale & Nichols, 2014), which amounts to 15 separate incidents each year. Other researchers concur that the number of mass shootings has indeed tripled since 2011, amounting to 16.4 incidents per year at a rate of one mass shooting every 64 days (McCormack, 2014). In their wake, mass shootings provoke contentious issue debates among stakeholders including gun manufacturers, legislators, nonprofit groups, law enforcement agencies, and the families of the victims. Debates tend to focus on determining cause and prevention. At issue are where to affix blame and how to best address the lasting disputes related to gun control, violence, and public safety.

Not surprisingly, the impact of such high-profile events often reverberates out from the immediate vicinities where they take place to the larger society. Other communities identify with the issues being deliberated and seize the opportunity to learn from the lessons inherent in these crises. Under the close and often vocal scrutiny by stakeholders, these tragedies gain prominent placement on the media's, publics', and policy makers' agenda. Each subsequent shooting incident triggers national conversations on the recurring issues of gun control, gun rights, and public safety.

Notable for mass shootings and other crises are the acute levels of uncertainty and the considerable media attention (Birkland & Lawrence, 2009). Germane to mass shooting crises and

adding much complication are the polarizing issue arguments that are catalyzed. For example, the 2015 church shooting in South Carolina not only revived the requisite gun control debate initially, but it also stoked hate crime discussions and precipitated national controversy over the removal of the Confederate battle flag. These have real social and policy implications. This study explores the central features of these crises, including how stakeholders communicate during these incidents, how these attacks activate certain issues, dominate media coverage, inflame passionate stakeholder discourse and reignite public policy debates. Employing a multiple case content analysis, this study extricates the unique categorical markers that distinguish mass shootings from other violence in the workplace often found within existing crisis typologies. Additionally, it examines media reports for three mass shooting incidents to chronicle the key stakeholders, the foundational public policy issues and their trajectory as they unfold in the aftermath of each shooting.

One feature of mass shootings is that they can seriously undermine existing issues management and crisis planning efforts. This can be observed by examining how confidence in contingency plans is misguided during mass shooting events. For example, the school security system in place inside the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown was inadequate to defend against mass shooter Adam Lanza in December 2012. The 20-year-old forced his way through the school's main door even after it was securely locked at the designated time. He shot and killed administrators before anyone could trigger the security alarm in the main office. A critical vulnerability was the fact that the crisis plan adopted by the school was not as familiar as fire and lockdown drills (Barron, 2012). As a result, administrators, who were under fire, were never able to activate the alarm system to alert law enforcement of the intrusion. Instead, a 911 call had to be placed by someone in the school well after shots were fired. The result of this localized security breach raised the school safety issue on the media, public, and policy agenda for not only

Newtown, Connecticut but schools all over the nation. Yet, the safety issue is only one of many associated with these tragedies.

Following each mass shooting, the challenge of addressing several unresolved issues intensifies as communities (and the nation) are forced to contend, yet again, with compromised safety. Communities, organizations, activists, government officials and other stakeholders are left to grapple with a number of outstanding policy disputes. From news reporting, we learn that among those reported policy disputes are: 1) responsible gun control statutes that restrict access to certain types of ammunition and firearms, particularly assault weapons; 2) wholesale preservation of Second Amendment freedoms; 3) examination and change of existing mental health laws; 4) restrictions on open carry statutes that makes some public places off limits (such as elementary schools, public parks, places of worship, sports arena, and other venues); 5) the classification of some shootings as "domestic terrorism;" 6) reasonable safety and security protocols in public spaces; 7) universal background checks for gun purchases; 8) loopholes in online gun purchases; 9) court-ordered temporary gun seizures for those deemed a danger to themselves or others; and 10) federal legislation that addresses all of the above from a national vantage. Several of these issues continue to be contested long after the shooting investigation concludes. They tend to be debated during the crisis and post-crisis stages when emotions are still elevated.

Another defining characteristic of mass shooting incidents is their extensive media coverage, albeit for a limited duration, and its role in setting the public agenda. Due to the equivocal nature of crises and the public's inclination to make sense of them, mass shootings tend to "generate high levels of media coverage, as audiences have a desire to learn the facts of the events, and, in a more sustained way, to understand the social implications and deeper meaning of such events" (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014, p. 24). Like any unfolding emergency, the rise and

fall of the reporting trajectory for mass shootings can be mapped along the three-stage crisis continuum: pre-crisis, crisis, post-crisis. During the pre-crisis calm, media coverage remains routine and security protocols are generally deemed adequate. Daily events proceed as planned and are considered normal until gunfire erupts without warning, triggering the crisis. Media coverage tends to explode exponentially as outrage and disbelief reverberates from the epicenter of the shooting crisis (Birkland & Lawrence, 2009). For days and sometimes weeks following the shooting, the coverage of these events consumes the front pages of local newspapers and dominates the lead stories on nightly news broadcasts (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014). After the customary identification of the shooter, the shooter's weapon(s) and the victims, the media solicits responses from local and national officials who comment on the tragedy and propose plausible deterrents (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014). As the crisis subsides, subsequent reporting explicates the possible motives, shooter background, and an initial timeline of how the tragic events unfolded. The consequence of this continuous coverage is usually the revival of the decades-old gun control issue debate and/or an associated issue. Subsequently, public policy deliberations take center stage concurrent with the public bombardment of competing stakeholder narratives. It is at this point that the issues debate only deepens.

This study is grounded in the understanding that active shooter incidents with four or more fatalities (using the FBI's definition of "mass murder" during a single incident) are crises with the propensity to activate issues and provoke public policy debate. Accordingly, these phenomena function as "turning points," (Fink, 1986, p. 15) "triggering mechanisms" (Gerston, 2004, p. 23) or "focusing events" (Birkland, 1997, p. 3), that result in issues saliency and deliberation. If these galvanizing events can raise stakeholder awareness, sustain public attention, and realize legislative support on the local and national policy agenda, then they can help to foster the passage of

legislation (Gerston, 2004). Heath and Palenchar have noted that crises have the potential to activate the public policy agenda (2009). Mass shootings are such events and can instigate broad social discussion of issues leading to changes in the public agenda and subsequent shifts in policy (Birkland, 1997; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2011). Mass shootings, such as those that occurred at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University ("Virginia Tech") in 2007 or the U.S. Navy Yard in 2013, disrupt communities and result in public debate on the issues of cause, resolution, and prevention.

As noted, an outcome of this study is a closer look at the communication that takes place in the aftermath of mass shooting incidents. In particular, it is important to understand who is communicating in the aftermath of these crises and what arguments and appeals they are making. Also of concern are how the public policy issues come to the forefront and how they evolve or fade in the media and public domain following an incident. Another expected outcome of this study is a look at how mass shootings are distinct from other forms of crisis such as workplace violence. Some shooting incidents, as opposed to others, appear to reactivate public policy discussions, but we do not know a great deal about how the central features of these crises are mapped and subsequently evolve. The media coverage following a shooting incident makes news reporting a primary data source to tease out answers to the questions of focus for this study. Following a brief review of the mass shooting literature; a discussion of the theoretical frames chosen to tease out the features of mass shootings is also included.

Mass Shootings – An Overview

Some researchers argue that mass shootings "reflect the deeply latent social value conflicts frequently at tension below the surface of social life" (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014, p. 24). It is that very conflict that leads to issues debate and provides opportunities for improved public

policies and security protocols following mass shootings. Although active shooter incidents occur with some (albeit disputed) regularity in the U.S. -- on college campuses, on city streets, in the workplace, in homes, at night clubs, and in places of worship -- discussions have been dominated by those in school settings such as Columbine or Virginia Tech and now Sandy Hook (Muschert, 2007). How these incidents are characterized in the literature is itself subject to different interpretations. Discrepancies in the way mass shootings are defined and therefore tallied contributes to competing stakeholder narratives used to influence public and policy agenda. The more salient features of mass shootings covered in extant research follow, beginning with how these phenomena are defined and quantified, who initiates them, how to prevent them, and some of the unresolved issues they engender.

Mass shootings defined. "Mass shooting" is a derivative of the FBI's definition of mass murder. According to the FBI, mass murder is described as four or more fatalities "occurring during the same incident, with no distinctive time period between the murders. These events typically involved a single location, where the killer murdered a number of victims in an ongoing incident" (Morton & Hilt, 2005). Mass shootings with at least four fatalities have been made synonymous with mass murder by the independent news organization *Mother Jones*, which keeps a running tally of shooting incidents. Still, there are no specific criteria or an official definition of a "mass shooting." This invites identification discrepancies and stokes an additional point of contention. Generally, mass shooting is described in the media based on incidents involving multiple victims and primarily associated with gun violence. Criminology experts and FBI officials delineate three classes of perpetrators of mass fatalities: mass murderer, spree killer, or serial killer. According to the FBI's website, "mass murder was described as a number of murders (four or more) occurring during the same incident, with no distinctive time period between the murders."

Contrast this with the agency's distinguishing characteristic of serial murder, which "…required a temporal separation between the different murders," and spree killing, which occurred in more than one location ("Serial Murder," 2005). For purposes of this study, the FBI's definition of mass murder, involving four or more fatalities following the discharge of a firearm that occurs in the same location and during a single incident, will be adapted to denote mass shooting.

Mass shooting frequency. Another point of contention, in addition to definitions of mass shootings, is how frequently these crisis events occur. Inconsistencies in how researchers count mass shootings invite a fundamental counting discrepancy that plays out in the media. While researchers and political pundits argue about whether there is evidence of a decrease in mass shootings, the most recent report by FBI researchers indicates mass shootings have tripled over the past 12 years (Blair, Martaindale & Nichols, 2014). Some statistical reporting models include shootings related to gang and domestic violence or count non-fatal mass shootings, while others do not (Fox & DeLateur, 2014). Fox and DeLateur argue that it is a myth that mass shootings are on the rise, happen indiscriminately, involve more fatalities than in the past, are caused by violent media, and can be resolved with responsible legislation. They contend that there are "nearly 20 mass shootings a year in the United States. Most… were nowhere as deadly as the recent massacres in Aurora and Newtown…that have encouraged healthy and often heated debate" (2014, p. 130). The stance on whether the trend has increased, decreased or remained flat appears to correlate with political ideology (Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2013). As a result, headlines for articles in the popular press report conflicting results. Still, if one mass shooting makes the nation pause and reflect in disbelief that nothing substantial has been done to mitigate these incidents, the cumulative effect of a history of successive mass shootings amplifies the notion that these complex events are beyond our lawmakers' capacity or willingness to address. Coombs and Holladay (2001) refer to this

negative performance history as the "velcro effect" because one poorly-handled crisis "attracts and snags additional reputational damage" for the managing organization. Ineffectual responses to effect change after consecutive shootings affect how some stakeholders view government aptitude when it comes to public safety (Coombs & Holladay, 2001, p. 335).

Mass shooting causation. Another issue affecting public policy debate is determining what causes mass shootings. Gun activists generally argue that mass shootings occur because the shooters tend to be mentally disturbed and those targeted are unable to defend themselves. The oft referenced "good guys" quote by NRA executive Wayne LaPierre suggests a "binary: good versus evil" context for very complex shooting crises (Tropp, 2016, para. 1). Thus, the solution to mass shootings is more guns in the hands of "good guys." These gun enthusiasts hold the view that any infringement on a gun owner's Second Amendment rights is indistinguishable from an attack on their personhood. Fundamentally, they believe inefficiencies in security protocols make organizations susceptible. At the other end of the political spectrum, gun control advocates generally argue that inequities in the socio-economic environment breed violence. They cite loopholes in gun sales as inviting abuse, along with the availability of assault rifles and automatic pistols. Like their conservative counterparts, they too agree that mental health issues are among contributing causes (Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2013).

Aside from psychological causes, Joslyn and Haider-Markel found the public's political affiliation helps frame causal attributions. After studying the 2007 shooting massacre at Virginia Tech and the 2011 fatal shootings in a Tucson public square (2013), they found that Democrats "were more likely than Republicans to attribute the tragedies to larger social and political forces" such as "situational forces…for example, permissive gun control laws, institutional neglect of the mentally ill, or persistent exposure to violence" (2013, p. 411). According to their research,

Republicans blamed the gunmen themselves and cited the assailant's "character, attitudes, personality, or dispositions" and believed it to "give rise to their behaviors" (p. 412). This partisan divide is indicative of the social narratives promoted from both ends of the political spectrum.

Some researchers maintain that assailants have five primary motives for shooting to kill: 1) *revenge* by the disgruntled who want retribution for their own failures in life; 2) *power* from a "'pseudo-commando' style massacre perpetrated by some marginalized individual… wage(ing) a personal war against society"; 3) *loyalty* as evidenced in murder suicides where a father takes the life of his family and self to "spare them all from a miserable existence on earth and to reunite them in the hereafter"; 4) *terror* inclusive of the destruction of government property by "a political dissident" who wants to send a message; and 5) *profit* as exemplified in criminal incidents where the shooter intends on eliminating all witnesses (Fox & DeLateur, 2014, p. 127). Acts of revenge and terror, in particular, and power and loyalty motives to a lesser degree align with the partisan argument that gun wielding and the resulting mayhem are the result of complex social ills that plague our society. These shooters' anti-establishment motives are further complicated by easy access to guns, particularly at gun shows and Internet points of sale. The other partisan argument upholds the view that it is the individual shooter's disposition that causes them to act – not society or social ills. Moreover, they contend that the locus of control is with the shooter and not the gun they wield. Those factors motivating individual shooters are certainly complex and it is clear that political affiliation also influences our perceptions and affects how we ascribe blame and attribute cause for mass shootings (Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2013). The next segment briefly expounds on shooter background.

Mass shooter profiles and universal background checks. The argument that universal background checks could prevent those with mental health from obtaining guns is yet another

residual issue remaining in the wake of mass shootings. When considering school shootings, the popular framing of school shooters is that they are individuals with mental illness, probably experienced bullying, are exposed to media violence (including video games), have a weak social support system, and have access to firearms. Furthermore, support for the idea that mass shootings are phenomena associated with mental health issues is plausible given the work of researchers who developed shooter profiles from multiple school "rampage" shootings. Rampage in school settings is defined as "large-scale attacks…involving students who attend (or formerly attended) the school where the attack takes place; occurring on a school-related 'public stage'; and involving multiple victims, at least some of whom were shot at random or as a symbol" (Langman, 2009).

According to Langman (2009), there are three classes of school rampage shooters: 1) *traumatized* – these shooters are profiled as coming from broken homes, as suffering physical and/or sexual abuse, as having one or more parents with substance abuse problems, "at least one parent with a criminal history," and susceptible to peer influence (p. 2); 2) *psychotic* – these shooters are identified as coming from "stable homes with no histories of abuse," as having "schizophrenia" (p. 4), "paranoid delusions, delusions of grandeur, and auditory hallucinations" (p. 3); and 3) *psychopathic* – shooters are characterized as self-absorbed, showing a lack of empathy or conscience, having "a sense of superiority and contempt for others, … sadistic delight in inflicting pain on humans and/or animals…with no evidence of abuse or neglect and…no known psychotic symptoms" (p. 6) and a "fascination with weapons" (p. 8).

These classifications were based on the ten individual shooters that they profiled but likely have some applicability to mass shooters outside of the school setting. More general shooter profiles inclusive of schools and other public places based on empirical data suggest shooters are "overwhelmingly male (more than 95%, in fact), more often Caucasian (nearly two thirds), and

older than murderers in general (half are more than 30 years of age)" (Langman, 2009, p. 8). Common characteristics of these killers include: "depression, resentment, social isolation, the tendency to externalize blame, fascination with graphically violent entertainment, and a keen interest in weaponry" (Fox & DeLateur, 2014, pg. 133). In light of this profile, gun rights activists emphasize these subjects' mental instability as the reason behind most mass shootings and not the fact that the assailant chose a gun to carry out their acts of violence and revenge. For them it is a matter of shooter and not firearm culpability. "Guns do not kill people…" goes the mantra. Gun control advocates, on the other hand, argue that these shooters are resentful, depressed, and loners is indicative of deeper social and environmental issues that alienate them and cause them to lash out at and victimize others. They reason that stricter gun laws would remove firearms as the most accessible weapon of choice for those documented as mentally unstable who are intent on doing harm to many others.

Mass shooting coverage and controlling the narrative. Heath and Palenchar observe that generally people "think of events that occur in their world in narrative terms, as elements of a constructed story" (2009, p. 295). Because crises are about control (or the loss of it), it behooves organizations to control their issues narrative in the media, public and policy agenda. An examination of the 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School shows how the customary news frame had changed since the Columbine shootings in 1999. According to Schildkraut and Muschert (2014), Sandy Hook media coverage focused more on the victims, which was a departure from the media's previous coverage of mass shootings where the shooter(s) received more prominent coverage. Building on prior framing, media salience and agenda-setting research, their analysis suggests how journalists change frames over the course of their coverage of a news event and how there is a "recurring narrative process that follows mass shootings" (p. 39). They term the

process as "disaster narrative" and define frame-changing as the "continual reframing of the story [*that*] allows the media to highlight different facets of the narrative" (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014, p. 39). According to their research, the social implications following the framing of these events have material consequences. They contend that the narrative developed from around-the-clock news coverage "impacts how mass violence is defined and conceptualized in American society...events such as Columbine and Sandy Hook transcend single tragedies to sociological events with long-lasting social effects" (p. 39). The work of these researchers also provides insight into the coverage duration and the "issue-attention" cycle of these events in the media (p. 26). They briefly present the five-stage life cycle of news events. They also unpack the Columbine and Sandy Hook events and show how these "events or social problems are introduced in the media, gain interest from the public, and then fade away" (p. 39).

Mass shooting narratives – gun rights versus gun control issues. The aftershock of the third deadliest school shooting incident in U.S. history inside the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut on December 5, 2012 was quite impactful. It created intense public outcry for intervention and media scrutiny. It also altered the way society communicates and strategizes around these complex events. For example, following the Newtown shootings, the public debate on curbing gun violence greatly intensified. So has the output of both social and traditional media on this topic, whose coverage is normally expanded following gun violence (Herda-Rapp, 2003). State and national legislators even caucused to draft gun control measures that focus on and address perceived vulnerabilities, the right to bear arms, and background checks. Gun enthusiasts, for their part, flooded gun shows to secure high-capacity weapons, fearing they would soon be in short supply or removed off retailers' shelves altogether. In addition, the powerful lobby and principal stakeholder group, the National Rifle Association framed the

conversation as an attack on Second Amendment rights. They argue for arming the average citizen, such as a teacher who may have to confront an active shooter. Together, these publics are co-creating, through narrative, the crisis response, recovery, and prevention storylines through the process of enactment where "people focus on some element of their environment as they interact with one another about it" (Millar & Heath, 2004). Of course, those narratives are framed, in part, by the extensive media coverage following a mass shooting.

Mass shooting and media framing. Mass shooting crises generate widespread media attention particularly when a public official or scores of first-graders are murdered. The press generated by the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in Newtown brought media outlets to the Connecticut town that no other shooting had generated nationally since the Columbine slayings in 1999; several weeks passed before the watchful eyes of the media and nation abated (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014). Altheide examined the thematic portrayal of the attacks in the media and found that the local shooting was systematically "merged with terrorism as part of the broader frame of fear and national security" (2009, p. 1354). He also noted that Columbine would become associated with any future act of gun violence (particularly in a school setting) and found other lesser frames represented in the coverage, including "worrying about protecting children, legitimating the war on terror, and expanding social control" (Altheide, 2009, p. 1355). According to Rocque, "the vast media coverage given to these events creates the impression that there is a school shootings 'epidemic' that is still ongoing, creating something of a 'moral panic,' or a socially constructed crisis that may not reflect reality" (2014, p. 306). Using extant research, he explicates possible "cultural or sociological explanations" (p. 308) for school shootings and highlights five contributing factors: 1) the availability of guns; 2) violent media such as videos or movies (even though the literature on media effects remains inconclusive); 3) bullying; 4) the

"copycat factor" that is associated with imitation for fame and notoriety purposes; in other words, they imitate what they believe to help bring them "celebrity status" (p. 308); and 5) masculinity is the final contributing factor because to brandish a firearm is to prove yourself to be manly. It is no accident, then, that as the coverage of shooting incidents evolves weeks after the shooting, the news frames of the murders progressed from gun control and advocacy to who was hurt, to who done it, to reasons why, to reactions and responses (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014, p. 32). The *societal* frame that "situates the event in a national context" was found to be most prevalent in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook shootings (p. 33). It was followed by the *individual* frame as memorials were held for victims and the *community* frame as the remaining youth returned to a temporary school building in a nearby community (p. 34).

Mass shooting policies and prevention. Learning opportunities following shooting events include actual policy recommendations from researchers, law enforcement agents, and other stakeholders. They also offer suggested steps to help communities stem the violence. For school shootings, staff and personnel training in threat detection along with action-oriented deterrence procedures (such as combining student records in one location, or changing the school culture by spreading praise to all students beyond the stadia where only athletes excel) are among policy recommendations, according to Rocque (2012, p. 309). Additionally, limiting access to guns through community/family engagement and increasing security (e.g., installing more security cameras, random locker sweeps, improved communications and metal detectors) are also recommended strategies for mitigating shooting rampages. One criticism of these efforts is that they create a "climate of fear" (Rocque, 2012, p. 310). Legal redress options following mass shootings tend to take the form of laws that close gun show loopholes, require background checks, ban certain weapons, restrict gun magazine clips, or address mental healthcare challenges.

However, these measures tend to fail before they are enacted, due to gun lobbyists and the influence they exert on state and federal lawmakers (Addington 2009; Birkland & Lawrence, 2009; Schildkraut & Hernandez, 2014).

While existing scholarship has begun the important process of explicating several aspects of the mass shooting phenomena, it is not clear how these crises impact the larger public policy debate. Existing research has indicated that crises and public policies are closely related and that crises and/or issues can possibly activate public policy debates. The specific ways in which this activation occurs, by whom and with what outcome, are less understood. These characteristics suggest two things: 1) that mass shootings are themselves crises; and 2) their enactment can be mapped along the three crises stages. After a brief discussion of these two foundational assumptions, the crisis-issue connection is included to help contextualize these phenomena as crises activating issues. It will be followed by the two theories to be employed in this study, the questions they will answer and an overview of the three cases examined.

Primary Assumption One: Mass Shootings As Crises

Mass shootings are categorical crises. Although there is no singular definition for "crisis," leading researchers characterize these events as socially unsettling, discordant, equivocal, anomalous, and essentially destabilizing phenomena. Pauchant and Mitroff contend that crises reconcile the interplay of opposites such as "order and chaos, construction and deconstruction, [or] order and disorder" (1992, p. 32). Borda and Mackey-Kallis (2004) regard a crisis as "any event" that threatens or "seriously interferes with the operation of the organization and which can be regarded as unwelcome by those involved" (p. 117; Wragg, 1992, p. 265). Crises denote threatening and "extraordinary events that result in an unstable time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending" (Fink, 1986, p. 15). They are not merely the potential threat or *risk*

of harm, but they are actually that threat or "risk manifested" (Heath & Palenchar, 2009, p. 275). Stocker suggests crises are evident by discernible stress and pressure and constitute "a violation of your [organizational] vision….affecting people first, then organizations" (1997, pp.189-190). Tushman, Newman, and Romalli equate crises with "frame-breaking change" (1986, p. 32). Other researchers argue that crises cause a "significant disruption" (Jordan-Meier, 2011, p. 8); interrupt "the normal flow of business" (Fearn-Banks, 2011, p. 2); incite "environmental shifts" and upheaval (Tushman, Newman & Romalli, 1986, p. 43); have "actual or potential consequences for stakeholders," and invite "strain on the reward-cost balance between an organization and key stakeholders" (Heath & Millar, 2004, p. 5).

For this study, crises are defined as distressing and damaging events that erode citizen confidence in a community's or organization's legitimacy and operational control. They are dislocating and disruptive with the potential to destabilize normal community relations, instigate uncertainty, threaten reputations, imperil system integrity, undermine the public trust and activate issues. Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger's (2011) developed an often-cited and definitive, five-part working definition of organizational crises. Their typology also has broader applicability to crises that occur in the greater social environment beyond the domain of a private organization in crisis. Their research characterizes crises as: *unexpected, non-routine, producing uncertainty, creating opportunities, and threatening to the organization's image, reputation, or high-priority goals* (2011, p. 7). Mass shootings meet these criteria. These events "have possible and/or actual consequences for the organization suffering the crisis, that organization's reputation, and its multiple publics, stakeholders, and their interests" (Waymer & Heath, 2007, p. 90). They occur without warning and leave a community in a state of vulnerability and upheaval with acute levels of uncertainty and a sense of defenselessness. Media attention is riveted because these events are

so equivocal, and they amplify those unsettled issues needing resolution. The lack of forewarning and threat to community safety and lasting stability goals break with the normal routine. Moreover, because shooting crises tend to occur in public spaces and their sphere of influence expands beyond that of the local setting where the shooting erupts, they provide a laboratory of learning for other communities. Opportunities to shore up security protocols and improve public safety are inherent in these incidents. How mass shootings conceptually conform to Ulmer et al. (2011) five crisis attributes can be further seen in Table 1.0 below. It is followed by a mapping exercise that plots mass shooting features along the three-stage crisis continuum.

Table 1.0	
Five Crisis Attributes	**Crisis Features' Applicability to Mass Shootings**
1. **Unexpected** *unanticipated, surprising events that are neither planned nor captured within the crisis management plan*	Mass shooting crises erupt unexpectedly, without warning. Though frequently occurring over the past five years, these events cannot be predicted. According to a Sept. 2013 report by Mayors Against Illegal Guns, "between Jan. 2009 and Sept. 2013, there have been 93 mass shootings in 35 states" or two shootings per month for five consecutive years. None of the high-profile shooting occurrences could be connected to the shooters prior to the incident. Officials later turned up incriminating web pages/sites and "manifestos."
2. **Non-routine** *incongruent with routine processes and procedures; requires "unique and often extreme measures" (Ulmer et al., 2011)*	Mass shootings undermine routine safety procedures; routine protocols are invalidated and are simply unresponsive to active shooter incidents. These events put stress on normal security protocols and expose inefficiencies in personnel and procedures; for example, staff was unable to respond to Aaron Alexis in the 2013 U.S. Navy Yard murders; Alexis was in possession of special security clearance to enter the highly-guarded facility just as he had previously.
3. **Producing Uncertainty** *Resulting information gap due to the quickly changing nature and complexities of the event*	Despite media coverage, unanswered questions persist in many of the mass shootings where the active shooter(s) take their own lives or are killed by law enforcement authorities. Investigators often are not always able to determine cause for the rampage or a connection to the slain. Neither can they ascertain a pattern (if any) to the randomness of the slayings or decipher what initially triggered the incident.
4. **Creating opportunities** *"crises create opportunities to learn, make strategic changes, grow, or develop ...competitive advantages" (Ulmer et al 2011)*	Mass shootings build on lessons learned from inter-agency collaborations, new safety policies on college campuses, first responder trainings and better warning systems. From a public policy standpoint, 1500 state gun bills were introduced since the slayings at Newtown; of these, 109 were signed into law. Vigorous national debate on gun control and rights under the Second Amendment was reactivated following the Tucson, AZ; Newtown, CT; and Roseburg, OR shootings.
5. **Threatening image, reputation or high-priority goals** *"Crises can produce an intense level of threat to the organization and its affiliates" that damages its legitimacy. (Ulmer et al 2011)*	Mass shootings damage the image of a safe environment and generally threaten public safety. Such rampant crime, in turn, impacts the local economy as businesses choose to locate elsewhere to a safer location, parents send their children to schools and universities with more robust security, and tourists choose other vacation destinations. The city of Detroit is an example of an image that has for too long been allowed to deteriorate from uncontrollable crime, neighborhood blight, and political corruption.

Secondary Assumption Two: Mass Shootings have Three Crisis Stages

Researchers characterize the crisis life cycle as having several distinct features delineated in three or more stages (Coombs, 1999; Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003; Borda & Mackey-Kallis, 2004; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). Support for the efficacy of adopting a three-phase crisis configuration (*planning* before the crisis or pre-crisis, *response* during the crisis or crisis proper, and *reaction* after the crisis or post-crisis) as a best practice for structuring crisis research projects is explicated in Millar and Heath (2004). Waymer and Heath (2007) operationalize this practice in their analysis of communications during Hurricane Katrina before, during, and after the catastrophe. Their research was ordered by these three aspects: 1) *pre-crisis or planning stage* where "vigilant preparation…can reduce the likelihood of a crisis and increase the responsiveness of the organization…to establish control over its operations;" 2) *the crisis or response stage* to "investigate the types of narratives that are used to explain crises and the extent to which conflicting narratives divide some stakeholders from others;" and 3) *the post-crisis or restoration phase* where "communication results from the need for sense making, which is a collective co-created activity" and the need to respond for organizations "…Savvy practitioners understand that stakeholders are capable of creating, and motivated to create, their own sense of the situation" (Waymer & Heath, 2007, p. 92).

These crisis stage distinctions are certainly applicable to the events unfolding during a typical mass shooting. For example, during the *pre-crisis* stage, the normal day-to-day activities continued without interruption at the Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 12, 2012. The crisis plan was written, the doors were locked per the security protocols, and parents were confident that their children were in a safe environment. Such assumptions about crisis

preparedness, risk reduction and threat-sensing predominate during this stage when the crisis is in a "period of incubation" (Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer, p. 105).

That pre-crisis calm changed during the five minute-barrage of 150 rounds of gunfire. In the aftermath, 20 youth and six adults were slain. Mass shooter Adam Lanza's rampage that morning abruptly shattered the "normal" with unthinkable violence. His actions forced Newtown into a full-blown *crisis* and turned the operational priorities of the school, community, and law enforcement agencies upside down. The crisis stage is also known as the "escalation period," as it is characterized by "high levels of uncertainty, confusion, disorientation, surprise, shock, and stress" (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003, p. 126). This stage is precipitated by a specific trigger (fatal shootings in this case), and it is emotionally charged and highly confusing (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). As events unfold, order and control restoration become the new priorities. The principal actors try and contain the harm and reduce uncertainty as they prepare to respond to media and other stakeholders' inquiries. Sensemaking efforts are fraught with anxiety as attention turns to similar events from the past for lessons learned. It is also at this juncture where some gun control critics view the new shooting incident as a reverberation from the failure to address previous shootings – it is termed the "velcro effect" (Coombs & Holladay, 2001). The salience of these crises is effectively amplified and long shelved public policy issues on gun control are revived.

Lastly, following the *pre-crisis* and *crisis* stages there is the *post-crisis* period where the focus now shifts to the investigative/analysis phase. Here organizations and community leaders (such as those in Newtown) work to simultaneously restore an image of community safety and gradually return the school and/or town to a semblance of normalcy. In this final stage, answers to key questions emerge that try and identify cause, assign blame, shore up operational weaknesses,

and make sense out of the chaos. Ironically, this stage also yields lessons learned for the organization with ample opportunities to revise policies and procedures and influence public policy. Recovery, renewal, restoration and organizational learning form the basis of a proactive-versus-reactive way forward and preventive measures become the preoccupation of the organization or community (Seeger et al., 2003).

Consistent with Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer's three-stage typology, Hale, Dulek, and Hale (2005) placed specific crisis management descriptors on the three phases. *Pre-crisis* becomes "crisis prevention," *crisis* is denoted as "crisis response," and *post-crisis* is associated with "crisis recovery." Mass shooting crises can be unpacked retrospectively using the three-stage typology that begins with pre-shooting calm and a sense of security. This is followed by the trigger event and eruption of gun fire and high uncertainty. It concludes with an identification of the shooter, attempts at ascertaining motive, stakeholder discussion, memorializing the slain, the deployment of new security measures, and a vigorous issues debate. See Table 1.1 below for a brief look at how the mass shooting crises at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin on August 5, 2012 unfolds along the three crisis stages.

This section sought to establish mass shootings as crises that can be deconstructed along the crisis literature's foundational three-stage continuum. This is a common practice among crisis scholars (Millar & Heath, 2004; Waymer & Heath, 2007). This depiction is especially relevant in this study with all of the multiple stakeholders debating before, during and after the shooting crisis. It also serves as an organizing strategy for chronicling the particulars for each shooting, charting stakeholder responses and evolving policy issues during a specific stage. For instance, residual issue discussions from previous mass shootings simultaneously occur at the pre-crisis stage before the next shooting. The crisis trigger event or the shooting itself initiates the crisis stage where the

most vocal stakeholders give voice to their issue arguments. The third stage tests the strength of stakeholder narratives based on their impact on public policies and organizational change. Each of these foregoing discussions is central to this study. The next section contains a mapping of the Sikh temple shooting in Wisconsin. It is followed by a discussion of the crisis-issue management nexus, a theoretical framework which suggests crises can result in the exacerbation of issues at rest.

Table 1.1	*Crisis Stages and Mass Shooting Mapping Along the 3-Stage Continuum*				
THREE-STAGE CRISIS ▶ Row 1 - *Coombs 1999; Seeger et al., 2003* Row 2 - *Coombs et al., 2012* (Row 3) – *Hale et al., 2005*	STAGE 1		STAGE 2	STAGE 3	
	PRE-CRISIS *Crisis incubates* (crisis prevention)		**CRISIS** *Crisis is triggered* (crisis response)	**POSTCRISIS** *Organizational learning* (crisis recovery)	
FIVE-STAGE CRISIS ▶ *Fink, 1986; Pauchant & Mitroff,1992*	Signal detection	Preparation/ prevention	Containment/ damage limitation	Recovery	Organizational learning
Features of the Three Crisis Stages ▶	• Pre-critical uncertainty • Normalcy of operation • False sense of preparedness • Risk sensing/reduction • Exposure to threat emerges • Crisis management planning		• High uncertainty • Emotional stress • Disruption of normal • Reactive following trigger event • Response generation • Crisis plan enacted to stem spread of damage • Media relations	• Uncertainty reduction • Return to normal • Proactive after order is restored • Preventive steps are enacted • Reestablish legitimacy • Reemergence of a public policy issue • Institute learning opportunities	
Mapping Mass Shootings	**The 2012 Sikh Temple Shooting in Oak Creek, Wisconsin** Temple was founded in October 1997 450-500 worshipers **Shooter:** 40-year-old Wade Michael Page, and former US army service man; white supremacist **Slain:** Seven – includes the shooter and responding officer **Weapon:** 9mm semi-automatic handgun	• Shooter already under investigation by the FBI prior to the shooting • Pre-shooting calm • Maintenance of regular schedule of worship • Collective sense of safety • Trigger: August 5, 2012 shooting incident – six worshipers killed plus active shooter is shot by law enforcement	• Police called while shooting was occurring • Worshippers take cover • First responders arrive on scene; shooter killed • Media descend on scene • Emotional sound bites • Eyewitness statement(s) • Leaders denounce violence as "senseless" • Identification of shooting victims • Pres. Obama makes public comments • Law enforcement officials hold press conference • New Delhi parliament make statement • Shooter identified	• Investigation continues to ascertain motives • Shooter background & weapons investigated • Review of security protocols • Institute new measures • Temple scrubbed and painted • One bullet hole left in Temple as memorial • Remembrance ceremony held every Aug. 5th • Resumption of regular schedule of worship • Sikh Coalition civil rights organization, reported Sikhs had been the target of several hate-crime shootings in prior years leading up to shooting • New York police increased security at their Sikh temples -post event	

Theoretical Framework: Crisis and Issues Management Integration

Dubbed the "Siamese twins" of PR, crisis management and issues management are two specialty subfields within the rich domain of public relations practice (Jacques, 2009, p. 281). According to Coombs, "issues management and crisis management have a reciprocal relationship. An issue can create a crisis or a crisis can create an issue" (Coombs, 2012, p. 55). While this connection can be linear, as a festering issue might worsen and become a crisis, it might also be cyclical where an issue-turned-crisis might return to an issue to be resolved once again. Furthermore, according to Saunders, "good issues management enables an organization to deal with a problem situation before it becomes a crisis" (2009, p. 140). To illustrate, gun manufacturers like *Remington* or *Smith and Wesson* quite actively manage their reputations and frame the gun control debate as a Second Amendment freedom issue whenever a gun control advocate tries to associate violence with unobstructed access to guns. They point to studies that suggest much of the mass shootings in our nation are by assailants who are mentally imbalanced; thus, the issue is not the gun. At the other end of the spectrum are the family members of murder victims and gun control advocates who point to the increase in mass shootings since 2009. They are intent on generating sustained pressure on public officials and are raising safety concerns over lax-to-non-existent background checks, an unchecked availability of assault rifles, and excessive rounds of bullets in magazine clips. These issues, they contend, put the public at risk.

The connection between issues management and crisis management exists within each of the three crisis stages, from pre- to post-crisis as coexisting phenomenon. Although much of the scholarship on crises revolves around private enterprise, the organization referenced during a mass shooting generally involves a unit of local government as they are among first responders. The

next section examines those linkages in turn and includes a definition of "issue" and "issue management."

Pre-crisis stage. During the pre-crisis stage, managers engage in issues/crisis threat sensing and scan their organization's environment for crisis threats or looming issues. The issues/crisis threat monitoring is an integrated function of the two PR disciplines, but they remain distinct areas. Crisis management as a process is designed to "prevent or lessen the negative outcomes of a crisis and thereby protect the organization, stakeholders, and/or industry from damage" (Coombs & Holladay, 2012, p. 20). The crisis to be managed has also been defined as "a struggle for control" where those "who are affected by a crisis look to responsible parties to control their actions or to create actions that reduce the harm of the crisis" (Millar & Heath, 2004, p. 9). Organizations that suffer or appear to suffer from a loss of control, particularly from the vantage of their key stakeholders, also lose their legitimacy and right to operate in a cooperative environment (Millar & Heath, 2004). Therefore, crisis management strategies are enacted at each of the three crisis stages to ensure an organization maintains or appears to maintain their cache of legitimacy. According to Coombs, "pre-crisis involves efforts to prevent crises and …prepare for crisis management. Crisis is the response to an actual event. Post-crisis are efforts to learn from the crisis event" (Coombs & Holladay, 2012, p. 20).

Despite their connection during the pre-crisis stage, issues management is distinct from crisis management, public relations, media relations, public affairs, and strategic planning. Distinctly, issues management is a process that involves all these things in combination (Heath & Palenchar, 2009). According to Jacques, the discipline "began as a corporate response to adverse public policy and the desire to move from reaction to participation, driven by a belief that identifying and managing issues early enhances corporate capacity to influence new regulations

and guidelines rather than responding to them" (2009, p. 283). Griffin posits that issues management is "the management over time of non-acute risks to an organization's strategic, commercial and reputational interests which, if left unmanaged or ignited by a 'trigger' event could escalate into crises" (2014, p. 4064). Others define issue management as "the strategic process of 'issue identification, monitoring, and analysis' seeking to influence their resolution in a manner mutually beneficial to the organization and its stakeholders" (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003; p. 11). One of the more comprehensive definitions of strategic issues management (SIM) comes from Heath and Palenchar (2009) who posit:

> It is the management of organizational and community interests and rights by striking a mutual balance with stakeholders and stakeseekers. SIM supports strategic business planning and savvy management by using issue monitoring to track and understand public policy trends, by meeting standards of corporate responsibility that are expected by key stakeholders, and by using communication to contest issues, foster understanding, and minimize or resolve conflict through collaborative decision making. It is not limited to media relations, customer relations, or government relations. *It is expected to keep the organization ethically attuned to its community and positioned to exploit, mitigate, and foster public policy changes as they relate to its mission*. It understands and engages in stake exchanges with relevant stakeholders and stakeseekers (p. 15 – emphasis added).

Issue defined. The policy interests and rights to which the organization must be attuned represent the issues to be managed. Leading issues management researchers define an issue as "a contestable difference of opinion" (Jaques, 2009, p. 282), "an unsettled matter which is ready for decision" (Chase, 1984, p. 38), or "an ongoing, complex problem with competing points of view that can linger for years, sometimes with few…audiences engaged…Issues often evolve from

mismanaged incidents" (Schannon, 2006, p. 15). The fact that they are complex, disputable and not yet settled provides insight into why there is contention among stakeholders. Stakeholders can hold opposing viewpoints and develop a narrative to support their particular stance. The success of their narrative will be reflected in the public discourse and the media's framing of the issue. For example, gun manufacturers are interested in selling firearms. They contribute to the National Rifle Association's key talking points. In turn, the NRA's officials and its membership, promote their talking points through public speeches, paid commercials, and public rallies. Media coverage of the NRA's narrative becomes the basis for one side of the debate. Of course, at the other end of the spectrum, the families of mass shooting victims also promote their narrative during public hearings in the nation's capital, while granting media interviews, and also by participating in commercials. Both stakeholder groups attempt to shape the national conversation that ultimately influences public policy related to their issue. According to Boutilier, issues "arise from conflicting interests" and "all parties are trying to frame and reframe the issue simultaneously" (2012, Issues Management: In Whose Interests section, para. 1, 2).

Crisis stage. During the crisis stage, when emotions are still acute and the issue debate is most animated, public policy issues left unresolved from previous crisis events or an unaddressed issue can resurface. This is a process of issue reactivation. In the case of mass shootings, the decades-old debate over responsible gun laws, the 1994 ban on assault weapons and limits on Second Amendment freedoms are a few of the issues still percolating in the public's conscience from previous shootings. With each new mass shooting episode, stakeholders take sides and reactivate the public debate pitting responsible gun control against expanded gun rights. The shootings of 6 and 7-year-old elementary students at Sandy Hook Elementary in December 2012, like other rampage shootings before and after it, gave the nation pause to process its shock and

disbelief. The lingering outrage and anger associated with the unrestrained and seemingly random acts of violence represents residual safety issues unresolved in the larger environment. The challenge for communities like Newtown or Charleston or Roseburg, the centers of more recent mass shootings, is to balance competing narratives so that gun enthusiasts and gun control advocates both reach an accord on what is ethical and sensible when it comes to public safety and responsible gun ownership.

Post-crisis stage. As noted above, though distinct processes, crisis management sometimes overlaps with issues management (Coombs & Holladay, 2012). Following a mass shooting incident, and well after causes and vulnerabilities are determined, public safety and other issues emerge. This usually occurs during the crisis and post-crisis stages as community and national stakeholders attempt to address the breach in public safety and commence the recovery process. Organizational crises left unresolved at this juncture can often lead to a negative history for the organization that has to be resolved. Crises with social aspects such as mass shootings are no different than organizational crises such as product safety issues, or natural disasters. They can instigate issues and public policy debates if they remain unsettled after the crisis subsides. It is the role of issues managers to arbitrate issues and negotiate stakeholder impasse for the benefit of all parties involved (Heath & Palenchar, 2009; Griffin, 2014).

Similar to its allied public relations function, crisis management, issues management has a variety of definitions. One major difference between issues and crisis management is that issues management can take place over time, rather than always having to be enacted during times of marked pressure (Griffin, 2014). As an area of scholarship, issues management began as a business function in the late 1970s to address the environmental tensions between corporate America and the public (Jaques, 1007). According to Heath and Cousino (1990), the discipline began as an

episodic tool for augmenting public relations. It has evolved from issues advertising and outward directed advocacy to an essentially dialogic and wholly strategic practice, as it remains today (Heath & Cousino, 1990; Heath & Palenchar, 2009; Bronn and Bronn, 2002). It continues as an ongoing dynamic for the organization as environmental issues are constantly monitored and assessed for threat to the organization.

With regard to mass shooting incidents and issue management, the organization of record is typically a unit of city, regional or national government which is charged with the safety and welfare of its constituents – the public. As such, the balancing imperative alluded to in the above definitions refers to the need to reconcile public opinion and issues advocacy with the public policies enacted into law. Heath and Palenchar emphasize the relational aspect of issues management between stakeholders and stakeseekers and contend: "the struggle between businesses, government agencies, and activists is a search for order, an effort to standardize public policy and related practices through informal agreement as well as legislative, regulatory, or judicial action" (2009, p. 50). They also stress how the issues management process involves public policy communication between stakeholders that is ethical and factual and "dialogic in nature, a process of give and take – statement and counterstatement – between interested parties" (2009, p. 53). Over time, that dialogue is "refined, abandoned, and created…as conditions change" (p. 54). This phenomenon is playing out at local, state and national levels as legislators, communities, gun control advocates, and gun enthusiast publicly debate the efficacy of public policy change in the wake of what some perceive to be a mass shooting epidemic. Positions are refined and policies are abandoned and created in response to public opinion, lobbyist pressure, and political will (Health & Palenchar, 2009).

The Four Functions of Issues Management

Issues management, as a strategic business function for private enterprise, government agencies, or even community groups, has four primary functions: "1) *strategic business planning*: it supports strategic planning by keeping it [the organization] aware of threats and opportunities [in their environment stemming from] the opinions of key publics and markets that can influence the public policy arena; 2) *getting the house in order*: it seeks to understand and implement standards of corporate [or civic] responsibility that meet or exceed stakeholder expectations; 3) *scouting the terrain*: it requires issue scanning, identification, monitoring, analysis and priority setting; and 4) engaging in tough defense and smart offense: it gives substance and rationale for issue communication, the organization's voice" (Heath, 2002, p. 210, emphasis added). Heath later enhanced this line of reasoning to define strategic issues management as "a culture of thinking smart to minimize conflict and maximize collaborations and a philosophy of responsibility and reflectiveness that optimizes the quality of community interests" (Heath & Palenchar, 2009, p. 27).

Issues Management Exemplars

Following are two representative mass shooting cases that illustrate the centrality of the media reporting and issues management in mass shootings. The first case occurred in the Commonwealth of Australia, which in 1996 experienced a mass shooting with 35 fatalities. The importance of the public agenda in mass shooting policy discussions, the contentious nature of issues debate, and the defensive postures taken by competing stakeholders, are among the distinguishing features of mass shootings. Because media reporting of mass shootings is also central to this present study, the second case focuses not on the issues debate as in the first case, but on how the issues covered in the media change over time. This case examines the key issues from the Columbine shootings and observes how the frames and issues changed as the media

coverage evolved. The contentious issues debate and frame-changing are expected to be common features across mass shooting incidents in later chapters.

Australian massacre and the issue of gun control. The April 1996 mass shooting by Martin Bryant where 35 people were killed and another 13 were injured using an automatic rifle at Port Arthur in Tasmania put the country's media and politicians on trial. Following the initial shock and expressed outrage, the national conversation quickly moved to an issue of gun control and political survival. Months of media coverage became problematic for the Australian media, who, as a stakeholder and the reporting authority, came under fire for their treatment of the crisis and the lack of objectivity. According to Reynolds, "messages and images were manufactured and maneuvered into the media by various stakeholders to influence public opinion and persuade decision makers. As the issues became politically complicated, the salience and attention given by the media mirrored the priority of those issues on the public agenda" (1997, p. 344). The Reynolds study compared 30 days of coverage by one national (*Sydney Morning Herald*) and one local paper (*Gold Coast Bulletin*). His findings suggest the media is central to building issue salience (through its agenda-setting function), which influences the public and public policy agenda. He also credits the fourth estate with also "creating…the very existence of the issue management function in business and politics" (Reynolds, 1997, p. 344). He argues that although the media is influential in shaping the public agenda, public opinion is essential to influencing the media agenda just the same. Stakeholder tensions played out in the media as coverage evolved from the massacre to gun control to political infighting and, ultimately, the passage of legislation. The ability of a coalition of gun control stakeholders to shape a narrative in the media that painted their opponents as extremists was one reason for their success. The study further explicated the media-public-policy agenda nexus and showed how issues are co-created and sustained by various stakeholders.

Columbine massacre and the issues of cause and guns. The April 1999 mass shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado where seniors Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold wounded 21, killed 12 students and one teacher, and then killed themselves garnered unprecedented media coverage and formed an unstated template for covering school shootings. According to Birkland and Lawrence (2009), there *is* a duration for story salience. They note:

> …life cycle of school shootings stories: an initial emphasis on the individual- and community-level aspects of the story, followed by a growing emphasis on societal aspects as the story lives on in the news, with a final rebound in community coverage at around the 1-month anniversary of the event…Initial coverage focused on the who, what, where and how of the event, quickly followed by a second phase of expanding coverage into the why (p. 1408).

They found that the media framed gun accessibility and pop culture as the leading causes of the massacre and, like researchers before them, found that the coverage was primarily on a societal level (Chyi & McCombs, 2004). Still, despite massive amounts of media coverage, Birkland and Lawrence conclude that the shootings only had a limited effect on public policy from 1999-2001, and "the majority of the public seems ultimately to have framed Columbine differently than the media;" that is, as a poor parenting issue (2009, p. 1412). Though there was an expansion of coverage and stakeholder dialogue, these discussions did not correspondently translate into articulated public policy; thus, they gradually diminished in their intensity. This case represents a rare examination of mass shootings and the resulting legislation by focusing event theorist, Thomas A. Birkland. More on his theory is covered in the next section.

Secondary Theoretical Frame – Birkland's Focusing Events

Closely related to the concept of issue management is the concept of *focusing events*. Mainstreamed in the agenda-setting policy vernacular in 1984 through the scholarship of John Kingdon (1985), the term referred to jolting or dramatic events such as "accidents, natural disasters, and deliberately caused catastrophes, such as terrorists attacks" that occurred suddenly and resulted in greater attention to a problem – thus setting the media, public and legislative agenda (Birkland, 2006). As its progenitor, early on Birkland primarily examined the dynamics of focusing events and agenda setting in natural disasters and catastrophes such as hurricanes, nuclear disasters and oil spills (1997). Later he would turn his attention to school shooting incidents and further test the theory as not only a catalyst for influencing or setting the agenda, but provoking policy deliberations and change (2009). According to Birkland (1997), "a potential focusing event (that is, an event than can be, but is not necessarily focusing) is a rare, harmful, sudden event that becomes known to the mass public and policy elites virtually simultaneously. The agenda-setting power of these events derives from these features" (p. 3). Birkland (1997) also observes that these events "can be reasonably defined as harmful or revealing the possibility of greater potential future harms, inflicts harms or suggests potential harm that are or could be concentrated on a definable geographical or community of interest." These events can, as in the case of the Exxon Valdez oil spill or 9/11 lead to policy change because focusing events tend to drive the public and policy agenda and can ultimately lead to legislation.

Mass shootings constitute what has been termed the "precipitating event" of a crisis and, according to Muschert, due to the considerable public interest generated, these incidences also classify as a "social problem" (2007, p. 65). He contends that after the 1999 Columbine massacre, which occurred just at "the turn of the millennium, school shootings were an ascendant social

problem, often because the events garnered public interest, which contributed to the perception that school shootings were a new form of violence occurring with increased frequency and intensity" (p. 61). Columbine was altogether rare and jarring, and it changed the way mass shootings thereafter would be framed in the public discourse (Birkland & Lawrence, 2009). It also served as the catalyst for upgrades in the security protocols in schools all across the country and became the impetus for public policy legislation and improved learning for law enforcement everywhere. The coverage of the 1999 Columbine shootings was massive and had not been seen since until the coverage of the 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook. Still, even with the media and public agenda focused by those two shooting incidents, the effect on public policy enactment at the federal level was broadly contemplated but effectively limited. Birkland and Lawrence (2009) conclude, "What Columbine appears to have done is mobilize local schools to implement state laws and federal programs more aggressively than they had before…It should be noted, however, that the gun frame for policy in the schools is not the same as the gun frame in broader media and public discourse" (p. 1414). The explanation for the limited nature of a focusing or "evocative" event to effect public policy is due to the difference in the action taken as a result of the agenda influence. Says Lawrence & Birkland (2004), "the media are an arena of discourse, while the congressional arena involves both discourse and action. Congress both debates ideas and converts ideas into policies. Ideas that are prominent in media discourse are therefore not necessarily prominent in actual legislation" (p. 1195). Hence, though Columbine and Sandy Hook resulted in significant media attention, they generated discourse but not national legislation.

Fundamentally, the theory of focusing events is a derivative of agenda-setting theory, which is concerned with how the media establishes issue prominence for the public by the way they assign importance to the stories they choose to report in the news. That story assignment is

the media's agenda. Focusing events theory suggests that there are certain events that are prominently placed on the public agenda because of their gravity. Their significance brings attention to an issue that affects public opinion and discourse which, in turn, influences media coverage and the policy agenda simultaneously. It is important to note that the focusing does not guarantee enactment of legislation. In fact, these events do not "routinely lead to policy change. Rather the media's coverage of them focuses attention on current policy and invites public discussion and debate" (Sellnow, & Seeger, 2013, p. 3081 of 6068, electronic version).

Another aspect of focusing event has direct implications for issue management studies. Birkland's early work examined what he categorized as "group mobilization" in which certain stakeholders (defined as "those with a legitimate interest or claim in a particular situation or policy decision" (de Bussy & Kelly, 2010, p. 300) become actively involved in policy deliberations, as in the aftermath of a mass shooting. According to Birkland, some groups might be pro-change and react to a focusing event by mobilizing through letter-writing campaigns, membership drives, donation solicitations or even protests. These groups might be opposed by more powerful groups who would then mobilize to counter any attempts to challenge their positions. The dynamics, according to Birkland, sometimes unfolds according to this pattern: "If an event threatens to reduce the power of advantaged groups to control the agenda, these groups are likely to respond defensively to focusing events. They may argue that an event is not as important as claimed by opposing groups, that existing policy is able to deal with any problems, or that, if new policy is needed, the policy proposed by the contending groups would be ineffective or counterproductive. More powerful groups will work to downplay an event's significance by providing officials and the public with alternative explanations of the meaning and significance of the event" (1998, p. 57).

According to Birkland and Schneider (2007), catastrophic events such as the attack on the World Trade Center towers and Hurricane Katrina classify as *focusing events* because they seized substantial media attention and came to serve as catalysts for public policy change. The events of September 11 "directed attention to homeland security issues" (p. 23) and even resulted in the creation of a federal-level cabinet department in the United States Department of Homeland Security. Similarly, the flooding of as much as 80 percent of Louisiana in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, focused attention on emergency management issues and the effective coordination of federal, state and local authorities. Among changes in emergency management protocols, Katrina precipitated the passage of a law that made it permissible to relocate state courts to other venues during times of catastrophe (Birkland and Schneider, 2007). With issues management and focusing events established as the theoretical frames, the concentration of the next section turns to the research questions guiding this study.

Research Questions

By definition, crises such as mass shooting focusing events are distressing phenomenon. They result in high levels of uncertainty because they tend to erupt without warning, threaten system and community fundamentals, and deviate from the normal course of the day (Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2011; Fearn-Banks, 2011). Also characteristic of crises are the learning, prevention and development opportunities that yield insights that help prevent the crisis from reoccurring (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003; Jordan-Meier, 2011). Exploring how public safety in public spaces is discussed following a single mass shooting incident or successive mass shootings that occur within weeks of each other can produce understandings into the nature of the communication stakeholders employ around these and other issues. Moreover, investigating how the issues debate concerning gun control and accessibility evolve with each mass shooting incident

will lead to an understanding of the agenda-setting influence and focusing effect of mass shootings on public discussions and public policy deliberations. With the investigation of these concerns as the chief aims, four research questions are explored:

RQ1 – *What is the nature of mass shootings (who are the stakeholders involved in these crises)?*

The first research question seeks to do two things. First, it will define the key characteristics of the mass shooting phenomenon as a unique type of exigency that does not predictably fit within existing taxonomies as a subcategory of *workplace violence* or *murder*. Second, this question will identify (through news reporting) the various stakeholders or publics involved in mass shootings. Those invested in these crises are expected to include: politicians, legislators, the NRA, gun control advocates, activists, survivors, leaders, community and organizational members, and family members of the victims. Avery and Lariscy (2012) note that "not only are publics different, but also members of the same public will respond to the various layers of crises in different ways" and, therefore must *not* be characterized as "monolithic" (p. 327). In this study, stakeholders are defined as those central to and participating at the forefront of the gun control/owners' rights debate after a mass shooting. Heath and Palenchar (2009) refer to this group as "primary" because they "have stakes that can directly influence the success of the organization" or the issue with which the community may be grappling (p. 16). Others define stakeholders in relationship to organizations and posit, "stakeholders are people who are linked to an organization because they and the organization have consequences on each other – they cause problems for each other. People linked to an organization have a stake in it," and are affected by its "actions, decisions, policies, practices, and goals" (Grunig & Repper, 1992, p. 126). Similarly, members of a local community have a stake in it and should expect reasonable safety and security. Taken together, these views conceive of stakeholders as those with vested interests or stakes in the issues deliberated; they are

likely to be represented in media reports because as engaged publics, they are most vocal and active.

In a mass shooting incident, several stakeholders with dominant stakes in a community include legislators, who wield the power to draft and pass gun control legislation that defines the type of guns (assault or otherwise) the public can legally access. It includes gun manufacturers, who wield the influence of a powerful gun lobby in the National Rifle Association that carries much weight with gun owners and politicians. The media are also a primary stakeholder because they establish the all-pervasive news platform used to frame the most salient narratives and issues and give voice to both gun owners and gun control advocates in the ongoing gun control debate. Then there are the investigators, who include the first responders and on-the-ground researchers, who are charged with determining possible causes and consequences of a shooting incident.

Activists typically enter the conversation to exert pressure on other stakeholders to influence the debate on any number of issues, including gun safety and control, the maintenance of Second Amendment rights for gun owners, or a ban on assault weapons. According to Heath and Palenchar, "interest groups speak to reveal problems and inject values into dialogues by which issues are judged and solutions are weighed" (2009, p. 162). Finally, there is the general public, which includes affected communities and especially individuals (including witnesses, the shooters themselves, and survivors) directly affected by the active shooting event; this group can provide on-scene insight and put a local face to the debate narrative. This group is more varied because it is comprised of those as close as community residents who live in proximity to the shooting, as well as a riveted public not bound by geography but scattered across the nation. Collectively, these stakeholders shape and intensify opposing arguments once the gun control debate is reactivated in the media following a mass shooting. Stakeholders' viewpoints captured in the first week or two

of media reporting will help to identify those publics who are most engaged and more likely than not to invite more media exposure over the ensuing 30-day coverage period (Muschert, 2009).

RQ2 – *What public policy issues emerge in the aftermath of mass shootings?*

Examining the issues debate and how it activates public policy is a central point of inquiry. Therefore, identifying the public policy issues in the aftermath of a mass shooting will yield valuable information on how communities, the media, legislators and other stakeholders grapple with policy concerns. Also, of the numerous issues that emerge post shooting, this question will examine which ones are most salient and garner the most coverage in the news media. From a surface scanning of news reports on mass shootings, issues deliberated following a mass shooting are numerous. They include: gun control, Second Amendment rights, gun laws, safety precautions, facility lockdown protocols, active shooter responsiveness, active shooter training, background checking prior to gun purchasing, limitations on rounds of ammunition in magazine clips, assault rifle bans, mental health policies and screenings, and firearms training among others. Some of these issues gain traction during the course of a mass shooting incident, while others do not. An understanding of the genesis of these issues, their trajectory in the textual record, and their evolution in the press will inform researchers of their salience on the primary stakeholders' agenda and capture the intensity of related communications, which leads to the next question.

RQ3 – *How do the stakeholders address public policy issues arising from mass shootings?*

This question seeks to uncover what primary stakeholders actually say and how they construct meaning following a shooting incident? According to Heath and Palenchar, "narratives are a way of ordering the events of the world that would otherwise seem unpredictable or incoherent" (2009, p. 209) and "society is a complex of many voices, opinions, and interests" (p. 202). Narratives and ongoing dialogue are how we make sense of, contextualize or frame events

in the aftermath of a crisis. Because mass shootings heighten uncertainty and undermine a community's sense of security and normalcy, seeking order in such turbulence is a normal inclination of stakeholders. According to Schildkraut and Muschert (2013), "two groups have emerged as key narrators of the school shootings story…First, the *mass media* are responsible for breaking the news and providing audiences with information…Once the audience receives this information, they then turn to the second group – *politicians* – to report on the response and 'official' reaction." The types of policies enacted at the local level and debated at the national level are indicative of and find expression in these stakeholder narratives. I support the view that a third group to emerge as primary in these instances is the public. Their questions of *what happened*, *who's to blame* and *what can be done to prevent this* are their symbolic way of processing events and shaping a crisis response – even if it is expressed through outrage or another engagement strategy. Characteristically, this group tends to turn to the social media and other public forums to narrate these sentiments (Fearn-Banks, 2011). At times, their story frames using new media compete with those published by traditional media (Guggenheim, Jang, Bae, & Neuman, 2015).

This research question will capture how narratives from opposing sides of the gun control debate are framed in the media, how the public discusses them, and how politicians represent them through policy deliberations. Some researchers refer to this as frame alignment. According to Van Der Meer et al. (2014), "in the context of a crisis, when time passes, the interplay between the domains of PR, news media, and the public might result in what can be labeled 'crisis-frame-alignment'" (p 751). News articles over a 30-day timeframe, which contain spokesperson and community leaders' and other stakeholders' talking points (paraphrased or directly quoted), are the communications sought to profile stakeholder views on the various issues. A national news

source, specifically *The New York Times*, was used to capture stakeholder views and their participation in the debate for each of the four cases.

RQ4 – *How do public policy issues develop over time following a mass shooting and do these crises vary from case to case?*

In addition to identifying stakeholders, what they are saying, and the salient, public policy issues that emerge following a mass shooting incident, gauging how these issues evolve in the media during the initial 30 days of news coverage could also speak to relative stakeholder influence. There is precedence in extant research studies for using a month's worth of coverage to elucidate media framing (Muschert, 2009; Reynolds, 1997). According to Muschert and Carr, "by selecting and changing frames of coverage among and within news events, mass media producers influence the nature of reality presented to the public" (2006, p. 748). Thus, examining stakeholder narratives against the changing media frames over a 30-day period might determine whether there is resonance with stakeholder narratives in the broader public. Where certain aspects of mass shootings receive more prominent coverage at times may correlate with how compelling stakeholder narratives may be. For instance, it is conceivable that a focus on the shooter, their motive, and weapon(s) of choice could fuel the issues debate on gun control and promote a discussion of mental health issues and mass violence. Whereas a focus on the security breach that allowed the shooter to enter a facility may steer the discussion to improved safety protocols and personnel training.

Joslyn and Haider-Markel (2013) note how the public, in the aftermath of a shooting, seeks to attribute blame. It is their way of "understanding," which can later translate into support for or against policies (p. 411). They posit: "once political causes are identified, policy alternatives that seek to eliminate or reduce the problem can be debated" (Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2013, p. 411).

One manifestation of attributed cause to an outcome, although unproven, is the hypothesized link between gun violence and entertainment media (i.e., video games, movies, or television drama), which fuels the debate that game violence contributes to school violence. With the mass shooting phenomenon, the media's shift from covering the perpetrator less and the victims more, as observed by Muschert (2009) and others may, over time, improve prospects for national legislation. However, determining whether extant research supports this finding will be instructive. Chronicling the progression of the issues via the media and public agenda will be accomplished through the examination of national newspaper coverage.

Part two of this question is interested in whether or not crises within the domain of "mass shooting" vary from case to case or are they uniform in terms of their depiction and how they unfold. This question makes a between-case comparison of different mass shootings to uncover whether there are similarities and distinctions in media coverage. Elucidation of the defining features of mass shootings will require what Freeman (2014) refers to as "a rich, contextualized description" that interprets the nuanced elements characterizing these social phenomena (p. 827). Just as natural crises are different from human-initiated ones, within the domain of mass shooting incidents, no two shootings are the same because no two shooters or array of victims or setting are exactly the same. Insights from this sub-question might include: 1) why do some shootings, as opposed to others, result in a more contentious gun control debate; and 2) do mass shootings at schools activate public policy debate any more than those that take place in the public square or in the sanctity of a church?

All questions considered, an examination of what distinguishes mass shootings from a single murder or a terrorist event, which can garner little or considerable attention, respectively, will help define these events and potentially justify the introduction of a distinct category within

the crises taxonomies. Certainly, the imminent threat potential of an active shooter in the public sphere makes us question public safety everywhere. Also of interest here is whether the intensity of the mass shooting coverage in the media is based on the number of shooting victims, their ages, the shooter's motives, the location of the shooting, or some other variable. These attributes will be explored by examining traits from three mass shooting incidents and conducting case comparisons. Just how these cases will be examined is the subject of the next chapter, but in advance of that the next section is an identification of the cases to be analyzed.

Mass Shooting Cases

For this study, three contemporary mass shooting cases that have occurred within the past five years were selected for examination. The sampling criteria included whether the shooting is fairly recent (last five to six years), the type of location where the events transpired (i.e., whether the shooting occurred at a school, residence, or the public square), and the number of fatalities. Selection dissimilarity of the cases in terms of the shooting location was a way to provide maximum variation in the case selection and allow for additional insight (Tracey, 2013). The chosen cases would also have to meet the FBI's definition of a "mass murder" with a minimum of four or more fatalities. Exclusion criteria set aside those mass shooting cases which garnered lesser amounts of media coverage or public policy attention, and those incidents that took place prior to 2012.

In each of the three cases, public safety was presupposed and security protocols were deemed sufficient (or taken for granted) to ensure citizen safety. Each incident, whether involving a customer, resident, or a member of the general public, reinvigorated the public debate on gun control and framed one or more public policy issues. The first mass shooting case occurred at the Century 16 movie complex in Aurora, Colorado, during the release of a box office favorite, *The*

Dark Knight Rises during the summer of 2012. The shooter had documented mental health issues and identified himself with one of the on-screen villains from the movie.

The second case took place later that same year in Newtown, Connecticut at the Sandy Hook Elementary School where 6- and 7-year-old first graders attended; inclusion of this case is central because the age of the victims resulted in considerable media coverage that had not been seen since Columbine. The third case involves a 2015 mass shooting inside a historic church in Charleston, South Carolina during a weekly Bible study. This case calls into question how authorities carefully parse notions of terror and hate in shooting investigations. This case additionally set off a vigorous debate about Confederate memorabilia in public places. For each of the three cases, stakeholder discourse followed the initial outrage and ignited the gun control debate once more.

Conclusion

Mass shooting incidents are themselves threatening, disruptive, destabilizing, and undermining crises with social implications. They impact the larger ecosystem where organizations compete for scarce resources and become valued and contributing members of a community. Mass shootings have a broader social dimension then even natural disasters because the agent of destruction is not a randomly roaming hurricane but often a member of the community with a deliberate plan of violence. Such deliberation undermines public safety, stokes uncertainty, and activates and reactivates public policy issues. Although mass shootings are a local phenomenon, wherever they occur they focus national media attention, and invite issues framing and public deliberations (Birkland & Lawrence, 2009). They are of interest to issue management scholars for teasing out the dynamics of the interplay between the media, public and policy agenda. Collectively, these events graphically articulate the need for intervention, rouse opposing

stakeholder views, and compound the national debate on gun control. They defy our notions of personal and societal safety and exploit the tension between responsible gun control with the right to bear arms. The issues activated are myriad and appropriate for multiple case analyses to explicate the essentials of the mass shooting crises.

This introductory chapter includes a primer for understanding how mass shootings have been discussed in extant literature along with the two primary assumptions underlying this study: 1) that mass shootings are crises; and 2) they can be mapped along the three crises stages. In addition, background was given on the chosen research lens, *issues management*, separate and yet wholly related to crisis management as the "Siamese twins" of public relations practice. It will examine the nature of competing stakeholder narratives. As noted, it will be supported by a secondary theoretical lens; Birkland's *focusing events* is included to test the catalytic nature of mass shootings in their ability to effect public policy deliberations and perhaps lead to public policy creation or change. The next chapter will outline the method employed to collect the data needed to explicate and catalog the critical features of mass shootings across multiple cases, as well as describe the chosen texts that will be content analyzed to chronicle case particulars. It will be followed by individual chapters, one for each of the three shootings analyzed, for situating the unique and generic case identifiers.

CHAPTER 2 - METHOD

To examine the central features of mass shooting incidents generally and the issues debate and public policy deliberations that result in their aftermath, this study employed a multiple case, content analysis to examine three relatively recent mass shootings in the United States. As such, the content analysis reviewed a month-long span of newspaper articles from the *New York Times* for the national framing for each mass shooting. Day one of each timeline commences on the very day gunfire erupts and concludes 30 days thereafter. Each case chronology is further extended to capture the more consequential events within the first 90 days of each shooting.

The four research questions guiding this study seek to increase our understanding of mass shootings as a distinctive crisis form that triggers issue and public policy debates as the crisis unfolds. Essential to this inquiry is an identification of the key stakeholders and the issues they deliberate in the news. This study provides some insight into the resulting public policy issues debated immediately after each shooting and weeks after when the investigation closes and reports are filed. This chapter describes the content analysis method employed, provides a rationale for its selection, and explains how it, informed by the thick description of case chronologies, will answer the research questions. Additionally, a discussion of the three cases and justification for their selection is provided. The chapter concludes with a look at the chosen statistical methods that will be applied to examine the data results and a brief conclusion.

Content Analysis Method

To explore the boundaries of mass shooting phenomena, map their primary characteristics, and capture the subsequent debate, this multiple case analysis employs content analysis informed by thick description. Initially, content analysis was "used as a method for analyzing hymns…advertisements and political speeches in the 19th century" (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 108).

As a popular tool in the study of historical documents, cultural studies and mass communications research over the past 60 years, content analysis was refined after the second world war (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and has been used to characterize content from popular magazines, television ads and programming.

Recently, it has been used to examine messages from tweets and other social media content, and, of course, the staple in communication studies – newspapers. Its popularity experienced an uptick in the 1980's and '90s in multiple fields besides communication and journalism, including sociology, psychology, and business (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Neurendorf, 2002). Though used in numerous social scientific studies and fields today, according to Krippendorff (1989), content analysis "is indigenous to communication research" (1989, p. 403). He differentiates it from other research methods and notes:

> Whereas most social research techniques are concerned with observing stimuli and responses, describing manifest behaviors, differentiating individual characteristics, quantifying social conditions and testing hypotheses relating these, content analysis goes outside the immediately observable physical vehicles of communication and relies on their symbolic qualities to trace the antecedents, correlates, or consequences of communications, thus rendering the (unobserved) context of data analyzable (Krippendorff, 1989, p. 403).

The object of content analysis is to "attain a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon. Usually the purpose of those concepts or categories is to build up a model, conceptual map, or categories" (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 108). Neuendorf (2002) contends that "content analysis as a research method is consistent with the goals and standards of survey research…an attempt is made to measure all variables as they naturally or normally occur" (p. 49).

Mapping the characteristics of mass shooting phenomena will facilitate an expansion of existing typologies that currently lump all shootings into the single category of violence or murder.

Content analysis is an appropriate textual analysis tool when used "to identify, enumerate, and analyze occurrences of specific messages and message characteristics embedded in communication texts" such as public speeches, newspaper articles, television programming, corporate or government documents, lyrics, or even movie scripts (Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1992, p. 194). This method "seeks to analyze data within a specific context in view of the meanings someone – a group or a culture – attributes to them" (Krippendorff, 1989, p. 403). For this study, the chosen communication messages and their contexts for analysis were distilled from national newspaper articles on the shootings themselves.

One defining characteristic of content analysis, according to Krippendorff, is that this research method is objective and can, therefore, be replicated. Content analysis is a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 10). Its replicability and rigor makes this social scientific method ideal for examining mass shooting events because, as noted above, it "goes outside the immediately observable physical vehicles of communication and relies on their symbolic qualities to trace the … consequences of communication, thus rendering the (unobserved) context of data analyzable" (Krippendorff, 1989, p. 403). The consequence and impact of mass shootings on a community and nation are represented symbolically in the spirited issue debates they engender, and these aspects (who, what, and how) are recorded in newspapers – the appropriated text for this study.

Another defining characteristic of content analysis is its utility as both an analytic and descriptive technique – both of which are needed in a study on mass shootings. It is "a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages" (Elo & Kyngas, 2008) and it is a

sound research tool for "summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity, intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing)" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 10). The primary aim of content analysis, according to Frey, Botan, Friedman, and Kreps (1992), is to "describe characteristics of the content of the messages" (p. 195). This view aligns with what Berelson (1952) conceived in his foundational text that this method facilitates a "description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 18). Such description involves "a process that includes segmenting communication content into units, assigning each unit a category, and providing tallies for each category" (Rourke & Anderson, 2004, p. 5).

Quantification alone, however, does not begin to offer a complete picture of content analysis, for it affords a broader understanding of the meaning behind the numbers. Elo and Kyngas (2008) maintain that "it is concerned with meanings, intentions, consequences and context" (p. 109). Hence, in the study of mass shooting incidents, description of the categories of data were augmented with an analysis and interpretation of meanings for communities and the nation.

Content analysis is a robust methodology given its ability to simultaneously capture both quantitative (manifest) and qualitative (latent) aspects of the mass shooting phenomenon for a richer depiction of its characteristics (Neuendorf, 2002). According to Duriau, Reger, and Pfarrer (2007), one benefit of content analysis inquiry is that the analysis of text occurs on two distinct levels: 1) the surface or "*manifest* content of the text can be captured and revealed in a number of text statistics" or, simply put, those textual units (words, phrases, or themes) that can be counted or quantified; and 2) the embedded, emergent, or "*latent* content and deeper meaning embodied in the text" can be inferred or qualified (p. 6). This study relies on both lines of inquiry.

Maguire, Weatherby, and Mathers (2002) applied quantitative content analysis to mass shootings in their examination of the coverage of 14 mass shootings on evening broadcast news programs. They found that "there appears to be a general recipe for how the stories are presented. Initially there is a description of events, followed by attention to reactions, and concluding with an analysis as to why this case, and others like it, have taken place" (p. 469). Their study also found support for increased media coverage of the most violent shootings. They conclude that "although there is exceptionally strong support for concluding that violence is the decisive factor in determining amount of media coverage, other considerations might include the unusual quality of the act, weapons used, the setting, strategy employed, age of offenders and victims…other news stories of the day, and media accessibility" (p. 468).

Content analysis informed by a thick description of each case was used for this study. Thirty days of news coverage from *The New York Times* was examined for each of the selected shootings. The purpose was to explore the boundaries of mass shooting crises and describe both quantitatively and qualitatively the nuances of this phenomenon. Content analysis was chosen for its utility for unitizing text in context, then later identifying, analyzing and describing both the latent and manifest content present in communication messages. The results from analyzing articles along with insight from the thick description of the various cases are used to answer the four research questions, which in turn will help to map the contours of mass shootings as a distinct form of crises with social aspects. An initial description of the three cases is examined in the next section, along with a rational for their selection. It is followed by a description of the procedures followed, the data to be examined, and the analysis expected.

Synopsis of the Three Cases

For purposes of this study, a "mass shooting" resulting in four or more death parallels the FBI's definition of mass murder. According to the FBI, mass murder is described as four or more fatalities "occurring during the same incident, with no distinctive time period between the murders. These events typically involved a single location, where the killer murdered a number of victims in an ongoing incident" (Morton & Hilt, 2005). Mass shootings are mass murder incidents where the fatalities result from the discharge of a firearm that takes place within a relatively short time frame in the same general location. These are rapid-fire events that tend to transpire within a matter of minutes. For instance, in the three cases that follow, the average shooting with multiple fatalities occurred in just 10.3 minutes. They typically occur within a public place, most notably in or near schools, in restaurants, theaters, department stores, airports, malls, night clubs, hospitals, and even places of worship. Mass shooting incidents are wholly disruptive and are themselves a crisis type other than murder, an incident of workplace violence, an act of terror, or a natural disaster such as a hurricane. These events, more than the others, exhibit a tendency to activate and reactivate issues and provoke public policy discussions.

For this study, three mass shooting cases were selected for examination. These cases occurred within the past five years, making them more recent and within, arguably, a shared time period. The cases were chosen for their differences which provides for maximum variation and the inclusion of "marginalized data" (Tracey, 2013). It also allows for greater access to the phenomena being studied and includes a broader sample for possible generalization to the larger pool of mass shootings. In addition, multiple case analyses offer more respectability due to their replication of findings across studies and their theory-development potential (Yin, 2009; Amerson, 2011); thus, this study employed a multiple case framework that adheres to social science rigor. Specific case

shooting massacre killed 12 movie goers and wounded 70 others who were attending a midnight screening of the film *The Dark Knight Rises*. Holmes had died his hair orange to resemble one of the villains in the movie. Reports say that Holmes sat in the front row of the theater and left early through an emergency exit to go to his car to retrieve multiple firearms, put on a gas mask and body armor. He reentered the theater and began shooting, including those patrons in nearby theatre no. 8 while they were being evacuated. Holmes was later arrested outside the cinema. He had also planted explosive devices inside his apartment. Prior to his trial, Holmes pleaded guilty by reason of insanity. It was the deadliest shooting in the state since the Columbine massacre of 1999. This shooting took place in an unlikely entertainment venue – a movie theater. Equally significant is Holmes documented history of psychiatric care earlier that year at the University of Colorado. He described his mental state in a mailing to his psychiatrist hours before the shooting rampage. The magnitude of the shooting and the unusual site of the crime assured massive amounts of media coverage and cemented the mental health issue as an integral part of mass shooting phenomena.

The elementary school shooting and the most vulnerable. On December 14, 2012, 20-year-old Adam Lanza fatally shot six adult staffers and 20 children at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. The shooting happened just after the doors were locked according to security protocol at 9:35 a.m. It was the nation's second deadliest mass shooting incident at a school after the murders at Virginia Tech in 2007. The fatal shooting at a school housing kindergarteners through fourth graders was quite anomalous. Moreover, there had been only one fatality in the city of Newtown during the previous decade. The shooter, prior to driving to the school, killed his mother at their Newtown residence. Even though calls for background checks reverberated in the media following the rampage, it was determined that all of Lanza's firearms were obtained legally by his mother. She would attend target practice with Lanza using

some of the same firearms he later used in the incident. Lanza took his own life after confronting first responders that morning. As is typical with these types of incidents, renewed debate about gun control, mental health issues, and public safety became commonplace. An important feature in this case was the emotionally-charged public outrage over the lack of protections for some of the youngest mass shooting victims. That outrage resulted in highly-publicized statements from the President, the Governor of Connecticut, and others who called for a combination of sweeping congressional action (weapons ban, universal background checks, and limits on firearm magazines to no more than ten rounds of ammunition per clip). A failed attempt at federal legislation culminated with a no vote in April 2013. The age of the victims alone garnered considerable media coverage that had not been seen since Columbine and allows for further examination, comparison, and elucidation of key mass shooting aspects.

The AME church shooting and the Confederate flag. On June 17, 2015 after an 8:00 p.m. Bible study, 21-year-old Dylann Roof fatally shot nine churchgoers and wounded a tenth at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a historic landmark in downtown Charleston, South Carolina. The gunfire took the life of the church's senior pastor who was also a state senator, Clementa C. Pinckney. This shooting was different from many others because it was investigated as a hate crime and an act of domestic terrorism since all victims were African American and the shooter Caucasian. In addition, it occurred in a religious institution and hate speech on a website was later attributed to the shooter. According to his roommate, Roof had hoped to ignite a race war. Instead, his actions in combination with personal images of him online and on social media precipitated a local and national debate surrounding the symbolism of the Confederate flag. While on the run, Roof was arrested the next morning in the neighboring state of North Carolina; he had driven 245 miles. Unique to this case are the racial overtones embodied in the white shooter and

the black victims; thus, this mass shooting transcends the typical case to include the nuanced form of mass shooting involving an act of hatred and/or an act of terror. In addition, a picture of Roof holding a firearm with a Confederate flag on his car's license plate catalyzed a vigorous debate on keeping the flag at the state capitol and the broader issue of race relations in the city and nation. As is typical in these cases, the shooting also reinvigorated the gun control debate since the shooter in this case should not have been able to pass a background check and purchase a firearm due to prior offenses in the months leading up to the shooting.

In each of the three cases, public safety was presupposed and security protocols were deemed sufficient or taken for granted for ensuring citizen safety at a movie theater, a school, and at a place of religious worship. Each incident, whether involving a student, patron, parishioner or a member of the general public, reinvigorated the public debate on gun control and framed one or more public policy issues. As no two crises are the same, each case exhibits unique properties that will inform a reasoned explication of the central features of mass shooting incidents. The selection criteria, which is based on timing, location, number of fatalities, and media attention, was used to provide the maximal variation of cases to help shape a cogent depiction of this crisis category from multiple (similar yet different) contexts. The next section details and justifies the data source and unit of analysis for the study (newspaper articles), as well as the exact procedures used to examine that text.

Procedures

As noted, mass shooting incidents ignite media reporting and, by extension, the public and policy agenda. Due to their equivocal nature and the public's need to make sense of them, mass shootings tend to "generate high levels of media coverage, as audiences have a desire to learn the facts of the events, and, in a more sustained way, to understand the social implications and deeper

meaning of such events" (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014, p. 24). The media then, as the primary source for the latest information, is appropriate for examining mass shooting accounts, and for content-analyzing the central messaging and public policy issues evidenced in the news. Newspapers typically provide up-to-the-minute coverage of shooting events the moment community calm is, without warning, disrupted by gunfire. After that, media coverage of the shooting details tends to expand exponentially thereby "focusing" the public and policy agenda simultaneously (Birkland & Lawrence, 2009). For days and sometimes weeks following the shooting, the coverage of these events consumes the front pages of local newspapers and dominates the lead stories on nightly news broadcasts. This continues until stakeholder interest, debate, and sensemaking, post-shooting, begin to be clarified or diminished altogether (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014).

The typical pattern for covering a crisis also applies in reporting mass shooting incidents. Initially, there is the employment of the standard journalistic approach to news coverage involving the "five w's and h" (who, what, when, where, why, and how). In mass shootings, the reporting trajectory involves the customary identification of the active shooter, the shooter's chosen firearm(s), first-hand witness accounts, the location, and the victims. Simultaneously, the media publishes responses from local and national officials who express outrage and comment on the tragedy and its cause, then propose plausible deterrents (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014). As the crisis subsides, subsequent reporting explicates the possible motives, shooter background, and an initial timeline of how the tragic events unfolded. The consequence of this continuous coverage is usually the revival of the decades-old gun control issue debate. Reporting usually concludes with public memorials, trials and diminishing public policy deliberations.

To chronicle this trajectory in each of the three cases, select articles from one national newspaper source were chosen, and each story was the unit of analysis. The fact that crises are generally localized phenomenon necessitates the later expansion beyond this study to include the local angle for each shooting. For purposes of this study, following each shooting incident, one month's worth of articles was selected from *The New York Times*. This process is consistent with extant research studies with each subsequent shooting incident focusing the national conversation on the recurring issues of gun control, gun rights, public safety, and prevention. The Reynolds (1997) case study compared 30 days of coverage by one national (*Sydney Morning Herald*) and one localized paper (*Gold Coast Bulletin*). His findings suggest the media is central to building issue salience (through its agenda-setting function), which influences both the public and public policy agenda. The 30-day examination period following each mass shooting incident is recognized as the "present" frame in Chyi and McCombs' analytic measurement framework (Schildkraut and Muschert, 2014, p. 29). In addition, major story elements (who, what, when, where, and how) and central themes of stakeholder discourse were captured within the 30-day window. A month's worth of newspaper coverage is sufficient coverage for thoroughly developing a composite of the primary stakeholders and identifying the critical issues in the wake of the shooting incident that will be deliberated in the weeks following. The 30-day window is expected to contain the bulk of the critical information when emotions are at their peak on either side of the debate and initial positions are most forcefully articulated. It is expected that beyond and sometimes within this initial frame of reporting, media coverage is expected to drop considerably.

The New York Times was chosen based on its profile as *the* recognized standard of journalistic integrity and as a reputable, national news source. It serves as a frequent, "elite" information source for other publications and countless academic studies (Seon-Kyoung, & Gower, 2009, p. 109).

Articles taken from this paper developed a macro-level composite of the shooting events as they unfolded and captured the national dialogue in each case. Thick description of the case details augments the content analysis of articles. Also, a sampling of quotes from the various stakeholders supplemented frequency counts for stakeholders referenced and stakeholders quoted to illustrate what public policies are most talked about and by whom. Finally, the news coverage over the 30-day timeframe was described by recording the themes and events reported for three 10-day periods for each shooting. This provided a between-case assessment to determine if the news trajectories of these crises advance during the reporting frame in a similar manner.

Article selection and coding process. For each of the three cases, the following three steps were followed to locate, search, and code the articles taken from *The New York Times*.

Step 1: Locate the unit of analysis, which is defined as the words and phrases extracted from the select articles themselves. To do this, the *Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe Database* was used since it is specifically devoted to indexing newspaper content. Filters were set for limiting the search to one publication only – *The New York Times.* In addition, the date of the shooting and several specific and general keywords were also set to filter content. Non-straight news articles, such as editorials, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor were excluded.

Step 2: Once the articles were located and collected in one file, they were each searched using keywords or locator terms for stakeholders (e.g., president, shooter, law enforcement, victim, or advocate), public policy issues (e.g., weapons ban, ammunition, background check, or mental health), and proposed actions for addressing the public policy issue (e.g., creation, enforcement, or modification). Not all locator terms and coding categories were identified *a priori*, but some were content-specific and added as appropriate while the search and coding phases were in progress. See appendices A through D for the complete listing of the keywords and coding

categories. In all, 30 individual coding categories were amassed for categorizing stakeholders. However, for purposes of computing the chi-square statistic with a more manageable calculus for the degrees of freedom, those 30 stakeholder codes were collapsed to a group of nine stakeholder clusters. For example, while the precise number of "family member" references and quotes were counted, the individual "family member" code joins individual stakeholder codes for "community member," "subject-matter experts," "social media users," "Internet respondents," and "customers/consumers," which collectively comprise the "members of the local community" cluster. There are nine stakeholder clusters total. Similarly, the group of 18 individual public policy codes were grouped into seven public policy clusters for computing the chi-square statistic. For example, the "ammunition control" cluster is comprised of individual codes for "ammunition" (mail order or in-store purchasing), "banning of high-capacity magazines," and "restriction on the number of rounds in magazine clips." There are seven designated public policy clusters for this research.

Once identified in the article text, locator terms were color-coded to highlight their presence in the text. The color scheme was organized to associate yellow highlighted text with stakeholders who were referenced in the article. Green highlighted text referred to those stakeholders who were directly quoted in the news. Blue highlighted text referred to the public policy issues mentioned in the text. Finally, the red highlighted text identified suggested ways stakeholders felt they could address the public policy issue. Coloring highlights as a preparatory step would make the textual units stand out during the formal coding process, which is the subject of step three.

There was only one coder for this dissertation. The work around for using a single coder was the establishment of a reasonable level of consistency through prior pre-testing of the coding category scheme in combination with one of the dissertation advisors. Joint coding at the outset

helped to refine the coding process and refine categories for both stakeholders and public policy issues. Identifying key words at the outset allowed for a pre-code search function of all articles to locate the keywords (or an approximate equivalent) that would later align with the formal coding categories.

Step 3: With the textual units identified and the keywords highlighted, the next step was to begin the actual coding of all 248 articles. Using several pre-identified codes listed in the codebook, articles for each shooting case were read line-by-line and the word or phrase that approximates the codes in the codebook were identified, and placed within a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was designed to capture all articles' titles and dates, in addition to all stakeholders, quotations from each, and the public policy issues identified in each article. The design also reflects a one-to-one correspondence of every unique category found in the codebook.

Per content analysis protocol, each code is unique and includes one each for: 1) stakeholders, 2) public policies, and 3) ways for addressing the policy issue. Because each of these three categories were already color coded, the actual identification of these in the news articles would be easier for coders to locate. The extra step was designed to minimize possible human error and coder fatigue such as missing the keywords altogether. It was also designed to allow for intercoder reliability through the precise identification of what codes fall into which categories. With the three-step process outlined for selecting and coding the unit of analysis generally, the next section will look more specifically at the article data sets and the search terms used to select them.

Identification of the data sets.

The *Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe Database* was used exclusively for sourcing all shooting-related articles on the three cases from the *New York Times (NYT)*. The filtering function

of the database was used to limit search results to a month's worth of articles in the *NYT*, beginning with the first day of the respective shooting. All articles were gathered for identifying stakeholders, their reactions to the shooting, and capturing the manifest public policy narratives. For all cases, overarching generic keyword search terms include: "mass shooting," "gun control," "mass murder," "mental health," and "gun violence." These were augmented by incident-specific identifiers such as the city where the shooting took place, the name of the shooter, among others. Keyword search terms and the search results are included below for each of the three cases as Table 2.0, Table 2.1 and Table 2.2.

Data collection – Aurora, Colorado and the theater shooting. The Aurora, Colorado shooting at the Century movie theater, the deadliest mass shooting in the state since Columbine, is investigated using a month's worth of news coverage from the *NYT*. Keyword search terms include a general set of locators: "mass shooting," "gun control," "mass murder," "mental health," and "gun violence." These search terms were expanded with three incident-specific identifiers: "Aurora," for the city where the shooting took place, "James Eagan Holmes," as perpetrator of the shooting, and "theater shooting" for the type of shooting venue. The span of straight news articles collected and content-analyzed extend from July 20, 2012 through August 20, 2012. Excluded from this data set were editorials and other opinion pieces, blogs, corrections, features, sports-related reporting, and magazine articles. A cache of 268 articles were returned from searching *The New York Times*. These were later screened and pared down further to 46 articles (or 17%) after the opinion pieces, editorials, and other article types were also removed. (See Table 2.0 on the following page that shows the data set source, the timeframe for article selection, the number of articles found, and the number of articles to be coded.)

In each case, once the articles were located and saved as one continuous file, the entire set was searched for stakeholders using the 37 keywords found in Appendix A or the table labeled *Keyword Search or Locator Terms: Stakeholders*. Appendix B, or *Keyword Search or Locator Terms: Public Policy*, lists 34 terms used to search the text for instances of public policy issues debated in the aftermath of each shooting. Finally, Appendix C, or *Keyword Search or Locator Terms: Addressing Public Policy*, lists 32 terms used to search for ways policies are addressed.

Table 2.0	Keywords: Aurora, CO (Century 16 Movie Theatre Shooting) - July 20, 2012		
Source:	*New York Times* (national news source)		
Database:	*Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe*		
Search Feature:	"Advanced Options"		
Timeframe:	July 20, 2012 – August 20, 2012		
Filters:	Eliminating blogs, magazines, editorials, corrections, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and sports reporting		
Keywords: "Aurora," "James Eagan Holmes," "Mass Shooting," "Mass Murder," "Gun Control," "Gun Violence," "Mental Health" and "Theater Shooting			
Keyword Search	No. of articles returned	Exceptions (-) Articles removed from dataset	Final number of articles to be coded of total returned
Combined above search terms	268	221	46 (17%)
			108 total pages of content

Data collection – Newtown, Connecticut and an elementary school shooting. For the Newtown, Connecticut school shooting, 30 days of coverage in *The New York Times* was analyzed. Full-text, shooting specific keyword search terms include: "Sandy Hook" for the name of the elementary school, "Adam Lanza" for the name of the shooter, and "Newtown" for the name of the city where the shooting took place. Generic search terms included: "mass shooting," "gun control," "gun violence," "mass murder," and "mental health." Articles were examined for stakeholder identification and language and story particulars during the 30-day window of coverage following the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The 30-day keyword search

terms included: "mass shooting," "gun control," "gun violence," "mass murder," and "mental health." A combined search using the keywords listed above returned 384 from the *New York Times* after removing the exclusions (editorials/opinions, blogs, letters to the editor, and magazine articles). The final data set amounted to 88 articles after removing all exceptions to the straight-news selection rule. The timeframe for the analysis of this case runs from June 17, 2015 through July 17, 2015. See Table 2.2 below for the dataset particulars. Also, for a look at the total number of actual keyword matches for each case, refer to appendices A, B, and C for stakeholders, public policy issues, and ways for addressing public policy issues, respectively.

Table 2.2	Keywords: Charleston, SC (Emmanuel AME Church Shooting) – June 17, 2015		
Source:	*New York Times* (national news source)		
Database:	*Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe*		
Search Feature:	"Advanced Options"		
Timeframe:	June 17, 2015 – July 17, 2015		
Filters:	Eliminating blogs, magazines, editorials, corrections, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and sports reporting		
Keywords: "Charleston," "Dylann Roof," "Mass Shooting," "Mass Murder," "Gun Control," "Gun Violence," "Mental Health," "Church Shooting," and "Confederate Flag"			
Keyword Search	No. of articles returned	Exceptions (-)	Final number of be articles to be coded of total returned
Combined search terms…	384	296	88 (23%)
			223 pages of content

Coding categories, definitions and the codebook. For research question one (RQ1), which seeks to identify the primary stakeholders and explore the characteristics of mass shooting crises, stakeholder attribution was deciphered and coded using direct quotes from 248 articles extracted from *The New York Times*. For this study, the definition of *stakeholder* corresponds with that of Heath and Palenchar (2009): "any persons or groups that hold something of value that can be used as rewards or constraints in exchange for goods, services, or organizational policies and operating

standards" (p. 16). These engaged publics who have "stakes that can directly influence the success of the organization are primary, whereas those whose stakes are less likely to be immediately brought to bear are secondary or indirect" (p. 16). Grunig and Repper (1992) earlier refer to these engaged individuals and groups as "active publics" who "actively communicate about an issue" because they "perceive that what an organization does involves them" (p. 125). Thus, their level of involvement or stake is raised. Stakeholders in this study are classified according to a list of publics who have a stake in the post-shooting debate (local, regional, and national leaders, community residents, politicians, survivors and their families, the media, active shooters, first responders, activists, civil liberties and rights groups, gun rights advocates, or gun control advocates). As these coding categories were not exhaustive, other emergent publics were included as they were manifested in the articles.

On the following page is a partial listing of the codes and coding categories used for individual stakeholder identification. The complete list is found on page 2b of the codebook in Appendix D.

Table 2.3 – Snapshot of Stakeholder Codes from Appendix D (pg. 2b)	
CODE	**Stakeholder – (Column 4 of the code sheet)**
Law enforcement, regulators, emergency personnel, and judiciary	
1	Local law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief*)
3	National law enforcement official (*FBI agent or other federal officer*)
4	First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement*)
5	Judicial offices/officials <u>local</u> level (*attorneys for either side, jury*)
7	Regulatory body (*governmental entity, administrative authority*)
Civic leaders	
8	Politician – leader (*mayor, governor, president*)
9	Politician – legislator (*congress person: senator, representative – at state or federal level*)
Community members, victims, perpetrators, media, family members and friends	
10	Victim (*survivor of mass shooting*)
11	Shooter
12	Family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor (*with knowledge of…*) of victims *or* shooter
13	Community member (*eye witness, neighbors, parent, teacher, or minister*)
16	Subject-matter experts in any area who are often quoted
17	Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists*)
Community organizational members	
20	Customers
21	Employees
22	Businesses (*those affected by the shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops*)
23	Workplace or institution with responsibility as the site of the shooting (*e.g., universities or theaters*)
30	Other (coder defined)

Articles not only were examined for quotes and statements attributed to stakeholders, but they were also content-analyzed for the public policy issues that emerge. Issue categories were organized along a continuum of the more prominent topics including: "gun control," "mental health and violence," "mental health and gun control," "public safety," "public memorial," "victim profile," "shooter profile," "second amendment rights," "gun owner rights," "self-defense," "cause," "background checks," and other underlying themes within the articles. Keyword search terms include incident-specific terms, such as shooter names specific to the mass shooting, and more generic terms such as "mass shooting" and "gun control." Below is a listing of the codes and coding categories used for identifying public policy issues. These are found in Appendix D on page four of the codebook.

Table 2.4 – Snapshot of Public Policy Issue Codes from Appendix D (pg. 4)	
CODE	Public Policy Issue – (Column 5 of code sheet)
1	Active shooter drills or training
2	Assault weapons ban
3	Background checks
4	Communication (*cross-agency or among facility staff members*)
5	Enhanced security measures or precautions (*e.g., use of metal detectors*)
6	Firearm training
7	Gun control generally
8	Magazine clip – limit the number of rounds
9	Mental health policies or screenings
10	Open carry laws
11	Second Amendment
12	Confidentiality
13	Legal safeguards
14	Other (coder defined)

Issues identification (RQ2) and tracking over the 30-day examination period involved extracting the public policy issue from the texts. For this study, the definition of a public policy issue is a publicly-debated policy matter framed through dialogue. They are indicative of the public's and policy makers' social concerns (Birkland, 1997). These matters are more than "contestable point[s]" (Heath & Palenchar, 2009, p. 93); they tend to attract media coverage and, at times, spur intense argument from the various stakeholders, including policy makers who contemplate legislation. In these issue exchanges, stakeholders' views and values are revealed through their dialogue, which are chronicled in the media, as well as in the public and policy arenas. According to Heath and Palenchar (2009), "a policy results when an issue is resolved through governmental action or voluntary actions by a company or industry, a negotiated agreement among opposing sides, or social convention….An issue…has the potential, once key groups begin to promote it, to require resolution" (p. 93). They contend that the more complex the issue, the more stakeholders are engaged in dialogue (Heath & Palenchar, 2009).

Unitization of the themes, arguments, narratives, strategies, and appeals that capture which public policy issues garnered the most reported stakeholder attention (RQ2) were extracted directly from the news articles. In addition, how stakeholders discuss public policy issues (RQ3) was also mined from the text itself and recorded for each speaker. Specifically, stakeholders given speaking roles within an article, meaning they are directly quoted, were coded as a stakeholder (RQ1). Those not directly quoted but mentioned in the article passage were likewise coded. In addition, the public policy issue discussed (RQ2) by stakeholders was also coded. This open source classification process permitted manifest narratives and/or policy stances to come to the fore directly from the context and served as the basis for the codebook's scheme.

In an attempt to be exhaustive, the codebook was expanded as each occurrence of a coded element was identified and assigned a code. Still, "open coding," as "the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data" was employed through each step of the coding process to allow for more robust data capture beyond predetermined categories (Schildkraut, 2012, online). Straight news articles, inclusive of any debate-related public comments, were examined from day one of each shooting event, and 30 days thereafter. These sources were scanned for the presence or absence of the public policy issue over the examination period. Should the issue have disappeared from the news source, then that was noted. Should the issue have increased in coverage intensity and garnered more attention, then that too was captured over the 30-day examination period. Issue attention was captured in terms of the number of days the issue showed up in the press. This study used a single coder design and results were entered directly into SPSS for statistical analysis. How the data was analyzed is the subject of the next section.

Analysis

Data analysis in this study consisted of descriptive statistics, notably frequency distributions and measures of central tendencies for the number of public policies, the number of stakeholders referenced and quoted, and the number of issues debate articles examined. This is inclusive of the mean (arithmetic average), mode (most recurrent value), and median (exact midpoint) for the complete list of targeted variables. Testing whether the observed frequency at which stakeholders are referenced or quoted and public policies are mentioned is significant is also calculated. Significance is defined as the statistical threshold where the observed frequency count of a variable (such as the number of stakeholders quoted or the public policy counts in text) exceeds the number expected for that variable.

Because this study is exploratory, expected frequency counts for all three measures (public policy issues, referenced stakeholders, and quoted stakeholders) are preset at 50 percent, meaning there is a 50/50 chance that each measure will appear in the text. This would also suggest that the variable is observed in the text more frequently than what mere chance could yield. Statistical significance to determine if there is a difference between *observed* and *expected* frequency measures is calculated using the chi-square, goodness-of-fit test with a predetermined probability level (or *p-value)* of less than 0.05. The development of an SPSS spreadsheet to capture this data facilitated the recording of frequency counts and calculation of the chi-square statistic. Together these results will help answer questions about which stakeholders are mentioned/quoted (RQ1) the most and which public policy issues garner the most coverage (RQ2) in the national news.

More specifically, frequency counts for those stakeholder codes (e.g., local, regional, national politicians) listed in Appendix D, page 2b returned two measures: 1) the total number of references for each stakeholder that appeared in the news coverage; and 2) the total number of

quotes attributed to each stakeholder that appeared in the news coverage. The average number of references and averaged number of quotations across all stakeholders was determined for each shooting case by summing the frequency counts for each category and dividing them by the total number; it's the calculation of the arithmetic average. The median number of references and quotations was also calculated for each distribution by locating the exact midpoint for an odd number of values. Where there was an even number of values, the calculation required summing the two middle values then dividing it by two. Calculation of the mode involved identifying the most frequently occurring number for stakeholders referenced and stakeholders quoted in the news source. This information yielded several useful data points, including the most frequent stakeholders mentioned in the news coverage, the stakeholders quoted the most, the average number of stakeholder quotes printed in the news, and the average number of stakeholder mentions in the reporting.

In addition to frequency counts and measures of central tendencies for stakeholder references and quotes, the mean, mode, and median were also calculated on the frequency counts for all public policy issue codes as listed in Appendix D, page 3. Determining where each public policy issue ranked among those coded provides useful information for quantifying just which policy issues gain prominence after a mass shooting and which ones are centrally positioned. Furthermore, calculating the average number of public policy issue mentions shares which ones garner the most coverage with each mass shooting and which policies are mentioned the least.

To determine whether or not certain referenced and quoted stakeholders were included in the news coverage by mere chance or probability, a chi-square statistic with a .05 level of significance was calculated using stakeholder frequency data. Similarly, to determine whether the observed number of public policy issue counts was equal to the expected number of public policy issue

counts was also calculated using the chi-square statistic with a .05 level of significance. These calculations would indicate if certain stakeholders are more likely to be referenced and/or quoted in mass shooting media coverage at the national level, or whether certain public policies are foregrounded in these incidents by chance or probability.

Questions about how stakeholders address public policies (RQ3) and how mass shootings evolve over time (RQ4) will be based on qualitative measures. As noted earlier, this case study will be informed by the ethnographic technique known as "thick description." Thick description, according to Thompson (2001), increases "the ability of the public to understand the issues at stake" (p. 68). It involves "more than merely facts; 'the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard…A thick description creates verisimilitude'" (pp. 66-67). Contextualized description and interpretation (Freeman, 2014) "has four characteristics: 1) it gives the context of an act; 2) it states the intentions and meanings that organize the action; 3) it traces the evolution and development of the act; and 4) it presents the action as a text that can then be interpreted" (Thompson, 2001, p. 66). The basis for these four features is included in the typical news story. Media reporting, therefore, was determined as an appropriate data source from which to extract the research data. The discussion and dialogue generated in the public domain are routinely captured in news stories and will provide the content and context for each case study's thick description. Full case chronologies were developed for each mass shooting beyond 30 days, to help determine whether different mass shooting stories evolve in the press in a similar manner.

Conclusion

This chapter described the content analysis method used for this multiple case analysis. A brief description of and rationale for employing this method was discussed along with the fact that it will be informed by the use of thick description to generate both narratives and chronologies for

each case. An introduction to the codebook was also presented. The chapter additionally provided an overview of the three cases to be examined in subsequent chapters and included a discussion of the rationale for their selection. The chapter concludes with a brief look at how the data will be collected and analyzed and particularly how frequency counts and measures of central tendencies will be appropriate for answering several of the four research questions guiding this study.

In the three chapters that follow is a detailed examination of the three mass shooting crises chosen to tease out the nuances of this genre. Each case begins with a detailed narrative followed by an extended case chronology that goes well beyond the 30-day examination timeline. These are followed by an accounting of the public policy issues debated, an identification of the stakeholders engaged, and a brief look at how the cases evolve over the month-long examination period. Finally, each chapter concludes with a final word on the takeaways for each shooting case.

CHAPTER 3 - A THEATER SHOOTING IN AURORA

This chapter explores the 2012 mass shooting that occurred in a suburb of Denver, Colorado in a crowded Aurora movie theater. Following the brief narrative below is a chronology that identifies the key events surrounding the shooting and its aftermath. The dataset is comprised of 46 articles from *The New York Times*, each of which was content-analyzed for several emergent and pre-identified, keyword search terms for locating a list of targeted stakeholders and public policy issues (see Appendices A and B for the terms used). Descriptive statistics, primarily measures of central tendencies and summation counts, are presented in this chapter with the identification of the most frequently-cited public policy issues. Those frequencies will be followed by a listing of the top stakeholders reported in the news coverage, which will include a synopsis of what each stakeholder is quoted as saying. This chapter will conclude with a characterization of the shooting coverage over the 30-day period. This section will describe news coverage from the first day of the shooting through the decline of coverage as the month concluded.

Narrative of the Aurora Theater Shooting

The sudden chaos and heightened uncertainty that typify the mass shooting crisis were both present during the early morning hours of Friday, July 20, 2012. Avid moviegoers had descended on the Century Aurora 16 multiplex in Aurora, Colorado, just 20 miles from the site of the 1999 shooting massacre at Columbine High School. They were there to attend the midnight premiere of the Batman fantasy sequel – *The Dark Knight Rises*. Box office receipts were expected to be record breaking based on interest and attendance from the movie saga's predecessor. In an instant, the pre-crisis calm in the darkened theater from the customary run of movie trailers and opening scenes would be shattered by gunfire emanating from the right side of the movie screen instead of on it.

The movie began at 12:20 a.m. in sold-out Theater 9 of the Cinemark complex. Attendees with front row seats say the shooter, 24-year-old James E. Holmes, reentered the theater through a parking lot emergency exit door to the right of the movie screen. Witnesses also said that he had propped that door open to allow himself reentry after going to his car (Fender & Ingold, 2013). Upon reentering, he threw two canisters in the air that released smoke into the room. In the confusion, audience members initially thought that Holmes was participating in a marketing stunt intended to synchronize with the release of the film. His reddish-orange hair made this plausible as did his long black coat, gas mask, helmet, and full body armor (Healy & Kovaleski, 2012). Witnesses also recalled Holmes saying "I am the Joker" and shooting up into the ceiling. This was immediately followed by him firing directly into the audience with numerous rounds from a cache of three firearms: an AR-15 assault rifle, a Remington 12-gauge shotgun, and a .40 caliber Glock handgun (Eligon & Santora, 2012). Pausing only to reload, he targeted members of the audience as they tried to escape the room in the commotion, some jumping or hiding in between rows of seats.

The first emergency call to authorities was placed eighteen minutes after the movie began while the sound of gunfire could still be heard in the background. Police officers arrived on the scene around 90 seconds after the initial 911 call (Frosch & Johnson, 2012). They immediately began to call for backup, evacuate the theater complex, and transport the injured to local hospitals. Their numbers eventually swelled to 200. In the mayhem, dozens of more 911 calls flooded emergency dispatchers. One officer recounted how, as he approached Theater 9 from the rear, he almost mistook the shooter for another officer because of the ballistic helmet and armor he was wearing. The officer also noticed the trail of blood in the rear of the theater. Shortly after that,

Holmes was arrested at the scene, but not before his 14-minute shooting violence took the lives of 12 moviegoers and injured 70 others.

Holmes' actions reverberated throughout a shocked community and nation, and strained local healthcare professionals in the Aurora area who tended to the wounded. It was later determined that Holmes, a graduate student studying neuroscience at the University of Colorado-Denver, had legally purchased four firearms and over 6,000 rounds of ammunition in the preceding months leading up to the massacre (Patterson, 2012). Holmes' mental health issues also came to the fore, including the fact that he was seeing psychiatrists at the student mental health services at the University of Colorado's Anschutz Medical Campus. In addition, prior to leaving for the theater that night, Holmes had outfitted his apartment with chemical explosives, complete with trip wires designed to surprise responding investigators. As police moved in to barricade and evacuate the street by his apartment, neighbors looked on in disbelief. Revulsion for Holmes' actions reinvigorated, once more, the gun control debate nationally. A chronology of the key events that led up to and trailed the shooting incident are observed in Table 3.0 on the next page.

TABLE 3.0 - A Chronology of the Theater Shooting in Aurora, Colorado	
Date	*Event(s)*
April 3, 2012	Holmes has first therapy session with psychiatrist, Dr. Lynne Fenton. He shares how he had recently broke up with his girlfriend and had "homicidal thoughts three to four times a day" (McKinley, 2015). Medication was prescribed.
May 10, 2012	Holmes makes first of 16 purchases, including two tear gas grenades, a gas mask, four firearms, bullet proof, body armor, and materials for making explosives.
May 31, 2012	Holmes has therapy session with Dr. Fenton along with Dr. Robert Feinstein.
June 6, 2012	Holmes purchases road stars (tire punctures), handcuffs, and bandage.
June 7, 2012	Holmes fails his oral exams for the neuroscience program. He is told he has no future in the field. He also purchases a Smith & Wesson M&P15.
June 11, 2012	Holmes has second therapy session with both doctors; he appears "relaxed" though he shared he had failed his oral exam and decided to drop out of the program. Dr. Fenton reports him to the university's threat assessment team along with campus police.
June 13, 2012	Holmes purchases several firearm magazines (for holding ammunition).
June 20, 2012	Holmes purchases shooting targets with pictures of law enforcement officials on them.
June 25, 2012	Holmes submits an application to join a shooting range - the Lead Valley Range
June 28, 2012	Holmes purchases 2050 .40 caliber rounds, 2250 .223 ammo and 25 rounds for his shotgun. He is said to have bought 6,000 rounds in all.
June 29, 2012	An employee of his apartment's rental office notices Holmes orange hair tint. Holmes takes two photos of the Century 16 theater and another on July 6.
July1-2, 2012	Holmes buys a scope on the 1st of July and body armor (for the neck, arm, and groin) the very next day.
July 5, 2012	Holmes creates a profile on the site "Adult Friend Finder" with the headline: *"Will you visit me in prison?"*
July 6 -7, 2012	Holmes purchases a Glock pistol at a Bass Pro Shops; he takes another picture of the Century 16 theater. The next day he purchases his first ticket to see the Batman movie in Theater #8 using Fandango; the shooting occurs in Theater #9.
July 11 & 14, 2012	Holmes purchases a gas can, some diesel oil, spray paint, a window tint and a sun shade from O'Reilly Auto Parts on the 11th; he takes another photo of Century 16 theater that same day; on the 14th of July, Holmes purchases chemicals, electrodes, and a mortar from The Science Company.
July 19, 2012	6:25 p.m. - Holmes takes several "selfies;" one shows his face next to his Glock.
July 20, 2012 **Date of mass shooting**	**12:00 a.m. Friday -** Holmes's downstairs neighbors hear loud music coming from Holmes's apartment. No answer to knocks on the door. Police receive a call at 12:09 am. Holmes heads to Theater 9.
	12:30 a.m. - Holmes reenters Theater 9 of the Century 16 theater in Aurora, CO. through a parking lot emergency exit. His shooting massacre begins.

TABLE 3.0 - A Chronology of the Theater Shooting in Aurora, Colorado	
Date	*Event(s)*
July 20, 2012 **Date of mass shooting**	**12:38 a.m.** - Police dispatch receive their first 911 call from the theater. They arrive on the scene a minute-and-a half later.
	12:44 a.m. - Police begin arriving on the scene and start taking the injured to local hospitals. They also begin evacuating neighboring theaters.
	12:45 a.m. - Police arrest Holmes in the rear of the theater near his car. Hundreds of rounds of ammunition are found, along with his four firearms. Holmes allegedly tells officers that he was the Joker, a character in the Batman series. In the mayhem, he shoots 70, killing 12 and injuring 58 others.
	12:55 a.m. - Police set up a perimeter around the theater.
	1:00 a.m. - Over 140 nurses and doctors were called to the University of Colorado hospital to treat the wounded. An hour later, Holmes' apartment building is evacuated.
	3:00 a.m. - Aurora Police Chief Dan Oates address the media and shares what they know about the shooting and suspect.
	5:23 a.m. – Per the Atlantic.com, President Obama makes a formal statement: *"Michelle and I are shocked and saddened by the horrific and tragic shooting in Colorado. Federal and local law enforcement are still responding, and my administration will do everything that we can to support the people of Aurora in this extraordinarily difficult time…"* He addresses the nation at noon and orders flags lowered for five days (Franke-Ruta, 2012).
	5:44 a.m. – Per the Atlantic.com, presidential candidate Mitt Romney makes a statement: *"Ann and I are deeply saddened by the news of the senseless violence that took the lives of 15 people in Colorado and injured dozens more. We are praying for the families and loved ones of the victims during this time of deep shock and immense grief..."* (Franke-Ruta, 2012).
	6:30 a.m. - A San Diego woman identifying herself as James Holmes' mother tells ABC News, *"You have the right person. I need to call the police. I need to fly out to Colorado"* (Holpuch, 2012).
	8:00 a.m. - Surviving moviegoers who survive the shooting give eyewitness accounts on what it was like from inside the theater.
July 21, 2012	The Century 16 theater reopens to the public at 10:00 a.m.; law enforcement officials disarm Holmes' apartment and destroy the explosive devices and chemical materials.
July 22, 2012	President Obama visits shooting victims in the hospital; thousands remember the victims in a public memorial in front of the Aurora Municipal Center.
July 23, 2012	Holmes makes his first court appearance; the mailroom of the Anschutz campus at the University of Colorado is evaluated and searched; authorities find a notebook Holmes had mailed to his therapist, Dr. Fenton.
July 24, 2012	Actor Christian Bale (who played Batman in the film) visits shooting victims.
July 25, 2012	Residents of Holmes apartment building at 1690 Paris St. are given permission to return home.

Date	Event(s)
	TABLE 3.0 - A Chronology of the Theater Shooting in Aurora, Colorado
Date	*Event(s)*
July 27, 2012	Fox News shares information from the notebook Holmes sent to his psychiatrist. In it Holmes used drawings and other illustrations to depict how he would murder people.
July 30, 2012	Holmes is charged with 24 counts of murder (two for each victim), 166 counts of attempted murder (two for each victim), possession of explosives and a crime of violence – 142 counts in all.
Aug. 9, 2012	Holmes' defense team suggests he suffers from "mental illness" at a court hearing.
Aug. 28, 2012	Shooting victims' families complain about a "lack of voice" in the distribution of the Aurora Victim Relief Fund.
Sept. 21, 2012	Cinemark, the parent of Century 16 theaters, receives the first of several lawsuits from victims alleging "inadequate security."
Oct. 15, 2012	A plan of agreement is reached for distributing funds to victims from donated funds.
Oct. 22, 2012	The youngest victim of the shooting massacre is buried. Her mother is paralyzed below her waist; she has a miscarriage with another child.
Oct. 26, 2012	Counts leveled at Holmes are amended to 166 from 142; the total number of injured is upgraded from 58 to 70.
Nov. 13, 2012	Holmes tries unsuccessfully to commit suicide by ramming his head into his jail cell wall. On Nov. 14 he is taken to and restrained at Denver Health for an emergency evaluation.
Dec. 10, 2012	Following leaked information about the notebook Holmes sent to his therapist, Holmes' defense team announced they would subpoena the reporter who wrote the story to uncover the source.
Dec. 14, 2012	The father of one of the shooting victims makes a public call for gun control; Tom Teves argued "*there is no need for the public to have access to weapons like the one allegedly used by the gunmen in Aurora or Newtown, Conn.*" ("Gun control demands," 2012).
Jan. 7, 2013	Holmes' has his preliminary hearing; after a couple of days of presentation, Judge William Sylvester sends the shooting case to trial.
Jan. 17, 2013	Century 16 theater reopens to victims, families, and first responders; Colorado's governor and Aurora's mayor attend and say "the healing begins here."
Jan. 18, 2013	Judge Sylvester approves subpoena request for Fox reporter Jana Winter who wrote about the Holmes' notebook to his psychiatrist.
Mar. 12, 2013	A victim (Caleb Medley) finally released from the hospital attends court hearing and eyes shooter for the first time since the incident. Though Holmes' defense attorneys were not ready to enter a plea on behalf of their client, the judge did – "*not guilty.*"
Mar. 20, 2013	Colorado's Governor John W. Hickenlooper signs three separate gun control bills. "*Spurred by the shootings in Aurora and Newtown…Colorado Legislature passes three gun bills…restrict the size of gun magazines, expand background*

TABLE 3.0 - A Chronology of the Theater Shooting in Aurora, Colorado	
Date	*Event(s)*
	checks…and add a fee for background checks for gun transfers." ("Gun control demands," 2012)
May 13, 2013	Holmes' attorneys enter a plea of "not guilty by reason of insanity" for him. Judge Carlos A. Samour, Jr. agreed to extend Holmes sanity evaluation from July 31 to September 16.
July 20, 2013	Marking the one-year anniversary of the theater shooting, Aurora holds a "day of remembrance."
Sept. 6, 2013	A 128-page mental health assessment of Holmes is released; it would later be ruled "inadequate" and result in a couple of trial delays.
July 10, 2015	Almost three years after the shooting, several delays, and emotional testimony, the Holmes defense team rests their case.
July 16, 2015	Jurors find Holmes guilty of first-degree murder of all 12 victims.
Aug. 26, 2015	James Holmes is sentenced to 12 consecutive life sentences plus 3,318 years in prison by Arapahoe County District Court Judge Samour.
Primary source: *7NEWS & TheDenverChannel.com*, Theater shooting timeline. Retrieved from http://www.thedenverchannel.com/aurora-movie-theater-shooting/timeline. Articles are augmented by articles in *The New York Times* dataset.	

The unfolding of this shooting is indicative of the unexpected and surprise nature of these incidents. While the shooter pre-planned his attendance at the premier down to the type of protective gear he would wear, the tint of his hair, and the firearms he would use, he appeared to shoot individuals randomly. Moviegoers thought they were attending just another blockbuster movie opening, but they had no reason to think they would meet with an imminent threat. These fans were oblivious to the danger and calculation they would encounter, as suggested by reports of atypical, pre-movie tweets shared by excited fans just moments before the shooting began (Capretto, 2015). The thought that the shooter with orange hair was a part of an elaborate and deliberate promotional stunt shows the level of presumed safety public moviegoers have come to assume. Round after round of bullets flying, screaming, running, bloodshed and carnage that erupted in an instance replaced the pre-movie excitement with terror and disbelief. This theater

breach exposed the vulnerabilities present in many public settings where security measures are designed in proportion to a calculated threat level.

The arrival of first responders to such a chaotic scene was also fraught with uncertainty as law enforcement authorities had to quickly decipher who is the victim(s), who is the perpetrator(s), and how to best secure the scene. In the chaos, for a moment Holmes was mistaken for one of the responders because of the ballistic gear he was wearing. Proper training of the responding officer was critical in the seconds it took them to identify Holmes as the shooter and make an arrest. Taken together, the caustic mix of firearms, mental health, lax security measures, unsuspecting patrons and supposed safety, exposed a venue susceptible for violence that is not unlike other public contexts. The result of these crises is that they provoke much debate about the very issues that make them possible. Among them are: the failed security, the shooter's motivation and predisposition to violence, patron safety, the types of weapons used, options for self-protection, as well as lawmaker and governmental responsibility. Several of these issues become the target of public policy makers and are the subject of the next section.

Identification of Public Policy Debate Issues

The shooting in Aurora occurred during the 2012 presidential election year; thus, the coverage was amplified in part by the candidates' commentary, the unusual nature of the shooting venue, and the large number of victims. Data from the analysis of media coverage indicates that several issues, a number of which are related, received prominent media attention in the month after the shooting. Notably, the call for gun control resounded soon after the shooting, as did the contrasting demand to preserve and even expand Second Amendment freedoms to protect one's property and person. Of the 17 public policy issues examined in this study, the majority of the coverage revolved around measures to control the use of firearms. News reporting frequency

rankings of the top public policy issues are listed in Table 3.1. Regulation of guns and ammunition were among the top policy issues mentioned in the 46 NYT articles. Specifically, controlling the sales and dissemination of guns and the need to implement more stringent background checks were among the most prominent issues covered by the media. The breach of Century Aurora 16 theater security is also the subject of much of the safety coverage in the first month. Mental health issues also garnered a sizeable share of the news coverage in the first 30 days. Concern about how to prevent someone with mental illness from obtaining weapons is related to the issue of expanded background checks. Also, the speed at which Holmes was able to kill or wound so many precipitated a discussion in a number of the articles on banning certain high-capacity magazines and assault weapons. This issue was also related to ammunition sales and firearm accessibility and the loopholes that exist for Internet gun merchants. Following in Table 3.1 is a ranking of the top individual public policy issues covered in the data set. It will be augmented by Table 3.2, which groups the same public policies into clusters of related issues, which was subsequently used for calculating the chi-square, "goodness of fit" statistic.

TABLE 3.1 – Top Public Policy Issues Covered – As Reported in 46 NYT articles			
Ranked Public Policy Issues	Public Policy Issue Defined	Issue is reported in X no. of the 46 articles	Issue appears in X % of the 46 articles
Stricter gun laws	Gun control measures, generally - (*stricter gun laws, restrict access to guns, new gun laws*)	21	46%
Background checks	Background checks (*regarding application and license fees, permits, and renewals*)	14	30%
Public safety measures	Enhanced security measures or precautions (*use of metal detectors, public safety efforts*)	12	26%
Mental health policies	Mental health policies or screenings or precautions	11	24%
Assault weapons ban	Assault weapons ban like that of 1999	10	22%

TABLE 3.1 – Top Public Policy Issues Covered – As Reported in 46 NYT articles			
Ranked Public Policy Issues	Public Policy Issue Defined	Issue is reported in X no. of the 46 articles	Issue appears in X % of the 46 articles
Ammunition sales	Ammunition – mail order via Internet or through a gun retailer, bulk purchasing	10	22%
Legal Safeguards	Safeguards against the sale of firearms at gun shows or online; tracking sales and licensing for sellers	9	20%
Second Amendment rights	Second Amendment right to bear arms	8	17%
Limitations on the size of magazine clips	Restriction on the number of rounds allowed in magazine clips or the number of guns one can own	6	13%
Confidentiality matters	Confidentiality - especially in the case of mental health or privacy matters concerning social media	6	13%
Open carry laws	Curtailing or relaxing open carry laws	4	9%
Communication issues	Communication (cross agency sharing or among organizational staff members)	3	7%
High-capacity magazine ban	Ban of high capacity ammunition magazines	2	4%
Firearm training	Training in use of firearms	1	2%
Active shooter drills	Drills for active shooter events	1	2%
"Stand your ground" laws	Laws authorizing self-protection in incidents of threats or perceived threats to one's person	1	2%
Note: *Public policy issues covered in less than one article are not included in this table. These include: emergency drills and straw purchases.*			

Specific to the theater shooting case, issues of new or stricter gun control laws, background checks, and enhanced public safety measures garnered the most coverage, appearing in 46%, 30%, and 26% of the 46 news articles, respectively (see Table 3.1 above). These issues were followed by mental health fitness screenings (24%), assault weapons banning (22%), access to ammunition

through the Internet or retailers (22%), and legal safeguards by restricting the sale of firearms at gun shows or online, which was covered in 20% of the 46 articles examined. Lesser attention was devoted to issues surrounding Second Amendment freedoms, limits on the number of rounds in large-capacity ammunition magazines, confidential medical records or social media accounts, open carry laws and interagency communication through registries such as the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. These issues garnered varying amounts of news coverage in the 30-day examination period that ranged from a mention in 7% of the 46 articles up to 17%. Reporting on issues related to an outright ban on high capacity magazine (versus a limitation on volume), emergency drills, firearm training, "stand your ground" laws, and finally straw purchases when combined accounted for less than 10% of the total news coverage over the 30-day timeframe (see Table 3.1 above).

Aside from the 17 categories developed for coding public policy issues, the issue of movie-inspired violence surfaced in three articles for a 7% share of the news coverage. In addition, the following policy issues were equally represented in a single article or garnered 2.2% of the news coverage over the 30-day timeframe: a) a proposed increase in gun licensing fees; b) diversion of guns to criminals across state lines due to inconsistent laws from state to state; c) a fetal homicide law that decides cases when a fetus is killed; d) selling shell casing to ammunition dealers instead of to a scrap yard; e) determining, through perpetrator motive, when crimes are instances of random gun violence, domestic terror, hate crimes or a combination thereof; f) implementation of microstamping, a form of ballistics identification and seriation; and g) a proposed tax increase on different ammunition types such as hollow-tipped bullets that can pierce body armor – it does not include bullets used during target practice.

Several of the forgoing individual public policy issues overlap. For example, ammunition control generally takes the form of an outright ban on high capacity ammunition magazines, or placing a cap on the number of rounds permitted in magazine clips, or accessibility of ammunition via the Internet or bulk purchasing. An "ammunition control" cluster was devised to better quantify the total number of articles associated with that category. Similarly, six other clusters were developed to account for public policies associated with: "gun control measures, generally," "training and public safety measures," "weapons ban – firearm related policies," "interagency coordination/communication," "background checks," and "mental health related" policies. See Appendix D, page 5 for the full breakdown of these clusters.

Of the 119 public policy issues coded, the majority or 43 occurrences (roughly 36% of the total) was associated with the gun control cluster. This category was followed by 18 instances from the ammunition control cluster, 14 occurrences from the background checks cluster, 14 occurrences associated with the training and public safety cluster, 11 instances related to the mental health cluster, 10 instances from the weapons ban cluster, and nine occurrences associated with agency coordination and communication.

Significance – Public Policy Issues. A chi-square, "goodness of fit" test was performed using the seven cluster categories. Two public policy clusters emerged significant in the national press based on what was expected and observed for reporting of an average public policy issue. Frequency distributions for each cluster is displayed in Table 3.2 below. For a p-value of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 49.647 and six degrees of freedom, both the gun control and ammunition control clusters were significant. Instances of the gun control policy issue was observed 43 times in the data set, while instances of ammunition control occurred 18 times. Both

articles (or 67%) of the total news coverage. This is understandable given the need to identify the perpetrator of such carnage and perhaps ascertain a motive. Holmes was closely followed by community members who appeared in 29 or 63% of the total 46 articles, local law enforcement who were referenced in 28 of the 46 articles (or 61%), the victims who appeared in 24 articles or 52% of the total coverage, and businesses such as gun shops appeared in exactly half of the news reporting or 23 of the 46 articles. The media and family members appeared in a sizeable number of articles with 39% (or 18 out of 46) and 37% (or 17 out of 46), respectively. Several stakeholders were mentioned in an appreciable percentage of the 46 articles, appearing in between 26% and 35% of the total news coverage. They include (in reverse order) the public in general (35% or 16 of 46 articles), national leaders (35% or 16 of 46 articles), subject-matter experts (33% or 15 of 46 articles) who are often called upon to provide informed commentary/analysis in these incidents, regulatory bodies (33% or 15 of 46 articles) such as the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms or other governmental entity, local judicial officials (30% or 14 of 46 articles), organizations at the local, regional or national levels (28% or 13 of 46 articles) such as the Urban League or Red Cross, and regional leaders/politicians such as a governor (26% or 12 of 46 articles).

Though not statistically significant, customers appeared in 9 of the 46 news articles or 22% of the total news coverage. Five stakeholders were each referenced in eight articles or 17% of the total article dataset. They are local leaders such as the mayor or a city manager, national legislators such as a member of the U.S. Congress, gun control activists, national law enforcement officials such as an FBI agent, and district court judges or other court officials. For the remaining stakeholders who were mentioned in seven articles or less (i.e., 15% or less of the news coverage) see Table 3.3. They are displayed in frequency count order and include first responders, gun rights advocates, social media users, and the N.R.A.

TABLE 3.3 - Most Frequently Referenced Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 46 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in **N** (no.) of 46 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 46 articles
Active Shooter	Shooter/gunman/suspect/ accused/assailant/terrorist	31	67%
Community members	Community member (*neighbors, residents, fans, singer, student, parent, teacher, minister, or voter*)	29	63%
Local law enforcement	Local law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief, bomb squad, investigators, authorities*)	28	61%
Victim (survivors)	Victim (*survivor of mass shooting; eyewitness*)	24	52%
Businesses	Businesses (*those affected by shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops, range, or gun makers*)	23	50%
Media	Media (*apart from coverage when the media is identified as active public in the article, newspaper*)	18	39%
Family member	Family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor (*with knowledge of…*) of victims *or* shooter	17	37%
The public, in general	Community generally (*"the community" or "the public," city, state, county, neighborhood, Americans, racial group, nation, crowds, region*)	16	35%
National leader	Politician – national leader (*president, vice president, their spokespersons, or advisers*)	16	35%
Subject-matter expert	Subject-matter experts in any area who are often quoted (*e.g., university professors, psychiatrists*)	15	33%
Regulatory body	Regulatory body (*governmental entity, administrative authority; ATF, Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, federal government, government generally – any level*)	15	33%
Local judicial official/office	Judicial offices/officials local level (*attorneys for either side, jury, judges, or legislative aides*)	14	30%

TABLE 3.3 - Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 46 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in <u>**N**</u> (no.) of 46 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 46 articles
Local, regional, or national organization	Local, regional, and national organizations (*e.g., the Urban League, parents' groups, Red Cross, CDC, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, or KKK*)	13	28%
Regional leader	Regional leader/politician (*governor, lieutenant governor, their spokesperson, or advisers*)	10	26%
Customers	Customers, patrons, attendees, audience, moviegoers, buyers, or consumers	9	22%
Local leader	Politician – local leader (*mayor, city manager, their spokespersons, or advisers*)	8	17%
National legislator	Lawmaker– national legislator (*member of U.S. congress*)	8	17%
Gun control activists	Gun control advocates/activists, supporter (e.g., *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*)	8	17%
National law enforcement	National law enforcement official (*FBI agent or other federal officer, branches of military, DOJ*)	8	17%
District court or judge or officer	Judicial offices/officials district/appellate/federal levels (*e.g. the Supreme Court*)	8	17%
Healthcare provider	Healthcare provider (*medical and/or psychiatric institutions generally*)	7	15%
Regional/state law enforcement	Regional/state law enforcement official (*county sheriff, state officers*)	6	13%
Gun rights activists	Gun rights advocates/activists (*gun enthusiasts; known to oppose gun control*)	6	13%
First responder	First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement; firefighters*)	5	11%
Site of the shooting	Workplace or institution with responsibility as the site of the shooting (*universities, or theaters*)	5	11%
Employees	Employees, workers, investors, staff	3	7%
Regional legislator	Regional lawmaker – regional legislator (*senator, representative – at state level*)	3	7%

TABLE 3.3 - Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 46 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in <u>**N**</u> (no.) of 46 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 46 articles
Social media user	Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists, the media itself as source of story – Twitter, Facebook*)	3	7%
Internet as a public	Internet (*as a quoted public – "Internet respondents say…" survey, polls, or PEW)*	1	2%
N.R.A.	National Rifle Association official or spokesperson	1	2%
Community group	Community group or group leader, social or political activists	1	2%
Local politician	Politician – local leader (*mayor, city council, their spokespersons, or advisers*)	1	2%
American Civil Liberties Union	American Civil Liberties Union official or spokesperson	0	0%
Total Stakeholders: 33	Total number of references: 361	As reported in 46 articles	

Significance – Most Referenced Stakeholders. The chi-square, "goodness of fit" test was performed using nine cluster categories comprised of the following groupings: 1) law enforcement officials, emergency personnel, and first respondents; 2) government, regulators, and the judiciary; 3) politicians; 4) lawmakers; 5) victims; 6) shooter; 7) members of the local community; 8) community organizations; and 9) activist publics, lobbyists, and special interests (see Appendix D, pages 3a-3b for a description of what comprises each cluster). Of the nine clusters, three stakeholder categories were referenced in the national press in a greater amount than what was anticipated if all stakeholder had an equal chance of being referenced. Based on the chi-square analysis, community members were referenced in the *Times* at twice the amount of an average stakeholder with 91 occurrences verses the expected 40.1 references. Community organizations, with 69 references in the news, also exceeded the expected number of article mentions. Lastly, the

third stakeholder category that emerged as significant was law enforcement. This group appeared 47 times in the article data set, which is nearly seven mentions above the expected 40.1 references. Government regulators with 37 references and politicians with 34 mentions fell just below the expected level for stakeholder references in the national press. Frequency distributions for each stakeholder cluster is displayed in Table 3.4 below. For referenced stakeholders in the theater data set, there is a p-value of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 130.310 and eight degrees of freedom.

TABLE 3.4 – Clusters of the Most Frequently Referenced Stakeholders			
Stakeholder Cluster	Stakeholder Frequency *Observed*	Stakeholder Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Community Members	91 (25%)	40.1	
Community Organizations	69 (19%)	40.1	
Law Enforcement	47 (13%)	40.1	
Gov't Regulators & Judiciary	37 (10%)	40.1	
Politicians	34 (9%)	40.1	<.001
Shooter	31 (8.6%)	40.1	
Victims	24 (6.6%)	40.1	
Activists & Special Interests	15 (4%)	40.1	
Lawmakers	13 (3.6%)	40.1	
Total	361	Chi-Square Expression	
Chi-Square (X^2) Statistic	130.310		
Degrees of Freedom (df)	9 -1 = 8	X^2 (8) = 130.31, p < .001	
Asymp. Sig. or *p-value*	.000		

For this study, in addition to identifying which stakeholders garner prominent coverage in the article dataset, a related question is: Of those stakeholders referenced, who is most often quoted? Nine stakeholders (local law enforcement officials, community leaders, national leaders such as the president or vice president, family or friends of either the victims or shooter, subject-

matter experts, businesses, the surviving victims, judicial officers/officials of the court, and gun control advocates) were quoted in six or more articles in that order of frequency. See Table 3.5 below for the complete rank order of stakeholders by most frequently quoted. Two stakeholders were quoted in 22 percent of the articles, while two followed closely and were quoted in 20 percent of the data set. They are: local law enforcement officials, community members, followed by national leaders and businesses (such as gun shops), respectively. Two stakeholders garnered 15-17% of the news coverage. They are: family and/or friends of either the victims or shooter and subject-matter experts who oftentimes are associated with universities. Four other stakeholders were quoted in 13 percent of the dataset. Frequency distributions (with percentages) of stakeholder quotes are recorded in Table 3.5 below. It is followed by a sampling of quotations from the most frequently quoted stakeholders whose words are replicated in 15% or more of the NYT coverage.

TABLE 3.5 – Most Frequently Quoted Stakeholders – Quoted in N of 46 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in N (no). of 46 articles	Quoted in X (%) of 46 articles
Local law enforcement	Local law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief, bomb squad, investigators, authorities*)	10	22%
Community member	Community member (resident, witness, neighbors, parent, teacher, minister, voters, fans, student, protester, churches, religious figures, citizens, gun owners, voters, athlete, or singer)	10	22%
National leader	National leader (president, vice president, their spokespersons, advisers, or his cabinet members)	9	20%
Businesses	Businesses (*those affected by shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops, range, or makers*)	9	20%
Family member	Family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor (*with knowledge of...*) of victims *or* shooter	8	17%

TABLE 3.5 – Most Frequently <u>Quoted</u> Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 46 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in <u>*N*</u> (no). of 46 articles	Quoted in <u>***X***</u> (%) of 46 articles
Subject-matter experts	Subject-matter experts in any area who are often quoted (e.g., university professors, psychiatrists)	7	15%
Victim	Victim (*survivor of mass shooting; eyewitness*)	6	13%
Gun control activists	Gun control advocates/activists, supporter (e.g., *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*)	6	13%
Judicial offices/officials	Judicial offices/officials <u>local</u> level (*attorneys for either side, jury, judges, or legislative aides*)	6	13%
Local, regional, and national organizations	Local, regional, and national organizations (*e.g., the Urban League, parents' groups, Red Cross, CDC, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, or KKK*)	6	13%
National legislator	Politician/Lawmaker – national legislator (*member of congress*)	5	11%
Media	Media (*apart from coverage when the media is identified as active public in the article, newspaper*)	5	11%
Local leader	Politician – local leader (*mayor, their spokespersons, or advisers*)	5	11%
Shooter	Shooter/gunman/suspect/accused/assailant/ terrorist	4	9%
Gun rights activists	Gun rights advocates/activists (*gun enthusiasts; known to oppose gun control*)	4	9%
Regulatory body	Regulatory body (*governmental entity, administrative authority; ATF, Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, federal government, government generally – any level*)	3	7%
Customers	Customers, patrons, attendees, audience, moviegoers, buyers, consumers	2	4%
Regional law enforcement	Regional/state law enforcement official (*county sheriff or state officers*)	2	4%

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in <u>*N*</u> (no). of 46 articles	Quoted in <u>*X*</u> (%) of 46 articles
	TABLE 3.5 – Most Frequently <u>Quoted</u> Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 46 NYT articles		
Regional leader	Leaders – regional leader (*governor, their spokesperson or advisers*)	2	4%
District judicial offices/officials	Judicial offices/officials <u>district/appellate/federal</u> levels (*e.g. the Supreme Court*)	2	4%
National law enforcement	National law enforcement official (*FBI agent or other federal officer, branches of military, DOJ*)	2	4%
Social media users	Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists, the media itself as source of story – Twitter, Facebook*)	2	4%
Regional legislator	Lawmaker – regional legislator *(congress person: senator, representative – at state level)*	1	2%
Community group	Community group or group leader, social or political activists	1	2%
Healthcare providers	Healthcare provider (*medical and/or psychiatric institutions generally*)	1	2%
Workplace – site of shooting	Workplace or institution with responsibility as the site of the shooting (*universities or theaters*)	1	2%
Local legislator	Lawmaker – local legislator *(city council, their staff, city manager)*	0	0%
Internet respondents	Internet (*as a quoted public – "Internet respondents say…" survey, polls or PEW*)	0	0%
First responder	First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement; firefighters*)	0	0%
N.R.A.	National Rifle Association official or spokesperson	0	0%
Employees	Employees, workers, investors, staff	0	0%
The public, in general	Community in general (*"the community" or "the public," city, state, county, neighborhood, Americans, racial group, nation, region, the South*)	0	0%

TABLE 3.5 – Most Frequently Quoted Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 46 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in $\underline{N}$ (no). of 46 articles	Quoted in $\underline{X}$ (%) of 46 articles
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union official or spokesperson	0	0%
Total Stakeholders 33	Total number of quotes 119	As reported in 46 articles	

Significance – Most Quoted Stakeholders. A chi-square, "goodness of fit" test was performed using the nine stakeholder cluster categories. If quotations from all stakeholder groups had an equal chance to be cited in the *Times*, then each stakeholder would be expected to have 13.2 of their quotes published. However, the quoted discourse of four stakeholder clusters was observed as having higher than average (i.e., significant) newspaper coverage in the theater data set and exceeded the minimum expected quantity. Community members were quoted 30 times (twice the expected level of 13.2 quotes), community organizations were cited 22 times, politicians were quoted 16 times, and law enforcement officials were quoted on 14 occasions. Frequency distributions for each cluster is displayed in Table 3.6 below. For a p-value of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 43.227 and eight degrees of freedom. This suggests that those four stakeholder groups have a better than chance opportunity to be among quoted stakeholders in this data set. The remaining five stakeholder clusters were quoted below what is expected. Specifically, the shooter, victims, lawmakers, activists, and government regulators were quoted between four and 11 times, well below the expected level of 13.2 quotes had each grouping received an equal chance of being quoted in the data set. In total, there were 119 stakeholder quotes captured in the data set with the largest share or 25 percent being extracted from members of the local community.

TABLE 3.6 – Clusters of the Most Frequently Quoted Stakeholders			
Stakeholder Cluster	Stakeholder Frequency *Observed*	Stakeholder Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Community Members	30 (25%)	13.2	
Community Organizations	22 (18%)	13.2	
Politicians	16 (13%)	13.2	
Law Enforcement	14 (12%)	13.2	
Gov't Regulators & Judiciary	11 (9%)	13.2	<.001
Activists & Special Interests	10 (8%)	13.2	
Lawmakers	6 (5%)	13.2	
Victims	6 (5%)	13.2	
Shooter	4 (3%)	13.2	
Total	119	Chi-Square Expression	
Chi-Square (X^2) Statistic	43.227		
Degrees of Freedom (df)	9 - 1 = 8	$X^2 (8) = 43.23, p < .001$	
Asymp. Sig. or *p-value*	.000		

Exemplars of stakeholder discourse. As noted Table 3.5 above, the most quoted stakeholder group in the theater shooting news coverage was local law enforcement. Tied with members of the local community, they were quoted in 22% of the articles or 10 out of 46 straight news pieces. It is no surprise that stakeholders from the law enforcement community are frequently quoted, given the nature of the event, need for answers, assurance that the threat is contained, and regular updates on how the investigation is proceeding. Based on a reading of the shooting coverage, their discourse, for the most part, is descriptive in nature often providing details of the crime scene which is typically closed to the public. The public and the media look to responding officers and other first responders for crime reports, scene descriptions, and general updates.

Initial crime reporting that answered how a shooter could injure so many people in a short amount of time were addressed by local Police Chief Dan Oates of the Aurora police department. He stated that "many, many" rounds were fired and noted that "With that drum magazine, he [Holmes] could have gotten off 50, 60 rounds, even if it was semiautomatic, within one minute" (Frosch & Johnson, 2012). Chief Oates also described the scene of Holmes' apartment saying, "Our investigation determined his apartment is booby trapped with various incendiary and chemical devices and apparent trip wires…We have an active and difficult scene...Personally, I've never seen anything like what the pictures show us is in there" (Frosch & Johnson, 2012). Chief Oates also addressed the question of premeditation and said, "What we are seeing here is evidence of some calculation and deliberation" (Healy & Kovaleski, 2012). He also addressed the issue at the heart of the gun control debate about whether the suspect had illegal weapons. Chief Oates said that all four firearms were purchased legally within the preceding months. He also updated the public on how the investigation was coming noting: "We're focusing on anyone who knew him [Holmes] and statements he may have made. We're building a case to show that this was a deliberative process by a very intelligent man who wanted to do this" (Eligon, Kovaleski, & Santora, 2012).

Not all quoted material from law enforcement officials is limited to providing scene description or investigation updates. Three days after the shooting, one article excerpted personal views of a police chief who further stoked the public deliberation of gun control. "I have an issue with people being able to buy ammunition and weapons on the Internet," Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey of the Philadelphia police said on the ABC program *This Week* (Healy, 2012). "I don't know why people need to have assault weapons. There needs to be reasonable gun control put in

place…And we talk about this constantly, and absolutely nothing happens, because many of our legislators, unfortunately, at the federal level, lack the courage to do anything" (Healy, 2012).

While factual scene descriptions and investigation updates are the focus of police officials, community members provide local angles from an insider perspective. This group of civic-minded stakeholders is inclusive of residents, eye witnesses, neighbors, parents, teachers, clergy, voters, students, fans of entertainers, local businesses and schools. They provide answers to questions about how residents feel emotionally post-shooting and if anything has changed in the community. They help complete a portrait of the shooter and/or victims that police investigations alone cannot uncover. They also articulate positions in the gun debate and help commemorate the fallen. Post-shooting emotion and uncertainty are highest in the throes of and immediately following a shooting as details can be sketchy. Community residents and eye witnesses are often called on to provide insight on what coping feels like following mass shootings. "It's very difficult for people on the outside to understand what it's like here," said Aurora native Luke Niforatos. He was a friend of several who were injured at the theater (Frosch, 2012). "It feels unbelievable, the emotional response that has been bringing people together this week" (Frosch, 2012).

As noted in chapter one, gun control deliberations customarily take center stage following such incidents, and the residents on social media and elsewhere enter the discussions. "I honestly believe that criminals can get guns no matter where or when or how," said Aurora resident, Phyllis Everitt (Sussman, 2012). "I realize this man (Holmes) purchased them legally, but if he hadn't and he was determined to do this, he probably would have gotten them illegally," she said (Sussman, 2012). The term community also takes on a broader sense during these incidents, as residents from other localities identify with those affected locally. "I'm not saying you should outlaw guns, but I don't see the point of hundred-round magazine clips and automatic weapons if you just want to

target shoot," said John Tyson of Winchester, Virginia (Sussman, 2012). "People say it's their right to bear arms, but when the Constitution was written there was no such thing as an automatic weapon" (Sussman, 2012). The sensitive nature of these events and the guarded speech that they can engender is illustrated in the firing of one professor who made an off-colored joke. U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Professor Gregory F. Sullivan joked: "If someone with orange hair appears in the corner of the room, run for the exit." He was later dismissed for what his dean termed "notoriously disgraceful conduct" under the academy's rules of conduct (Kramer, 2012).

Quotes from national leaders such as the president, vice president, his cabinet members and spokespersons also reflect an appreciable share of news coverage since these stakeholders (especially in the case of the President) are sought after to serve as the spokespersons for the nation. Reporters included statements by national leaders in 20% of the news articles within the first 30 days. These stakeholders provide a message of empathy, remorse, comfort, and often a pledge for action to help shore up security and galvanize support for change at the federal level. Accordingly, President Obama stated:

> ...this morning, we woke up to news of a tragedy that reminds us of all the ways that we are united as one American family. By now…many of you have heard that a few miles outside of Denver…at least 12 people were killed when a gunman opened fire in a movie theater.…Some of the victims are being treated at a children's hospital…the police have one suspect in custody. And the federal government stands ready to do whatever is necessary to bring whoever is responsible for this heinous crime to justice…And we will take every step possible to ensure the safety of all of our people.…I'd like us to pause in a moment of silence for the victims of this terrible tragedy, for the people who knew them and loved them, for those who are still struggling to recover, and for all the victims of less

publicized acts of violence that plague our communities every single day" ("Remarks by the President," 2012).

Because the shooting in Aurora occurred during a presidential election year, Republican nominee, Mitt Romney used his national platform to express: "I stand before you today not as a man running for office but as a father…husband…American. This is a time for each of us to look into our hearts and remember how much we love…and…care for our great country …" ("Remarks by Mitt Romney," 2012). Speaker of the House John Boehner said, "Words cannot capture the horror, or make sense of something so senseless…So I won't try" (Eligon & Santora, 2012).

The President also seized upon the gun control debate following the Aurora shooting. He said: "I believe the majority of gun owners would agree that we should do everything possible to prevent criminals and fugitives from purchasing weapons; that we should check someone's criminal record before they can check out a gun seller; that a mentally unbalanced individual should not be able to get his hands on a gun so easily" (Huetteman, 2012). President Obama's spokesman, Jay Carney, noted how Obama's call for an assault-weapons ban was designed to "protect Second Amendment rights." "He [the President] believes we need to take steps that protect Second Amendment rights of the American people but that ensure that we are not allowing weapons into the hands of individuals who should not, by existing law, obtain those weapons" (Gabriel, 2012). The transnational attention paid to mass shootings also elicits comments from international leaders. Mexican President Felipe Calderon whose country organized a national campaign with a billboard that read (in English) "no more weapons." President Calderon tweeted: "Because of the Aurora, Colo., tragedy, the American Congress must review its mistaken legislation on guns. It's doing damage to us all" (Cave, 2012).

If the President and other leaders reflect the thoughts and feelings of the nation, then family and friends provide a first-hand account of the agony and disbelief from losing a loved one in a mass shooting. This occurred in 17% of the articles. These stakeholders also provide anecdotal detail that completes both victims' and shooter's profiles. Third, this constituent group also memorializes those slain. Maryellen Hansen, a great-aunt of the youngest person slain in the theater shooting said "I felt anger and I felt resentment that anybody could take away someone's life for just going to the movies. I also felt sorry for him. Here was a brilliant person that could've done a lot of good. What went wrong" (Healy & Frosch, 2012). Recalling the horror, one victim's brother noted in a blog post that his sister "took one round followed by an additional round, which appeared to strike her in the head" (Frosch & Johnson, 2012). The father-in-law of one of the wounded, when asked about just punishment for the shooter if found guilty said: "I think death is" (Healy & Frosch, 2012, p. A1).

Contributing to the shooter profile, one Aurora resident and classmate of Holmes described him as socially awkward, quiet and spending considerable time on his computer, "There was no way I thought he could have the capacity to commit an atrocity like this." He also stated that Holmes' "disposition was a little off" (Frosch & Johnson, 2012). The school's chancellor, described Holmes as a bit peculiar as well but also smart. "I think he was kind of quirky, just the way you expect smart people to be" he recalled. He then elaborated: "Quirky in the sense that he probably had a wry sense of humor. He kept to himself more than he socialized. But he was social. He wasn't a hermit or an introvert. He wasn't a loner" (Healy & Kovaleski, 2012, p. A1). A fellow 2006 graduate of Holmes from Westview High School said Holmes had a small group of friends who played video games and could be considered "a little nerdy." She also remembered Holmes as "…really shy, really quiet, but really nice and sweet" (Healy & Kovaleski, 2012, p. A1).

Remembrance of those killed in the shooting episode is another contribution of families and friends and often strangers. When asked why she was visiting the memorial service, one attendee commented, to "bring some closure" (Eligon, Kovalski, & Santora, 2012, p. A14).

Contributing professional observations, subject-matter experts are often called upon to provide testimony at trials, comment on mental health, or even profile violent tendencies. In the case of the Aurora shooting, *The New York Times* quoted experts on gun purchasing, background checks, how Holmes was able to shoot so many in a short period, and the connection between guns and violent crime. These stakeholders were quoted in 15% of the theater shooting's news coverage. For example, a constitutional law expert from the University of California, Los Angeles, Eugene Volokh, commented on how the current gun buyer screenings would not prevent someone with a clean record from purchasing a firearm. He said, "The guy [Homes] basically had normal guns…there's no indication that, from his record, he is someone whom more restrictive screening procedures would have caught" (Schwartz, 2012, p. A13). He also stated: "The only weapons-control solution that could do anything about this kind of murder would be a total ban on guns" (Schwartz, 2012, p. A13).

Another expert and former commander of the firearms and tactics section for the New York Police Department, John Cerar, commented on how Holmes could injure so many. He said, "Shotguns are a very good antipersonnel weapon at close range…With that kind of crowd, he didn't have to be Annie Oakley…He could have closed his eyes and killed a lot of people" (Dao, 2012, p. A12). Another expert, Philip Cook, professor of public policy at Duke University, commented on how there is no correlation between guns and increased crime. He stated, "My research over 35 years demonstrates that the effect of gun availability is not to increase the crime rate but to intensify the crime that exists and convert assaults into murders…" (Bronner, 2012, p.

A12). He also said, "I have never seen evidence that gun access influences the volume of violent crime. But when you add guns to a violent situation, you get a higher level of murder" (Bronner, 2012, p. A12).

Another of the most frequently-quoted stakeholders referenced in at least 15% of all NYT theater shooting articles in the first 30 days is businesses. As members of the affected community, they typically report on how the shooting affects their business, make a public comment on the horrendous nature of the crime, and express support for those affected. The venue for the theater shooting potentially meant box office receipts would be directly affected by the shooting if patrons felt unsafe and stayed away. Several in the industry refused to talk about ticket sales, citing it as inappropriate. Major studio Warner said the studio and its filmmakers were "deeply saddened" by the shooting and offered their "sympathies" to the families of victims of this "appalling" crime (Cieply & Barnes, 2012, p. A13). Warner's director, Christopher Nolan, issued this statement: "The movie theater is my home, and the idea that someone would violate that innocent and hopeful place in such an unbearably savage way is devastating to me" (Cieply & Barnes, 2012, p. A13).

The Unfolding Public Policy Debate on Guns – 30 Days of News Coverage

The first reporting of the theater shooting in the *New York Times* took place on day two. The NYT reported "the nation was plunged into another debate about guns and violence" ("Gunman Kills," 2012). Because the shooting massacre was still under investigation throughout day one, July 20, 2012, day two reporting provided the initial briefing of the facts about the shooting, the number of victims, the shooter's identity, the time, and the venue. In addition, parallels were drawn with the 1999 Columbine tragedy just a half hour away as if the association would similarly result in the passage of some form of legislation.

Speculation about the shooter's motives, though, would have to wait this early in the coverage, but it was not too soon to feature advocates on opposite sides of the gun debate. A radio address quote by national gun control advocate Mayor Michael Bloomberg would issue a challenge to both presidential contenders: "Maybe it's time that the two people who want to be president of the United States stand up and tell us what they are going to do about" gun violence, which Bloomberg characterized as a "problem across the country" ("Gunman kills," 2012). Bloomberg's comment was offset with that of a member of a gun rights group in Colorado. Luke O'Dell of the Rocky Mountain Gun Owners pivoted to the other side of the gun debate. He suggested: "Potentially, if there had been a law-abiding citizen who had been able to carry in the theater, it's possible the death toll would have been less" (Frosch & Johnson, 2012, p. A1). Thus, began the national coverage of the theater shooting in Aurora, and so began another round of debate about gun violence.

The remainder of this section briefly examines how, over the course of 30 days of news reporting, the gun debate developed through the media's lens. Like previous high profile mass shootings, the theater shooting became a focusing event for rousing opposing viewpoints about gun violence. Early reporting examined the parallels with the Columbine tragedy. This supports the velcro effect, which amounts to a cumulative attachment to and association with previous mass shooting crises (Coombs & Holladay, 2001). Grounding the shooting coverage is an array of questions whose answers underpin the public policy deliberations on guns. For instance, the question of how Holmes obtained his firearms makes the prospect of tighter gun restrictions less convincing if he obtained them through legal means. Other questions whose answers could either garner support or detract from stricter gun laws are what type of firearm was used, how many victims were injured or killed and in what timeframe, was the shooter screened thoroughly, can a

motive be determined. Advocates from both sides of the issue seized upon these answers as support for their positions.

Included in early reporting is a primer on existing gun laws in Colorado and elsewhere that Second Amendment activist argue could still not prevent shooters like Holmes from committing acts of violence. Of note are three separate gun control policies turned into law: 1) provisions that regulate the sale of firearms at gun shows; 2) regulations gun owners ability to carry a concealed weapon; and 3) a ban of "straw purchases" which the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence defines as "a person with a clean background who purchases firearms specifically on behalf of a person prohibited from purchasing a firearm because he or she is a convicted felon, domestic violence misdemeanants, juvenile, mentally ill individual or other federally or state-defined prohibited person" (http://lawcenter.giffords.org/straw-purchases-policy-summary/). These restrictions are perhaps counterbalanced by the rights of gun owners to maintain their right to carry a concealed weapon on the campus of the University of Colorado and elsewhere. In fact, those in Colorado "are allowed to carry firearms in a vehicle, loaded or unloaded, as long as the gun is intended for lawful uses like personal protection or protecting property" (Schwartz, 2012, p. 13). The coverage also mentions the 41 "shall issue" states that grant concealed weapons permits if applicants are in compliance with existing requirements. That is contrasted with the more restrictive "may issue" state policy that gives law enforcement officials some discretion to decide who gets a permit.

With several policy lines drawn, pro-gun control and gun rights advocates continued to be featured in post-shooting coverage. One national advocate for gun control, the nonprofit Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, issued this statement: "The horrendous shooting in Aurora, Colo., is yet another tragic reminder that we have a national problem of easy availability of guns in this country" (Schwartz, 2012, p. 13). Opponents of attempts at more restrictive legislation were

quick to rebut how laws are not the answer. "The only weapons-control solution that could do anything about this kind of murder would be a total ban on guns....it's unlikely that gun laws are going to stop" those intent on committing such crimes said Eugene Volokh, a constitutional law expert (Schwartz, 2012, p. 13). A spokesman for a Colorado group that opposes gun control, the Rocky Mountain Gun Owners, pointed out that the Aurora theater's parent company prohibits guns on the premises, which put them at a distinct disadvantage. Following is an accounting of media coverage over a one month period. It is divided into three, ten-day groupings of articles.

Reporting during days 1-10. The bulk of the articles, 24, falls within the first ten-day grouping. For this set, besides the start of discussions on gun control and gun rights, these articles also cover the increased security at theaters in response to the shooting. Also covered is the film-violence link alleged between the film "The Matrix" and the Columbine shooting and how there are potentially parallels with the "The Dark Knight Rises" and the Aurora shooting. On day-three reporting, more background information on the victims and shooter, James Eagan Holmes, emerges with details about how this honors graduate in neuroscience with no criminal record had also rigged his apartment with easily obtained explosives and a waist-high trip wire. The identification of the firearms Holmes used was also reported on day three. Holmes legally bought four guns from local shops -- two Glock .40-caliber handguns, a Remington 12-gauge shotgun, and an AR-15 assault rifle within the preceding two months. By day four, the gun debate morphed from regulating guns to the 6,000 rounds of ammunition and a 100-round, high-capacity magazine Holmes had purchased. Gun control advocates argued that with all the talk about gun restrictions, the market for ammunition remains unregulated in both physical and online purchases. Gun groups stated that regulating ammunition vendors, such as making them keep track of who makes purchases, would "not make the country [any] safer" and actually "restrict constitutional rights"

(Healy, 2012, p. 1). The fact that Holmes could make such large purchases without having to submit to a background check or register his purchases added more issues to the debate. "It's a wide-open marketplace," said gun control advocate and father of a son killed at Columbine, Tom Mauser. "The Internet has really changed things," he continued. "You don't have to show your face. It's anything goes" (Healy, 2012, p. 1).

Day four coverage records a presidential visit to Aurora to meet with families and victims. Coverage of a local memorial also marks the journey towards community healing. Day five is a pivotal moment in the gun debate as both presidential candidates choose to reject calls for new stricter gun laws. Seen as a political liability in an election year, the gun debate began to stall. "If he [the President] had said almost anything else it would be used in a fund-raising appeal by the N.R.A.," said Representative Earl Blumenauer, Democrat of Oregon. "There are very few political leaders that think there is any opportunity in a constructive way to do something in this political climate" (Gabriel, 2012, p. 12). From the other side of the political aisle, Representative Peter T. King, Republican of New York said, "The political reality is at this point the American people have made the decision that gun control is ineffective, that people have the right to have weapons, and the government can't be trusted and they'd rather trust themselves with a gun" (Gabriel, 2012, p. 12). Both candidates recognized that support for gun restrictions had fallen substantially in recent polling. In fact, the annual Gallup poll showed only 53 percent opposed a ban on semiautomatic guns, or assault rifles (Gabriel, 2012). Other political realities that influenced the aversion to new policy initiatives were: 1) previous attempts to restrict sales of 100-bullet magazines or to tighten background checks stalled in congress; 2) both sides of the debate recognized the dominant influence of the N.R.A. lobby, particularly in an election year; and 3) the discrepancy from the experts who argue that stricter gun laws will/will not make a difference.

Gary Kleck, a professor of criminal justice at Florida State University, notes, "There is unanimous evidence that higher homicide rates lead to people getting more guns (for protection)…But our statistical analysis finds no homicide effect of more guns" (Bronner, 2012, p. 12). Contrast his views with that of Daniel Webster, co-director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research who says, "What keeps guns from criminals…Good gun control clearly does, and the lack of it facilitates diversion. All of the research shows that availability of guns is important. If a guy goes into a theater with a knife or a club, that is very different than if he goes in with a gun. Guns matter" (Bronner, 2012, p. 12).

On day eight, the president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, Daniel Gross, called on both candidates to express their plan for action on gun violence. The group had released a report that read, "To say that there is nothing we can do in the wake of gun violence, whether in a movie theater in Aurora or the streets of Chicago, is to say that the most powerful nation in the world is helpless, has neither courage nor imagination…because its leaders are beholden to the political lobby of the gun industry" (Huetteman, 2012, p. 14). Speaker John Boehner disagreed with the call for more gun laws and said, "I think that what's appropriate at this point is to look at all of the laws that we already have on the books to make sure that they're working as they're intended to work, that they're being enforced the way they're intended to be enforced" (Huetteman, 2012, p. 14). In the meantime, on day nine politicians, police officers, the clergy and family members remember the slain during a series of funerals and memorials, but the shooter's motive remained a mystery. By day ten, a first look into the mental health status of Mr. Holmes was being reported. It triggered a lesser facet of the gun debate as it relates to mental health. Daniel Gross of the Brady Campaign clarified the issue: "There are no federal restrictions on the purchase of firearms for the mentally ill unless the person has been adjudicated by a court as being dangerously

mentally ill" (Frosch, 2012, p. 12). Gross stated that with the designation of "dangerously mentally ill" the patient's records should then be submitted to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, which flags gun shops that the person could not legally purchase a firearm.

Reporting during days 11-20. The second article grouping with a total of 16 articles began with a series of human interest articles including an emotional article about one of the injured moviegoers who, though recovering, suffered a miscarriage. The lost was a double tragedy for this mother who had already lost her 6-year-old daughter in the shooting, the youngest of the 12 fatalities. The subject of fetal homicide laws was also mentioned, but it had already stalled in the Colorado legislature earlier in the year. Also reported during this ten-day grouping were the Batman film's box office receipts, which showed a 60% decline in sales since the opening weekend, and a songwriter honored the slain through song. On day 12, Holmes learned that he would face 142 charges (24 counts of murder and 116 counts of attempted murder, two for each victim) plus the prospect of the death penalty for his actions. Although the gun debate may have largely faded from the national scene, it increased at the state level.

Day 13 reporting included how the gun debate following the theater shooter influenced the democratic governor of Illinois, Pat Quinn, to propose a ban of assault rifles: the AK-47, the AR-15 and the TEC-9. As proposed, Governor Quinn used his amendatory veto power to strip some of the language to a bill on ammunition sales and add language that would prevent the "manufacture, delivery, sale and possession of semiautomatic assault weapons and attachments" ("Illinois: Governor wants," 2012, p. 15). The lack of regulations on ammunition sales again takes center stage as a secondary story about how the Bloomberg's police department sells their used shell casings to an ammunition store in Georgia instead of a scrap yard. The issue is that under Georgia's gun laws, "no questions are asked and no identification or registration is required" unlike

New York's where you must have a gun license to possess ammunition. Customers of the shop, Georgia Arms, must only be 21 years old. Beyond age, says owner Larry Haynie, purchasers only need to "be standing in front of the counter and breathing" (Wilson & Roberts, 2012, p. 3).

By day 14, coverage began to pivot to Holmes' upcoming trial and the issue of a sanity defense as a contributing factor. On day 17, another mass shooting trial was featured where sanity was also debated. Jared Lee Loughner, the lone gunman in the 2011 shooting of Representative Gabrielle Giffords and mass murderer of six in Tucson, was expected to plead guilty in the face of 49 charges. While that shooting case was potentially winding down, a third mass shooting also with six fatalities entered the national conscience on guns and violence when a gunman targeted worshipers at a Sikh temple in a Milwaukee, Wisconsin suburb (Yaccino, Schwirtz, & Santora, 2012, p. 1). The association of the temple and theater shootings, which were roughly two weeks apart, is indicative of the velcro effect. The gun debate once again intensifies as a result of the shooting in Wisconsin. New York lawmakers propose new legislation to require background checks for anyone purchasing ammunition and the other to limit firearm purchases to one per person per month. Commentary from both sides of the issue captures the fervor of the battle lines. "There comes a point where one has to say enough is enough," said State Senator Michael Gianaris, Democrat of Queens. "How many tragedies have to occur before we take even the most basic, sensible measures to reduce gun violence" (Kaplan, 2012, p. 19). A counterpunch came from Jacob Rieper, the vice president for legislative and political affairs of the New York State Rifle and Pistol Association, who said, "They're trying to throw out a bunch of stuff basically to see what sticks…Since when has taking guns from decent people prevented bad people from committing crime?" (Kaplan, 2012, p. 19). Day 10 polls in Colorado and Wisconsin, two of the states with mass shootings in 2012, show that only 40% of likely voters say their state's gun laws should be

made stricter. Though they argued stricter gun laws could not deter a criminal with their mind made up to commit a crime, 57% in Wisconsin and 58% in Colorado were in favor of banning high-capacity ammunition magazines (Sussman, 2012).

Reporting during days 21-30. The final set of articles covering ten days of reporting began on August 9, 2012. Reporting was noticeably reduced compared to the first two groupings. Two articles dealt with jokes gone wrong when one comedian hit a sensitive spot by bringing up the theater shooting specifically, and the other resulted in the firing of a tenured humanities professor at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. One article discussed the trial delay of the 2009 Ford Hood Army Base shooter, Major Nidal Malik Hasan who was accused of shooting 13 and wounding 32 in Killeen, Texas. Another article discussed how the U.S., as "the world's biggest market for civilian guns" is a major buyer of Russian-made AK-47s, which increased 50% over the previous year (Kramer, 2012, p. 1). The article also talked about how even the Russian gun laws are stricter than those of the U.S. For example, to purchase a long firearm, Russian citizens must clear three hurdles: 1) obtain a police permit that requires a clean criminal record; 2) earn a diploma from a gun safety course; and 3) possess a medical certificate attesting to one's sanity. Another article cited the solution for gun violence by Daniel Patrick Moynihan who argued the way to curb violence is not to go after the guns themselves since they were already proliferated. He reasoned it would be effective to go after the ammunition by imposing a tax on them and, in the case of hollow-tipped bullets – ten thousand percent. His proposed solution came with a slogan: "Guns don't kill people; bullets do!" A day 29 article provided an inside look at the chaos following the theater massacre from the eyes of the E.R. staff at the University of Colorado Hospital. *The New York Times* coverage intensity was diminished by 75% from 24 articles during the first ten

days of reporting to 16 articles the second ten days to finally, six articles for the final days of the

30-day examination period.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter sought to elucidate the central features of the mass shooting crisis. In

particular, it aimed to identify and examine the most frequently referenced and quoted stakeholders

and the most frequently mentioned public policy issues. The top two individual stakeholder groups

whose quotes garnered the most coverage (22%) in *The New York Times* were local law

enforcement officials and members of the Aurora community. Not too far behind those two were

national leaders, who were quoted in 20% of the 46-article dataset. Together, this trio of

stakeholders makes for a reasonable alliance given the need for information, comfort, and direction

during times of high uncertainty. For an accurate account of what transpired on the ground,

reassurances that the threat has been contained, and regular updates on a fluid investigation with

an impending prosecution, law enforcement officials as first responders are the information

authority most in demand. For comfort and assurance that the local government, community

groups, neighbors, businesses, and clergy communities are galvanized. Because these incidents are

usually locally-based, the federal government pledges its external support with resources to

augment local efforts. In addition, as the collective voice of the nation, national leaders (just as

local and regional leaders) are expected to deliver parallel expressions of comfort and restoration

paired with the resolve to assure public safety.

Frequency counts of the most *quoted* stakeholder clusters (as opposed to individual

stakeholder groups discussed above) included in the dataset reveals how journalists in this case

profile the views of community members the most. They are followed by community

organizations, politicians, and law enforcement. Each of these four clusters were significant,

exceeding the 13.2 quotes expected in the 46-article dataset. For this case analysis, each of these four clusters has a greater likelihood, beyond a chance occurrence, of being quoted in *The New York Times* coverage based on chi-square analysis.

While the expectation that every issue in the public policy table would be quoted in at least one article was supported, two public policy issues emerged significant; namely, background checks and enhanced public safety measures, which have a higher likelihood of occurrence. The top public policy issue observed in the text was stricter gun control, which occurred in nearly half of the articles. Measures of central tendency associated with the theater shooting are presented in Table 3.7 below. On average, in the 46-article dataset, there are eight references per stakeholder for a combined 361 references in the news coverage; there are on average nearly four quotes from stakeholders for a total of 119 quotations. Public policy issues are mentioned on average seven times in the article dataset and 119 times overall.

Table 3.7 – Measures of Central Tendencies for the Aurora Theater Shooting			
	Referenced Stakeholders	**Quoted Stakeholders**	**Public Policy Issues**
Totals	361 references	119 Quotes	119 mentions
Median	8	3	7
Mode	8	0	1
Mean	11 references on average	4 quotes on average	7 mentions on average

From this chapter, it became evident that mass shootings activate and reactivate public policy debate. That debate is not limited to a single issue however. In the case of the theater shooting, a basket of issues was activated, including mental health and background checks, in addition to stricter gun laws generally, and enhanced security measures for venues such as theaters. The velcro effect that causes one crisis to "stick" to or be associated with another incident of the same genre in a cumulative manner sustains the gun debate with each successive shooting. This

was apparent within the first two weeks of the theater shooting news coverage. Specifically, the theater shooting was at the outset a focusing event for the running gun debate and public policy deliberation. As the month progressed, and around day five, it was clear that on the federal level at least no legislative proposals would be offered. Neither of the presidential candidates was willing to risk turning off voters on either side of the debate, so it appeared the gun debate might cease before it really took hold. However, once the temple shooting near Milwaukee occurred a little over two weeks after Aurora's theater shooting, the debate was reinvigorated and gained renewed traction in the theater's 46-article dataset.

Each crisis is different and, depending on the particulars in the mass shooting incident, will activate different issues. Case details that emphasize a shooter's psychological profile could shift, for example, the issue discussion to mental health, and effectively replace or run parallel with gun control issues as it did in this case. The type of shooting directly affects the trajectory of the coverage. Two of the top four public policy issues for this case are a direct result of the type of mass shooting that transpired. The top two issues, stricter gun laws and background checks, are part and parcel of the typical debate on guns. The second pairing, public safety measures and mental health policies, are signature issues relevant to the Aurora theater shooting. For instance, following the shooting at the Century 16 multiplex, theaters across the country began to examine their own security and public safety measures to determine preparedness for copycat shooters or other violence associated with the release of a film. The issue of sanity is also an essential element of this case as the shooter was under psychiatric care at the time of the shooting. The connection between law enforcement and mental health agencies, whose increased coordination when conducting background checks might save lives in certain instances, became a noted public policy issue in this case.

Finally, a look at the gun debate in general reveals that it is not just a temporary series of heated arguments and counterarguments. Mass shootings do not just shock the nation for a moment, result in a loss of life, incite a few days of high emotion and debate then quickly move to a cool down phase. There are repercussions, financial and otherwise that change the national landscape, albeit incremental. In the case of the theater shooting, movie receipts for the film fell 60% during the following weekend, and the film industry had to scale back its scheduled event in one of its European venue. Mass shootings and the gun debate they provoke also accompany a spike in the sale of assault rifles with each consecutive mass shooting. The unabated stockpiling of ammunition, which in the case of Holmes was purchased by the thousands with the click of a button, brought attention to the oversight of ammunition dealers who have far less restrictions than do gun shops. This mix of issues will further compound the shooting case in the next chapter and move a nation to within a few votes of stricter background checks.

CHAPTER 4 - A SCHOOL SHOOTING IN NEWTOWN

This chapter examines the 2012 mass shooting that occurred at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. Prior to the shooting, this small New England town had only one homicide in the previous ten years. Following is a brief narrative of the shooting that took place that December in Fairfield County, just 48 miles southwest of the state capitol. The massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School was the second deadliest mass casualty shooting in U.S. history to take place on school grounds. Following the shooting storyline below is an extended sequence of events that presents some of the key timeline markers in this crisis event (see the shooting case chronology below identified as Table 4.0).

The data set in this mass shooting case analysis consists of 114 *New York Times* articles, each of which was content-analyzed for emergent and pre-identified keyword search terms aimed at locating a list of stakeholders and public policy issues (refer to Appendices A and B). Descriptive statistics, comprising frequency data (i.e., central tendency and category totals) are also presented in this chapter with an identification of the most often-cited public policy issues. Those statistics will be followed by a listing of the top stakeholders mentioned in the mass shooting news coverage, a table of which stakeholders are most often quoted, and a sample of reported quotes. The chapter concludes with an account of the first 30 days of news coverage from a national news source – *The New York Times*. This coverage describes how this shooting crisis occurred on day one and how the issue of gun control advanced in the media over the coming weeks, which would result in a congressional vote on Capitol Hill months later.

Narrative of the Newtown School Shooting

Mass shootings anywhere are at once threatening and destabilizing. The resulting death of multiple victims in a compressed timeframe puts at risk notions of citizen safety. Furthermore,

sensemaking efforts in these instances go into overdrive as many, including the media, look to local law enforcement officials and others on the scene for answers. A mass shooting in a local venue such as a theater, church, mall, or school is already a nightmare scenario with heightened fear and uncertainty. Place into this mix the most vulnerable citizens, that is children, and the reality is unimaginable. Yet, such was the case in a school setting on a clear December morning in 2012. The site of the shooting was Sandy Hook Elementary School with a student population of 456 at the time. The school, which serves grades kindergarten through 4, is situated in a wooded area in the small Connecticut town of Newtown. When the shooting occurred, parents were notified that the school was on lock down due to an active shooter incident. As they arrived near the scene, they frantically tried to determine the wellbeing of their children. Some parents were able to reunite with their beloved at a safe gathering site, while twenty of them had to suffer the worst possible news – that their child, entrusted to the care of the school, was among those killed.

Sometime during the morning of Friday, December 14, 2012, 20 year-old Adam Lanza left home after fatally shooting his mother, Nancy Lanza, four times at point blank range while she lay in bed. Investigators determined that he had used a Savage Mark II rifle, to carry out the shooting. Except for a green bullet-proof vest, Lanza was dressed in all black clothing that morning including military-style cargo pants. He was armed with multiple firearms (two handguns, a Glock 10 mm and a Sig Sauer 9 mm, along with a .223 caliber Bushmaster AR-15 semi-automatic rifle), each of which legally belonged to his mother. He was also carrying hundreds of rounds of ammunition encased in multiple magazines. He had taken his mother's black Honda and was on his way to the Sandy Hook Elementary School about five miles away from the Lanza residence. According to investigators, Lanza would arrive at the main entrance of the school around 9:30 a.m. The students had already recited the pledge of allegiance for the day, performed their physical fitness exercises,

and the doors were now locked according to security protocol. To gain entrance to the locked building, Lanza shot out a large glass window just to the right of the main entrance door. Around this time, staff in the main office could hear loud popping noises. Tragically, Sandy Hook had been breached.

In an attempt to warn the school community, a school official made an announcement over the public address system with the sound of continuing gunfire in the backdrop. Simultaneously, just after 9:35 a.m., emergency telephone calls began flooding the police department, and dispatchers directed available personnel to the school location. Lanza, now inside the school, made a left turn down the first hallway off the main entrance. He was headed to a classroom of first graders between 6- and 7-years old. There he killed 18 of them and wounded two others; each youth was struck with multiple rounds of ammunition fired from the assailant's assault rifle. One teacher, who heard the gunfire from another classroom, crowded 15 of her third graders into a small bathroom and kept them quiet until police arrived to escort them to the designated parent pick-up location at the nearby firehouse. Law enforcement officers arrived on the scene around 9:38 a.m. and entered the building after 9:40 a.m. A minute into their methodical searching of classrooms, police spotted Lanza down a hall. He had seen them as well and ducked inside one of the rooms. As police were closing in on his location, the final sounds of gunfire could be heard at 9:41 a.m. Lanza had taken his own life using one of the two handguns he was carrying. Police officials later found that Lanza had brought a fourth firearm to the school. It was a shotgun, which remained in the trunk of his mother's vehicle. At 9:45 a.m., police reported finding victims inside the school. Evacuation of the building commenced around 10:30 a.m., nearly an hour after the shooting began. The two wounded children were rushed to an area hospital. Other children were

escorted by police and teachers to the safety of the nearby firehouse around the corner from the school to reunite with anxious parents.

Investigators concluded that the shooting occurred over an 11-minute span but only five minutes were needed to fire all 155 rounds of ammunition. Lanza's barrage of gunfire was concluding just as police officials were entering different parts of the building. In addition to the children, six adult females were slain, including the school principal, school psychologist, and several teachers. The two wounded children who were rushed to the hospital later died of their wounds, revising upward the number of children killed to 20. In total, including the gunman and his mother, 28 people were killed.

Following an 11-month investigation, officials could never determine the shooter's motive. A probe of the shooter's background suggests he was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome at the age of 13 and had suffered from anxiety. Back at the Lanza residence, investigators uncovered a stash of weapons, including knives, swords, guns, ammunition, along with accessories and National Rifle Association certificates for Nancy and Adam Lanza. They also found a spreadsheet listing mass murders through the years along with newspaper clippings. They determined that Lanza, who had no known criminal record, had a fixation with mass shootings, including those at Columbine, as well as a strong interest in firearms.

The case-related events leading up to and beyond the school shooting incident are chronicled in Table 4.0 below. They show the relational trajectory of how a mass shooting reinvigorates the gun debate, which sometimes can also lead to other issue management exigencies. In this shooting, the larger issue of gun control was further parsed into discussions on weapons ban, background checks, and ammunition sales, which eventually lead to congressional action and the near passage of federal legislation.

TABLE 4.0 - A Chronology of the School Shooting in Newtown, Connecticut (*Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.*)	
Date	*Event(s)*
2012	FBI interviewers suggest that Lanza had not left his room in three months prior to the shooting; family friends say he had no emotions, and communicated with his mother Nancy only via email. (Source: http://fox61.com/2013/12/27/photos-video-documents-released-from-sandy-hook-investigation/)
2012	Early that year, Sandy Hook Elementary implements a new security system that requires visitors (including parents) be buzzed in only after being clearly identified. The school's slain principal, Dawn L. Hochsprung, spearheaded the new system's implementation, which also involved a new lockdown protocol that required the school's doors to be locked each day at exactly 9:30 a.m.
Dec. 13, 2012	The mother of the shooter, 52-year-old Nancy Lanza, returns home from a three-day trip to New Hampshire. Her friend reports it was an experiment to see if her son Adam could manage being at home alone. After the shooting, police find a Christmas card for her son Adam. Inside, they discover a check to purchase a new gun.
Dec. 14, 2012 **Date of mass shooting**	**A.M.** – sometime during the morning of Dec. 14, 20-year-old Adam Lanza shoots his mother, Nancy Lanza, in the head four times at point-blank range while she lay in bed in her pajamas. A Savage Mark II rifle is used and is later found near the body by investigators. He exits their home, taking his mother's black 2010 Honda Accord and four other guns with him then drives five miles to the Sandy Hook Elementary School. All the firearms were legally owned by the shooter's mother. **9:30 a.m.** – Doors to the Sandy Hook Elementary School are locked per the usual security protocol. Lanza arrives on the scene just before the doors were locked. • To gain entry into the now locked entrance, Lanza shoots out a large glass window just to the right of the main entrance door. • Once inside, Lanza first goes to the main office and has a confrontation with Principal Dawn Hochsprung, who he fatally shoots. The school psychologist, Mary Sherlach, is also shot somewhere near the main office along with the vice principal Natalie Hammond. Hammond, who is wounded, manages to return to the office. A parent, also in the office, ducks under a table and dials 911. A nurse in another part of the building does the same thing, she ducks under a desk and observes the shooter's feet as he enters her room. Not seeing anyone, he turns around and heads down the hall. • At some point, a school official makes an announcement over the public address system. • Next Lanza proceeds to the front corridor of the building toward the rooms where the kindergarten classes are held.

TABLE 4.0 - A Chronology of the School Shooting in Newtown, Connecticut *(Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.)*	
Date	*Event(s)*
Dec. 14, 2012 **Date of mass shooting**	• He first enters the kindergarten classroom of Kaitlin Roig, but she had crowded her students into a small bathroom. They remained hidden there until authorities arrived. Thinking the room is empty, the shooter proceeds to a nearby classroom. Other teachers hid their children in closets, while others locked their classroom doors and covered the windows. • Lanza then encounters Lauren Rousseau, a substitute teacher. He shoots and kills her along with 14 of her students. According to law enforcement officers, there was only one survivor. • In another classroom, although their teacher, Victoria Soto, kept her first-graders clear of the door, Lanza still rushed in and shot Soto and six of her students.
	9:35 a.m. – 911 calls flood the police station. Dispatchers direct police to the scene.
	9:38 a.m. – Police arrive on the scene and begin securing the perimeter of the building and searching for one or more shooters
	9:40 a.m. – Police report that an active shooter is in the main office of the elementary school.
	9:41 a.m. – Lanza hears the police closing in. He ducks into a classroom and pulls out his Glock and takes his own life.
	10:23 a.m. – Police enter the school building where the shooting took place. They begin to evacuate the building and discover numerous bodies. Ambulances are called. One school aide, Anne Marie Murphy, in her last act is found slumped over shielding one student. Stretchers are set up in front of the school.
	10:30 a.m. – Children with their eyes closed, hold hands or place them on the child in front of them, then begin to exit the building in groups. They are escorted by both police officers and teachers. They gather at the fire station, which was set up as the meeting place to reunite with the parents.
	10:45 a.m. – Police gather in front of the school where stretchers are set up.
	11:00 a.m. – Hospital staff report receiving three patients from Sandy Hook. Police continue searching the school; police canine are used.
	11:27 a.m. – A state official reports the gunman has been killed. Police confirm this later at 1:44 p.m.
	11:50 a.m. – It is reported that the unthinkable has happened – children are among the wounded and slain.
	12:53 p.m. – The total number of fatalities at Sandy Hook are reported: 27 are dead in all, including 20 children and the gunman himself.
	2:30 p.m. – Media reports erroneously report that the shooter is 24-year-old Ryan Lanza who turns out to be the shooter's older brother. Ryan is detained and questioned by police but later released. Police later report that the older brother's identification was recovered at the scene.

121

Date	Event(s)
Dec. 14, 2012 **Date of mass shooting**	**2:43 p.m.** – Law enforcement officials report that the shooter's mother, Nancy Lanza, is also dead of apparent gunfire. **3:15 p.m.** – President Obama makes a tearful statement to the nation about the shooting from the White House. The President initiates a call to reopen the gun debate. **3:35 p.m.** – Connecticut Governor Dan Malloy gives a statement at Newtown. State Police Lt. J. Paul Vance follows the governor with a summary of the shooting, confirming the death toll, including the death of 20 children. **4:20 p.m.** – The active shooter is identified as 20-year-old Adam Lanza. **7:45 p.m.** – Investigators begin a thorough search of the Lanza residence after classifying it as a crime scene and obtaining a search warrant.
Dec. 14, 2012	Per the social analytics company Topsy, over 80,000 tweets on "gun control" and 23,000 on the N.R.A. are posted following the shootings. Traditional media begin their descent on the New England town.
Dec. 15, 2012	The media descend on the small city of Sandy Hook and some decry it as a circus. A profile emerges of shooter Adam Lanza as shy without any display of emotion and having no digital footprint such as a social media page. Investigators say it appears steps were taken to destroy Lanza's computer hard drive. At the age of 13, he was diagnosed with a developmental disorder - Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism.
Dec. 15, 2012	The gun debate revives, including the connection between gun violence and mental illness: Dan Gross, the president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, said *"We genuinely believe that this one [shooting incident] is different. It's different because no decent human being can look at a tragedy like this and not be outraged by the fact that it can happen in our nation. And because this time, we're really poised to harness that outrage and create a focused and sustained outcry for change."* Two days later, the rifle used in the slaying is featured in the news.
Dec. 16, 2012	A profile of the shooter's mother Nancy emerges. She is characterized as a gun enthusiast who loved guns and enjoyed spending time with both of her sons at a nearby shooting range. Her brother, James Champion, offered this statement: *"On behalf of Nancy's mother and siblings, we reach out to the community of Newtown to express our heartfelt sorrow for the incomprehensible loss of innocence that has affected so many."*
Dec. 16, 2012	A memorial service is held to remember the slain. President Obama attends as does Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. Condolences for the Newtown community poured in from around the world, including the Pope.
Dec. 18, 2012	The first of many funerals to come is held. Six year old Sandy Hook Elementary School students, Noah Pozner and Jack Pinto, are laid to rest.

TABLE 4.0 - A Chronology of the School Shooting in Newtown, Connecticut (*Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.*)

TABLE 4.0 - A Chronology of the School Shooting in Newtown, Connecticut *(Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.)*	
Date	*Event(s)*
Dec. 19, 2012	Private equity groups begin divesting themselves of stock from gun companies following the request of clients such as the influential California teacher's pension fund. Gun retailers such as Dick's Sporting Goods temporarily stop selling sporting rifles, while Wal-Mart modified its sales policies on guns and ammunition. Wal-Mart also removes its online page for the rifle used by Lanza.
Dec. 19, 2012	The N.R.A. finally breaks its silence saying: *"The N.R.A. is prepared to offer meaningful contributions to make sure this never happens again."*
Dec. 19, 2012	Nationwide, school officials revisit their security protocols and consider whether to employ armed guards in addition to having safety and lockdown drills.
Dec. 20, 2012	Religious leaders around the country join the push for gun control legislation.
Dec. 21, 2012	The N.R.A. holds a news conference, saying it wants to arm security officers at every school in the country. Nancy Lanza, the mother of the gunman is buried.
Dec. 23, 2012	The final Sandy Hook child, 7-year-old Josephine Grace Gay, is laid to rest.
Dec. 24, 2012	The N.R.A. pledges to resist any new gun laws introduced in Congress.
Dec. 30, 2012	Vice President Joseph Biden, Jr. is tasked with spearheading Obama's effort to create sensible gun control legislation.
Dec. 31, 2012	The body of Adam Lanza is claimed for burial by his father, Peter Lanza.
Jan. 4, 2013	Students of Sandy Hook Elementary return to school for the first time. They are bused to a middle school seven miles away. The school is made to resemble Sandy Hook and was complete with original wall hangings and desks. Former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords meets with family members of Newtown's victims. Five days later, Giffords and her husband Mark Kelly would start a campaign opposing gun violence.
Jan. 10, 2013	Democratic Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, pledges to take action to prevent future Sandy Hooks in his third State of the State address. Says Malloy, "*When it comes to preventing future acts of violence in our schools, let me say this: more guns are not the answer…Freedom is not a handgun on the hip of every teacher, and security should not mean a guard posted outside every classroom. That is not who we are in Connecticut, and it is not who we will allow ourselves to become.*"
Jan. 11, 2013	Colorado Gov. John W. Hickenlooper called for universal background checks on all gun sales in the state of where the theater shooting took place.
Jan. 12, 2013	Ammunition and gun sales spike in advance of tighter gun restrictions and proposals from Vice President Joe Biden.
Jan. 16, 2013	New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed into law the sweeping gun control bill, the Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement (SAFE) Act that, among other things, expands the definition of banned assault weapons, reduces the maximum number of rounds in a magazine, and requires background checks on all gun sales.

Date	Event(s)
TABLE 4.0 - A Chronology of the School Shooting in Newtown, Connecticut (*Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.*)	
April 17, 2013	The bipartisan compromise to expand background checks for gun buyers (i.e., the Manchin-Toomey Amendment) and the Assault Weapons Ban of 2013 to ban 150-named assault weapons and measures to ban high-capacity gun magazines all failed to get the 60 votes needed in the U.S. Senate.
Oct. 5, 2013	A referendum on the future of the Sandy Hook Elementary School building was held and residents voted 4,504 to 558 to demolish the old structure and rebuild.
Oct. 24, 2013	Demolition of the old structure begins and is completed in two months that December.
Dec. 15, 2014	Newtown families for nine of the 26 slain in the mass shooting file a negligence and wrongful death lawsuit against rifle manufacturer, Bushmaster Firearms International. They claim the firearm used by Lanza should not have been publicly available since its purpose was military in nature and unsuited for civilians. While the Connecticut court ruled against a motion by the gun makers to dismiss the case in April 14, 2016, a second motion to dismiss was granted by Judge Barbara Bellis of State Superior Court on Oct. 15, 2016– the same judge who denied the original motion to dismiss.
July 29, 2016	The new Sandy Hook Elementary School opens to the public on the site of its predecessor but further back on the property. It is constructed with a $50 million grant from the state.

Primary sources:
Assorted articles from *The New York Times*.
Mosemak, J. & Loehrke, J. (2012, December 15). Timeline of the Newtown shooting rampage. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/12/15/timeline-connectiucut-school-shooting/1771297/

The foregoing chronology of this elementary school shooting is representative of how public shootings can reopen deliberation of public policy issues such as gun control. It also shows how these crisis events can generate considerable media attention as communities want to know what happened and how to prevent it. The day of the shooting, the gun debate revived as gun control activists and gun rights advocates began to exchange familiar arguments. The media coverage of this decades-old dispute increased in intensity as facts about the mass shooting unfolded. In addition, social media accounts provided an additional platform for registering dissenting voices that challenged the rights of gun rights supporters or confronted the validity of

gun control in the face of violence. Not since Columbine had there been as much media attention and, as the parallels held, it meant a future congressional move to vote on some form of gun legislation was assured. Two weeks after the shooting, it was announced that Vice President Joseph Biden, Jr., would lead a taskforce to devise sensible gun control proposals that the president could champion and hopefully shepherd through congress.

This shooting incident more than those that predated it involved a level of outrage that perhaps the others did not. Contemporaries with this shooting included the Sikh temple shooting in Wisconsin where six died, and the Colorado movie theater shooting where 12 died but 58 were wounded. Those incidents experienced an interrelated rise and fall of emotions, resulting in diminishing calls for action on gun control – but not Sandy Hook. The ages of the majority of the victims in the Newtown shooting sustained a level of outrage that energized calls for legislative action. This fact was not lost on the gun lobby's most powerful ally, the National Rifle Administration. While they, per usual, strategically postpone making any public statement until the initial uproar has subsided, when they did speak their message was one suggesting a willingness to compromise. As the chronology suggests however, they abandoned that stance and added insult to outrage when they recommended placing an armed guard in every school in the nation.

Another unique feature of this crisis is the level of presidential capital that was spent on pushing for a congressional vote. This had not happened in the other cases in part because of polling data that suggested Americans had no appetite for new gun legislation (Savage, 2012, p. 1). More outstanding though was the fact that the victims of this shooting were defenseless more so than the majority of others and relied on others to keep them safe. Images of dozens of youth in single file being lead out of the school building were emblazoned on the consciousness of the country. This was paired with subsequent images of small caskets, 20 of them, that had to be

special ordered to accommodate the numbers in a small town of 27,000. Taken together, the unprecedented violence against some of the most vulnerable Americans elevated this shooting to the level of a national emergency more so than the other shootings. As the memorials concluded, it became clear that a potential vote on gun control was likely, so the conversation shifted to not whether there would be some type of public policy attempt but what type. The work of Vice President Biden's taskforce would polarize both sides of the gun debate, but further efforts to reach a bi-partisan solution. Within this context, the national media reported on the most prominent public policy issues and identified the major stakeholders who promote them. These results are presented in the following sections.

Identification of Public Policy Debate Issues

The school shooting in Newtown reopened the gun debate, and uniquely precipitated a congressional vote in Congress five months later. On the day of the shooting, President Obama remarked generally that he would initiate some "meaningful action" to prevent future tragedies like Sandy Hook (Landler & Goode, 2012, pg. 1). Those words from the President were heard again two days later at a memorial service for the victims, but some enthusiast were not impressed. Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York, a vocal gun control advocate, was very critical of both the President and Congress for anemic action on gun legislation and called for more specifics. The debate would become more intense with the appointment of a presidential taskforce on guns lead by Vice President Joseph Biden. In the ensuing months, all three legislative proposals originating with the presidential panel on gun violence would eventually be voted down. They included: an assault weapons ban naming 150 weapons, stricter background checks, and a ban on high-capacity magazines. All three were bi-partisan attempts that were, in the end, unable to overcome the gun lobby. Two of the three proposals were among the top four public policy issues covered in the

national press. Stricter gun control was first, and an assault weapons ban was the fourth most frequently-cited public policy issue in the national press. Stricter gun control legislation was significant and had a higher than normal presence in the national press based on chi-square calculations (see Table 4.2 below).

News reporting frequency rankings of the top 15 public policy issues are listed in Table 4.1 below. All issues are represented on the table of 17 public policy issues charted in *The New York Times* within this study's 30-day reporting frame (see Appendix D, page 3). The top three public policy issues that garnered the most coverage in the data set were: 1) stricter gun control legislation at 61% - appearing in 69 of 114 articles; 2) gun violence at 43% or covered in 49 of 114 articles; and 3) mental health issues at 39%, which was mentioned in 49 of 114 articles. Those policy issues that received less attention in the *New York Times* coverage were: Second Amendment rights and ammunition sales at 32% and 31%, respectively appearing in 36 and 35 articles of the 114-article data set. They were followed by background checks (25%) and a ban on high-capacity magazines (21%).

Other issues not listed among the policies coded include: video game violence, television violence, and micro-stamping of owner information on guns. More nuanced sub-groupings that easily aligned with the public policy issue categories examined include, virtual firearms, smart gun technology, longer prison sentence for both gun violence offenders, and background check cheating. Table 4.1 on the next page displays the total number of articles for each public policy examined. It also provides the percentage of coverage from the data set of 114 total articles. It will be supplemented by Table 4.2, which groups the same individual public policies into clusters for performing chi-square, "goodness of fit" calculations.

TABLE 4.1 – Top Public Policy Issues Covered – As Reported in 114 *NYT* articles			
Public Policy Issue	Public Policy Issue Defined	Issue is reported in <u>N</u> <u>**no.**</u> of the 114 articles	Issue appears in <u>*X%*</u> of the 114 articles
Stricter gun laws	Gun control measures, generally - (*stricter gun laws, restrict access to guns, new gun laws*)	69	61%
Gun Violence	Violence and/or crimes (*e.g., murder, gun trafficking, hate crime*)	49	43%
Mental health policies	Mental health policies or screenings or precautions	44	39%
Assault weapons ban	Assault weapons ban like that of 1999	36	32%
Second Amendment rights	Second Amendment right to bear arms	36	32%
Ammunition sales	Ammunition – mail order via Internet or through a gun retailer, bulk purchasing	35	31%
Background checks	Background checks (*regarding application and license fees, permits, and renewals*)	29	25%
High-capacity magazine ban	Ban of high capacity ammunition magazines	24	21%
Public safety measures	Enhanced security measures or precautions (*use of metal detectors, public safety efforts*)	23	20%
Communication	Communication (*cross-agency sharing or among facility staff members*)	8	7%
Open carry laws	Curtailing or relaxing open carry laws	6	5%
Active Shooter training	Active shooter drills or training	6	5%
Firearm training	Firearm training	5	4%
Legal safeguards	Safeguards against the sale of firearms at gun shows or online; tracking sales and licensing for sellers	2	2%
Limitations on the size of magazine clips	Restriction on the number of rounds allowed in magazine clips or the number of guns one can own	1	1%

Note: Public policy issues covered in less than one article are not included in this table.

As indicated in Table 4.1 above, the top individual public policy issue that garnered the most coverage within the 114 articles examined was the push for stricter gun control legislation. It appeared in 69 of 114 articles or 61% of the total articles. The second most mentioned public policy issue was gun violence or crimes, which appeared in 49 of 114 articles or 43% of the total coverage. Mental health issues appeared in 44 of the 114-article dataset or 39% of the coverage. Fourth in the listing of top public policy issues is an assault weapons ban. It appeared in 32% of the coverage or 36 of 114 articles and was tied with another public policy – that of Second Amendment rights. Rounding out the top five most frequently mentioned public policy issues is ammunition sales. It was nearly tied with the fourth place issues and accounted for 31% of total news coverage, appearing in 35 of 114 articles. The next most covered policy issue is background checks, which appeared in 29 of 114 articles and garnered a 25% count. On its heels were two other public policy issues – high-capacity magazine ban and the enhanced security measures. These issues appeared in 24 (or 21%) and 23 (or 20%) of all 114 articles, respectively.

A lower tier of single public policy issues with a sizeable drop in coverage includes open carry laws, active shooter training, and limitations on the size of magazine clips. These were mentioned in eight articles or less of the total 114 articles. In order of frequency, the spread of this coverage includes: 1) communication around sharing information between agencies, which appeared in eight of 114 articles or 7% of total coverage; 2) open carry laws, which was tied with active shooter training and reported in six of 114 articles or mentioned in 5% of the total coverage; 3) firearm training, which was proposed by the N.R.A. for teachers appeared in five of the 114 articles or 4% of the total coverage; 4) legal safeguards related to gun ownership or related appeared in two articles, which amounted to a 2%-mention rate in 114 articles. Finally, the mention of limitations on the size of magazine clips appeared in a single article among the total 114-article

data set, accounting for 1% of the coverage. It was equal to other public policy issues that were not included in the policy issue table such as virtual firearms, smart gun technology, extended prison sentencing for gun violence offenders, and longer prison time for those who lied on background check applications. Finally, there was no mention in any of the 114 articles of the following two public policy issues: a) confidentiality of records, particularly mental health records or open-carry licenses; and b) "stand your ground" laws where a licensed gun owner can discharge a firearm to protect him or herself if they feel afraid for their lives.

Seven clusters were devised to combine overlapping individual public policy issues (see Appendix D, page 5). From a data set of 373 public policy mentions, 162 or 43% were associated with gun control, including Second Amendment rights. This dominant cluster was more than the next three combined as the ammunition policy cluster (16%), the mental health policy cluster (12%), and the weapons ban cluster (nearly 10%) collectively garnered 38% of the public policy news coverage. Less print media attention from the *Times* was devoted to background checks and agency coordination and communication, which appeared 29 times (or 8% of 373 policy mentions) and eight times (or roughly 2% of 373 public policy mentions) of the 114 articles coded, respectively.

Significance – Public Policy Issues. A chi-square, "goodness of fit" test was performed using the frequency counts from the seven clusters. Two public policy clusters emerged significant - gun control and ammunition control. Both received a greater share of coverage than the expected 53.3 mentions if each policy issue had an equal chance to be mentioned. In the case of gun control, which was observed 162 times, it occurred more than three times what was expected in the national press. Ammunition control was observed 60 times, which is seven more times than what was expected. Frequency distributions for each cluster is displayed in Table 4.2 below. For a p-value

of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 286.408 and six degrees of freedom, both the gun control

and ammunition control clusters were significant, occurring at a higher than expected rate.

TABLE 4.2 – Clusters of the Most Frequently Reported Public Policies			
Public Policy Cluster	Public Policy Frequency *Observed*	Public Policy Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Gun Control	162 (43%)	53.3	
Ammunition Control	60 (16%)	53.3	
Mental Health	44 (12%)	53.3	
Weapons Ban	36 (10%)	53.3	< .001
Training & Public Safety	34 (9%)	53.3	
Background Checks	29 (8%)	53.3	
Agency Coordination	8 (2%)	53.3	
Total	373	Chi-Square Expression	
Chi-Square (X^2) Statistic	286.408		
Degrees of Freedom (df)	7 – 1 = 6	$X^2 (6) = 286.41, p < .001$	
Asymp. Sig. or *p-value*	.000		

Identification of the most referenced and quoted stakeholders, whose discourse contributed

to the most frequently reported public policy issues listed above, follows in the next section.

Frequency distributions will reveal whose voice is captured in the national news immediately

following the school shooting in Newtown and in the month to follow.

Identification of Stakeholders and their Discourse

A list of both pre-identified and emergent stakeholders associated with mass shootings was

devised for coding the data set (see Appendix D, page 2b). The list of 33 stakeholders was used to

identify and code for the most frequently referenced and quoted stakeholders within the data set

of 114 *New York Times* articles. The analysis sought to determine which stakeholders surfaced in

the news more frequently in the wake of the school shooting in Newtown and which stakeholders'

quotes were used within the 30-day coverage timeframe. In general, leaders at the national level such as the president or vice president, the regional level such as governors, and local level that include mayors and city councils are quite visible in the Newtown shooting news coverage. In addition, local and regional law enforcement official are also given considerable space in the news coverage of the shooting. Federal, state and city level leaders were mentioned in 43 (or 38%), 28 (or 25%) and 16 (or 14%) of the 114 *Times* articles, respectively.

The stakeholders with the most references in the data set were community members who appeared in 97 of 114 articles or 85% of the news coverage. With nearly an equal share of mentions were the victims (including survivors) of the shooting who were referenced in 96 of 114 articles for an 84% share. It was followed by a trifecta of stakeholders who were mentioned above the 50-reference threshold and included: active shooters at 56% (or 64 of 114 references); local law enforcement at 55 percent (or 63 references); and the community in general at 54% (or 61 references). Family members of the victim and/or shooter and the Sandy Hook Elementary School (as the site of the shooting) also received a fair share of mentions in the media. They were nearly tied at 49% and 48%, respectively. Referenced in between 33% and 38% of the news coverage are: the media itself as an active public, gun rights activists, businesses, national politicians such as members of Congress and national leaders such as the President or his or her cabinet. Mentioned in the range of 21% and 28% of all news coverage are government regulatory bodies such as the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, regional (state level) legislators, county and state-level law enforcement, employees, and regional politicians. Both gun control advocates and the N.R.A. received an equal share of coverage with 28% (i.e., 32 article references each).

The complete frequency distribution, detailing how individual stakeholders are referenced in the 30-day interval of news coverage of the Newtown shooting, is listed in Table 4.3 below. It

is further buoyed by Table 4.4, which shows the combined frequency distributions organized by

nine categories and upon which a chi-square "goodness-of-fit" test was performed.

TABLE 4.3 - Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 114 *NYT* articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in **$\underline{N}$** (no.) of 114 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 114 articles
Community members	Community member (*neighbors, resident, fans, singer, student, parent, teacher, minister or voter*)	97	85%
Victim (survivors)	Victim (*survivor of mass shooting; eyewitness*)	96	84%
Active Shooter	Shooter/gunman/suspect/ accused/assailant/terrorist	64	56%
Local law enforcement	Local law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief, bomb squad, investigators, authorities*)	63	55%
The public, in general	Community generally (*"the community" or "the public," city, state, county, neighborhood, Americans, racial group, nation, crowds, region*)	61	54%
Family member	Family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor (*with knowledge of...*) of victims *or* shooter	56	49%
Site of the shooting	Workplace or institution with responsibility as the site of the shooting (*universities or theaters*)	55	48%
National leader	Politician – national leader (*president, vice president, their spokespersons, or advisers*)	43	38%
National legislator	Lawmaker– national legislator (*member of U.S. Congress*)	42	37%
Businesses	Businesses (*those affected by shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops, range, or gun makers*)	40	35%
Gun rights activists	Gun rights advocates/activists (*gun enthusiasts; known to oppose gun control*)	40	35%
Media	Media (*apart from coverage when the media is identified as active public in the article, newspaper*)	38	33%
Gun control activists	Gun control advocates/activists, supporter (e.g., *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*)	32	28%
N.R.A.	National Rifle Association official or spokesperson	32	28%

TABLE 4.3 - Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 114 *NYT* articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in <u>**N**</u> (no.) of 114 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 114 articles
Subject-matter expert	Subject-matter experts in any area who are often quoted (*e.g., university professors, psychiatrists*)	30	26%
Regional leader	Regional leader/politician (*governor, lieutenant governor, their spokesperson or advisers*)	28	25%
Employees	Employees, workers, investors, staff	28	25%
Regional/state law enforcement	Regional/state law enforcement official (*county sheriff or state officers*)	27	24%
Regional legislator	Regional lawmaker – regional legislator (*senator, representative – at state level*)	25	22%
Internet as a public	Internet (*as a quoted public – "Internet respondents say…" survey, polls, or PEW*)	25	22%
National law enforcement	National law enforcement official (*FBI agent or other federal officer, branches of military, DOJ*)	21	18%
Regulatory body	Regulatory body (*governmental entity, administrative authority; ATF, Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, federal government, government generally – any level*)	21	18%
Social media user	Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists, the media itself as source of story – Twitter, Facebook*)	18	16%
Local, regional, or national organization	Local, regional, and national organizations (*e.g., the Urban League, parents' groups, Red Cross, CDC, Mayors Against Illegal Guns or KKK*)	17	15%
Local leader	Politician – local leader (*mayor, city manager, their spokespersons or advisers*)	16	14%
Customers	Customers, patrons, attendees, audience, moviegoers, buyers, consumers,	14	12%
District judicial offices/officials	Judicial offices/officials district/appellate/federal levels (*e.g. the Supreme Court*)	13	11%
Local judicial official/office	Judicial offices/officials <u>local</u> level (*attorneys for either side, jury, judges or legislative aides*)	12	10.5%
First responder	First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement; firefighters*)	11	10%

TABLE 4.3 - Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 114 *NYT* articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in **_N_** (no.) of 114 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 114 articles
Community group	Community group or group leader, social or political activists	6	5%
Local politician	Politician – local leader (*mayor, city council, their spokespersons or advisers*)	5	4%
Healthcare provider	Healthcare provider (*medical and/or psychiatric institutions generally*)	4	3.5%
American Civil Liberties Union	American Civil Liberties Union official or spokesperson	1	1%
Total Stakeholders: 33	Total number of references: 1081	As reported in 114 articles	

Significance – Most Referenced Stakeholders. Using the nine stakeholder cluster categories, a chi-square, "goodness of fit" test was calculated to determine congruence between the number of observed and expected stakeholder references in the data set. In the school shooting, if all stakeholder had an equal chance of being referenced then they would appear 120.1 times in the data set of 114 articles. Based on the chi-square analysis, three stakeholder clusters exceeded that number and are significant. Community members were referenced in the *Times* at more than twice the amount of what's was expected with 307 occurrences compared to the expected 120.1 references. Community organizations, also significant, was referenced 182 times in the data set, exceeding the expected number of mentions in the data set. Lastly, the third stakeholder category that emerged as significant was law enforcement. This group appeared 122 times in the article data set, just beyond the expected number of references. Activists and special interests, who were observed 105 times in the article data set, did not meet the expected level for stakeholder references in the national press. Frequency distributions for each stakeholder cluster is displayed in Table 4.4 below. Accordingly, for referenced stakeholders in the elementary school data set, there is a p-value of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 429.793 and eight degrees of freedom.

TABLE 4.4 – Clusters of the Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders			
Stakeholder Cluster	Stakeholder Frequency *Observed*	Stakeholder Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Community Members	307 (28%)	120.1	
Community Organizations	182 (17%)	120.1	
Law Enforcement	122 (11%)	120.1	
Activists & Special Interests	105 (9.7%)	120.1	
Victims	96 (9%)	120.1	<.001
Politicians	87 (8%)	120.1	
Lawmakers	72 (7%)	120.1	
Shooter	64 (6%)	120.1	
Gov't Regulators & Judiciary	46 (4%)	120.1	
Total	1081	Chi-Square Expression	
Chi-Square (X^2) Statistic	429.793		
Degrees of Freedom (df)	9 -1 = 8	$X^2 (8) = 429.79, p < .001$	
Asymp. Sig. or *p-value*	.000		

Identifying those stakeholders who are referenced in the newspaper coverage is an important area of inquiry for this study. It locates which stakeholders are recognized as potential contributors to the issues debate. However, the question of which stakeholders are actually afforded a national platform for the articulation of their ideas is reflected in the representative quotes captured in the article data set. Quoted material from targeted stakeholders was extracted from all 114 *NYT* articles to determine whose voice was captured in the weeks following the mass shooting incident. Table 4.5 below provides frequency counts with percentages that rank-order those stakeholders quoted most frequently. It is followed by a sampling of their quotes. The top 11 stakeholders were quoted in 11 or more articles of the 114-article data set. Members of the local community were the most frequently quoted; they were highlighted in 39 articles or 34% of the news coverage. In total, there were 309 quotes extracted from the data set with frequency counts

for stakeholder quotes ranging from 0 to 39. Following community members, the next five stakeholder groups were quoted in 20 or more articles from the 114-article data set. From high-to-low rankings, national leaders were quoted in 27 articles or 24% of the coverage, family members were quoted in 24 articles or 21% of the data set, both local law enforcement officials and businesses were quoted in 22 articles representing 19% of the news coverage for this case, and subject-matter experts were quoted in 20 articles or 17% of the data set. Another quinary of stakeholders consisting of regional and national legislators, regional leaders, the National Rifle Association, and gun control activists were featured in between 11 and 18 articles, or 10% and 16% of the article data set, respectively. For the remaining frequencies revealing how stakeholders were quoted in the data set, see Table 4.5 below.

TABLE 4.5 – Most Frequently Quoted Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 114 *NYT* articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in N (no). of 114 articles	Quoted in X (%) of 114 articles
Community member	Community member (*resident, witness, neighbors, parent, teacher, minister, voters, fans, student, protester, churches, religious figures, citizens, gun owners, voters, athlete, or singer*)	39	34%
National leader	National leader (*president, vice president, their spokespersons, advisers, or cabinet members*)	27	24%
Family member	Family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor (*with knowledge of…*) of victims *or* shooter	24	21%
Local law enforcement	Local law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief, bomb squad, investigators, authorities*)	22	19%
Businesses	Businesses (*those affected by shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops, range, or makers*)	22	19%
Subject-matter experts	Subject-matter experts in any area who are often quoted (*e.g., university professors, psychiatrists*)	20	17%

TABLE 4.5 – Most Frequently Quoted Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 114 *NYT* articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in **_N_** (no). of 114 articles	Quoted in **_X_** (%) of 114 articles
National legislator	Politician/Lawmaker – national legislator (*member of congress*)	18	16%
Regional leader	Leaders – regional leader (*governor, their spokesperson, or advisers*)	16	14%
N.R.A.	National Rifle Association official or spokesperson	14	12%
Gun control activists	Gun control advocates/activists, supporter (e.g., *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*)	13	11%
Regional legislator	Lawmaker – regional legislator (*congress person: senator, representative – at state level*)	11	10%
Local, regional, and national organizations	Local, regional, and national organizations (*e.g., the Urban League, parents' groups, Red Cross, CDC, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, or KKK*)	9	8%
Gun rights activists	Gun rights advocates/activists (*gun enthusiasts; known to oppose gun control*)	9	8%
Media	Media (*apart from coverage when the media is identified as active public in the article, newspaper*)	9	8%
Local leader	Politician – local leader (*mayor, their spokespersons, or advisers*)	8	7%
Regional law enforcement	Regional/state law enforcement official (*county sheriff or state officers*)	8	7%
Victim	Victim (*survivor of mass shooting; eyewitness*)	7	6%
Customers	Customers, patrons, attendees, audience, moviegoers, buyers, consumers,	5	4%
Local judicial official/office	Judicial offices/officials local level (*attorneys for either side, jury, judges or legislative aides*)	4	3.5%
Shooter	Shooter/gunman/suspect/accused/assailant/terrorist	3	3%
Community group	Community group or group leader, social or political activists	3	3%

TABLE 4.5 – Most Frequently <u>Quoted</u> Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 114 *NYT* articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in <u>*N*</u> (no). of 114 articles	Quoted in <u>*X*</u> (%) of 114 articles
National law enforcement	National law enforcement official (*FBI agent or other federal officer, branches of military, DOJ*)	3	3%
District judicial offices/officials	Judicial offices/officials district/appellate/federal levels (*e.g. the Supreme Court*)	3	3%
Employees	Employees, workers, investors, staff	3	3%
Social Media Users	Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists, the media itself as source of story – Twitter, Facebook*)	2	2%
Regulatory body	Regulatory body (*governmental entity, administrative authority; ATF, Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, government generally – any level*)	2	2%
Workplace – site of shooting	Workplace or institution with responsibility as the site of the shooting (*universities or theaters*)	1	1%
Local legislator	Lawmaker – local legislator (*city council, their staff, city manager*)	1	1%
Internet respondents	Internet (*as a quoted public – "Internet respondents say…" survey, polls, or PEW*)	1	1%
First responder	First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement; firefighters*)	1	1%
Healthcare providers	Healthcare provider (*medical and/or psychiatric institutions generally*)	1	1%
The public, in general	Community in general (*"the community" or "the public," city, state, county, neighborhood, Americans, racial group, nation, crowds, region, the South, quoted or referenced*)	0	1%
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union official or spokesperson	0	1%
Total Stakeholders 33	Total number of quotes 309	As reported in 114 articles	

Significance – Most Quoted Stakeholders. Per the chi-square, "goodness of fit" test, four

of the nine stakeholder clusters exceed the expected frequency rate of 34.3 quotes per stakeholder

cluster (see Table 4.6). The observed frequency of quotes for community members, politicians,

community organizations, and activists are significant and exceed what is expected for the average

stakeholder. If quotations from all stakeholder groups had an equal chance to be cited, then each

stakeholder would have 34.3 quotes published. Newspaper coverage cited quotes from community

members in the school shooting 94 times, which exceeded what was expected by nearly three times

or 2.74. Politicians were also significant and quoted 51 times, community organizations were

quoted in 45 instances, and activists were cited 36 times. Frequency distributions for each cluster

is displayed in Table 4.6 below. For a p-value of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 184.777

and eight degrees of freedom, the remaining five stakeholder clusters were quoted below what is

expected. Law enforcement was quoted at the expected level with 34 mentions had each grouping

received an equal chance of being quoted in the data set. In total, there were 309 stakeholder quotes

captured in the data set with the largest amount or 30 percent being distilled from members of the

local community. For the frequency counts and percentages for each cluster, see Table 4.6 below.

TABLE 4.6 – Combined Most Frequently Quoted Stakeholders			
Stakeholder Cluster	Stakeholder Frequency *Observed*	Stakeholder Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Community Members	94 (30%)	34.3	
Politicians	51 (17%)	34.3	
Community Organizations	45 (15%)	34.3	
Activists & Special Interests	36 (12%)	34.3	
Law Enforcement	34 (11%)	34.3	<.001
Lawmakers	30 (10%)	34.3	
Gov't Regulators & Judiciary	9 (3%)	34.3	
Victims	7 (2%)	34.3	
Shooter	3 (1%)	34.3	
Total	309	Chi-Square Expression	
Chi-Square (X^2) Statistic	184.777		
Degrees of Freedom (df)	9 - 1 = 8	$X^2 (8) = 184.78, p < .001$	

TABLE 4.6 – Combined Most Frequently Quoted Stakeholders			
Stakeholder Cluster	Stakeholder Frequency *Observed*	Stakeholder Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Asymp. Sig. or *p-value*	.000		

Exemplars of stakeholder discourse. The most quoted stakeholders in the school shooting news coverage were members of the community. Their quotes appeared in 34% of the total data set or 39 of 114 *NYT* news articles (see Table 4.5). They are among stakeholder cluster by the same name (from Table 4.6 above) whose coverage proved the most significant based on chi-square analysis; this means community member quotes have a higher likelihood than other stakeholders to be included in the targeted national news source. This also means their inclusion in the dataset of quoted stakeholders is not a chance occurrence. The community member stakeholder group is comprised of neighbors, parents, teachers, voters, ministers, fans, students, members of religious groups, movie patrons, and local members of a community generally. Their input can range from descriptive commentary on how the shooting event affected them, to commentary on the gun debate, to insights on their knowledge of the shooter, victims, venue, or community.

For example, members of religious groups were quite vocal. The Rev. Matthew Crebbin of Newtown Congregational Church, for example, described how family members were coping with the shooting rampage. "It's very agonizing for the families, but they are trying to be very meticulous…it is very difficult for people" (Applebome & Wilson, 2012, p. 1). Another community member, who knew the shooter's mother, said "she was "handling a very difficult situation with uncommon grace…She was a big gun fan" (Flegenheimer & R Somaiya, 2012, p. 1). Reverend Meg Boxwell Williams praised one of the slain teachers as a "quick-thinking, beautiful, selfless person" whose "last act was selfless, Christ-like in laying down her life for her

children" (Berger, 2015, p. 38). Ms. Soto gathered her first-graders into a closet and cupboards and helped others to safely escape.

Not all voices from the clergy were focused on support of relatives and the community or memorializing those slain. Some entered the fray of the gun debate and contemplated the need for a measured response. Jim Winkler, general secretary of the United Methodist Church's public policy arm, the General Board of Church and Society, said "I could tell there was this real need, real hunger, at least in my denomination, for there to be some response that is not only prayers and expressions of sadness, but also a call to action…And it came from some who wouldn't normally care that much about public policy action, but who would be more interested in spiritual responses" (Goodstein, 2012, p. 38). Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, in Washington, said, "This is not likely an issue that we'll have a sustained campaign on in the absence of political leadership. But if political leaders act, the religious community will be strongly engaged" (Goodstein, 2012, p. 38). The Rev. Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, noted that his group had "never taken a position on gun control but might now 'take a harder look'" (Goodstein, 2012, p. 38).

The clergy and others with intimate knowledge of the shooter's and victims' families were also part of the community of voices that included school officials. Tom Boasberg, the superintendent of schools in Denver, said he had not yet determined whether to increase safety drills. "When you read the story of what happened at Sandy Hook, you realize, 'Holy cow, they did a lot of things right'" (Rich, 2012, p. 1). Reflecting on additional security measures to take, Boasberg said many schools already had "intercoms, buzzers and surveillance cameras mounted at their primary doors" but he added, "We're not going to turn our schools into police bunkers" (Rich, 2012, p. 1). Another school superintendent of the Harrold schools grappling with the same

question reasoned, "So if there was an ability to put an armed security officer in every school, I would have to seriously consider it…I looked around for solutions, and the only solutions are to have some kind of defense" (Rich, 2012, p. 32).

Other community voices articulated a more targeted stance on the gun debate. "We are a country that has too much violence and too many ways to have people hurt or killed and not enough access to mental health services," said one parent (Rich, 2012, p. 32). Another one noted that some of the firearms can be excessive but may be necessary in certain areas where wild animals are known to frequent. He said, "Hunting is taking one shot. It's not pumping round after round…There's a lot of ranchers in the outskirts of the valley where they run cattle…Come February when they calve, the coyotes love to eat the calves. Some ranchers give permission to folks to hunt coyotes. A lot of them use that very particular gun [the Bushmaster assault rifle] that's raising all the awareness now" (Gabriel, 2012, p. 36).

The second most frequently quoted stakeholders were national leaders such as the president, vice president or their cabinet members. They were represented in 24% of the article data set or 27 of the total 114 articles. Calling for "meaningful action," President Obama said, "Our hearts are broken…I know there is not a parent in America who does not feel the same overwhelming grief that I do…They [the slain children] had their entire lives ahead of them: birthdays, graduations, weddings, kids of their own" (Savage, 2012, p. 1). The President also stated, "…we should check someone's criminal record before he can check out at a gun seller; that an unbalanced man shouldn't be able to buy a gun so easily; that there's room for us to have reasonable laws that uphold liberty, ensure citizen safety and are fully compatible with a robust Second Amendment" (Savage, 2012, p. 1). Acknowledging that it would not be easy, he also pledged to "use whatever power this office holds" to prevent future tragedies, saying, "No single

law, no set of laws can eliminate evil from the world or prevent every senseless act of violence in our society. But that can't be an excuse for inaction" (Landler & Baker, 2012, p. 1). Melody Barnes, the president's former domestic policy adviser said, "This moment is so pain-filled and there is such a desire -- I think you can feel it building -- to move forward in a common-sense way that he sees the imperative" (Baker, 2012, p. 1). Indicative of the political divide, a former education secretary under President Ronald Reagan, William J. Bennett, indicated on NBC's "Meet the Press" that he would support such measures as armed security in schools. "I'm not so sure I wouldn't want one person in a school armed, ready for this kind of thing" (Rich, 2012, p. 32).

Some providing commentary noted the political risk taken by the Obama administration to tackle the gun issue in a climate where public support could fall as quickly as it rose in the immediate aftermath of the Sandy Hook shooting. "There certainly can be a cost to it," said Peter Wehner, an adviser to President Bush who also worked for presidential candidate Mitt Romney. "You can fight for something and lose and be a weakened figure" he continued. On the other hand, sometimes there's honor in loss. You may lose, but in the process, you advance a cause in the eyes of history" (Baker, 2012, p. 1). Mr. Wehner said Mr. Obama was prudent. "He has waited until the stars aligned before he acted…When you think about what we've gone through over the last couple months -- a devastating hurricane, and now one of the worst tragedies in our memory -- the country deserves us to be willing to compromise on behalf of the greater good" (Calmes & Weisman, 2012, p. 26).

After community members and national leaders, the third most frequently quoted stakeholders were members of the victims' and shooter's families. There were 24 quotes extracted from the data set representing 21% of 114 articles. The shooter's father and former husband to the shooter's mother Nancy, Peter Lanza, an executive at General Electric, said he was cooperating

144

with investigators. "We are in a state of disbelief and trying to find whatever answers we can…We, too, are asking why…Like so many of you, we are saddened but struggling to make sense of what has transpired" (Flegenheimer & Somaiya, 2012, p. 1). Ms. Lanza's brother, James Champion, a former police officer who lives in Kingston, N.H., said in a statement, "On behalf of Nancy's mother and siblings, we reach out to the community of Newtown to express our heartfelt sorrow for the incomprehensible loss of innocence that has affected so many" (Flegenheimer & Somaiya, 2012, p. 1). The shooter's uncle, who had been a police officer in New Hampshire, James M. Champion, issued a statement expressing "heartfelt sorrow," adding that the family was struggling "to comprehend the tremendous loss we all share" (Barron, 2012, p. 1).

Some quotes from family members provided insight into what a parent feels when their child is involved in such a tragedy. One parent, Mr. Urbina, who was forced to use back roads and park a quarter mile from the firehouse where the children were being held said "he scooped his son under his arm and began running…It's utter fear. Your heart stops. Your chest doesn't move. I'm a dad. What can I do? I'm helpless" (Dwyer, 2012, p. 19). Mr. Urbina recalled that the students at Sandy Hook are familiar with safety protocols because they "are always doing fire drills" and "incident drills…The fire station is their gathering point. The kids know it" (Dwyer, 2012, p. 19). Mr. Urbina was seen running into his daughter Lenie's arms while each one sobbed. He said, "I had to put her down because other parents…needed to know about their kids, and I wanted to get word to them" (Dwyer, 2012, p. 19). Urbina immediately texted his wife who works at the bank to let her know their daughter was safe. For her part, Lenie Urbina, remembered being in gym class when she heard over the public address system, she had heard someone say, "'Put your hands up,' and then bang after bang" (Dwyer, 2012, p. 19).

The families of those whose children were among the slain were just as vocal. Robbie Parker, whose 6-year-old daughter, Emilie, was among the dead, choked back tears as he described her as "bright, creative and very loving." But, he added, "as we move on from what happened here, what happened to so many people, let us not let it turn into something that defines us" (Barron, 2012, p. 1). An 8-year-old boy named Nolan Krieger tearfully remembered his brother at his memorial service and said, "I used to do everything with him…We liked to wrestle. We played Wii. We just played all the time. I can't believe I'm never going to see him again" (Barry, 2012, p. 1). Nolan's sentiments were echoed by his older brother Michael who said, "We no longer have a brother but now we have a guardian angel" (Barry, 2012, p. 1).

Parents around the nation shared their thoughts on the N.R.A.'s proposal to pay for an armed security guard in every school. "If we're going to do this -- which I don't know that we necessarily should -- they should be paid professionals," said Dave Lamb, a research physicist in St. Paul, who has two daughters in elementary school (Rich, 2012, p. 1). "Other parents regarded the proposal as simply missing the point" (Rich, 2012, p. 1). A mother of three, Courtney Carlson, picking up her child from a Washington, D.C., elementary school said she felt "so totally outraged when I stepped into the school thinking that was the solution to a totally messed up problem…I think crazy people who get access to high capacity-rifles want to cause mayhem…Someone who has a gun that can shoot 200 rounds in under 10 minutes -- you don't stop that person unless you don't let the person have that kind of gun" (Rich, 2012, p. 1).

Local law enforcement was the fourth most quoted source among the data set stakeholders. Represented in 19% of the news coverage or featured in 22 of 114 articles, this constituent is the primary group for obtaining the latest information on the shooting. They provide the substance of the journalist's queries on behalf of the community and clear up misinformation. For example,

according to Newtown's Lieutenant Vance, the shooter, Adam Lanza, "was not voluntarily let into the school at all…He forced his way in" (Barron, 2012, p. 1). As first responders, local law enforcement provide an eyewitness account of the scene. Gary MacNamara, the chief of the Fairfield Police Department, said before one teacher was killed, she "pushed children into a closet and allowed other kids to escape" (Berger, 2012, p. 38). He stated that Ms. Soto illustrated what some would do when they need to make a split-second, "life-threatening decision." Said Chief MacNamara, "She [Soto] answered that question: through her strength, she took action to save the life of the students. I know, because I've spoken to children in that class who are alive because of what she did" (Berger, 2012, p. 38).

Other members of law enforcement provide commentary on the gun debate just as family members and the clergy. Gerald Pickering, the police chief in Webster, suggested that "there were certainly mental health issues involved" in the shooting (Robbins & Kleinfield, 2012, p. 1). Grieving, Chief Pickering said in an interview: "We know that people are slipping through the cracks, not getting the help they need. And I suspect that this gentleman slipped through the cracks. Maybe he should have been under more intense supervision, maybe he should not have been in the public, maybe he should have been institutionalized, having his problems dealt with" (Robbins & Kleinfield, 2012, p. 1). Other law enforcement officials say that in theory, "the A.T.F. could take a lead role in setting a national agenda for reducing gun crime…But it is hampered, they say, by politically driven laws that make its job harder and by the ferocity of the debate over gun regulation" (Goode & Stolberg, 2012, p. 1). "I think that they've really been muzzled over the last several years, at least, from doing their job effectively," said Frederick H. Bealefeld III, a former police commissioner in Baltimore. "They've really kind of been the whipping agency, caught in the political turmoil of Washington on the gun issue" (Goode & Stolberg, 2012, p. 1). Dave

Hoover, a police officer in Lakewood, Colorado, whose nephew A. J. Boik was one of the 12 people killed in Aurora, said, "It's different now because children are being butchered in schools…Because kids were killed at a movie. Because families went to church and were gunned down…I don't understand why we are even arguing about this" (Healy & Frosch, 2013, p. 9).

Tied for the fourth most quoted stakeholders with law enforcement, businesses also were quoted in 22 (or 19%) of the 114 articles examined. Some of their quotes were highlighted from what they etched on a chalk board outside their businesses. One board read, "Our love, thoughts and prayers are with our community." Diners at the Blue Colony Diner, just off Route 84, were taking their plate mats, turning them over and writing messages on them in crayon. One with a purple angel, hovering over words written in green said, "RIP Children & Adults of Newtown." They were later taped to the entryway window. Once the manager discovered what was going on he told his staff to "Leave them there…We have to leave them" (Dwyer & Rueb, 2012, p. 28).

As expected, gun shop businesses were in the midst of much of the debate. Indicating how accessorizing weapons is the work of the gun owner, one gunsmith at The Gun Store in Las Vegas remarked, "The average person can change stocks, they can put lasers on them, they can put locks on them…It's just endless. It's like building a custom car. You can just accessorize it to your own personal taste" (Goode, 2012, p. 25). He noted that his wife owned a pink, chrome-plated AR-15. Private equity firms with investments in firearm stock also feel compelled to make public statements in their own defense when investors call on them to divest. Cerberus officials stated, "As a firm, we are investors, not statesmen or policy makers. It is not our role to take positions, or attempt to shape or influence the gun control policy debate…That is the job of our federal and state legislators" (Lattman, 2012, p. 1). One group announced that it was planning to sell its stake in the Freedom Group whose subsidiary sells 10-round magazine clips. "It is apparent that the

Sandy Hook tragedy was a watershed event that has raised the national debate on gun control to an unprecedented level" (Sorkin, 2012, p. 1). The Freedom Group shelved its pursuit of an I.P.O. because of the "risk factors" involved saying: "The regulation of firearms and ammunition may become more restrictive in the future and any such development might have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, results of operations or cash flows" (Sorkin, 2012, p. 1).

Dick's Sporting Goods, which sells rifles and handguns nationwide, posted a notice on its Web site announcing that it was "scaling back weapon sales" because of the shooting. The notice read, "During this time of national mourning, we have removed all guns from sale and from display in our store nearest to Newtown and suspended the sale of modern sporting rifles in all of our stores chain wide" (Nagourney, 2012, p. 1). Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, said it "removed an information page on Bushmaster from its Web site 'in light of the tragic events'…but it had made no changes to its sales policies on guns and ammunition" (Nagourney, 2012, p. 1). Some gun shops say they sell to buyers who have *not* been cleared in the three-day applicant screening window, including nationwide chain Bass Pro Shops. "We follow the law," unless a buyer is "jittery or acting funny," said Larry L. Whiteley, a spokesman (Schmidt & Savage, 2012, p. 1). Dennis Pratte, owner of the NOVA weapons store in Falls Church, Virginia, said, "We are just as concerned about firearms getting into the wrong hands as the state police or the F.B.I." (Schmidt & Savage, 2012, p. 1). The Colt executive, Carlton S. Chen, said the company would seriously consider leaving the state of Connecticut if the bill became law. "You would think that the Connecticut government would be in support of our industry," said Chen (Rivera & Cowan, 2012, p. 1). In a statement, Colt said, "Our hearts go out to our fellow Connecticut residents who have suffered such unimaginable loss…We do not believe it is appropriate to make further public

statements at this very emotional time" (Rivera & Cowan, 2012, p. 1). The increased talk of gun regulation has a positive impact on gun sales. Said one independent gun dealer in Des Moines, "If I had 1,000 AR-15s, I could sell them in a week…When I close, they beat on the glass to be let in. They'll [the customers] wave money at me" (Cooper, 2013, p. 1).

The Unfolding Public Policy Debate on Guns – 30 Days of News Coverage

As is typical for these crises, reporting commences fully on the second day, although there might be an initial announcement of the shooting on day one. This gives media outlets sufficient time to gather the most critical information. The *New York Times* began its coverage on day two with eight shooting-related articles on the school shooting in Newtown. One article addressed how to talk with children about the shooting, while another gave an initial profile of the gunman from those acquainted with him in high school and beyond. Still, another article provided a first-hand account of what happened inside the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire and Rescue station house, where children are customarily taken during an emergency at the elementary school or a practice drill. An article central to this study examined the "cautious" call by President Obama that would formally initiate the gun debate from Washington, although the contentious discussion on social media had already begun (Landler & Goode, 2012, Section A). The news coverage that began on day two effectively press the reset button on the partisan gun debate. According to Landler and Goode (2012, Secton A), "Republicans and many moderate Democrats expressed their horror at the mass killing, but were either silent on a legislative response or said it was not time to talk about gun control…liberal Democrats said it was time to move forward." The balance of this section briefly examines how the gun debate evolves in the national print media over the course of 30 days of coverage.

Reporting during days 1-10. Sixty-eight articles (or 60% of the total news coverage) on the school shooting in Newtown were published in the *New York Times* within the first 10 days following the incident. Besides the prime informational article entitled, "Gunman massacres 20 children at school in Connecticut; 28 dead, including killer," topics for this coverage period include articles remembering those slain, such as the lasting commitment of Sandy Hook principal, Dawn Hochsprung. Also included on day two was an initial article on the gunman where those who knew him remember him as being an intelligent but shy loner with no perceptible emotions. Several of his former friends and classmates were not surprised that he could carry out such a horrific crime (Halbfinger, 2012). The first article on the gun debate was published on Saturday, December 15 (the day after the shooting). It reported on President Obama's tearful declaration that more preventive measures had to be taken to combat incidents like Sandy Hook (Landler & Goode, 2012).

Another day-two article traced the incomprehensible moments that some parents experienced when picking up their children from the emergency meeting location at the nearby firehouse. Another article touched on the velcro effect, linking the Newtown shootings with those of earlier shooting incidents such as the Wisconsin temple shooting, the Colorado theater shooting, and those at Columbine and Virginia Tech (Glaberson, 2012). Prior to the official release of the victims' names, one article was devoted to an early recognition of the slain Sandy Hook school psychologist, Mary Sherlach, and principal, Dawn Hochsprung who were among those killed. Both were remembered as solution oriented and student-centered who provided support to students. Such reporting serves to humanize those who became victims to mass shooting violence.

On day three, continued probing into the background and potential motivation of the shooter, Adam Lanza, would reveal that the guns he took to the shooting rampage were three of

five registered to his mother Nancy Lanza. The article bought the gun debate front and center with a description of her cache of weapons as: "two powerful handguns, two traditional hunting rifles and a semiautomatic rifle that is similar to weapons used by troops in Afghanistan" (Flegenheimer & Somaiya, 2012, pg. 1). It was also revealed that Ms. Lanza would go with her sons to target shooting. Another day-three article reported an abandoned attempt by the Justice Department to greatly expand the background-check system to help prevent guns from being obtained by those with mental illness and criminals. Gun control proponents seized upon the topical deliberations to request that Congress pass laws mandating background checks for all gun sales along with a ban on certain high-capacity magazine clips and assault rifles. The article also noted that since 2008 federal agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs were to share information on whether those in their database were mentally ill. Most agencies, the article stated, have not complied (Savage, 2012). Further igniting the gun debate, another article reported how some of the children were shot as many as 11 times. An article focused specifically on the gun debate noted how at the state level there was a trend toward few restrictions. It highlighted less restrictive legislation allowing gun owners to carry concealed weapons in more places. It also mentioned the bill that passed in Michigan the day before the Newtown shooting which allows individuals to carry concealed weapons in schools.

Reporting on days four through ten included articles that begin to examine how communities begin the process of grieving and recovery as they prepare to bury and memorialize their loved ones. School safety measures were also scrutinized at both the local level and across the national generally. This period also begins a detailed look into mental health issues, the silence of the N.R.A., the type of weapon (the Bushmaster AR-15) the shooter used in the massacre, and the considerable supply of ammunition he had on his person when he shot his way into Sandy

Hook that morning. While gun control advocates began calling for a ban on high capacity magazines and assault weapons like AR-15's, gun owners labeled the argument "misguided" since the gun was not the perpetrator and millions are responsible gun owners (Goode, 2012, p. 26). Newtown, incidentally, is home to a major gun industry trade association, the National Shooting Sports Foundation; thus, attempts at gun control in Newtown were summarily dismissed (Moss and Rivera, 2012). The media's descent on the New England town also makes its own headlines.

Reporting during days 11-20. Seventeen news articles, representing 15% of the total coverage, were examined during the eleventh through the twentieth days. Central to this reporting is the focus on the N.R.A., which finally broke its silence around day eight of the news coverage. They were clear on day 11 that they would not cooperate with the presidential panel on gun control. Closer to home, a major gun maker, Colt Manufacturing Company, threatened to leave the state of Connecticut if a bill that requires tracing markers on guns. It was another indication of how contentious the gun debate can be and also how pervasive when one considers its economic impact. *The Journal News*, a local newspaper in Westchester County, N.Y., saw this first hand when it made the decision to publish the names and addresses of handgun permit holders. The resulting community uproar threated the safety of its staff and forced it to defend its journalistic integrity and claim of public service (Goodman, 2012). Reporting for this section concluded with the shooter's father claiming his remains for burial on day 19.

Reporting during days 21-30. The first article examined during the third, ten-day cluster reported on the busing of Sandy Hook Elementary School children to a renovated middle school building that was gutted to resemble their old school facility in Newtown. This coverage included a potpourri of 29 news articles that made up 25% of the total coverage. Articles included reporting on smart guns as an alternative to conventional firearms, details from the trial of the Colorado

movie theater gunman, steps by the makers of violent video games to mitigate the threat of regulation, and a youth charged with plotting a school attack in a copycat scenario. A couple of articles on the gun debate and proposed legislation in New York and Connecticut indicate a shift to local politics, which were overshadowed by those in Washington. Notable for the gun debate during this period was the launch of a campaign against gun violence by former U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona, who had also visited the children, teachers, and staff of Sandy Hook once they moved to their renovated facility. Equally noteworthy coverage focused on the efforts of Vice President Biden, who promised action in the continuing fight for sensible gun regulation. The month-long coverage concluded with articles on the rise in gun sales and the fate of the former Sandy Hook Elementary School facility and whether it should be razed or renovated.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter examined the emotionally-charged school shooting in Newtown whose victims' ages and numbers attracted considerable media attention. The gun debate during this shooting was far more pronounced than what had been typical for mass shootings since Virginia Tech. Within the dataset of 114 *NYT* articles, the top five most frequently *referenced* stakeholders are comprised of members of the local community who appear in 85% of the articles. That group is followed by the victims/ survivors of the massacre who were mentioned in 84% of the coverage. The remaining three groups mentioned in the coverage are the shooter, local law enforcement, and the public. Frequency counts of the most *quoted* individual stakeholder groups included in the dataset reveals how journalists in this case profile the views of community members the most. This group was quoted in 34% of the total news coverage. This is unsurprising given the media's attempt to report on how the massacre of children affected members of a local community.

Community members are followed by national leaders such as the president, family members of either the victims or shooter, local law enforcement who provide regular updates on the scene and on the continuing investigation, and businesses directly affected by the shooting such as gun and ammunition shops. In terms of stakeholder clusters, where similar stakeholders are grouped as a single collective, community members figured prominently as the most frequent stakeholder cluster. They were a significant stakeholder cluster, along with politicians, community organizations, and activists. For this case analysis, each of these four clusters has a greater likelihood, beyond a chance occurrence, of being quoted in *The New York Times* coverage based on chi-square analysis.

As noted in Table 4.4 above, across the spread of 33 stakeholders, on average they were referenced in 33 articles in the 114-article dataset. Also, of the 309 stakeholder quotes extracted from the news coverage, stakeholders were quoted nine times on average. Finally, the third measure for frequency distributions, public policy issues, was referenced in the dataset 373 times. On average these policy issues, which ranged from assault weapons ban to stricter gun control measure, were mentioned in 22 of the 114 articles.

Table 4.7 – Measures of Central Tendencies for the Newtown School Shooting			
	Referenced Stakeholders	**Quoted Stakeholders**	**Public Policy Issues**
Totals	1081 references	309 Quotes	373 mentions
Median	28	7	23
Mode	21, 25, 28, 32, & 40	1 & 3 (bi-modal)	0, 6, & 36
Mean	33 references on average	9 quotes on average	22 mentions on average

Of the three cases examined in this study, only the reporting of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting sustained sufficient attention to top the media's, public's, and national legislator's agenda (resulting in congressional action) simultaneously. On the very next day following the

school shooting, President Obama pledged to work with Congress on taking "meaningful action" (Cooper, 2012, p. 27) to stem these types of deadly incidents. Reporting of those comments was the start of 21 days of direct coverage of the contentious gun debate over the next month. That meaningful action resulted in the establishment of a presidential task force and, four months later, the April 2013 failed attempt by members of Congress to pass new legislation for stricter background checks and a ban on certain assault rifles and ammunition magazines.

A closer examination reveals that these three public policy issues coincidentally were among the most frequently-mentioned public policies in the 114-article dataset. Specifically, each of the three areas garnered a 21% share or more of the news coverage. An assault weapons ban was mentioned in 32% of the news coverage. Stricter background checking was highlighted in 25% of the dataset, and a ban on high-capacity magazines was referenced in 21% of the news coverage. Other more referenced public policy issues were related and more general in nature. For instance, stricter gun control, which was the most-mentioned policy issue of the 17 coded, amassed a 61% share of the total news coverage. It was followed by the mention of gun violence that appeared in 49 articles for a 43% share. The public policy that tends to gain support from members of both parties, mental health policies, which was a significant factor in the shooting, was mentioned in a notable 39% of the news coverage even though it was not included in the congressional vote.

Another public policy issue that gained prominence in the news coverage was that of enhanced public safety measures. This issue was driven in part by the N.R.A.'s proposal to underwrite the cost of placing armed security personnel in every school in America as a way to solve the gun violence in schools. It also agreed to provide firearm training to teachers and other school personnel. The topic would be mentioned in 20% of the total news coverage. The

presidential taskforce assembled to address gun control did not include enhanced security protocols as one of its public policy proposals and the N.R.A., although it pledged early on to work to prevent future shootings in cooperation with the Obama administration, later announced it would *not* work together with the taskforce and instead proposed a solution of its own.

The shooting at Sandy Hook supports the notion that mass shootings are a distinctive crisis type with a reporting trajectory and mix of policy issues unique to the details in each shooting. In all, the gun debate was covered on 21 of the 30 days of news coverage. As the composite of the shooter's profile was developed during the first couple of weeks after the shooting, it was clear that mental health was a factor in the commission of the crime. Yet, the gun debate and subsequent vote by Congress focused not on mental health issues, but on the shooter's assault rifle used in the massacre and the amount of ammunition he was able to fire in a compressed amount of time. In this case, unlike the one that follows, the concern over background checks was not an issue because the guns and ammunition used in the case were registered to the shooter's mother Nancy, who was also a gun enthusiast with a cache of five guns of her own. As observed in this chapter and the one that preceded it, the mix of public policy issues reported in the media and deliberated over the course of a month changes in accordance with the facts in the shooting and how stakeholders process the focusing event details. In the next chapter, although the venue changes from a school to a church, the impact on the community is no less profound.

CHAPTER 5 - A CHURCH SHOOTING IN CHARLESTON

This chapter explores the 2015 mass shooting that occurred at a historically important African American church in Charleston, South Carolina. A brief description of the shooting is followed by an extended presentation of the sequence of events (see the shooting case chronology below identified as Table 5.0). The case data set consists of 88 *New York Times* articles, each of which was content-analyzed for pre-identified and emergent, keyword search terms aimed at locating a targeted list of stakeholders and public policy issues (see Appendices A and B). Descriptive statistics, consisting of frequency data (i.e., central tendency and summation measures) are also presented in this chapter with an identification of the most often-cited public policy issues. Those statistics are followed by a listing of the top stakeholders mentioned in the mass shooting news coverage along with a table of stakeholders most often quoted and samples of what they said. The chapter concludes with an account of the first 30 days of news coverage from *The New York Times*. This coverage describes how the shooting crisis erupted on day one, how the discussion of it in the media developed over the ensuing weeks, and how the frequency of coverage began to decline during the concluding days of the 30-day reporting frame.

Narrative of the Charleston Church Shooting

The elevated level of uncertainty that typify a crisis generally is compounded by the fact that active shooter events initiate a fluid crime scene. The apparent danger, intense emotion and widespread attention in these settings are further intensified when the shooter remains at large. Such was the case in the Charleston, South Carolina mass shooting that occurred during a Wednesday night Bible study on June 17, 2015. The shooting took place in the fellowship hall of an historic black church in downtown Charleston, the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Referred to as "Mother Emanuel," it was built in 1891 and became emblematic of

community organizing during the civil rights era. The church is registered on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places and has a storied past dating back to 1816. It also served as the center of the failed 1822 slave rebellion involving one of the church's founders, Denmark Vesey. As a result of the revolt attempt, Emanuel was subsequently burned down.

Wednesday night Bible study at Mother Emanuel was a weekly affair. It took place in the lower level of the church and usually began at 8:00 p.m. It was open to the public and is described on the church's website as an opportunity to learn more about God. Eyewitnesses reported that during their mid-June gathering of around a dozen congregants, they were joined by a guest, the 21-year-old Dylann S. Roof of Eastover, South Carolina. Surveillance footage would later emerge showing Roof entering the main entrance of the predominantly black church at 8:16 p.m. Upon entering the church, witness testimony says Roof first asked to see the pastor. Since the Bible study was already underway, Roof then asked to sit next to the pastor. Roof, white, got his wish as seen in a *Snapchat* video where he is seated in a folding chair several feet away from the church's 41-year-old pastor, Clementa C. Pinckney. Pinckney was a member of the South Carolina Senate and previously a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives. In the video, Pinckney appears to be leading the discussion while the congregants and guest looked on. Roof is said to have sat quietly through the entirety of the Bible study after being given a study sheet and a Bible by Reverend Pinckney.

Surviving witness testimony alleges that at the conclusion of the Bible study around 9:00 p.m., Roof stood up alongside the church members who all rose to their feet and closed their eyes. It was time to pray. Instead of praying, however, Roof reached for his concealed Glock .45-caliber handgun and began shooting. One survivor recalled only hearing a series of pops as Roof unloaded multiple rounds into several congregants. It was testified that Roof reloaded his .45-caliber pistol

five times. In between reloading and flying shell casings, Roof yelled racial insults and continued to shoot. The rampage lasted for several minutes and 77 shots were fired in all. It is alleged that prior to departing the scene, Roof asked one of the survivors, Polly Sheppard, if she were shot. When she said no, he reportedly told her that he would let her live so she could tell others what had just happened. Sheppard also shared that Roof made a failed attempt to kill himself inside the church. He allegedly aimed the gun at his own head, pulled the trigger, but realized he was out of bullets and ran out (Phelps, 2015).

While the shootings were taking place inside the Bible study hall, steps away, inside an interior church office were huddled the pastor's wife and their six-year-old daughter. According to the wife's testimony, she could hear the gunshots and even observed one of the bullets pierce the wall where they hid. It prompted her to lock the door. She testified that she could hear the active shooter, who turned out to be Roof, moving around the fellowship hall firing round after round. After a few moments, she saw the door knob turn, and Ms. Pinkney and her daughter hid underneath the secretary's desk. She, too, expected to be shot. When she finally heard the assailant leave out the door, she immediately called 911 to report the shootings. Roof exited the church at 9:06 p.m., but not before standing over one of the survivors and making a racially-inflammatory statement. Then he drove away in his black, four-door sedan armed with his handgun and a list of other churches that some in law enforcement speculate as other potential targets.

In the aftermath of the massacre, eight congregants died at the scene. Another member died at the hospital – six women and three men were killed in all, including Mother Emanuel's well-known pastor and civil rights leader, Reverend Clementa C. Pinckney. The victims ranged in age from 26 to 87 years old. Three congregants survived the massacre. Within minutes of several 911 phone calls, the Charleston police department descended on church grounds and ascertained that

the shooter acted alone. They later enlisted the help of the FBI and other law enforcement agencies.

Other key events leading up to and following the shooting incident are chronicled in Table 5.0

below.

TABLE 5.0 - A Chronology of the Church Shooting in Charleston, South Carolina (*Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.*)	
Date	*Event(s)*
Dec. 22, 2014	Roof makes a trip to Emanuel AME Church in Charleston from his dad's home in Columbia; he also visits the nearby Boone Hall Plantation in Mount Pleasant then makes a return trip to Emanuel per testimony from FBI agent and lead investigator of the church shooting, Joseph Hamski.
Feb. 2015	According to Agent Hamski, Roof initiates contact with other white separatists in the Columbia area, and he also joins a supremacist website, Stormfront.org. Roof also posts statements and sends private messages while on the site.
Feb. 9, 2015	Roof makes an online purchase of two patches depicting the flags of two former apartheid states - Rhodesia and South Africa.
Feb. 23, 2015	Roof makes a 13-second call to Emanuel AME Church.
Feb. 24 & 27, 2015	Roof makes additional trips to the black historic church among other historic sites on these two days then heads back to Columbia.
April 3, 2015	Roof turns 21-years-old – the legal age required to purchase a firearm.
April 11, 2015	Roof completes an application to purchase a Glock pistol at Shooter's Choice in West Columbia; the law requires three days after the completion of an application to do a background check to determine if the applicant can legally purchase a firearm.
April 16, 2015	Roof returns to the store, Shooter's Choice to purchase the .45-caliber pistol along with five (5) ammunition magazines.
April 25, 2015	Roof again visits the Emanuel AME Church – twice. He goes by the church first, then visits and takes photos at Boone Hall and stops by Daniel Island before returning to Emanuel AME before heading back home.
April 26, 2015	Roof makes a payment to the online host for his manifesto, Reg.Ru. He buys accessories for his gun at Palmetto State Armory in Columbia. On the following day (April 27) he buys three (3) more magazines at Shooter's Choice.
May 9, 2015	Roof pays his sixth visit to Emanuel AME since Dec. 2014 following a visit to another historic plantation.
May 10, 2015	Roof buys additional ammunition at Wal-Mart. He then visits and takes pictures at the Museum and Library of Confederate History.
May 16, 2015	Roof visits and takes photos at another plantation (Kensington) then heads to an area near Emanuel AME. He then travels to Sullivan's Island then circles back to an area near the church around 9:30 p.m. He left the church area after two hours.

TABLE 5.0 - A Chronology of the Church Shooting in Charleston, South Carolina (*Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.*)	
Date	*Event(s)*
June 7, 2015	Roof does additional shopping at Wal-Mart. This time, he buys a journal, pens and two flags – one American and one Confederate.
June 13, 2015	Roof purchases more ammunition at Wal-Mart.
June 16, 2015	Roof makes another payment to the electronic host of his online manifesto.
June 17, 2015 **Date of mass shooting**	**4:45 p.m.** - According to FBI testimony, Roof uploaded photos from a computer at his father's home in Columbia to the online site, Lastrhodesian.com.
	6:13 p.m. – Roof's GPS system is set for Charleston.
	8:16 p.m. – Roof is captured on surveillance camera entering Emanuel AME Church in Charleston. Upon entering he asks for the pastor.
	Roof is seen on Snapchat sitting at a green table not far from the pastor. He sits quietly through the remainder of the one-hour Bible study where those gathered pray, sing and then discuss the 4th chapter of the Gospel of Mark. As the session comes to a close, the group stands up for concluding prayer.
	9:00 p.m. – Instead of praying with his eyes closed, Roof takes out his .45-caliber handgun and starts shooting. He unloads several rounds into each person and leaves one congregant alive as an eyewitness to the mayhem.
	9:05 p.m. - Police dispatchers begin receiving their first 911 calls regarding a shooting at Emanuel AME Church. One of the callers is Jennifer Pinckney, wife of the now slain pastor Clementa who hid with their daughter in the pastor's office during the shooting episode.
	9:06 p.m. – Roof exits Emanuel AME Church and heads to his car. He is observed on surveillance camera with gun in hand. He appears to be in a hurry.
	Following the shooting, police and later FBI agents descend on the church and cordon off nearby streets as they search for the shooter. Law enforcement officers from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and other agencies were assisting.
	After 11 p.m. – Police crime scene lines are expanded one then two blocks away from Emanuel AME due to an immediate bomb threat.
June 18, 2015	**6 a.m.** Charleston's Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. and police chief, Greg Mullen hold an early morning news conference and label the shooting a hate crime. Chief Mullen clarifies that eight of the nine slain died at the church and one on the way to the hospital – the Medical University of South Carolina. Chief Mullen says, *"It is senseless…It is unfathomable that somebody would walk into a church when people are having a prayer meeting and take their lives."* Mayor Riley says, "*The only reason someone would walk into church and shoot people praying is hate."*

TABLE 5.0 - A Chronology of the Church Shooting in Charleston, South Carolina (*Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.*)	
Date	*Event(s)*
June 18, 2015	Police release images from surveillance cameras showing Roof exiting the door of the church heading to his car. He is labeled by Charleston police as "extremely dangerous" (ABC News). Roof's father and uncle contacted Charleston police and confirmed his identity and vehicle from the pictures. His dad also verified that Roof owned a 45-caliber handgun. Federal officials decide to investigate the shooting as a hate crime and the death penalty could apply. A support center is set up for the families of the victims.
June 18, 2015	Roof's childhood friend, Joseph "Joey" Carlton Meek, 21, of Red Bank, S.C., is arrested by FBI agents for knowing of Roof's plans in advance, concealing them, and lying about it.
June 18, 2015	**10:32 a.m.,** police in Shelby, North Carolina received a tip that Roof's car had been seen in their city about 245 miles from the murder scene.
June 18, 2015	President Obama spoke to the nation from the White House briefing room and urged the country to come together in such times of division and tragedy: "*This is not the first time that black churches have been attacked, and we know that hatred across races and faiths pose a particular threat to our democracy and our ideals,*" Mr. Obama said. "*The good news is I am confident that the outpouring of unity and strength and fellowship and love across Charleston today from all races, from all faiths, from all places of worship indicates the degree to which those old vestiges of hatred can be overcome*" (Baker, 2015).
June 18, 2015	South Carolina Governor Nikki R. Haley releases a statement: "*While we do not yet know all of the details, we do know that we'll never understand what motivates anyone to enter one of our places of worship and take the life of another,*" the governor said. "*Please join us in lifting up the victims and their families with our love and prayers.*" Haley would later call for the death penalty for Roof should he be found guilty.
June 18, 2015	Roof is arrested in Shelby, North Carolina at 10:44 a.m. According to police, he is apprehended at a traffic stop without incident. Roof waives extradition and was flown back to Charleston for his bond hearing.
June 18, 2015	NRA board member Charles Cotton posts then deletes a comment from an online discussion thread on firearms blaming the slain pastor's position on gun control for his congregants' death. Says Cotton, "*And he voted against concealed-carry. Eight of his church members who might be alive if he had expressly allowed members to carry handguns in church are dead. Innocent people died because of his position on a political issue*" (McCarthy & Gambino, 2013, online).

TABLE 5.0 - A Chronology of the Church Shooting in Charleston, South Carolina (*Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.*)	
Date	*Event(s)*
June 18, 2015	Hours after the shooting, the American and South Carolina flags fly at half-staff at the state capitol, while the Confederate flag continues to fly at full-staff at the Confederate monument. Images of Roof emerge showing him waiving the confederate flag and holding a firearm. In the coming days and weeks, it results in a contentious debate about the flag as a symbol of racial division and oppression versus a symbol of rich heritage.
June 18, 2015	The Supreme Court rules that Texas did not violate the First Amendment when it refused to allow specialty license plates bearing the Confederate battle flag.
June 18, 2015	An online petition is started demanding the removal of the Confederate flag from the state house grounds in South Carolina. Some 566,000 people sign it.
June 19, 2015	An article in *The New York Times,* "Flying the Flags of White Power" discusses the Facebook profile photo of Roof wearing two white supremacists flags.
June 19, 2015	Roof appears by closed-circuit television for his 13-minute bond hearing in Charleston. His bail is set for $1M. Chief Magistrate James Gosnell, Jr. presides. (CBS News)
June 19, 2015	Thousands, including dignitaries such as U.S. Senator and presidential candidate Lindsey Graham, wait in line to gather for a prayer vigil at the College of Charleston TD Arena.
June 20, 2015	At Roof's bond hearing, the shooting victims' family members look at the screen in the courtroom and, to the dismay of many, express sentiments of loss and forgiveness for the shooter. Roof is charged with nine counts of murder.
June 20, 2015	An article in *The New York Times,* "Charleston Shooting Reignites Debate About Confederate Flag" discusses how the shooting provokes the decades-long "conflict" over whether or not the flag should be displayed.
June 20, 2015	National president of the N.A.A.C.P., Cornell William Brooks makes a demand at a news conference to remove the Confederate battle flag from the dome of the state capitol in Columbia. Social media sites erupt with a vigorous issue debate. Legislators discuss plans to file legislation to have the flag removed from SC State House grounds.
June 20, 2015	An article in *The New York Times,* "Gun Control Voices in Congress Seem to Lose Their Resolve," discusses the diminished prospect of any gun safety legislation following the shooting in Charleston and the failed attempt two years prior right after the shooting at Sandy Hook.
June 22, 2015	South Carolina Governor Nikki R. Haley calls for the removal of the Confederate battle flag from the State House building. She is flanked by both Democratic and Republican lawmakers at a joint news conference.
June 26, 2015	President Obama attends the funeral of and eulogizes the Reverend Clementa C. Pinckney at Mother Emanuel with 6,000 in attendance.

TABLE 5.0 - A Chronology of the Church Shooting in Charleston, South Carolina (*Narrative entries were taken from The New York Times unless otherwise noted.*)	
Date	*Event(s)*
June 30, 2015	The ninth and final funeral of those killed in the S.C. church is held as Purple Heart recipient and Reverend Daniel L. Simmons Sr. is remembered.
July 6 & 8, 2015	The South Carolina legislature considers a bipartisan proposal on July 6 to move the Confederate battle flag that flies on State House grounds to the state's Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum in Columbia. By a vote of 37-3 the South Carolina Senate approves the measure. Two days later on July 8, members of the House of Representatives also vote to move the flag.
July 9, 2015	South Carolina Governor Nikki R. Haley signs a bill into law that orders the removal of the Confederate flag from Capitol grounds. It took only 22 days of contentious debate. Police investigate threats to lawmakers about the flag debate.
Sept. 26, 2015	Jury selection begins in Roof's federal case.
Nov. 15 & 21, 2016	After a psychiatric review on Nov. 15 and a closed competency hearing on Nov. 21 and 22, Roof is found competent to stand trial.
Nov. 28, 2016	U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel grants Roof's permission to serve as his own lawyer in the first phase of his trial. Roof faces 33 counts, including hate crimes, obstruction of religion and firearms charges.
Dec. 7, 2016	The federal death penalty trial (i.e., the guilt phase) of Dylann Roof begins.
Dec. 15, 2016	After two hours of jury deliberation, Roof, 22, an avowed white supremacist, was found guilty on all 33 federal charges in the shooting deaths of nine black parishioners at Emanuel AME Church
Jan. 4, 2017	Roof's sentencing trial begins and once again he chooses to represent himself.
Jan. 5, 2017	Circuit Judge J.C. Nicholson signed paperwork delaying Roof's state trial until further notice as the federal trial advances to the penalty phase.
Jan. 5, 2017	The first day of testimony in the penalty phase of Roof's trial begins; Jennifer Pinckney, survivor of the massacre and wife of State Senator Pinckney, takes the stand.
Jan. 10, 2017	After nearly three hours, the jury of six whites and three blacks unanimously sentenced Dylann Roof to death by lethal injection for 18 of the 33 counts against him. Roof will be the first person in the country to get the death penalty in federal court for a hate crime. Roof faces a state death penalty trial later this year.
Primary source: Darlington, A. (2016, December 13). Prosecution's timeline of Dylann Roof's movements. *The Post and Courier*. Retrieved from http://www.postandcourier.com/.	

The chronology of the Charleston church shooting suggests some level of premeditation

on the part of the shooter just as in the theater shooting discussed in chapter 3. According to police

records, Emanuel AME was only one church of several found on a list in Roof's possession. As

has been documented with other mass shootings, Roof surveyed his targeted location on seven occasions and, based on his car's GPS data, stayed in the vicinity of Mother Emanuel for hours at a time (Smith, Hawes, & Darlington, 2016). The shooter's targeting of historically important, symbolic sites helped him support his goal of taking action to prevent further encroachment by blacks against whites. His pre-planning had begun weeks before. In the wake of this particular mass shooting crises, the Charleston community was forced to grapple with the intentional and hateful nature of the crime, the loss of life, the violation of a historic community landmark, and potential deterioration of race relations in a city already dealing with elevated tensions from its own nationally-publicized police shooting.

Also unique to this case was an unusually early and somewhat atypical comment from a high profile member of the National Rifle Association, Charles Cotton. This statement broke with the advocacy group's characteristic mass shooting approach to remain silent in the immediate aftershock of a shooting and deflect the conversation on gun control to another topic. Typically, those topics can range from a focus on preventive matters that include arming and training others with firearms, to ratcheting up security measures, to offering prayers for the family of the slain, or to ascribing deficiencies in mental health laws as the cause of the shooting. NRA board member Charles Cotton broke with protocol and commented on an online firearm discussion forum that Emanuel's pastor was to blame for the death of his eight parishioners because he voted against the open carry law in his state. Had one or more of the congregants been armed, Cotton argued, the shootings could have been thwarted. Cotton's comments were later removed from the site and the NRA leadership distanced itself from them (Steinhauer, 2015). The exchange is indicative of a shooting crisis plan from one of the major incident stakeholders. As will become clear, the phenomenon of other issues rising to the forefront also became evident in this case.

Within days of the shooting, media reporting provided the basic answers sought by the community: what happened, where and when it took place, who was to blame, how it happened generally, and why. News reports characterized the accused assailant, who legally purchased his firearm after turning 21, as a white supremacist motivated by hate who felt justified in his killing of the nine victims. Further clues as to his motivation for the shooting were recorded in his loosely-defined online "manifesto." Remaining, however, were larger questions of recovery and renewal. For example, the post-crisis question of how a community quickly recovers from a mass shooting that has racial, religious, and domestic terror overtones remains. Equally problematic for locals was the reactivation of the decades-old issue of the official presence of Confederate symbolism at the state house in Columbia. The public policy issue of whether or not the Confederate flag, which was revered by some and despised by others, should continue to fly on capitol grounds would effectively overshadow and even displace the debate on gun control just days after the shooting.

Taken together, heightened emotion from the horror of the shooting, the offer of forgiveness from grieving family members, the need to memorialize those slain and especially honor a fellow state legislator made possible a shift in the conversation from gun control to community renewal. Removal of the flag from capitol grounds, both a physical and symbolic gesture, accelerated community healing for many. Just a couple of days after this shooting tragedy, media coverage prominently featured stories on the growing debate about the flag's removal while the reporting trajectory on gun violence all but faded into the background. The renewed public policy debate on guns became short-lived, while the issues argued in a timeworn dispute would resume. The degree to which local politics and symbolism would surpass the gun debate is quantified in the next section.

Identification of Public Policy Debate Issues

The church shooting in Charleston not only reignited the gun debate, but it also generated parallel coverage of a secondary debate – whether the Confederate battle flag should continue to fly in South Carolina's capitol. Two days after the shooting, a Facebook profile of the shooter, Dylann Roof, surfaced with him wearing symbols of white supremacy. In other photos he proudly waved the Confederate battle flag in one and burned the American flag in another. That imagery became a touchstone in South Carolina government for renewed deliberation on the fate of the Confederate flag. The intensity of the debate over the ensuing weeks dominated news coverage following the shooting, making removal of the flag from state capitol grounds the top public policy issue. Arguably, it even outpaced the gun debate and was featured more prominently than the next three gun-related policy issues combined: stricter gun laws, thorough background checks, and mental health issues. To a lesser degree, issues related to Second Amendment rights, ammunition sales, public safety measures, and a ban on assault weapons were also mentioned. News reporting frequency rankings of the top 11 public policy issues are listed in Table 5.1 below. All but one public policy is taken from the table of 17 public policy issues charted in *The New York Times* within this study's 30-day reporting frame (see page 3 of the Codebook in Appendix D). The top policy issue, removal of the Confederate flag, was not among the policy issues identified in Appendix D. It was added to the "other,*"* user-identified coding category. Table 5.1 below presents the total number of articles in which the public policies appear and provides the percentage of coverage from the data set of 88 total articles.

Ranked Public Policy Issues	Public Policy Issue Defined	Issue is reported in X no. of the 88 articles	Issue appears in X % of the 88 articles
Removal of the Confederate flag	State policy debate to move the Confederate battle flag from State Capitol grounds to a museum	50	57%
Stricter gun laws	Gun control measures, generally - (*stricter gun laws, restrict access to guns, new gun laws*)	20	23%
Background checks	Background checks (*regarding application and license fees, permits, and renewals*)	8	9.1%
Mental health policies	Mental health policies or screenings or precautions	8	9.1%
Second Amendment rights	Second Amendment right to bear arms	7	8%
Public safety measures	Enhanced security measures or precautions (*use of metal detectors, public safety efforts*)	5	6%
Ammunition sales	Ammunition – mail order via Internet or through a gun retailer, bulk purchasing	5	6%
Assault weapons ban	Assault weapons ban like that of 1999	3	3.4%
Open carry laws	Curtailing or relaxing open carry laws	3	3.4%
High-capacity magazine ban	Ban of high capacity ammunition magazines	1	1.1%
Limitations on the size of magazine clips	Restriction on the number of rounds allowed in magazine clips or the number of guns one can own	1	1.1%

TABLE 5.1 – Top Public Policy Issues Covered – As Reported in 88 NYT articles

Note: *Public policy issues covered in less than one article are not included in this table.*

As indicated in Table 5.1 above, the top public policy issue that garnered the most coverage within the dataset was the removal of the Confederate flag, which showed up in 50 articles (or 57%). This policy issue was followed by stricter gun control measures, which appeared in 20 of

169

the 88 articles or (23%). Two public policies related to the gun debate tied for the third most mentioned policy issues in the news coverage. Background checks and mental health screenings both showed up in eight (or 9.1%) of the 88 articles. Second Amendment rights rounds out the top five policy issues mentioned in the news coverage. It appears in seven of the articles and garnered 8% of the national news coverage. A lower tier of public policy issues with lesser coverage includes: 1) public safety or enhanced security measures such as employing security officers or metal detectors; and 2) ammunition sales and related issues such as purchase or availability. Each of these issues was reported in five articles (or 6%) of the total article dataset. Another pair of policies, an assault weapons ban and "open carry" laws, was reported in only three (or 3.4%) of the total news coverage. The final dyad, a ban on high-capacity magazines and restrictions on the number of rounds contained in magazine clips were only featured in one of the 88 articles or in 1.1% of the total news coverage.

Other public policies that were mentioned in a single article but were not included in the table of 17 pre-identified and emergent public policies were related to the following issues: antigovernment violence, terrorism, antiterrorism, civil rights, and gun safety. Finally, there was no mention in any of the 88 articles of the following five policy issues: a) active shooter drills or training; b) cross-agency collaboration and communication to share information about gun or ammunition purchasers; c) firearms training; d) confidentiality of records, particularly mental health records or open-carry licenses; and e) "stand your ground" laws where a licensed gun owner can discharge a firearm to protect him or herself if they feel afraid that their lives are threatened.

It is worth noting that several of these issues could be combined, as several are related to the gun debate, which would increase their frequency rates and potentially yield a degree of significance. As this study is exploratory in nature, a chi-square, one-variable test (x^2) statistical

procedure was performed to determine whether some of the policy issues included in the news reporting have a better than average chance of being reported by the media in the first 30 days. To calculate chi-square statistic, the theoretical frequency distribution for the typical mass shooting crisis was preset so that each public policy was expected to have a 50 percent chance to appear in each article. Also, the degrees of freedom or the number of observations minus one, denotes the number of frequencies that are free to vary. As noted in previous chapters, this study used the conventional *p-value* of 0.05 to denote statistical significance for assessing whether the occurrence of findings is more than coincidental.

Significance – Public Policy Issues. The 17 public policy issues from Table 5.1 above were pared down to a grouping of seven public policy clusters (see Table 5.2 below). An eighth public policy category was added to accommodate the significant number of references calling for the removal of the Confederate flag. For a p-value of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 48.279 and seven degrees of freedom, two policy issues were significant. With 50 occurrences in the data set, the policy to remove the Confederate flag was the most referenced issue and statistically significant, exceeding the expected number of policy mentions by nearly five times. Also significant was gun control, which garnered 30 references. It surpassed the expected frequency rate of 10.2 occurrences by almost 20. Frequency distributions for the remaining clusters, which fell under the expected level of occurrences, is displayed in Table 5.2 below. Mental health issues, which was a noted concern in the church shooting, as well as background checks were among those policy issues debated. Both were referenced eight times in the data set, just under the expected number (10.2) of issue mentions. There were 111 references to public policies captured in the data set.

TABLE 5.2 – Clusters of the Most Frequently Reported Public Policies			
Public Policy Cluster	Public Policy Frequency *Observed*	Public Policy Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Removal of Confederate Flag (*Note: this public policy was not included in the seven clusters and was added based on its observed frequency. Degrees of freedom was adjusted up one to accommodate this policy issue.*)	50 (45%)	10.2	< .001
Gun Control	30 (27%)	10.2	
Background Checks	8 (7%)	10.2	
Mental Health	8 (7%)	10.2	
Ammunition Control	7 (6%)	10.2	
Training & Public Safety	5 (4.5%)	10.2	
Weapons Ban	3 (2.7%)	10.2	
Agency Coordination	0 (0%)	10.2	
Total	111	Chi-Square Expression	
Chi-Square (X^2) Statistic	48.279		
*Degrees of Freedom (df)	8 – 1 = 7	$X^2 (5) = 48.28$, p < .001	
Asymp. Sig. or *p-value*	.000		

Identification of Stakeholders and their Discourse

A combined list of 33 *a priori* and emergent stakeholders associated with mass shootings was devised to identify those voices most frequently cited in the 88 *New York Times* articles comprising this chapter's data set. The research sought to decipher which stakeholders surfaced in the news more frequently in the wake of the shooting and which ones were most often quoted within the 30-day coverage timeframe. Leaders at the national level such as the president or vice president, the regional level such as governors, and local level that include mayors and city councils are quite visible in the Charleston church shooting news coverage. Federal, state and city level politicians were mentioned in 33 (or 38%), 46 (52%) and 16 (or 18%) of the 88 *Times* articles,

respectively. Another triad that also received a noticeable share of coverage was legislators from the same three strata: national, regional, and local. Although not as frequently referenced, members of the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives appeared in one-third or 29 of the 88 articles examined. In just over half of the coverage (i.e., 47 of 88 articles or 53%), one could read about the policy deliberations from state senators and other regional representatives, particularly since the slain pastor of Emanuel was also a state senator. On the local level, city councils members and mayors amassed a modest share of news coverage as they appeared in only 7 of 88 articles, which equates to 8% of the coverage in the 30 days following the church shooting.

By far, the stakeholder group which appears in nearly all of the articles over the 30-day reporting period is the shooting victims. The nine victims slain in the church shooting or those who survived the bloodshed appear in 80 of the 88 articles written about the tragedy. That accounts for 91% of the total coverage in *The New York Times*. Second and third to that group are members of the community and the shooter himself, who garnered 68 (or 77%) and 62 (or 70%) of the total number of articles, respectively. The historic church, as the site of the shooting, appeared in 56 (or 64%) of the articles, and a collective stakeholder group representing "the public" or "the community" *en masse* was mentioned in 57% of the news coverage, appearing in 50 of the 88 articles. Local law enforcement officials, the go-to stakeholder for uncertainty reduction, were mentioned in 48 of 88 articles or 55% of the coverage. Another stakeholder group, the family members of shooting victims, appeared in 45% of the news reporting or 40 of the article data set. Another six stakeholders were mentioned in between 28% and 39% of the total news coverage. They are: 1) the business community, which appeared in 25 of the 88 articles or 28%; 2) national lawmakers, who appeared in 29 articles or 33% of coverage; 3) the media, which appeared in 30 articles as a stakeholder or 34% of the 88 articles; 4) local, regional and national organizations

were highlighted in 31 articles or 35% of the coverage; 5) national politicians were mentioned in

33 articles (or 38%); and 6) the social media were noted in 34 articles, amassing a 39% share of

the total reporting. The remaining stakeholders were mentioned in less than a quarter of the news

articles and their frequency distributions (with percentages) are identified in frequency count order

in Table 5.3 below. They include stakeholders such as community groups, subject matter experts,

judicial officers, and employees, among others. Following Table 5.3 below is a listing of the most

referenced stakeholder clusters after collapsing stakeholder categories into similarity groupings. It

is followed by a listing of the most frequently quoted stakeholder groups and examples of what

they said.

TABLE 5.3 - Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 88 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in <u>*N*</u> (no.) of 88 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 88 articles
Victim (survivors)	Victim (*survivor of mass shooting; eyewitness*)	80	91%
Members of the community	Community member (*neighbors, resident, fans, singer, student, parent, teacher, minister or voter*)	68	77%
Active Shooter	Shooter/gunman/suspect/accused/assailant/terrorist	62	70%
Site of the shooting	Workplace or institution with responsibility as the site of the shooting (*universities or theaters*)	56	64%
The public, in general	Community generally (*"the community" or "the public,"* city, state, county, neighborhood, Americans, racial group, nation, crowds, region)	50	57%
Local law enforcement	Local law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief, bomb squad, investigators, authorities*)	48	55%
Regional legislator	Regional lawmaker – regional legislator (*senator, representative – at state level*)	47	53%

TABLE 5.3 - Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 88 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in <u>***N***</u> (no.) of 88 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 88 articles
Regional politician	Regional leader/politician (*governor, lieutenant governor, their spokesperson or advisers*)	46	52%
Family member	Family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor (*with knowledge of…*) of victims *or* shooter	40	45%
Social media user	Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists, the media itself as source of story – Twitter, Facebook*)	34	39%
National politician	Politician – national leader (*president, vice president, their spokespersons or advisers*)	33	38%
Local, regional, or national organization	Local, regional, and national organizations (*e.g., the Urban League, parents' groups, Red Cross, CDC, Mayors Against Illegal Guns or KKK*)	31	35%
Media	Media (*apart from coverage when the media is identified as active public in the article, newspaper*)	30	34%
National politician	Lawmaker– national legislator (*member of U.S. congress*)	29	33%
Businesses	Businesses (*those affected by shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops, range, or makers*)	25	28%
Community group	Community group or group leader, social or political activists	19	22%
National law enforcement	National law enforcement official (*FBI agent or other federal officer, branches of military, DOJ*)	18	20%
Subject-matter expert	Subject-matter experts in any area who are often quoted (*e.g., university professors, psychiatrists*)	17	19%
Local politician	Politician – local leader (*mayor, city manager, their spokespersons or advisers*)	16	18%
Local judicial official/office	Judicial offices/officials <u>local</u> level (*attorneys for either side, jury, judges or legislative aides*)	14	16%

TABLE 5.3 - Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders – Mentioned in *N* of 88 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Referenced in <u>*N*</u> (no.) of 88 articles	Referenced in X (%) of 88 articles
District judicial offices/officials	Judicial offices/officials district/appellate/federal levels (*e.g. the Supreme Court*)	11	13%
Employees	Employees, workers, investors, staff	10	11%
Regional/state law enforcement	Regional/state law enforcement official (*county sheriff or state officers*)	8	9%
Regulatory body	Regulatory body (*governmental entity, administrative authority; ATF, Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, federal government, government generally – any level*)	7	8%
Local politician	Politician – local leader (*mayor, city council, their spokespersons or advisers*)	7	8%
Internet as a public	Internet (*as a quoted public – "Internet respondents say…" survey, polls, or PEW*)	7	8%
Gun control activists	Gun control advocates/activists, supporter (e.g., *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*)	6	7%
Customers	Customers, patrons, attendees, audience, moviegoers, buyers, consumers,	5	6%
Gun rights activists	Gun rights advocates/activists (*gun enthusiasts; known to oppose gun control*)	4	5%
Healthcare provider	Healthcare provider (*medical and/or psychiatric institutions generally*)	3	4%
N.R.A.	National Rifle Association official or spokesperson	2	3%
First responder	First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement; firefighters*)	0	0%
American Civil Liberties Union	American Civil Liberties Union official or spokesperson	0	0%
Total Stakeholders: 33	Total number of references: 833	As reported in 88 articles	

Significance – Most Referenced Stakeholders. The chi-square, "goodness of fit" test was performed using nine cluster categories outlined in column one of Table 5.4 below. Three stakeholder clusters were significant and referenced in the national press in numbers that exceeded what was expected if all stakeholder had an equal chance of being referenced. Based on the chi-square analysis, community members were referenced two-and-a-half times the amount of an expected stakeholder with 240 occurrences verses the expected 92.6 references. Community organizations, with 155 references in the news, also exceeded the expected number of article mentions. Lastly, the third stakeholder category that emerged as significant was politicians. This group appeared 95 times in the article data set or nearly three mentions above the expected 92.6 references. Lawmakers with 83 references and victims with 80 mentions were observed in less than the expected level for stakeholder references in the national press. Frequency distributions for each stakeholder cluster is displayed in Table 5.4 below. For referenced stakeholders in the church shooting data set, there is a p-value of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 403.306 and eight degrees of freedom.

TABLE 5.4 – Clusters of the Most Frequently Referenced Stakeholders			
Stakeholder Cluster	Stakeholder Frequency *Observed*	Stakeholder Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Community Members	240 (29%)	92.6	
Community Organizations	155 (19%)	92.6	
Politicians	95 (11%)	92.6	
Lawmakers	83 (10%)	92.6	
Victims	80 (9.6%)	92.6	<.001
Law Enforcement	74 (9%)	92.6	
Shooter	62 (7%)	92.6	
Gov't Regulators & Judiciary	32 (4%)	92.6	
Activists & Special Interests	12 (1%)	92.6	

TABLE 5.4 – Clusters of the Most Frequently <u>Referenced</u> Stakeholders			
Stakeholder Cluster	Stakeholder Frequency *Observed*	Stakeholder Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Total References	833	Chi-Square Expression	
Chi-Square (X^2) Statistic	403.306		
Degrees of Freedom (df)	9 – 1 = 8	X^2 (8) = 403.31, p < .001	
Asymp. Sig. or *p-value*	.000		

While it is noteworthy that there are numerous stakeholders referenced throughout the month-long snapshot of coverage, a key question for this study seeks to identify which stakeholder voices are recorded for the public record. Quoted material from stakeholders cited in the news coverage was extracted from all 88 articles to determine whose voice was captured in the weeks following the church shooting incident. Table 5.5 on the next page provides raw scores and percentages that rank-order those stakeholders quoted most frequently. It is followed by a sampling of their quoted discourse. The top nine stakeholders were quoted in 10 articles or more with members of the local community being quoted the most with a nearly 40-percent share of total coverage. Regional legislators such as state senators and representatives, regional politicians such as governors, and organizations on the local, state or national levels were observed in 26 (or 30% of the 88-article data set), 23 (or 26%), and 22 (or 25%) instances of the quoted material, respectively. In all, 254 stakeholder quotations were extracted from the data set. See Table 5.5 below for an accounting of each stakeholder's inclusion in articles from the *New York Times*.

TABLE 5.5 – Most Frequently Quoted Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 88 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in $\underline{N}$ (no). of 88 articles	Quoted in $\underline{X}$ (%) of 88 articles
Community member	Community member (*resident, witness, neighbors, parent, teacher, minister, voters, fans, student, protester, churches, religious figures, citizens, gun owners, voters, athlete or singer*)	34	39%
Regional legislator	Lawmaker – regional legislator (*congress person: senator, representative – at state level*)	26	30%
Regional politician	Leaders – regional leader (*governor, their spokesperson or advisers*)	23	26%
Local, regional, and national organizations	Local, regional, and national organizations (*e.g., the Urban League, parents' groups, Red Cross, CDC, Mayors Against Illegal Guns or KKK*)	22	25%
Family member	Family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor (*with knowledge of…*) of victims *or* shooter	15	17%
National politician	National leader (*president, vice president, their spokespersons, advisers or cabinet members*)	14	16%
National legislator	Lawmaker – national legislator (*member of congress*)	13	15%
Businesses	Businesses (*those affected by shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops, range, or makers*)	12	14%
Subject-matter experts	Subject-matter experts in any area who are often quoted (*e.g., university professors, psychiatrists*)	11	13%
Local politician	Politician – local leader (*mayor, their spokespersons or advisers*)	9	10%
Social Media Users	Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists, the media itself as source of story – Twitter, Facebook*)	9	10%
Shooter	Shooter/gunman/suspect/accused/assailant / terrorist	9	10%
Local law enforcement	Local law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief, bomb squad, investigators, authorities*)	8	9%
Community group	Community group or group leader, social or political activists	8	9%

TABLE 5.5 – Most Frequently <u>Quoted</u> Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 88 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in <u>N</u> (no). of 88 articles	Quoted in <u>X</u> (%) of 88 articles
Victim	Victim (*survivor of mass shooting; eyewitness*)	7	8%
Media	Media (*apart from coverage when the media is identified as active public in the article, newspaper*)	7	8%
National law enforcement	National law enforcement official (*FBI agent or other federal officer, branches of military, DOJ*)	6	7%
Local judicial official/office	Judicial offices/officials <u>local</u> level (*attorneys for either side, jury, judges or legislative aides*)	5	6%
Workplace – site of shooting	Workplace or institution with responsibility as the site of the shooting (*universities or theaters*)	3	3%
District judicial offices/officials	Judicial offices/officials <u>district/appellate/federal</u> levels (*e.g. the Supreme Court*)	2	2%
N.R.A.	National Rifle Association official or spokesperson	2	2%
Local legislator	Lawmaker – local legislator (*city council, their staff, city manager*)	2	2%
Internet respondents	Internet (*as a quoted public – "Internet respondents say…" survey, polls, or PEW*)	2	2%
Employees	Employees, workers, investors, staff	2	2%
Gun control activists	Gun control advocates/activists, supporter (e.g., *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*)	1	1%
Regulatory body	Regulatory body (*governmental entity, administrative authority; ATF, Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, federal government, government generally – any level*)	1	1%
Customers	Customers, patrons, attendees, audience, moviegoers, buyers, consumers,	1	1%
Gun rights activists	Gun rights advocates/activists (*gun enthusiasts; known to oppose gun control*)	0	0%
Regional law enforcement	Regional/state law enforcement official (*county sheriff or state officers*)	0	0%

TABLE 5.5 – Most Frequently <u>Quoted</u> Stakeholders – Quoted in *N* of 88 NYT articles			
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group Defined (*examples*)	Quoted in <u>*N*</u> (no). of 88 articles	Quoted in <u>*X*</u> (%) of 88 articles
First responder	First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement; firefighters*)	0	0%
Healthcare providers	Healthcare provider (*medical and/or psychiatric institutions generally*)	0	0%
The public, in general	Community in general (*"the community" or "the public," city, state, county, neighborhood, Americans, racial group, nation, crowds, region, the South, quoted or referenced*)	0	0%
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union official or spokesperson	0	0%
Total Stakeholders 33	Total number of quotes 254	As reported in 88 articles	

Significance – Most Quoted Stakeholders. A chi-square, "goodness of fit" test was performed using the nine stakeholder cluster categories. Were all stakeholder groups quoted equally, each cluster would be quoted 28.2 times in the church data set. Exceeding that threshold and therefore significant were four stakeholder clusters: 1) community members, which were quoted 80 times; 2 and 3) politicians, which along with community organizations were observed in 46 instances; and 4) lawmakers, who were quoted 41 times in the data set. Community members with 80 quotes garnered 31% of the total 254, which amounts to nearly three times the expected level of 28.2. Both politicians and community organizations, with 46 quotes each, amassed just over one-and-one-half times the expected level of 28.2 quotes. Finally, the fourth significant stakeholder grouping was lawmakers who were quoted 41 times, which also exceeded the expected level. Frequency distributions for each cluster is displayed in Table 5.6 below. For a p-value of less than 0.001, a chi-square value of 196.425 and eight degrees of freedom, the remaining five stakeholder clusters were quoted below what is expected. In the range of three to 14 quotes, law enforcement, the shooter, government regulators and the judiciary, victims, and activists were

quoted well under the expected level. In total, there were 254 stakeholder quotes captured in the data set.

TABLE 5.6 – Clusters of the Most Frequently <u>Quoted</u> Stakeholders			
Stakeholder Cluster	Stakeholder Frequency *Observed*	Stakeholder Frequency *Expected*	Chi-Square *p-value*
Community Members	80 (31%)	28.2	
Politicians	46 (18%)	28.2	
Community Organizations	46 (18%)	28.2	
Lawmakers	41 (16%)	28.2	
Law Enforcement	14 (6%)	28.2	<.001
Shooter	9 (4%)	28.2	
Gov't Regulators & Judiciary	8 (3%)	28.2	
Victims	7 (2.8%)	28.2	
Activists & Special Interests	3 (1%)	28.2	
Total Quotes	254	Chi-Square Expression	
Chi-Square (X^2) Statistic	196.425		
Degrees of Freedom (df)	9 - 1 = 8	X^2 (8) = 196.42, p < .001	
Asymp. Sig. or *p-value*	.000		

Exemplars of stakeholder discourse. The most quoted stakeholders in the church shooting news coverage were community members. This stakeholder group is a broad designation that refers to residents of the local community. They include interviewees for media reports, neighbors, parents, teachers, ministers, voters, donors, fans, students, church members, religious figures, and citizens generally. Community members were quoted in 34 of the 88 articles examined, accounting for nearly 40% of the reporting. Their input after a mass shooting can be descriptive at times as they can provide background on shooters or victims when the media comes calling. They can also give the local angle for those in distant places. Still, in moments of crisis, they can articulate the necessary uplift for residents struggling to make sense of and move pass a

crisis event. For example, days after the church shooting a South Carolina pastor Eric Clark said, "When there's a tragedy, all of the flags of politics, all of the flags of religion, they fall…And suddenly, we are drawn together like a nail to a magnet to a common purpose. We're not always sure what the purpose is; most of those people are probably clueless as to where we go from here, but they're united" (Blinder, 2015, p. 15). Those words were echoed by the Reverend George Felder Jr., pastor of New Hope A.M.E. Church, who said "We cannot make sense of what has happened, but we can come together." He also recommended the audience look pass the shooter to "…the system, the way of life, the philosophy which produces the murderers" (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, & Alvarez, 2015, p. 1).

At other times, this stakeholder group's discourse is codified in written form on a sign or a local diner's menu board as it was in Newtown. An example of this is when a 15-year-old youth from North Charleston met Roof as he was being transported to a jail there. The youth held up a handwritten sign saying, "Your evil doing did not break our community! You made us stronger!" (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, & Alvarez, 2015, p. 1). As expected, multi-ethnic community voices called for the cessation of violence generally and an end to gun violence specifically. Calls for unity and prayer and healing reverberated throughout the community. The Reverend Brandon Bowers, a white minister of the group Awaken, said: "As a pastor in this city, a husband and a father to two boys and two girls, my heart broke in grief and disbelief….What the enemy intended for evil, God is using for good. We are here to pray for the healing that needs to come" (Eligon & Fausset, 2015, p. 1). Reverend Bowers' thoughts were supported by the words of a black minister, Reverend Jermaine Watkins from Journey Church. He referenced the cliché that "what unites us is stronger than what divides us" and then added, "To hatred, we say no way, not today…To

racism, we say no way, not today…To division, we say no way, not today. To reconciliation, we say yes. To loss of hope, we say no way, not today" (Eligon & Fausset, 2015, p. 1).

The next most quoted stakeholder group is regional legislators, which is comprised of state senators and representatives. As noted earlier, the church shooting in Charleston quickly moved from an act of hate and violence to a search for what unites. Once it was discovered that the shooting was hate driven and instigated by Confederate symbolism and other white supremacy artifacts, the Charleston community coalesced around a move to remove the battle flag from the State House in Columbia. Such action would require a vote by the state legislature of which the slain pastor of Emanuel AME was a member. Several articles put the debate about the flag's future front and center in the media, thus the voices of regional legislators were captured in 30% or 26 of the total 88 articles. For example, State Representative Norman Brannon (R) said: "The flag is kind of like algae in a lake. It's just barely under the surface, everybody knows it's there, but unless something like this happens, nobody talks about it…What lit the fire under this was the tragic death of my friend and his eight parishioners. It took my buddy's death to get me to do this. I should feel ashamed of myself" (Martin, 2015, p. 1). Counterbalancing this opinion, State Senator Lee Bright argued: "There are those of us who have ancestors that fought and spilled blood on the side of the South when they were fighting for states' rights, and we don't want our ancestors relegated to the ash heaps of history. Through the years, the heroes of the South have been slandered, maligned and misrepresented, and this is a further activity in that" (Robles, Fausset, & Barbaro, 2015, p. 1).

Regional politicians such as governors were quoted in 23 of 88 articles or 26%. This group is looked to for leadership, particularly in times of heightened uncertainty. Following the church shooting South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley stated tearfully at a news conference that, "We

woke up today, and the heart and soul of South Carolina was broken. Parents are having to explain to their kids how they can go to church and feel safe, and that is not something we ever thought we'd deal with" (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, & Alvarez, 2015, p. 1). Lieutenant governor, Tate Reeves, said, "What happened in Charleston is simply pure irrational evil. There is no other description for this monster's actions. He is an individual that has allowed his mind and soul to be horribly twisted and disfigured by irrational hate. No symbol or flag or website or book or movie made him evil -- he was evil on his own" (Robertson, Davey, & Bosman, 2015, p. 1).

Quotes from local, regional, and national organizations appeared in 22 of 88 articles or 25% of the coverage. This group is representative of its members at one of the three levels. Their role is to reflect and rearticulate the thoughts of their membership. Brief samples include the following. Reverend William J. Barber, who is president of the N.A.A.C.P. of North Carolina said, "What we must ensure is not just that the flag comes down, but that the policies that have disparate impact on black and brown people come down" (Robertson & Fausset, 2015, p. 1). A Montgomery, Alabama group leader, Bryan Stevenson the director of the Equal Justice Initiative, remarked about the Confederate flag debate, "The South is uniquely burdened. But the problem is fundamentally American. We still haven't done the hard work of talking about our history, and that's going to be done county by county, community by community…there's no substitute for that" (Robertson & Fausset, 2015, p. 1).

Rounding out the top five are family members, friends or co-workers of either the shooter or victims. In 17% of the new coverage, 15 family members' are quoted. This group, more than any other, help memorialize the slain by providing nuanced information known only to the victim's or shooter's closest acquaintance. For example, a steward at Emanuel AME Church, Leon Alston, remarks on the statements of forgiveness that grieving members expressed for the gunman. Alston

applauds the behavior of the congregants of the historic church saying, "These people were taught very well about right and wrong, about the loving and the teaching of the holy word. For them to forgive in such a short period of time speaks volumes to who they are and who their loved ones were" (Alvarez, 2015, p. 1).

The Unfolding Public Policy Debate on Guns – 30 Days of News Coverage

While at times the shooter dies in a gunfight with police or from turning their firearm on themselves, the shooter in the Charleston church shooting, Dylann Roof fled the scene overnight for the nearby state of North Carolina. True to form for NYT reporting, the first article appeared on day two of the shooting on June 18. It was the sole article that day with no release of information on the victims. That information began to be released on day three. In addition to information on the nine victims, the picture of the shooter from his Facebook profile also surfaced showing him with two separatist flags, one each from South Africa and Rhodesia. Typical for this early reporting is also an account of the shooting from survivors. A portrait of the scene at the landmark Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church was also report on day three. At a news conference, a tearful governor said, "We woke up today, and the heart and soul of South Carolina was broken. Parents are having to explain to their kids how they can go to church and feel safe, and that is not something we ever thought we'd deal with" (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, and Alvarez, 2015, p. 1). President Obama also issued a statement acknowledging a fluid investigation in which guns were once again in the center of it. He stated, "We don't have but all the facts, but we do know that, once again, innocent people were killed in part because someone who wanted to inflict harm had no trouble getting their hands on a gun" (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, and Alvarez, 2015, p. 1). He also challenged Americans to examine "the system, the way of life, the philosophy which produced the murderers" (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, and Alvarez, 2015, p. 1).

With the gunman now in custody on day three and a clearer picture of the violence from two days prior, the President revisited the off- and on-again gun debate. He remarked, "At some point, we as a country will have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries…It is in our power to do something about it. I say that recognizing the politics in this town foreclose a lot of the avenues right now" (Baker, 2015, p. 18). The remainder of this section briefly examines how the gun debate evolves in the national print media, specifically in the NYT, over the course of a month's worth of coverage.

Reporting during days 1-10. Forty-six articles (or 52% of the total news coverage from this dataset) on the church shooting in Charleston were published in the *New York Times* within the first 10 days following the incident. On the heels of the single article entitled, "South Carolina police search for shooter at Black church," printed on day two of the shooting (there were no articles published on day one), were day three articles that addressed the usual post-shooting questions such as how many were shot, who was killed, what are public officials such as the mayor and president saying, and what was the motive for the shooting. Aside from these, and in this case uniquely, the question was asked whether the assailant, who was now on the run, was arrested. With the shooter captured, through the end of day three reporters focused on providing a profile of those slain and active shooter, a historical look at the shooting venue at the AME church and a community in mourning (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, & Alvarez, 2015). One obscure article discussed the Texas ban of license plates barring the Confederate flag, would figure prominently as the church shooter is seen with a flag in an online picture (Liptak, 2015). Day three reporting concluded with an article indicating the President's indication that the gun debate was once again on the horizon. In addition, an article on whether the violence at the church was terrorism also entered a broader debate (Gladstone, 2015).

Day four reporting began with an update on the Colorado shooter, James Holmes' trial and the emotional testimony from one survivor (Healy, 2015). It showed how the velcro effect linking one shooting with another is an observed phenomenon. Another article covers the way forward for the city of Charleston, a port city of nearly 130,000 (Fausset, 2015). It covered how the city would have to manage race relations following the racially-charged incident. It was on day four that the relatives of the shooting victims appeared in court and were able to directly confront their loved ones' assailant, who appeared by closed circuit television. In an unusual turn, each relative provided a grief-filled statement or more, but pledged to forgive their deceased shooter (Stewart & Perez-Pena, 2015). Also on day four, the debate of the future of the Confederate flag entered the discourse when the N.A.A.C.P. demanded it be removed because it was "an emblem of hate" (Blinder & Fernandez, 2015, p. 1). In a city already recovering from the shooting and racial tensions, the fact that both the American and South Carolina flags waved at half-staff while the Confederate flag remained in the poll position divided the community and overshadowed any debate on gun control. Post-shooting sensemaking essentially provided an opportunity to reset the debate on what to do about Confederate symbolism – a political debate that was waged for decades (Rogers, 2015). While the flag debate began to grow, the gun debate began to wane as law makers in Washington expressed condolences for the violent act but did not pledge new efforts to address gun violence (Steinhauer, 2015). Presidential candidate, Senator Lindsey Graham returned to home to pay condolences to those families affected by the shooting on day four. He welcomed a discussion on gun control, particularly background checks, but admitted to reporters that his immediate focus was to mourn those lost to the violence (Parker, 2015).

Reporting on days five through ten included articles that begin to examine what happened on the day of the shooting and how a community begins to rebound. One article took "a day in the

life of" the slain pastor, Reverend Clementa C. Pinckney and reported his movements on the day of the shooting, which involved a busy day in Columbia at the South Carolina House as a state senator (Fausset, Eligon, Horowitz, & Robles, 2015). An online 2,500-word manifesto attributed to Roof is also reported, providing some insight into his views on racial hatred. Presidential candidate, Hilary Rodham Clinton on day five expresses her condolences for those of South Carolina and admits that race relations must be addressed. In addition, four days after the city and one of its historic edifices is torn apart through violence, the doors of the church reopen for its Sunday service to "send a message to every demon in hell and on earth" says one of its presiding elders, Reverend Norvel Goff, Sr. (Eligon & Fausset, 2015, p. 1). One of four articles on day six underscores how the shooting has provided a test for Republican presidential candidates such as Jeb Bush, Senator Marco Rubio and Governor Scott Walker who are forced to address the issues of race, gun rights, and Confederate symbolism (Martin, 2015). On day seven Governor Niki Haley enters the flag debate and calls for the Confederate flag to be removed from the capital grounds. It would prove to set the stage for vigorous debate in both state legislatures. In his eulogy of the late state Senator Pinckney, President Obama invokes the "N-word" to drive home the point that the country is not yet cured of its racial divide (Shear, 2015). The remaining coverage from day seven to ten days after the shooting continued to profile a community in recovery as it grappled with the racial divide, Confederate symbolism, and continued coverage of funerals and mourning for the deceased.

Reporting during days 11-20. Twenty-two news articles, representing 25% of the total coverage from the dataset, were examined during the eleventh through the twentieth days. Central to this reporting is the focus on the continuing investigation into the shooter's background and the weapons he used, the federal and state debate on what to do about Confederate symbolism, and a

continuation of memorializing the deceased with funeral processions. The last of the funerals took place on day 16 and one article noted how the memorials continued to increase. Notably, visitors and residents continued to go by the church and pray, sing, and lay flowers two weeks after the shooting (Blinder, 2015). A $3 million scholarship fund was established for those congregants who were to pursue an undergraduate or advanced degree. A loan article on day 12 tries to resuscitate the gun debate. Titled, "Does a pistol belong in your portfolio," it recounts the shootings at Sandy Hook, and how in the aftermath of that violence, Americans bought the greatest number of new firearms in history with an estimated 14.9 million guns sold (Sommer, 2015). The article also discussed how there was public outcry for companies, particularly retirement investment companies, to divest their holdings of the stock of gun companies such as Smith & Wesson.

Reporting during days 21-30. The first article examined during the third, ten-day cluster reported on the trajectory of the debate on the removal of the Confederate flag from the South Carolina State House. It reported on the protests that were taking place and how the senators voted 37-3 to move the symbols of both pride and prejudice. Capturing one side of the contested issue was Senator Joel Lourie, a Democrat from Columbia who said, "We all have somewhere between slightly different and very different perspectives on the Confederate flag…This fact is undeniable: The alleged killer of the Charleston nine used that flag as a symbol of hatred and racism and bigotry" (Blinder, 2015, p. 11). As the debate moved to the House of Representatives, the emotion was no less and representatives were inundated by constituent emails. One supporter to amend the legislation to remove the flag argued, "I grew up holding that flag in reverence because of the stories of my ancestors carrying that flag into battle," said Representative Michael A. Pitts, a Republican. His sentiments were countered by his colleague, Representative Jenny Anderson Horne, also a Republican, who rebutted, "The people of Charleston deserve swift and immediate

removal of that flag from these grounds…I cannot believe that we do not have the heart in this body to do something meaningful…I am sorry; I have heard enough about heritage…I am a descendant of Jefferson Davis, O.K., but that does not matter" (Fausset & Blinder, 2015). The month-long coverage concludes with an article on day 24 of the South Carolina governor signing into law the removal of the Confederate flag from the state capital, articles on day 25 of how a background check on Roof failed to prevent him from purchasing his firearm and the suspension of plans to require background checks to buy ammunition. On day 29, running concurrently with the Charleston shooting, the trial of the Colorado theater shooting begins to conclude.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter explored the church shooting in Charleston and revealed how mass shootings may reinvigorate the gun debate at the outset, but stakeholders, the media, and politicians discuss these events in context as incident details emerge. Although one issue may come to the fore initially in the immediate aftermath of the shooting, it has to compete with an array of other issues that also become the focus of stakeholder discussion. In each case, the deliberation of policy issues is an emergent interaction based on case-specific issues that become more or less salient. Eighty-eight articles made up the dataset for this case over the 30-day timeframe. The gun debate was covered on only four of the 30 days of news coverage. It was quickly displaced and overshadowed by discussion and deliberations on the subjects of race and hate crimes generally and, more specifically, the presence of Confederate symbolism at the State House. Removal of the Confederate flag appeared in 50 of the 88 articles examined in this case, which represents 57% of total coverage. This public policy was two-and-a-half times more referenced than the second most referenced public policy issue – stricter gun laws. This policy issue garnered a 23% share of reporting, appearing in 20 of 88 news articles. Two public policy issues, background checks and

mental health policies, appeared in eight articles or 9.1% of the news coverage. They were followed by the protections afforded by the Second Amendment, which appeared in seven articles or 8% of the news reporting. The circulation of pictures of Roof waving a Confederate flag coupled with an online hate-laced "manifesto" attributed to him move the discussion from a gun control debate to the perpetrator's campaign of hate.

The top five most frequently referenced stakeholders in the church shooting were the victims who were referenced in 80 articles (or 91%); members of the local community who were mentioned in 68 articles (or 77%); the active shooter himself who was noted in 62 articles (or 70%); the site of the shooting which appeared in 56 articles (or 64%); and the public as a general stakeholder that appeared in 50 of the 88 news articles (or 57%). This array of stakeholders is no accident given the media's onus to answer questions such as who perpetrated the crime, who were the victims, where did it take place, and what do members of the community think about it.

Frequency counts of the most quoted stakeholders included in the dataset reveals journalists in this case profile the views of community members the most just as in the Sandy Hook school shooting. This group was quoted in 39% of the total news coverage or 34 of 88 articles. It was the only significant stakeholder group with a greater likelihood of being included in the dataset based on chi-square analysis. The rich heritage of the south and the storied history of the shooting venue in the popular Emanuel AME Church, contributed to issue salience. As the news coverage shifted from a general debate on gun control to the ultra-local Confederate flag issue, so did the media's gaze. As such, the media profiled quotes from regional legislators such as senators and representatives whose quotes garnered 30% coverage or presence in 26 of 88 articles. This group was followed by quotes from regional leaders such as governors and their spokespersons. Their quotes were included in 23 of 88 articles or 26% of the coverage. Quotes from members of local,

regional, and national organizations such as the Urban League, KKK, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and others were also included in 22 of the 88 articles or 25% of the news coverage. Rounding out the top five quoted stakeholders are members of the victims' and shooter's family who were quoted in 15 articles or 17% of the total 88-article dataset. Their inclusion provides some insight into the shooter's or victims' personae, and serves to memorialize the slain.

Measures of central tendencies are presented in Table 5.4 below. For a total of 33 stakeholders, on average they were referenced in 25 articles in the 88-article dataset. Also, of the 254 stakeholder quotes extracted from the news coverage, stakeholders were quoted eight times on average. Finally, the third measure for frequency distributions, public policy issues, was referenced in the dataset 111 times. On average these policy issues, which ranged from assault weapons ban to stricter gun control measure, were mentioned in 10 of the 88 articles.

Table 5.7 – Measures of Central Tendencies for the Charleston Church Shooting			
	Referenced Stakeholders	**Quoted Stakeholders**	**Public Policy Issues**
Totals	833 references	254 Quotes	111 mentions
Median	18	6	5
Mode	7	0	1, 3, 5 & 8
Mean	25 references on average	8 quotes on average	10 mentions on average

The case of the church shooting more than the other two cases provides support for the assertion that crises are localized phenomenon and community input is prominent. An indication of this is how a local issue that had been debated years earlier resurfaced soon after the church shooting. The black community had acquiesced to living with Confederate symbolism, namely the Confederate battle flag. For them it represented a symbol of divisiveness and hate, whereas to many whites, it came to be a symbol of heritage and recognition of past war heroes. The flag's association with a hate crime and mass murder of the innocent signified a rupture in the balance

of race relations in Charleston. That rift was articulated through the quotes captured by the media, the contentious debate by state legislators in the state capitol that also reached the nation's capital, and images of love and community shown by members of the Charleston community. The reporting trajectory was an outgrowth of a community in crisis that turned what would have been another high level discussion on gun control to a conversation on race, forgiveness, and justice as a trial was about to ensue. With the shooter arrested, motive determined, and flag removed, the Charleston community was poised to move to the crisis recovery phase and continue the discourse of renewal.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation examined the general characteristics of mass shooting crises and how, as focusing events, they reactivate the public policy debate on guns, gun violence and gun control. Using the FBI's definition of "mass murder," in this study a "mass shooting" involves the discharge of a firearm in the fatal shooting of four or more individuals in one location by a single shooter. Such crimes attract substantial media attention and reinvigorate the deliberation on guns and public safety. Based on the foregoing multiple case analyses, not all shootings are equal, however. Media coverage for some mass shooting issues is short-lived, while other issues dominate the media's agenda for several months. Shooting venues also add a layer of complexity to these crises. For instance, a shooting in a school setting, while just as horrific as one in a mall, may be more media-noteworthy based on the total number of victims, their ages, or other demographic such as race, religion, or political persuasion. In addition, the policy issues that mass shootings activate vary with the specifics in each shooting, including venue, shooter motive and background, sociopolitical trends, and victims' characteristics.

Mass shootings, while meeting Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger's (2011) definition of crises as non-routine, threatening, and producing considerable uncertainty, for the most part are effectuated at the crisis and post-crisis stages where stakeholders grapple with the gravity of these incidents and try to move towards resolution. In the next section, the theoretical constructs chosen to explicate the key aspects of these incidents are discussed. This is followed by a review of the three cases examined in this dissertation that highlights their focusing influence on public policy debate followed by a discussion of the four research questions. Each question is answered using the analysis conducted from the three mass shooting events. The chapter concludes with discussion, future direction, and limitation sections.

Re-examination of the Theoretical Frames

Two theoretical frameworks guided this research. First, the theory of focusing events was employed to explain the galvanizing function of certain events such as natural and man-made disasters and crises to direct media attention to issues and provoke public policy debate (Birkland, 1997; Birkland, 2004). In the public policy literature, environmental disasters such as Hurricane Katrina or societal tragedies such as terrorist attacks classify as "focusing" events (Birkland, 1997; Kingdon, 2002; Jensen, 2011). Such events result in "attention shifts" and can "change the mix of issues" on the public, legislative and media agenda, but they do not necessarily result in public policy change (Bishop, 2014, p. 4; Fleming, 2012). Birkland (2004) further posits that not all catastrophic events are focal or agenda-setting; he circumscribes "potential focusing events" as rarified events with a propensity to cause harm (or "concentration of harms") that are well publicized and "known to all simultaneously" (p. 181). Fleming, Rutledge, Dixon, and Peralta (2016) later added that focusing events, which are essentially crises, "occur suddenly" (p. 1146). Mass shootings align with this definition as they remain rare occurrences when compared with common homicides. In addition, they disrupt the equilibrium of a community and, due to their multiple fatalities, become pervasive news stories often covered in near real time by broadcast news outlets.

In terms of application, the widespread communication of mass shootings gets the attention of (or focuses) not only the public and the media, but also policy makers. According to Glascock, "crisis communication is seen as having an agenda-setting function in that media coverage of the event focuses public attention on the issue and creates an urgency to correct the problem" (2004, p. 33). Thus, focusing events are distinct "triggering events" that open a public policy issue window (Birkland, 2004, p. 179). "Firearm focusing events" such as Sandy Hook, "serve as

catalysts for agenda attention through bill introductions" in the U.S. Congress (Fleming et al., 2016, p. 1144). This was observed in the months after the Sandy Hook shooting, where the U.S. Congress took up three restrictive gun bills: an assault weapons ban, stricter background checks, and a ban on high-capacity ammunition magazines.

The second theory employed was strategic issues management (or SIM). It was used to explore the issue-crisis connection and the involvement of stakeholders and their attempt to manage the public policy challenges and issues confronting them. This theory involves the process that seeks to "harmonize[s] organizational and stakeholder interests," particularly as it relates to public policy (Heath & Palanchar, 2009, p. 12). It, too, was appropriate for studying mass shootings, given the number of stakeholders who participate in the public policy debate. Zhang (2013) emphasizes the harmonizing feature involved with two-way communication where stakeholders seek to meet their objectives while at the same time help others achieve theirs through balancing cooperation with competition. This view is consistent with Heath and Palenchar's (2009) SIM's relational approach that is defined as "dialogic in nature, a process of give and take – statement and counterstatement – between interested parties" (2009, p. 53). In terms of application, with each shooting incident, the contentious gun debate pitting gun control advocates against gun rights proponents sets up a dialogue opportunity with points and counterpoints that continue to make gun policy an issue yet "unsettled…[but one] ready for decision" (Chase, 1984, p. 38).

Another key feature of issues management highlighted for this study is a "search for order for control" (Heath & Palanchar, 2009, p. 279). Organizations participating in the public policy debate are expected to exert control over their resources and to some extent over the positions taken by their members. When a crisis is triggered, stakeholders seek resolution of the crisis along with quick reduction in uncertainty. It is their way of regaining order. A public dialogue, as noted

above, becomes the avenue whereby stakeholders seek to regain some understanding and resolution – some control.

In mass shooting crises, the public looks to the government to enact policies that will keep it safe, particularly in public spaces. As the cases that follow show, the breach of public safety in a theater, school, and church from semi-automatic firearms demonstrated the inadequacy of current policies and promoted a public dialogue about resolution. The three cases explored in this study illustrate this process. The analysis of these cases provides insight into the ways in which the public policy dialogue evolves and/or devolves following a mass shooting event.

Recap of the Three Cases

Mass shootings in a theater, school and church were chosen for this analysis. The rationale for their selection included the notion that a difference in venue would yield some level of variance when it comes to how these crises activate and inform public policy debate. Each shooting exemplar below represents a different reporting trajectory with similar and yet distinctive aspects. Different case details influenced the way each shooting was framed in the media and which issues came to be prominent.

The theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado underscored the centrality of mental health issues in some shootings, the lack of coordination between agencies responsible for applicant screenings, and lax security in high-trafficked public venues. The shooter, James Holmes, was already attending counseling sessions at the University of Colorado Denver's prior to the shooting and was still able to amass multiple firearms, a staggering cache of ammunition, body armor, and supplies for explosives. His deliberate selection of the Century 16 multiplex was not random but part of an elaborate and parallel staging of a scene from the Batman film premiering that evening.

The elementary school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut highlighted the involvement of the community and the media in the enactment of certain shooting incidents. As in the first case, a breach of security protocols and mental health issues both played a role, albeit to a lesser degree since the shooter forced his way into a locked main entryway and his mental health status was unknown. The involvement of very small children in this case resulted in an intensely emotional crisis, including shock and outrage from both local and national communities. In addition, the unprecedented level of media coverage, which had not been seen since the 1999 Columbine shooting, turned the small city of Newtown into a provisional media annex. It ensured the issue of gun control would remain on the media's and public's agenda for a protracted period.

The third shooting case at an historic church in Charleston, South Carolina, illustrated how one issue can compete with and displace another in the aftermath of a shooting incident. It introduced an element of racial hatred into mass shooting phenomena. That hatred would become a focusing element that would concurrently dominate the public, media and policy agenda. In this case, unlike the other two, the gun debate was abruptly shelved for more polarizing policy deliberations – namely, the continued use of Confederate symbolism on capital grounds, unquestionable racial overtones, and classification as a hate crime. The racial tension present in the Charleston community at the time facilitated or attracted media framing that made race the focal issue once the details in the church shooting were revealed. A side-by-side comparison of the facts in the three cases is noted in Table 6.0 below.

Table 6.0 – Mass Shooting Case Comparison			
Mass Shooting Cases	**Theater**	**School**	**Church**
Date and location	July 20, 2012 Aurora, Colorado	Dec. 14, 2012 Newtown, Connecticut	June 17, 2015 Charleston, South Carolina
Shooter profile (age)	James Holmes (24) Sentenced – life in prison	Adam Lanza (20) Shooter kills himself	Dylann Roof (21) Sentenced – death penalty
Victims slain	12 killed 70 wounded	27 killed (plus shooter) 0 wounded	9 killed 0 wounded
Firearm(s) used	Two Glock Model 22 semi-automatic pistols, .40 caliber; Smith & Wesson M&P15 AR 15 style rifle, .223 caliber; and Remington Model 870 shotgun, 12 gauge	Bushmaster semi-automatic rifle, .223 caliber	Glock .45-caliber handgun
Shooting duration	14 minutes	11 minutes	6 minutes
Trial duration through sentencing	3 ½ months	No trial	3 months
Top public policy issues in the media	Stricter gun laws & Background checks	Stricter gun laws & Gun violence	Removal of flag & Stricter gun laws
Most referenced stakeholders *(in order)*	Shooter & Community members	Community members & Victims (survivors)	Victims & Community members
Most quoted stakeholders *(in order)*	Local law enforcement & Community members	Community members & National leaders	Community members & Regional legislators
Number of days gun debate articles were published in first month of coverage	12 days	21 days	4 days
Number of articles examined within one month	46 straight news	114 straight news	88 straight news
Total number of stakeholder references	275	1081	833
Average references	8	33	25
Total no. of quotes	116	309	254
Average no. of quotes	4	9	8
Public policy mentions	120	373	111
Average PP mentions	7	22	10

The three cases described above were selected because they are contemporary examples of this form of crisis. Each exemplifies a dramatic, focusing event calling attention to a mix of public policy issues. They typify the post-crisis discussion of gun debate issues and intensified media coverage that fuels a potential public policy discussion. Understanding which stakeholder voices are the most prominent and what they are saying helps to further explore the nuances of a mass shooting focusing event. In addition, ranking what public policy issues are reported most frequently in the national press will yield further insight into this crisis type. Discussion of the study's research questions with answers to these concerns are explored in the next section.

Re-examination of the Four Research Questions

Four research questions were developed to explore how gun control and public safety in public spaces are discussed following a mass shooting incident. The four questions guiding this dissertation are:

RQ1 – *What is the nature of mass shootings (who are the stakeholders involved in these crises)?*

RQ2 – *What public policy issues emerge in the aftermath of mass shootings?*

RQ3 – *How do the stakeholders address public policy issues arising from mass shootings?*

RQ4 – *How do public policy issues develop over time following a mass shooting and do these crises vary from case to case?*

RQ1: *What is the nature of mass shootings (who are the stakeholders involved in these crises)?* The first research question sought to identify which stakeholders are involved in mass shootings. Community members top the quoted stakeholder rankings in all three cases. The standings of top stakeholders who are either referenced or quoted clarify whose voice is prominent in the news coverage of these crises. Although there are referenced stakeholders common across all three mass shootings, some variation occurs depending on the particular case examined.

Most frequently referenced stakeholders. The data reveals that the top four most frequently referenced stakeholders in the 30-day national news coverage include community members, the shooter, victims, and local law enforcement officials. Frequency counts for 33 possible stakeholders reveal that across all three cases examined, members of the local community where the shooting took place ranked in the top two spots of all stakeholder groups referenced in the media. To tease out specific stakeholders from the local community, this study parsed community into several groupings, including residents, neighbors of the shooter or his victims, parents, teachers, ministers, students, protesters, voters, athletes, and others residing in the community.

In the theater shooting, the top three stakeholders referenced in the news coverage in rank order were: the shooter, community members, and local law enforcement officials. More specifically, references to the theater shooter appeared in 31 of 46 articles or 67%. It was followed by members of the Aurora, Colorado community who appeared in 29 of 46 articles or 63%. The third stakeholder group reported on most frequently was local law enforcement officials. This stakeholder group appeared in 28 of the 46 articles or 81% of *The New York Times* coverage for the first month after the shooting. The results for top stakeholders referenced in the news coverage were different in the case of the school and church shootings. The most frequently referenced stakeholder in the school shooting where 114 articles were coded were members of the Newtown, Connecticut community who appeared in 97 articles or 85% of the 30-day news coverage. Victims of the shooting appeared in 96 of the article data set or 84%, and the shooter was featured in 64 or 56% of the coverage, appearing as the second and third most referenced stakeholders.

The most frequently referenced stakeholder in the church shooting were the victims of the violence who appeared in 80 of 88 articles or 91% of the 30-day news coverage. The second most

frequently referenced stakeholder were members of the Charleston, South Carolina community who appeared in 68 articles or 77% of the reporting. The shooter himself rounds out the top three stakeholders, appearing in 62 articles or 70% of the total coverage as the third most referenced stakeholder. While being mentioned in the news coverage speaks of a journalist's obligation to cover the key actors and actions in the news story, being quoted identifies the more prominent voices in the aftermath of a shooting.

Most frequently quoted stakeholders. Three stakeholders tied for the most frequently quoted stakeholders in the theater shooting coverage. Quoted in ten of the 46 articles or 22% were: 1) members of the local community who provide insight on what the tragedy feels like from the local perspective and provide a shooter and/or victim character assessment; 2) local law enforcement officials who describe the scene, report on shooter motives and investigation updates, and give the all-secure signal; and, 3) national leaders, such as the President or Vice President, who provide reactionary statements that are part outrage, part somber and comforting, and part prescriptive of preventive measures that need to happen. Quoted in nine of the 46 articles or 20% were businesses, including gun shops and retailers who comment on any interaction with the shooter as a customer and on the type of firearms, ammunition, and accessories used in the shooting.

The top three most frequently quoted stakeholders in the school shooting were: 1) community members who were quoted in 39 of 114 news articles or 34%; 2) national leaders who were quoted in 27 of 114 articles or 24%; and 3) family members who were quoted in 24 of the total articles for 21%. Also, as noted above, community members were quoted primarily seeking information about their familiarity with the shooter or victims, for their insight on how the community had changed because of the shooting and also to memorialize the slain. National

leaders, once again are quoted as a voice of authority to express outrage, calm public fears, express sympathy, and pledge or mention corrective measures to prevent future occurrences. Finally, family members' quotes are predominantly of the victims' family who express grief while also remembering the best of their loved ones.

The top three most frequently quoted stakeholders in the church shooting were: 1) community members who were quoted in 34 of 88 news articles or 39%; 2) regional legislators who were quoted in 26 of 88 articles or 30%; and 3) regional leaders such as the governor who were quoted in 23 of the total articles for 26%. Community members' quotes provide the local perspective in the aftermath of the shooting and give insight into the shooter, the community, and the victims. Much of the coverage for the church shooting revolved around the debate on the future of the Confederate battle flag in the state legislature; thus, capturing the contentious dialogue dominated much of the coverage. The voices of both regional leaders such as the governor and regional politicians such as state lawmakers were given prominent placement in the national coverage.

In each case, there appears to be a loose relationship between the degree of prominence afforded each stakeholder and the reported facts involving that stakeholder. For example, while the coverage from the theater shooting seems representative of the type of news reporting of mass shootings generally, the top stakeholders (members of the community, local law enforcement officials, and national leaders) represent a greater part of the overall narrative. Members of the community were in the theater that evening to view the movie and 82 were shot in a 14 minutes. It is no surprise then that quotes from this stakeholder group who were also eyewitnesses would top the coverage frequency of all other stakeholders followed by local law enforcement officials who had apprehended the shooter.

Similarly, the dominant stakeholder group in the school shooting was also a member of the local community. Stories focused on how community members came to terms with the horror of the victims' ages and number of deaths. Supporting a shocking narrative that innocent children were among the slain, the voice of community stakeholders expressed stunned disbelief. This stakeholder group's sentiments were augmented by the pain of the victims' family members. Last, the media's focus on the racial animus of the shooter in the church shooting also lead to a profile of community members' sentiment as they grappled with Confederate symbolism.

The answer to the question of who are the primary stakeholders involved in a mass shooting crisis is, as supported by three different case analyses, the members of the local community where the shooting took place. Mass shootings as focusing events simultaneously top the media's, the public policy makers', and public's agenda. What public policies arise as an outgrowth of these crises is the subject of the next section.

RQ2: *What public policy issues emerge in the aftermath of mass shootings?* Examining the public policy issues debated in mass shooting crises is essential to this study. Therefore, identifying the public policy issues in the aftermath of a mass shooting will yield valuable insight regarding how communities, the media, legislators and other stakeholders grapple with policy concerns. Also, of the numerous issues that emerge post shooting, this question examines which ones are most salient and garner the most coverage in the media. From an initial scan of news reports on mass shootings, issues deliberated following a mass shooting are numerous. They include: gun control, Second Amendment rights, gun laws, safety precautions, facility lockdown protocols, active shooter responsiveness, active shooter training, background checking prior to gun purchasing, limitations on rounds of ammunition in magazine clips, assault rifle bans, mental

health policies and screenings, and firearms training, among others. Some of these issues gain traction during the course of a mass shooting incident, while others do not.

Frequency distributions show that in the aftermath of a mass shooting, the top public policy issue most common across all three shooting cases is a call for more stringent background checks for those who apply to purchase a firearm or ammunition. Screening a consumer's background was ranked as the second or third most frequently mentioned public policy issues within the 30-day reporting window. The highest ranking public policies in each of the shooting cases, however, vary. For instance, the public policy issues that garner the most attention in the media in the Aurora theater shooting are: 1) stricter gun laws, which was included in 21 of 46 articles or 46% of the news reporting, including restrictions on access to guns and new gun control legislation; 2) rigorous and more coordinated background checks of applicants purchasing a firearm, which appeared in 14 of 46 *New York Times* articles or 30% of the coverage; 3) enhanced security measures to increase public safety which were reported in 12 of 46 articles or 26%; 4) mental health and mental health screening policies, which appeared in 11 articles or 24% of the total coverage; and 5) an assault weapons ban which was reported in 10 articles or 22% of the total article data set. With dozens of people shot in a presumed safe location and the reporting of the massive amount of ammunition amassed by the shooter, it is perhaps unsurprising that this mix of issues relates to gun control, security, and ammunition accessibility. Also, the facts in the case indicating Holmes had a prior-treated mental health issue at the university he was attending magnetized issues of mental health and background check screenings into the debate.

Top public policy issues in the case of the Newtown school include the following: 1) tighter restrictions on ammunition sales with reporting requirements for bulk purchasing, which appeared in 35 of the 114 articles or 31% of the total article count; 2) more and stricter background checks,

which appeared in 29 of the total articles or 25%; 3) banning of high-capacity ammunition magazines, which was reported in 24 articles or 21% of the total article count; 4) public safety measures featuring enhanced security measures such as metal detectors for schools, which appeared in 23 of 114 total articles or 20%; and 5) cross-agency information sharing and communication coordination to ensure an accurate, real-time screening and reporting process that alerts interstate authorities when screening applicants for guns, mental health issues, criminal records, or more. While only appearing in 8 of 114 articles, this public policy was mentioned in 7% of the total coverage. Prevention of such violence against the most vulnerable in society was the impetus for the push to restrict ammunition sales, ban certain firearms, bolster security measures, and improve coordination and communication between law enforcement agencies and gun retailers. In addition to gun-related prevention issues, safety in schools became a prominent discussion point just as it had in both the Columbine and Virginia Tech shootings.

In the Charleston church shooting, the most frequently reported public policy issues were: 1) the removal of the Confederate flag from the State Capitol, which outpaced the other public polices by more than double the content; it appeared in 57% of the articles, being mentioned in 50 of 88 articles; 2) stricter gun laws that restricts access to guns, which was reported in 20 of the articles or 23% of the dataset; 3) more and stringent background checks; and 4) mental health policies were both mentioned in eight of 88 articles for a 9.1% count; and lastly, 5) Second Amendment rights and the freedoms associated with gun ownership were mentioned in 7 of 88 articles or 8% of the news coverage. Concern for restricting access to guns through stricter background checks and access to firearms, like the two preceding cases were among the more prominent issues. The specific case details in the church shooting showed how Roof's purchase might have been delayed with better screening procedures. Unique to this case was the dispute

over the presence of the Confederate flag. This was a previously-debated issue and perhaps not even peripheral to the larger gun dispute had it occurred in any other venue. Local stakeholders, through discussion, identified the shooter's racial hatred and acts of violence with the divisiveness reflected in Confederate symbolism. This made it most salient, and it soon dominated stakeholder discourse from both sides of the issue.

The most frequent public policy issues that emerge in the aftermath of mass shootings include a push for more stringent background checks followed by stricter gun laws, enhanced security measures to increase public safety, mental health policies, and an assault weapons ban. This listing depends on the specific shooting case details and includes stepped-up restrictions on ammunition sales, a ban on high-capacity ammunition magazines, and improved coordination and communication between regulatory agencies that authorize gun purchases. An outlier in this group was the issue of removing the Confederate flag, which was elevated to the forefront of issue deliberations based on details peculiar to the Charleston church shooting. An understanding of how public policy issues are reinvigorated after periods of dormancy and how they rise and fall in media coverage will inform researchers of an issue's salience on the stakeholders' agenda and their ability to influence legislative action. This examination leads to the next question regarding how key stakeholders address or talk about public policy issues, as recorded in the national press, following a firearm focusing event.

RQ3: *How do the stakeholders address public policy issues arising from mass shootings?* The third research question seeks to uncover what primary stakeholders actually say and how they construct meaning following a shooting incident. According to Heath and Palenchar (2009), "society is a complex of many voices, opinions, and interests" (p. 202); they further explain that "narratives are a way of ordering the events of the world that would otherwise seem unpredictable

or incoherent" (p. 209). Because mass shootings heighten uncertainty and undermine a community's sense of security and normalcy, reestablishing order is a primary inclination of community stakeholders. According to Schildkraut and Muschert (2013), "two groups have emerged as key narrators of the school shootings story." They are the mass media and politicians. It was initially expected that a third voice would also figure prominent in the news reporting – that of the public. Based on results of the frequency distributions, the voice of community members represents a significant stakeholder group with a higher probability of being quoted in each of the three cases examined.

Stakeholders who were quoted most often were community members, national and regional leaders, family members and local law enforcement. Themes from community stakeholder dialogue includes: political commentary, community unity and renewal sentiments, shooter profiling, and attitudes on the media. Dialogue also included eulogizing victims, and expressions of emotions such as grief, empathy, anger, and hope. A point/counterpoint sampling of gun debate dialogue also captured from members of local community follows as Table 6.1 below. Gun control advocates on the left of the table contend that placing armed guards in every school is not only impractical but also nonsensical. Gun rights advocates on the right see such a measure as an effective deterrence to active shooters bent on causing harm. Supporters of armed security in schools see a one-gun-to-one-gun differential as an appropriate security measure while detractors believe it is akin to living in a "police bunker." The dispute on high-capacity ammunition magazines and assault rifles, another public policy issue, pivots between the view that hunting is a protected right and target shooting is recreational to hunting does not require an assault rifle and large capacity magazines are excessive. Another clash on the issue of mental health balances ideas

that the mental health system in the country is woefully insufficient to how blame should be properly directed and fixed on the person but not the firearm he or she wields.

TABLE 6.1 – Community Stakeholders' Post-Shooting Discourse on Gun Control	
Gun Control Advocacy	Gun Rights Advocacy
"I'm not saying you should outlaw guns, but I don't see the point of hundred-round magazine clips and automatic weapons if you just want to target shoot." "Hunting is taking one shot. It's not pumping round after round."	"Teach kids to hunt, you will never have to hunt your kids." 'It's very stress-relieving…Some people crochet, some people shop, some people shoot guns."
"People say it's their right to bear arms, but when the Constitution was written there was no such thing as an automatic weapon."	"This is a freedom that should never be taken away."
"I realize this man purchased them legally, but if he hadn't and he was determined to do this, he probably would have gotten them illegally."	"There's somebody on the end of every gun pulling the trigger," he said. "We need to treat that person. The gun's not the problem."
"In churches all over the country people are asking, 'Do we need someone at the door, someone who is a little bit more questioning? This is an example of how terrorism works."	"It's not a matter of whether we should have armed people in the schools…It's a matter of how many, and what's their training."
"My prayer is that we don't get to the point where there's going to be somebody searching your bag coming in and you have to go through metal detectors, because church has always been a sacred place, a safe place, a sanctuary where you could come in freely."	"So if there was an ability to put an armed security officer in every school, I would have to seriously consider it."
"When you read the story of what happened at Sandy Hook, you realize, 'Holy cow, they did a lot of things right.' "	"We don't need politicians writing gun laws because they don't know what they're doing."
"We're not going to turn our schools into police bunkers." "If you need more than three rounds when you're hunting, you need to spend some time at the range before going out."	"I looked around for solutions, and the only solutions are to have some kind of defense," He added that having several staff members with concealed weapons was more effective than one security guard.

TABLE 6.1 – Community Stakeholders' Post-Shooting Discourse on Gun Control	
Gun Control Advocacy	Gun Rights Advocacy
"We are a country that has too much violence and too many ways to have people hurt or killed and not enough access to mental health services."	'How do we target people with mental illness who use firearms?' "
"But as a whole, just having a police officer or an armed guard or someone with a gun is not going to stop the violence. I think it's a lot more complicated than that…To have an armed guard at every school completely sends the wrong message in so many ways about what schools are about."	"In all these mass shootings where we have a deranged person in complete and absolute control, another person there with a handgun or a firearm would change the dynamic, even if that person was a terrible shot."
One woman, voicing support for a ban on assault weapons, said that gun rights supporters were trying to shift the debate away from guns.	"There is not a tyrannical government trying to take away your guns."
"I hear a lot about personal responsibility…But what's really being said is: 'Trust no one but ourselves and our assault weapons. Every man for himself.' That's not a community. That can't raise our children to be healthy. That's an insane asylum."	

As noted in Table 6.1 above, control of the issues debate involves opposing ways of viewing guns as either tools used for recreation and protection or those used to commit a crime and endanger public safety. A thematic reading of the above quotes by gun control advocates suggests certain guns are excessive, restrictions are appropriate for certain types of guns and ammunition, armed guards in public places is extreme, and the issue is a complex one where it is difficult to secure every venue. Holding the contrary view, gun rights advocates argue that gun ownership is a Constitutional right that must not be abridged. They view gun use as either recreational or as a protective measure; shooters as responsible or irresponsible; mental health issues as part of a broken institution; government as wanting to restrict access indiscriminately; and community policing by armed gun enthusiasts is as viable an alternative as paying armed

guards. Interestingly, many of these themes reflect the top public policy issues outlined in the second research question above.

RQ4: *How do public policy issues develop over time following a mass shooting and do these crises vary from case to case?* In addition to identifying the stakeholders, what they are saying, and the salient, public policy issues that emerge following a mass shooting incident, gauging how these issues evolve in the media during the 30 days of coverage contributes to a larger understanding of the nature of these phenomena. Although no two crises are the same, there are some common aspects across the three cases that are worth highlighting. Examining the three shooting cases over a month's time reveals there are differences even in the degree of coverage where one shooting is reported in roughly four dozen articles while another has a lifespan of twice that. Common across all shootings, however, are how the cases are reported in the first several days. For instance, on day two following each shooting there is usually an accurate early overview of the facts in the shooting which provides, if known, the name of the shooter, the number of victims, the time of the incident, the name and location of the venue and other story essentials. Motive is usually the last of those facts to surface and can sometimes remain unknown.

Included with the media reports are the initial discussions of the gun debate. Following initial coverage of the facts, attention turns to the victims and their families which include statements of condolences from public officials. This timeframe also includes any information on the shooter's background. By the end of the first ten days of coverage, an identification of the gun(s) used in the shooting would have generally been reported, adding fuel to a continuing gun debate already fully activated at this point. Initial court proceedings, if necessary and if the shooter was apprehended, would also have taken place at this point. Variance between shooting cases begins to surface after the end of the first week when reporting begins to focus on case-specific

details. For example, around the eleventh day of coverage, reporting on the theater case included stories about box office receipts for the Batman franchise since it was at the premier of that film that the shooting took place. Around the same time, reporting on the school shooting ran a story on the N.R.A.'s statement that it would not cooperate with the presidential taskforce on gun control. The school shooting, which garnered nearly 2.5 times the coverage of the theater shooting, focused more on the gun debate, a combative N.R.A., and mental health issues. These examples suggest that there are common reporting elements, but reporters follow the news trajectory for each case. The gun debate in the theater shooting, although it did not end in any public policy proposals at the national level, continued to be reported on right through day 27 of the month-long coverage, albeit in occasional reporting. Only the Sandy Hook shooting case yielded consistent reporting on the gun debate with consistent articles on guns, ammunition, and background checks right through day 30. Of the three cases, the outlier was the church shooting in Charleston. The gun debate had an early exit in the reporting on day four where the headline read: "Gun control voices in Congress seem to lose their resolve." The remainder of the coverage shifted its focus to the fate and ultimate removal of the Confederate flag from government buildings. Table 6.2 below shows the basic distribution of articles related to gun control for each of the three cases. It depicts the variance among the three cases in terms of media reports on the gun debate. It shows that each mass shooting's news coverage is uniquely configured to the details in that case. While there are common reporting elements in the coverage that follow the journalistic formula, there is also case-specific variance over the month-long news frame.

The answer to the first part of the question, how do public policy issues develop over time following a mass shooting, reveals that the trajectory for public policy issues is uniquely aligned with the facts in each shooting. Those facts direct the coverage over time according to the details

in each case that are addressed early on in the shooting narrative. More importantly, diminishing coverage over the month-long time frame shows how the public policy issue likely fades from view, whereas increasing or steady attention to the public policy can indicate momentum towards a future policy action or deliberation. The following table (6.2) maps the frequency of coverage on gun policy for each shooting case. It displays the number of articles published during the first, second, and third 10-day clusters.

In the three cases examined over a 30-day period, the majority of the coverage occurs in the first ten-day cluster. Diminishing coverage of the shooting occurred in both the theater and church shootings as the month advanced. Coverage of the theater shooting fell from a high of 24 of 46 news articles (or 52%) published during the first ten-day reporting cluster to 16 articles (or 35%) published in the second cluster down to only six articles (or 13%) in the final 10 days of coverage. Similarly, during the church shooting, news coverage decreased between the first and third ten-day clusters although not as radically. For instance, from a high of 46 of 88 total articles (or 52%) published during the first ten days, coverage decreased to 22 articles (or 25%) during the second cluster down to only 20 articles (or 23%) during the third, ten-day reporting cluster. In the case of the school shooting, most of the news reporting occurred within the first ten days of reporting following the shooting. Sixty percent or 68 of the total 114 articles were published during the first ten-day reporting cluster. That number fell dramatically during the second, ten-day cluster to only 17 of 114 articles (or 15%). However, instead of continuing to decline during the third, ten-day cluster, the number of articles increased from 17 to 19 articles or 25% of the total 114 articles, perhaps spurred on by a visit to Newtown by Representative Gabrielle Giffords and gun control bills by both New York and Connecticut.

214

Respectively, as the article count decreases, so does the number of articles devoted to the gun debate. For example, in the case of the theater shooting, as the month progressed, the total number of days the gun debate was mentioned in the article data set was 12 days (or 40% of the total coverage for the month). This could be related to the fact that the shooter had been apprehended and how revelations on his mental health status shifted the conversation from the gun debate to the issue of mental illness. The total number of days the gun debate was mentioned in the church shooting was only four days. That is 13% of the total coverage for the month. Discussion of the gun debate faded quickly and significantly after day four as it gave way to a more contentious deliberation on the fate of the Confederate flag. The gun topic resurfaced tangentially on days 12 and 25 with discussions on background checks and missed opportunities to prevent the shooter from obtaining his firearm.

The outlier of the three cases was that of the school shooting. In that case, reporting on the gun debate occurred in 21 of 30 days of coverage (or 70%). In the first ten-day cluster, the gun debate was mentioned every day with the start of the official coverage on day two. The gun debate was mentioned on seven of ten days during the second, ten-day cluster, and on five of ten days during the third, ten-day reporting cluster. See Table 6.2 for an accounting of debate-related articles published on each of the 30 days for each shooting incident.

TABLE 6.2 – Mapping the Absence/Presence of the Gun Debate in the News									
10-day Cluster for month	Day	**Theater** (n=46 articles) Incident - 7/21/12			**School** (n=114 articles) Incident - 12/14/12			**Church** (n=88 articles) Incident - 6/17/15		
Number of articles examined per cluster		24	16	6	68	17	29	46	22	20
Percent of total articles		52%	35%	13%	60%	15%	25%	52%	25%	23%
	1	null			null			null		

10-day Cluster for month	Day	**Theater** (n=46 articles) Incident - 7/21/12	**School** (n=114 articles) Incident - 12/14/12	**Church** (n=88 articles) Incident - 6/17/15
Reporting Cluster <u>One</u> Days 1-10	2	Yes	Yes	No
	3	No	Yes	Yes
	4	Yes	Yes	Yes
	5	Yes	Yes	No
	6	Yes	Yes	No
	7	Yes	Yes	No
	8	Yes	Yes	No
	9	No	Yes	No
	10	null	Yes	No
Reporting Cluster <u>Two</u> Days 11-20	11	No	Yes	No
	12	No	Yes	Yes
	13	Yes	No	No
	14	No	Yes	No
	15	Null	Yes	No
	16	null	Yes	No
	17	No	Yes	No
	18	Yes	Yes	No
	19	Yes	No	Null
	20	Yes	null	No
Reporting Cluster <u>Three</u> Days 21-30	21	No	null	No
	22	Yes	null	No
	23	No	Yes	No
	24	No	No	No
	25	No	No	Yes
	26	No	No	null
	27	Yes	Yes	null
	28	No	Yes	No
	29	No	Yes	No
	30	No	Yes	null
Total Mentions		12 days	21 days	4 days

TABLE 6.2 – Mapping the Absence/Presence of the Gun Debate in the News

Key: No = no mention of gun debate ⊙ Yes = reference to gun debate ⊙ null = no article this day

Discussion of Research Results

Mass shooting incidents are highly emotional crises given the fact that they result in multiple deaths and occur in venues presumed safe. They are not synonymous with the typical homicide where assailants use less powerful firearms in the commission of a crime. Mass shooters employ very lethal weapons, usually more than one, that can kill dozens in a matter of minutes. The victims are usually chosen at random with no affiliation with the shooter. Also, whereas homicides take place daily in the U.S., mass shootings occur much more rarely, although the frequency is increasing. Crisis taxonomies that require a retrofitting of mass shooting crises into more generalized categories such as workplace violence (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2011; Coombs, 2007); death and injury, fatality, murder, and suicide (Fearn-Banks, 2011) understate the complexities of these incidents. The limited workplace designation also confines these mass fatalities to an organization-centric context, missing the societal connection that can transpire anywhere people gather. The present study makes a case for an expansion of existing crisis taxonomies to include a unique mass shooting category that also includes a dynamic that supports the resurgence of the gun control debate.

Mass shootings are also differentiated from common homicides in the way they are framed. They are often discussed in terms of a larger, even national context. For instance, national public officials such as former President Obama do not discuss these incidents in isolation as a homicide in Chicago, but as a broader part of an alarming pattern needing immediate resolution. Following the church shooting in Charleston, Obama said: "We don't have all the facts, but we do know that, once again, innocent people were killed in part because someone who wanted to inflict harm had no trouble getting their hands on a gun" (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, & Alverez, 2015, p. 1). He asked that as Americans, we look pass the shooter and ponder "the system, the way of life, the philosophy

which produced the murderers" (Corasaniti et al., 2015, p. 1). Following the Sandy Hook shooting, Obama said: "We're going to have to come together and take meaningful action to prevent more tragedies like this, regardless of the politics" (Landler & Goode, 2012, p. 1). A local critic of the former President, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York, also considered each mass shooting in a broader context. In his rebuff of Obama's response to the Sandy Hook shooting, he said: "We have heard all the rhetoric before…What we have not seen is leadership -- not from the White House and not from Congress" (Landler & Goode, 2012, p. 1). The linkage to previous shootings is indicative of Coombs and Holladay's (2001) "velcro effect" that suggests each successive shooting is attached to those prior, albeit negatively. In terms of this study, the velcro effect was observed in four of 46 articles (or 8.7%) in the theater shooting, in 42 of 114 articles (or 38.6%) in the school shooting, and in 11 of 88 articles (or 12.5%) in the church shooting. This indicates the link to previous shootings in national news reports is stronger in some shooting incidents.

Bloomberg's continued advocacy of the gun issue may be instructive to advocacy groups and issue managers who engage other stakeholders in issue selling to move an issue towards resolution. A finding in this study reveals the prominence of local community members as primary stakeholders whose voice is reflected in the national press in significant coverage. It would be instructive then, for other advocates of issues such as gun control, to make it a priority to listen to and partner, when appropriate, with members of a local community to sustain issue salience and possibly effect policy change. The church shooting in Charleston is an apt example where local politicians clearly heard and valued the sentiments of residents and their plea for the removal of the Confederate flag. The Charleston residents' advocacy in the wake of the focusing shooting event at the church galvanized a community force that seized on the issue saliency, public opinion beyond the local venue, and the pressure from social media. Legacy media, such as *The New York*

Times further reflected the issues of the times and local views and focused the news frame away from gun control generally to cover the Confederate flag debate specifically.

Stakeholders and the views they hold cannot be understated as a noteworthy and intrinsic dynamic of the mass shooting crisis type. Results show that those who support some measure of gun control in these crises mostly call for stricter background checks, high-capacity magazines and weapons bans, and restrictions on ammunition sales. These stakeholders come from multiple categories such as the community, family members, and law enforcement officials, along with local, regional, and federal government representatives. It is their narratives that the media primarily quotes. Their opposition in this debate, the gun rights advocates, are referenced frequently. Interestingly, the gun lobby – the National Rifle Association, which is arguably one of the more powerful gun rights stakeholders, is noticeably absent from the top echelons of those stakeholders either referenced and quoted. Their issues management strategy in firearm focusing events is to remain silent and on the sidelines during much of the initial frame (30 days). They recognize the initial stages of grief in these incidents when emotions are raw and highly charged. They are also aware of the public's need to attribute blame and push for resolution when the mourning turns to anger. They reason that to enter the gun debate as a direct combatant would weaken their positions as defenders of Second Amendment rights. They also recognize that with each mass shooting, gun and ammunition sales increase dramatically in anticipation of probable calls for weapons and ammunition bans. This was observed in 2013 after President Obama's and Vice President Biden's gun control taskforce made recommendations to Congress for restrictive gun control measures.

Mass shooting news coverage and frame changing. A news frame, defined as "a selection of 'some aspects of a perceived reality' that makes those aspects more salient to a media

consumer" (Houston, Pfefferbaum, & Rosenholtz, 2012, p. 608; Entman, 1993). Of course, selection of some aspects means the omission of others. In mass shooting incidents, journalist use frames as an organizing and interpretive strategy to help online and print news consumers to better understand information. However, frames are not static. As the details in the shooting case evolves, so do the frames that interpret them. Frame changing is the process where "different aspects of the issues or events are emphasized at different points in time" (Houston, Pfefferbaum & Rosenholtz, 2012, p. 609). For instance, in the theater shooting, an initial motive frame asking "why" was asked early in the investigation. As more details came to light, it became evident that the shooter was, in his mind, playing out a role from the fantasy film the audience was viewing. With this new information came a change in frames from motive for shooting unknown to the shooting was mental health related.

Frame changing in the media is a documented practice (Muschert & Carr, 2006; Muschert, 2009; Chyi & McCombs, 2004). This suggests that issues and the frames that define them have a shelf life and can alter the outcomes of a policy debate. In the three shooting cases examined, there were under 50 straight news articles published on the theater shooting, just under 90 articles on the church shooting and under 120 straight news articles written on the elementary school shooting. When comparing the three cases, the initial factors included the presence of mass casualties; however, the duration of their respective storylines was not sustained by the number of fatalities alone. Other story details became the moderating factor. For example, while only nine people were shot at the church in Charleston, coverage in the same national paper was 45% greater in terms of the total number of articles published on the church shooting versus the coverage of the theater shooting. Yet, there were 12 fatalities in the theater shooting and 70 wounded. If the numbers killed or wounded were the mitigating aspect, then the theater shooting would have had an

extended "newspan" beyond the church shooting. The debate over the flag in the church shooting extended that incident's shooting coverage. In contrast, the Sandy Hook school shooting resulted in 26 deaths. The age of those youth killed at the elementary school was a contributing factor that initially attracted attention and defined the news frame. The fact that the media descended on the small town in large numbers due to the age frame was also an important, attention-grabbing factor. In this case, as in that of Columbine from 1999, the media became a part of the story as well and would prolong the coverage through the end of the memorials and beyond.

Frame dynamics are such that frames can change with the facts, but they can also compete with one another (Guggenheim, Jang, Bae, and Neuman, 2015). The recurrent rallying cry for policy action on guns in the aftermath of each mass shooting tends to yield to more nuanced frames that reach a higher level of salience based on updated information in the case. Thus, the gun control versus gun rights frame cedes the top frame position in light of details that a shooter had a mental illness and bought his guns legally or that the motive in the case was one based on hatred. The mental health frame or the racial hatred frame ascends and displaces that of gun control, which receives less news coverage as the case unfolds. With this level of competition present, it is instructive to note that mass shootings come with a set of common frames at their outset, but these often yield to more case specific ones, which is the subject of the next section.

Standard mass shooting issues. Another feature of mass shootings is that they generate both common and case-specific issue frames. Some common elements include a shooting overview, community impact, victim and shooter profiles, and memorial of the slain. Yet, coverage can still vary with each shooting. Generally speaking, coverage of the shooter involves an initial profile, a psychological assessment, if available, family and school affiliations, and what appears to equate to a brief footnote about their burial that is subjugated by expanded coverage of the

victims' memorial services. During the 30-day news frame, after the initial set of articles, coverage of the shooter returns only if there is a trial, but otherwise the coverage of them quickly fades as in the case of Adam Lanza of Newtown. In the case of Holmes in Aurora, it was reported that he had purchased over 6,000 rounds of ammunition and had mental health issues. His purchase of ammunition, accessories for his firearms, supplies for explosives to outfit his apartment in anticipation of unsuspecting investigators, and even tire spikes to debilitate the vehicles of first responders gained additional traction because it problematized the notion of reasonable purchases. It also contributed to the policy discussions of ammunition restrictions, background checks, and cross-agency communication.

To render a full narrative, reporting on the shooter is usually supplemented by law enforcement accounts of the scene, the effect on the community, and a profile of the victims of the violence that make them more relatable. At a minimum, this inclusion provides an eye witness' account from the perspective of someone directly confronted with gun violence in common social settings. Such coverage also includes personal statements from survivors and later eulogies from funeral services for those killed. In every case, statements from community leaders and to a lesser degree legislators are a part of the dialogue, which supports the frequency counts that community members are the leading stakeholder group quoted in all three cases. In addition, the fact that businesses, particularly gun shops, were a top-referenced stakeholder in the theater shooting also suggests that these stakeholders play a supporting and important role in the construction of the complex mass shooting narrative.

Case-specific issues. There are also some case-specific issues that surface during the month-long reporting of each shooting. These issues revolve around the details associated with the characteristics of the victims. They can also be related to the shooting venue and even the shooter's

222

motive. Sometimes the issues that become most salient are based on shooter characteristics. Consider, for example the theater shooting in Aurora. Following the immediate call for gun control, a profile of a town in shock, an update on the Batman movie's box office receipts, and a description of the shooter's stash of weapons, details surfaced that revealed how the shooter, James Holmes, yelled "I am the Joker" just before he started firing into the crowded theater (Frosch & Johnson, 2012, p. 1). His orange-tinted hair was indicative of a questionable identification with one of the fantasy film's villains. A fellow student at the University of Colorado said Holmes' "disposition was a little off" (Frosch & Johnson, 2012, p. 1). A little over a week after the shooting, an article revealed that Holmes was under psychiatric care at the University of Colorado Denver's medical center. Subsequent articles made mention of his mental health struggles, thus making mental health a salient issue. Case specific details that surfaced about Dylan Roof, the shooter in Charleston, shifted the conversation in that case from one on indiscriminate killing to a deliberate hate crime. The Sandy Hook school shooting gunman, Adam Lanza, it was later revealed was fond of firearms. That revelation lead to articles profiling the assault weapon used, how he and his mother often were certified members of the N.R.A., and how they often went to the local gun range. Such targeted issues were magnetized to the topical field of gun control.

Characteristics of the victims also generates case-specific issues. The ages of the youth killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School was the subject of the first straight news article in the *Times* on the shooting that provided advice from psychologists on how to talk with your child after a shooting incident. A related issue, a parent's coping with the loss of their child, also garnered its own coverage, which highlighted the panic and fear parents experience as they wait to learn the fate of their child lost to the violence. The bravery of the school's administrators who died trying to save the children was also profiled, again addressing the issues of security and self-sacrifice.

The same issue of heroics was observed in the theater shooting where some of the moviegoers shielded their loved ones from the assailant's bullets. In the case of the church shooting in Charleston, grieving relatives of the nine slain victims confronted the shooter in court through closed-circuit television. They altered the issue frame from one of hatred to grief and forgiveness as they expressed their sense of loss and their choice to forgive the shooter. In addition, the slain pastor of the church was a sitting state senator who's killing also generated a level of outrage from his colleagues from both ends of the political spectrum. Of course, it was those same colleagues who deliberated the fate of the Confederate flag.

Shooting venues and a shooter's motive can also spark case-specific issues. Take the historic church, Emanuel A.M.E. in Charleston. The storied edifice was a civil rights icon. Its targeting by the shooter changed the conversation (and issue frame) from a random act of violence to a deliberate act to make a statement. As the details in the case emerged through online images of the shooter waving the Confederate flag and a written manifesto, it was clear that a racial hate motive was at the center of the shooting. It was also determined that the shooter had visited the church grounds on several occasions prior to the shooting, indicating a degree of premeditation. Targeting an institution based on its community profile, selecting victims by race, killing a state senator, and expressing little remorse despite the family of the victims pledge to forgive were all case-specific details that combined to move a community to resolve an intractable issue – removal of an historic though disputed Confederate icon.

Why no policy change. Protracted media coverage enhances the opportunity to effect public policy change over time. It is also true that public attention to an issue lessens over time. Downs (1972) theorized the "issue-attention cycle" as "the process through which issues emerge in the news, briefly dominate attention, and then decline" (Muschert, 2009, p. 165). Thus, for

224

policy change to occur, there must be sustained attention that leads to lawmaker deliberation. Gerston (2004) suggests that there are four factors that combine to effect public policy change: *scope, intensity, time,* and *resources*. *Scope* refers to the number of stakeholders affected by the crisis triggering mechanism. The effect is proportionate, meaning if there is a small area affected by the crisis, then the net effect is small and the demand for change will be in proportion. *Intensity* refers to the amount of force or emotion that is reflected in the public perception of the event. Mass shootings like Sandy Hook that receive considerable media coverage garner proportionate public interest and attract policy makers' attention. The *time* factor, in Gerston's model suggests an event remains in the public consciousness. Gerston writes, "whereas some events seem to transpire almost immediately, others go through a lengthy gestation process" (2004, p. 26).

The final factor is *resources*, or "the costs of a problematic development" that may include money, lives, or 'quality of life'" (Gerston , p. 27). More times than not, focusing events fail to trigger public policy and their intensity tends to quickly dissipate before policy change takes hold. This was the pattern following the cumulative effect of the Gabrielle Giffords shooting, the theater shooting, and Sandy Hook massacre, all of which took place within a two-year period. In the end, congressional attempts to enact new gun control legislation faltered, despite the emotion, reporting intensity and a public that favored making private gun sales and sales at gun shows subject to background checks ("Broad Support," 2013). It is clear from the previous discussion that issue salience alone, even in combination with media intensity, is not enough to guarantee policy attention or change. Scholarship on the issue-attention cycle continues to deepen our understanding of the dynamics of the exchanges between the public, legislative, and media agenda.

Many mass shootings do not result in policy changes because as noted by Heath & Palenchar (2009), there "must be a negotiated agreement among opposing sides" (p. 93). In the

long-running debate on gun control, advocates of more restrictions on firearms and ammunition cite mass shootings as one of the rationales for policy change. On the other hand, gun rights advocates view mass shootings as a clear danger to society, requiring law-abiding citizens to exercise their right to self-protection. Often, such entrenchment of viewpoints leaves very little room for negotiation and consistently brings public policy activity to a standstill. Furthermore, somewhere between Gerston's high emotional intensity and the public's fixation on the issue for a concentrated period, there are other issue-related dynamics at work that determine the sustainability of an issue and its likelihood to garner public policy attention. The fate of an issue and its ability/inability to attract public policy attention following a firearm focusing event depends on how that issue evolves on the public's and media's agenda. How an issue is activated at the outset of the shooting can determine its duration on the media's and public's agenda. It is also possible that an issue can be replaced by another more salient issue at the time; for example, incident coverage can progress from gun control or public safety matters to a discussion of mental health concerns. Based on the foregoing research, five news trajectories are possible after an issue becomes salient and can frustrate or facilitate public policy attention:

- **Issue displacement** – defined as a replacement of one issue by another; it signals the supplanting of an issue in decline with one in ascension. The diminished attention on an issue can occur on either the public's or media's agenda (or both since they can at times reflect one another). Waning public interest can mean an end to one issue's reporting cycle and the rise and salience of another. This was observed in the Charleston church shooting when early reporting on gun control was shelved and displaced by the issue of race and Confederate symbolism. The displacement of gun control as a potential issue was based on case-specific reporting that revealed the shooter targeted his victims based on race. This

resulted in a frame change. More specifically, the issue of victim selection by ethnicity magnetized the issues of a categorical hate crime and racial division as symbolized by the Confederate flag. Subsequent reporting then focused on those issues, which directly affected more stakeholders as Gerston notes, broadening the scope of the issue.

- **Issue dissolution** – sometimes an issue, once salient, dissolves or dissipates of its own accord over time due to a shift to another issue or a lack of interest by stakeholders, the media and public included. For advocates of gun control and ammunition restrictions, this happens in most cases. The high emotion and renewed call for gun control that typify mass shootings at the outset often begins to dissipate as time elapses, a shooter is apprehended, and the danger passes. An indication of this from this study is the case of the theater shooting. The initial shock that someone would shoot dozens of movie patrons in a crowded theater took two days to go from an initial call for gun control to a consuming focus on mental health issues after the shooter's background was investigated. By day five, statements by then President Obama and the Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney all but ended any further deliberation on gun control. Statements by both leaders were parallel in their pivot away from public pressure for action on guns. They offered advice on how to get involved, not by advocacy, but by engaging in self-reflection, helping those hurting, and even observing a moment of silence. They equally agreed that the politics of gun control and related issues was more appropriate for a future time. Incidentally, both political camps were sensitive to recent polls that suggested Americans had no appetite for gun restrictions. Soon the issue of gun control collapsed as more details of the shooter's mental health status came to light. The result was a frame change to mental health, which eventually met the same fate.

- **Issue resurgence** – though rare, re-amplification or the resurgence of issues in decline happens when a dissipating issue in the media regains salience and generates renewed coverage due to the "velcro" (Coombs & Holladay, 2001) effect when the present crisis attaches to or snags a prior one or resurgent stakeholder interest. This was observed in the case of the theater shooting where the gun issue dissipated early on in the 30-day coverage only to reappear two weeks later following the shooting at a Sikh Temple in Wisconsin. Resurgence of the gun debate was facilitated by the second shooting as gun control activists pondered whether a mass shooting epidemic was on the rise with back-to-back shootings.

- **Issue maintenance** – maintaining issue salience in any given news cycle is a challenge, but some stories have the right mix of details that keeps them on the media's and public's radar for a prolonged period. Such was the case of the school shooting in Newtown. The gunning down of tens of elementary school youth made for shocking headlines and resulted in the installation of embedded media in the New England town, further ensuring issue maintenance. In the month following the school shooting, the issue of gun control stayed on the media's docket for 21 days. The momentum from continued salience was further observed months later when Congress took up three gun control measures. Of the three cases examined, only the Sandy Hook school shooting warranted congressional billing.

How stakeholders and advocacy groups respond to a given issue frame determines its salience on the media' and public's agenda. Heightened interest, as reflected in polling and social media attention, is a key indicator of an issue's resonance and stakeholder identification. It is not surprising then that several of the questions comprising the journalistic formula (who, what, and how) constrain the organizing of story content beyond the obvious questions of when and where did the shooting occur. The details are reader-centered to aid the public in its sensemaking efforts.

In the theater shooting case, the top five stakeholders mentioned in the *Times* reporting were: 1) the shooter to answer *who* committed the crime; 2) community members to report on *how* it impacted the locals and record eye witness statements; 3) local law enforcement officials for answers to sensemaking questions such as *how* and for *what* purpose was the shooting committed; 4) victims to describe the scene first-hand from inside the chaos and to later memorialize those slain; and 5) businesses from the perspective of accessibility issues related to purchasing certain types of firearms and amassing large quantities of ammunition used in the carnage. An examination of the content of the theater shooting coverage reveals the media's lens was primarily focused on who perpetrated the crime and its impact on the community. An attempt at describing the psyche of the shooter with background reporting on his psychological profile was used to identify a motive; thus, for a case where the shooter does not commit suicide, a profile of the perpetrator garners considerable coverage because readers want to know "*who* did it."

In contrast, in the elementary school shooting, the media itself became a focal point in the story as they descended in large numbers on the small town of Newtown. The newsworthy emphasis for this shooting was clearly the ages of the victims. Thus, the top referenced stakeholder class in the school shooting was the victims. The images and sound bites from mass shooting coverage make for a compelling narrative that energizes the public agenda and opens to deliberation the public policy agenda. This was most notable when viewing broadcast and print images of Sandy Hook students being led to safety in a single file by armed law enforcement officials and their teachers.

Implications for Focusing Events and Issue Management

This dissertation was grounded in the theoretical concepts of focusing events and issue management. Implications for understanding how mass shooting function as focusing events and

how they impact the management of issues in the public are discussed below. From the forgoing discussion, several insights contribute to the understanding of mass shootings as a distinct crisis type. They are outlined below.

Mass shooting crises are focusing events. Birkland and others define focusing events as widely publicized, rare events that occur suddenly and cause harm or a "concentration of harm" (Birkland, 2004, p. 181; Fleming, Rutledge, Dixon, & Peralta, 2016, p. 1146). Mass shootings as rare and, therefore, alarming events are granted priority news status generating intense news coverage. The public and policy makers then fix their attention on events usually as a consequence of the media coverage. Policy makers seek answers about happened and why and, hence, a public and policy debate ensues. Fleming et al., categorize mass shootings as "firearm focusing events" that "serve as catalysts for agenda attention through bill introductions" (2016, p. 1144). Sometimes legislation is enacted in their wake, but oftentimes it is not. That is based, in part, on what competing issues are foregrounded in the aftermath of the crisis.

Mass shootings activate more than one issue. In the aftermath of a firearm focusing event and during the initial reporting of the facts in the shooting, multiple issues emerge. Usually, these are articulated through the voice of gun control advocates who point to the perpetrator's use of a semi-automatic weapon as another case of unfettered access to guns. A gun debate ensues, when additional details of the crime are uncovered and publicized. These may include mental health issues, issues of racial hatred, or appropriate enforcement of existing laws as contributing factors. In the theater shooting, issues of the mental health of the shooter, James Holmes, were foregrounded. Consequently, the media frame changes and journalist may focus on the new issue. This process continues throughout the news coverage where an assortment of issues is deliberated. The implication is that mass shootings as complex, focusing events activate or even magnetize

new issues while reactivating others – simultaneously. This basket of issues can be expected to arise as a consequence of any mass shooting event.

Issues Attraction as a Magnetic Effect

Issues like those that surface in the media following a mass shooting incident generate much media attention and often attract associated issues based on the details in the shooting. In this respect, mass shootings are analogous to magnets in their ability to magnetize other issues embedded in the case details and the stakeholders who support them. For instance, calls for stricter gun control generally is among the first major issues to surface in the media following a mass shooting. These calls, typically from advocates of gun control, are magnetized to each shooting incident, unless the shooting case details dictate otherwise. Consider the leading headlines for the earliest incident reports for the three shootings highlighted in this dissertation. In the case of the theater shooting, the headline for the day after the shooting read: "Gunman kills 12 at Colorado theater; scores are wounded, reviving debate" (Frosch & Johnson, 2012). A next day headline for the school shooting connected statements by former President Obama with an appeal for gun control and read: "Obama's cautious call for action sets stage to revive gun debate" (Landler, Goode, 2012). For both of these shootings, reporters framed them as contributing to a reactivation of the gun debate. However, circumstances in the church shooting were such that the shooter was still at large the day after the shooting. Accordingly, the following day's headline for the church incident did not invoke the gun debate like the others on day two, but instead it read: "South Carolina police search for shooter at black church" (Horowitz, Corasaniti, & Southhall, 2015). With an active shooter on the run, news reporting was directed towards identifying the assailant and sharing news of his soon capture. That meant that a continuation of the gun debate would have to wait. It finally came the next day, but by then the magnetic pull of the race frame was prominent.

Force of Issue and Magnetic Pull. Media accounts observed over the 30-day examination period for this study capture both the dominant issues and the issues they attract or magnetize based on the details in each case. One observation is that as an issue surfaces in news articles based on the shooting case details, a magnetic or topical field is developed around that issue. This topical field, like the magnetic field of a magnet, attracts other issues that are aligned with the draw of its argument. Understandably, the pull of that issue, is strongest where there are a higher number of articles on a given topic. Moreover, just as magnets are stronger at their poles where the coils are more densely compacted, similarly, where there is a concentration of articles on an issue, the force of that issue to attract others (and their stakeholders) is strongest where there is topical or issue resonance. Weak issue magnetism occurs where there is little coverage of an issue and it begins to wane, whereas strong magnetism is when there is considerable coverage of that issue and it attracts media coverage, public discourse, and policy attention. Take the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School and the basket of issues it attracted as an exemplar of the *magnetic effect*. As the shooting crisis unfolded, the outrage that vulnerable youth were victimized initially lead to emotional calls for gun control. The dominant gun issue, as the topical field, magnetized other allied issues, including school drills and safety measures, stricter background checks, assault weapons bans, armed security in school, and the early detection of warning signs. With embedded media covering the incident continuously, which was expected since it was the second deadliest school massacre in American history, the magnetic pull of the gun issue remained on the public's radar. In addition to these issue frames being debated at the epicenter of the shooting, the incident took on a more expansive and elevated context and became identified as America's exigency and challenge. The debate sustained considerable media and public attention, which ultimately translated into congressional deliberation and a failed vote.

Magnetic Resonance. Extending the metaphor of the magnet further, just as magnets generate a magnetic field that can attract or repel other magnets, so too can mass shooting issues attract or repel other issues based on the strength of their magnetism or their ability to resonate with and link to the frequency of other stakeholder issues. For example, the racial element in the church shooting was embedded early in the reporting details that described the venue itself as an historic black landmark. In that context and as the case unfolded, the discussion of race became prominent as details emerged that the shooter harbored racial hatred and was a proponent of apartheid and white supremacy. That frame magnetized to itself and made prominent, again, the previously-disputed issue of Confederate flag and what should be done with the divisive symbolism waving on state capitol grounds. A debate ensued not only within the Charleston community, but in the nation's capital. The flag issue, which was for the Charleston community a symbol of a deep racial divide, easily gained traction in the news with invigorated stakeholders on both sides of the issue. The strength of the debate forcefully displaced early discussions on gun control. The shooter's identification with supremacist ideology was associated with and magnetized to the previous debate on removing the Confederate flag. That magnetic resonance fostered stronger attention to the flag issue with which stakeholders who supported its removal could identify. In addition, stakeholders wanting reconstitution of community after the shooting death of the nine churchgoers also found an allied issue they, too, were magnetized to and with whose sentiment they could sympathize.

As noted above, one property of magnets is that their magnetic force is strongest at the extremes. With both north and south poles, they attract or repel with the most force at either end. To extend the parallels with mass shooting issues further, loosely articulated issues that are centrally located or generically conceived have less chance of realizing issue salience. More

importantly for this discussion, these issues have a limited opportunity to lead to public policy change because of their imprecise and diffuse nature. Further, they are unable to sustain the necessary level of salience to remain forceful on the media's, public's, and policy makers' agenda. This was observed in the case of the church shooting where the lukewarm treatment of gun control on day four gave way to a far more forceful deliberation on race, Confederate symbolism, and what constitutes a hate crime. This mix of issues circulating concurrently in the traditional and social media was magnetized to and effected policy change in Charleston that resolved an old divisive issue on where to fly the Confederate flag. The magnetic attraction and salience of the Confederate flag issue easily repelled and displaced the generic issue of gun control.

In the post crisis discussion, these mass shooting issues may compete with one another. Various advocacy groups may promote one issue over another, and thus divert the larger public policy discussion. Moreover, with one or more issues rising to the top of the media, public, and policy makers' agenda simultaneously, the chances for legislation and significant policy changes are likely diminished. Media coverage of one issue may attract more attention than another. In the case of the church shooting where the issue of the Confederate flag took prominence over that of gun control, one issue and the associated debate was foregrounded. In this case, the issue had little relation to the larger question of gun control. In the Sandy Hook shooting events, the issue was access to guns by those mental health diagnoses. In this case, mental health and gun control were more closely connected. Competing issues in this context become a part of a meta policy debate about what the particular focusing event means and what policy questions should be debated.

As a consequence of the many issues that are activated in mass shooting events, issues advocates must monitor the larger issue landscape. From the standpoint of issues management, issue advocates and policy makers must be prepared to not only advocate for their preferred policy

234

change but counter arguments about what the event means. Issue managers are responsible for scanning the environment for issue positions and must decide when they should align with some views and challenge others. Opposing stakeholder positions resulting in different issue agenda and goals must be managed if issue advocates are to realize their desired policy attention and change. In some cases, a coalition of stakeholders is needed to champion an issue and clarify the issue definition to prevent it from being relegated to minor importance or redefined altogether by competing forces. If issue management is the search for order and control, then stakeholders must be vigilant if they are to maintain it.

It is also important to emphasize that mass shooting crises are each unique and are a function of several factors including the victims, the scene, and the shooter, among others. There are two issue management features that appear to dominate these events. First, each crisis is different and depending on the particulars in the mass shooting incident will activate different issues. Case details that emphasize a shooter's psychological profile could shift, for example, the issue discussion to mental health, and effectively replace gun control issues altogether. A slain shooter in one case might abruptly end the investigation into their background, but a surviving shooter's profile will be a featured segment. Narrative construction of the details in these events can influence the trajectory of the issues in the news and make one issue more salient than another in public discussions. For policy advocates this necessitates a constant scanning of the environment to counter opposing views and maintain control of the issue narrative.

Community interests here cannot be overstated and could possibly be a key contributor to the force of the magnetic pull of an issue such as gun control. The force exerted by the magnetic field of an issue is reflected in the media, which has a "watchdog" function to report on events and sell content to readers in which they are attracted. As issues become salient, there is an increase in

the reporting of the issue; hence, the magnetic force is strengthened surrounding the issue and those associated with it are buoyed by the type of reporting where their views are reflected in the media they consume.

Second, the impact of mass shootings as unique focusing events appears to be a function of the victims, randomness of the shooting, and shooter motives. For instance, the ages of the victims in the Newtown school shooting and the race of those in the Charleston shootings pushed those issues to the foreground. Safety in schools to protect the most vulnerable became an allied frame during the Sandy Hook shooting that paralleled the Columbine coverage of 1999. Its direct connection to gun safety and violence kept the gun control issue at the forefront of the debate. Lesser issues such as the video game/violence connection did not gain sufficient traction to challenge the gun debate in this case.

Randomly versus deliberately targeting victims based on features such as race adds another dimension to the virulence of these focusing events. A community which suffers mass casualties is already changed and forced to do the work of recovery and renewal to move pass a crisis. Worsening already fragile community relations by targeting victims based on race makes that work even more difficult. Members of the Charleston community opted for focusing their discussion and attention to racial healing versus a push for gun control. This again shows how the uniqueness of each mass shooting is a function of the case details. Deliberately targeting a group of innocent residents further defined the type of shooting that occurred at Emanuel AME. A random shooting could not have focused the media's lens on the issue of race as sharply.

Mass shootings are also a function of shooter motives in addition to the victims and randomness of the shooting. In the case of the theater shooting, Holmes' motive for killing was one not based on race or age or other feature, but on the parasocial interaction with the fantasy

film Batman. The mental health status of the shooter relegated the gun debate to a secondary status since, in this case, the crime was solved and the perpetrator apprehended. This case makes clear that issue salience in each mass shooting crises is dependent on the details in each case. Where to aim future research lenses is the subject of the next section.

Future Research Directions

This study was exploratory in nature and aimed at identifying the salient features of the mass shooting crisis as an exemplar of focusing events that activate public policy debate. Results suggest that the media's initial narration of each shooting story line follows a similar construction in the first few days after the shooting. This coverage relies heavily on the journalistic formula for describing the shooter, the victims, the venue, and the timeline. Once those questions are answered, the unique aspects of each shooting begin to emerge as more case details are reported. Targeted media attention to certain case details promotes more discussion among stakeholders, some of which influence public policy makers. To further explicate the nuances of the mass shooting crisis, following are proposed directions for future studies.

Researching what makes one issue more prominent than another is an important part of understanding the dynamics of these crises. As noted above, the displacing of the gun debate on day four of the church shooting with debate on the fate of the Confederate flag was a noteworthy issue change. Whether there is a causal relationship between an issue in decline and another on the rise is an equally worthwhile component for future examination. Also, determining if there are any case identifiers that mark an impending issue change would be of interest to issue managers, stakeholders, and public policy architects.

Also, examining mass shootings might fruitfully explore a larger sample size. Expanding the number of cases to be analyzed would allow for the development of a shooting case

classification scheme that lists shooting case variance. Such a mapping could include cases classified *by venue* such as those that occur in the workplace, those taking place in a school setting, those that happen in places of worship such as churches, synagogues or mosques, those that take place in homes or on the job, and those that transpire in high-traffic areas such as public squares, malls, or parks. In addition, another grouping of shootings might include those perpetrated based on *intention*. There are those instances where the active shooters were reported as having a known motive for targeting a certain venue (such as a hate crime, domestic violence, revenge, gang initiation or other acts, parasocial sentiments, or even terrorism). These could be compared to those shootings that appear to be random acts of violence where the shooter might act due to their having a mental illness. One useful classification scheme is that which the FBI uses to categorize shooting types. It has seven categories where shootings might take place including: 1) education; 2) government (includes both military and non-military venues); 3) open spaces; 4) residences; 5) houses of worship; 6) commerce (including malls and other businesses open to pedestrian traffic as well as those which are not open to the public); and 7) healthcare facilities (Blair & Schweit, 2014).

Of course, there can always be a combination of categories as observed in the theater shooting in which the shooter had a mental illness, chose a specific venue, and arrived to target victims at random. Another classification scheme might be mass shootings based on the type of issues activated. Shootings that re/activate mental health policies potentially have dissimilar characteristics than those that activate an assault weapons ban or stricter background checks. The issues activated are a reflection of the shooting case particulars. The rarity of this crisis type permits examination of a high percentage of mass shootings, which could help researchers move

closer to generalizability. Results from examining more cases would also ensure observed outcomes are not chance occurrences.

As expected, with each passing week following a mass shooting, the news coverage diminishes along with the prospect of gun control legislation. Future studies might also consider applying an extended timeframe beyond the 30-day window used in this study. Delineating issue changes over the life of the mass shooting could reveal multiple frame changes, especially if coverage were to go into a second, third, or even tenth month. Moreover, identification of issues that remain salient over an extended period would help researchers plot their intensity and rank-order the more prominent issues across cases. Prolonged issue salience and sustained reporting intensity could be a moderating factor in policy changes. Comparing high and low attention spikes will enable researchers to hypothesize about an issue's behavior over time and predict its potential capacity to effect policy change.

While this study focused on straight news articles, a remaining cache of content for future coding and analysis are the hundreds of opinion/editorial articles written about each mass shooting incident. Captured in this reporting are highly opinionated pieces by editorial writers, contributors, and the stakeholders themselves which more accurately reflect the opposing discourse. Further, the articulation of these unfiltered views can possibly broaden activist and advocate dialogue on the gun issue and yield contextual themes that go beyond what is commonly reported in straight news articles. Such a focus might provide researchers with an unmediated set of top public policy issues from the vantage of stakeholders, and produce frames over the course of the crisis that are quite different from straight news copy.

Having the benefit of coding articles in the three cases, future chi-square, "goodness-of-fit" analyses could be further refined to assign higher than average numbers for several

stakeholders whose appearance in an appreciable share of the articles is significant. Most notably, community members, victims, the shooter, politicians, and law enforcement officials appear in higher than expected numbers depending on the shooting case details. This equally applies to an observance of the top public policy issues such as gun control, and a restriction on the availability and amount of ammunition. As opposed to assigning all variables an equal chance of appearing in the text, the understanding that some will have a higher likelihood to be found will improve data analysis and scrutinize the findings in this study.

Finally, testing the connection between social media and legacy media is another area for future studies. It is recommended that future researchers examine the impact social media has on issue-attention cycles such as those that cover mass shootings. A study by Guggenheim, Jang, Bae, and Neuman (2015) suggests that there exists a "reciprocal relationship between the attention paid to different aspects of mass shootings in online news and in Twitter" (p. 207). Exploring whether other social media platforms have a moderating effect on the duration of time an issue remains salient would be instructive, especially when compared to traditional media. More specifically, determining if intense social media discussion parallels intense coverage in the traditional press could indicate a reciprocal relationship exists between the two. It would also be insightful to explore if social media reflects the debate observed in traditional media or whether discussions on Twitter, Facebook, blogs, or other platforms precede from or lead the story trajectory of the traditional press.

Study Limitations

These results are subject to several limitations, including the inability to generalize findings from a small sample size, methodological constraints, an overlap of stakeholder categories, and a limited unit of analysis that was taken from the national media only instead of both a national and

local source. Generalizability, the challenge for many studies with a small sample size, is limited. The examination of and results for only three cases in this study cannot be generally applied to other mass shooting cases. For example, the fact that the most frequently quoted stakeholders across all three cases is the community cannot be generalized to hold true for every mass shooting case. The cases chosen took place within a relatively short timeframe – three years (2012-2015). To arrive at a more representative depiction of the mass shooting phenomenon, it is appropriate to include shooting cases over a longer examination period that pre-dates 2012. Mass shooting cases for this study were selected because they took place in public spaces such as churches and theaters. In those contexts, which are more open to public participation, it would be reasonable to assume community voices would figure prominently; however, the question of whether a closed venue would make a difference cannot be answered with the limited dataset. The reality that there is a degree of between-case difference when it comes to ranking of the most referenced and quoted stakeholders indicates a distinguishing feature of each mass shootings. Similarities in shooter profiles, such as access to firearms, age range, mental health issues, though significant cannot definitively be correlated with a propensity for mass violence. Differences in shooter targets, take for example Roof's targeting of black churchgoers versus Holmes' randomness, speaks to the variability of motive, execution, timing, and venue. The need for additional cases, including those specific to a nonsocial, work-related venue such as an office complex, could yield further insight into this crisis genre.

Methodological constraints include the lack of intercoder reliability, and the parsing of coding categories for both the stakeholder and public policy categories. There was only one coder for this dissertation that content-analyzed and coded 248 articles. The work around for there being only one coder was the establishment of a reasonable level of consistency through prior pre-testing

of the coding category scheme in combination with one of the dissertation advisors. Joint coding at the outset helped to refine the coding process and refine categories for stakeholders and public policy issues. A comprehensive set of keywords associated with stakeholders and public policy issues was developed early on and aided with establishing consistency. This addition allowed for a pre-search function of all articles to locate the keyword (or an approximate equivalent) that totally aligned with the formal coding categories. Once found, keywords were highlighted using a color coding schema for easier identification once the formal coding began. These intricacies lead coder fatigue from searching for thousands of keywords across three cases and had to be managed.

The stakeholder and public policy coding categories has some overlap. For example, even though there is a category for victims, shooters, local media, local leaders and politicians, and even family members, all of these come under the umbrella of community member. Were this category collapsed or combined in different ways, the frequency distributions would be quite different. A clearer example would be the parsing of national leaders such as the president from a national lawmaker such as a member of congress. Instead of collapsing these into a single grouping since they both are national politicians, the decision was made to distinguish the voice of a policy maker from that of a leader. The community member category expanded during the coding process to include residents, witnesses, neighbors, parents, teachers, ministers, voters, fans or students. Yet, there were also mentions in the articles of non-specific community members such as "the public," "the city," "the state," "the community," and even "the neighborhood." Perhaps such tags could be included with the more specific members of the local community. This extreme parsing of stakeholders also applies to public policy issues where the ammunition category had three facets: 1) restriction on the number of rounds of ammunition in magazine clips; 2) ammunition purchases through the Internet or mail order; and 3) an outright ban on high-capacity magazines. In the end

and in accordance with strict content analytic protocol, each code was unique unto itself. However, in retrospect, numerous categories can translate into too many degrees of freedom when calculating the chi-square statistic. To address this, the individual variables were collapsed into a more manageable number of overarching categories that were more appropriately configured for a chi-square analysis.

The unit of analysis in this study was limited to articles taken from *The New York Times*. With articles only taken from the national media, an entire set of articles from local media went unexamined, which could further affirm top stakeholders and public policy issues in each case. Including both viewpoints might also better show the progression of one news frame as it possibly competes with and gives way to (or outdistances) another. Such inclusion could also yield a comparison of how each shooting reported in the local news progresses in contrast with that of the national press within the 30-day shooting examination period.

Conclusion

This dissertation examined the complexities of mass shooting events to determine how they unfold in the national press and impact the gun debate. Such an examination required an identification of the stakeholders involved and the public policy issues expressed by them and reflected in the media. The two theoretical lenses used to elucidate the nuances of this crisis type were both supported. Birkland's theory of focusing events explicates the public policy process by which shootings with multiple casualties, a representative exemplar, bring attention to and sometimes open a policy window for debate. In the case of Sandy Hook, a vote at the national level was taken to consider three gun-related policies.

A firearm focusing event and its capacity to set the agenda for policy makers, the public, and the media was most evident in the Charleston shooting case where a dormant debate about

flying the Confederate flag was revived. Stakeholders got involved, argued, and turned it over to legislators who continued to debate the issue, then voted to modify the previous legislation and remove the Confederate flag from the state capitol. Focusing events, such as certain mass shootings, effectively amplify the intensity of these crises in the media. The attention from the heightened coverage fuels some issues and reactivates others; in short, mass shootings are multi-pronged focusing phenomena.

Effective issues management from a mass shooting stakeholder's perspective requires an appreciation of the myriad issues that are framed in both the traditional and new media. Because mass shootings spark multiple issues, depending on the case particulars, stakeholders must actively monitor the news frames and public opinion in the specific incident to ensure their views are also included at the outset. Working actively with the most referenced and quoted stakeholder groups to promote ideas and align with active frames where possible would be beneficial to those seeking policy change. In addition, developing an inclusive network of stakeholders from different regions could help to influence or change the active frame and shape the shooting narrative as it unfolds. For example, the families of victims from Newtown, Aurora, and Charleston might jointly and proactively promote issues of interest as a part of a collective versus individual efforts. Taking a lesson from magnets, where the densely-populated side of the magnet has the greatest magnetic force or pull, so too can stakeholders join forces for a greater impact.

A closer review of the way state legislators agreed to move the Confederate flag following the Charleston church shooting demonstrated a balancing of stakeholder narratives, albeit not about gun control. On the one hand, the Newtown and Aurora shootings failed to generate any significant policy change, despite their ability to focus the public policy agenda on gun violence. In both cases, the larger public policy debate became one of mental health. Perhaps the important

question is not how does a crisis activate issue management, but what mix of issues are magnetized and made prominent as a result of the shooting discourse. According to Gruszczynski and Michaels (2012), "an issue creates the lens through which policy is viewed" (p. 362). Shaping issues and the frames they engender is of tremendous benefit to all stakeholders involved.

APPENDIX A

KEYWORD SEARCH OR *LOCATOR* TERMS: STAKEHOLDERS

Note: These keywords were used to search The New York Times articles for each case. Search terms were used to find all stakeholders (referenced and quoted).The "find" feature in MS Word was used.

37 KEYWORDS FOR: STAKEHOLDERS	Number of times keywords were found in NYT articles		
	Theatre Date: 7/20/12	School Date: 12/14/12	Church Date: 6/17/15
President	56	224	156
National	63	191	167
Senator	12	52	128
Police	132	215	134
City	78	117	110
Representative	13	54	86
Mayor (mostly Bloomberg)	22	46	29
Official	52	163	67
Federal / F.B.I.	37	97	46 / 28
Family	34	90	78
Government	17	43	45
Advocate (noun)	6	65	17
National Rifle Association /N.R.A.	1/3	44 / 104	2/1
Congress / congressmen	5	106	33
Student	38	123	23
Community	21	52	53
Friend	43	81	91
Media	30	72	50
Law enforcement / law/gun laws	33/55/26	58	26/198/11
Victim / victims	54	84	119
Citizen	5	17	23
Emergency	14	10	2
Politician	2	21	11
Legislator / legislature/Lawmaker	1/4/7	17/20/82	16/44/71
Democrat	19	172	100
Republican	17	163	196
Officer	26	123	54
Parent	16	125	38
Gun control advocates	2	16	2
Worker / workers	10	17	11
Agent / agents	7	22	3
Activist / activists	1	1	13
Judge / judicial	29/0	14/0	14/3
Neighbor / neighbors	22	34/8	27
Shooter / Gunman	10/50	23/93	7/70
First responder / responder	2/3	7/8	0/0
Expert	13	16	9

APPENDIX B

KEYWORD SEARCH OR *LOCATOR* TERMS: PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES			
Note: These following keywords were used to search The New York Times articles for each case. Search terms were used to find public policy issues in the three data sets using the "find" feature in MS Word.			
34 KEYWORDS FOR: **PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES**	**Number of times keywords were found in NYT articles**		
	Theatre Date: 7/20/12 N=47 | 108 pgs.	**School** Date: 12/14/12 N=114 | 257 pgs.	**Church** Date: 6/17/15 N=91 | 223 pgs.
Gun control	30	195	31
Security (protocol, measures)	11	74	34
Crime(s) (firearms linked to them)	27	66	65
Mental health / illness	9 / 4	66 / 42	5 / 10
Background check	9	101	29
Mass shooting	21	65	14
Second Amendment	8	36	2
Regulation	12	42	3
Magazines	20	61	5
Restrictions (on guns)	13	62	5
High-capacity (magazines)	2	54	1
Ammunition (clips)	68	95	14
Gun rights / Gun	6 / 192	49 / 885	3 / 307
Weapons ban / Gun ban	2 / 3	53 / 4	2 / 0
Bullets (number of)	30	36	11
Database	2	33	4
Gun Lobby / Gun legislation	0 / 1	20 / 4	0 / 1
Gun permit / licensing	3 / 1	20	0 / 0
Mass murder	4	10	5
Right to bear arms	4	14	1
Purchase (handguns)	29	29	16
Gun traffic	1	7	0
Drills	1	6	0
Public safety	2	4	0
Licensing / license	0 / 9	5	1 / 20
Registry / registration	0 / 2	4 / 1	0 / 1
Active shooter / drills or training	0 / 0	4 / 0	0 / 0
Violence / prevention	54 / 0	103 / 6	65 / 1
Firearms training / firearm	0 / 23	0 / 27	0 / 18
Metal detector	1	3	2
Safety / training	10 / 0	34 /12	5 / 0
Gun laws	26	67	10
Gun owners	7	33	6

APPENDIX C

KEYWORD SEARCH OR *LOCATOR* TERMS: ADDRESSING PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES			
Note: These following keywords were used to search The New York Times articles for each case. Search terms were used to find public policy issues in the three data sets using the "find" feature in MS Word.			

32 KEYWORDS FOR: **ADDRESSING PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES**	**Number of times keywords were found in NYT articles**		
	Theatre Date: 7/20/12 N=47 | 108 pgs.	**School** Date: 12/14/12 N=114 | 257 pgs.	**Church** Date: 6/17/15 N=91 | 223 pgs.
Change	19	81	97
Law	194	103	198
Ban / Banning	61 / 3	120 / 17	70 / 2
Support	19	118	104
Prevent / Prevention	14 / 1	64 / 7	11 / 1
Restrict	24	88	10
Policy	11	36	21
Advocate (verb)	0	65 / 5	17 (3)
Enforce / Enforcement	40 / 37	74	0 / 26
Study / Analysis / Analyze	4	29 / 9 / 2	68
Regulation / Regulate	12	37 / 5	3 / 1
Argue	6 / 4	16	11
Block	13	26	21
Enact	1	19	3
Maintain	3	6	8
Mandate	1	1	1
Strengthen	0	4	2
Repeal	0	1	1
Preserve / preservation / status quo	1 / 0 / 0	1 / 0 / 0	3 / 2 / 3
Reinstate / reinstatement	0 / 0	7 / 2	0 / 0
Prosecute / prosecution	1 / 5	3 / 7	3 / 8
Elimination	0 / 2	1	2 / 4
Interpretation	0 / 0	0	0 / 2
Conservation / conserve	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 0
Modify / modification	0 / 0	0 / 2	0 / 1
Pointless / futile / futility	0 / 0 / 0	1 / 2 / 0	0 / 0 / 0
Ratification / ratify	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0
Grandfather clause	0	1	0
Legislate / New policy	0 / 0 / 4	0	0 / 0 / 20
Debate	17	70	81
Propose	7	37	3
Introduce (as in a bill)	4	18	14

APPENDIX D

CODEBOOK: *Mass Shootings & Public Policies*

INTRODUCTION:
This codebook captures the particulars of newspaper coverage in mass shooting incidents. It specifically unitizes the identities of the various stakeholders, the public policy issues emerge post-crisis, how stakeholders address those issues, whether those issues evolve over a 30-day timeframe, and what, if any, is the discernable pattern of media coverage for covering mass shootings or is each incident distinct.

Instructions: *For each code sheet, fill in the name of the newspaper at the top of the page along with the 30-day timeframe of media coverage. Then complete the following fields in the top row of the sample table below with the appropriate information from the article and this codebook.*

1. *In column 1, place a number for the mass shooting case (e.g., Theater = 1; School = 2; Church = 3) and a number for the consecutive number of the article you are reading (starting with 1).*
2. *In column 2, place the number of the article you are reading in sequential order.*
3. *In column 3, place the date of the article you are reading.*
4. *In column 4, place the code(s) for type of stakeholder referenced/mentioned in article.*
5. *In column 5, indicate yes or no whether the stakeholder is quoted in the article.*
6. *In column 6, place the code(s) for the type of public policy issue mentioned in the article.*
7. *In column 7, place the code(s) for how the stakeholder suggests the issue be addressed.*
8. *Add a coder's note (optional).*
9.

Name of newspaper: _____

Duration of coverage: From _____   TO   _30 days later_

Case No.	Article Number Sequential	Date of Article	Stakeholder mentioned in the article	Stakeholder Quoted in the article	Type of Public Policy Issue	How Public Policy Issue is Addressed	coder note
1	7	12/7/12	20, 12	1 *Local officer*	5 *Safety*	2 *Modify laws*	Like NYT article

Unit of Data Collection: STAKEHOLDERS IN MASS SHOOTINGS – *Who is referenced in the article?*

Instruction: In column 4 of your code sheet, code for the type of stakeholder quoted or paraphrased in the newspaper article. Choose a code from column 1 below that matches the type of stakeholder referenced, then place it on your code sheet in the column labeled "stakeholder." If the article's speaker is not listed among the stakeholders below, use one of the *other, coder defined* codes (#30) and add a brief description on the blank line on this page in your codebook. Finally, place the corresponding number on your code sheet in column 1.

Definition: *Stakeholder* refers to engaged publics. The definition corresponds with that of Heath and Palenchar (2009): "any persons or groups that hold something of value that can be used as rewards or constraints in exchange for goods, services, or organizational policies and operating standards" (p. 16). These engaged publics have "stakes that can directly influence the success of the organization are primary, whereas those whose stakes are less likely to be immediately brought to bear are secondary or indirect" (p. 16). Grunig and Repper (1992) earlier refer to these engaged individuals and groups as "active publics" who "actively communicate about an issue" because they "perceive that what an organization does involves them" (p. 125). Thus, their level of involvement or stake is raised.

Description: As you read through the newspaper article identify who the reporter says is talking. This can be determined through: 1) attribution (example, according to Smith…); 2) stated name and title of speaker followed by their quoted or paraphrased statement (example: John Smith, Police Chief of Detroit says "the city has not had a mass shooting since…").

CODEBOOK: *Mass Shootings & Public Policies* Page | 2b

CODE	Stakeholder – (Place in column 4 of Code Sheet)
Law enforcement, regulators, emergency personnel, and judiciary	
1	**Local** law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief, bomb squad, investigators, authorities*)
2	Regional/state law enforcement official (*county sheriff, state officers*)
3	**National law enforcement** official (*FBI agent or other federal officer, branches of military, DOJ*)
4	First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement; firefighters*)
5	**Judicial offices**/officials <u>local</u> level (*attorneys for either side, jury, judges, legislative aides*)
6	Judicial offices/officials <u>district/appellate/federal</u> levels (*e.g. the Supreme Court*)
7	**Regulatory body** (*governmental entity, administrative authority; ATF, Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, federal government, government generally – any level*)
Civic leaders	
8-nat	**Politician – national** leader (*president, vice president, their spokespersons, advisers*)
8-reg	**Politician – regional** leader (*governor, their spokesperson, advisers*)
8-loc	**Politician – local** leader (*mayor, their spokespersons, advisers*)
9-nat	Lawmaker– **national** legislator (*member of congress*)
9-reg	Lawmaker – **regional** legislator (*congress person: senator, representative – at state level*)
9-loc	Lawmaker – **local** legislator (*city council, their staff, city manager*)
Community members, victims, perpetrators, media, family members and friends	
10	**Victim** (*survivor of mass shooting; eyewitness*)
11	**Shooter**/gunman/suspect/accused/assailant/terrorist
12	**Family** member, **friend**, **co-worker**, or **neighbor** (*with knowledge of…*) of victims *or* shooter
13	**Community** member (*resident, witness, neighbors, parent, teacher, minister, voters, fans, student, protester, churches, religious figures, citizens, gun owners, voters, athlete, singer*)
14	**Community in general** (*"the community" or "the public," city, state, county, neighborhood, Americans, racial group, nation, crowds, **region**, the South, quoted or referenced*)
15	Community group or group leader, social or political activists
16	**Subject-matter experts** in any area who are often quoted (*e.g., university professors, psychiatrists*)
17	Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists, the media itself as source – Twitter, Facebook*)
18	**Media** (*apart from coverage when the media is identified as active public in the article, newspaper*)
19	Internet (*as a quoted public – "Internet respondents say…" survey, polls, or PEW research*)
Community organizational members	
20	**Customers**, patrons, attendees, audience, moviegoers, buyers, consumers,
21	Employees, workers, investors, staff
22	**Businesses** (*those affected by shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops, range, or makers*)
23	Workplace or institution with responsibility as the **site of the shooting** (*universities or theaters*)
24	**Healthcare provider** (*medical and/or psychiatric institutions generally*)
25	Local, regional, and **national organizations** (*e.g., the Urban League, parents' groups, Red Cross, CDC, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, or KKK*)
Activist publics, lobbyists, and "special interests"	
26	Gun control advocates/activists, supporter (e.g., *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*)
27	Gun rights advocates/activists (*gun enthusiasts; known to oppose gun control*)
28	National Rifle Association official or spokesperson
29	American Civil Liberties Union official or spokesperson
Coder-supplied categories	
30	Other (coder defined)

CODEBOOK: *Mass Shootings & Public Policies*   P a g e | 3a

Note: For calculating the chi-square statistic use these stakeholder clusters that allow for a more manageable calculus for the degrees of freedom.

	Stakeholders – (Place in column 4 of Code Sheet)	
Code	**Cluster**	**Included Stakeholders**
1	**Law enforcement officials, emergency personnel, and first responders**	• Local law enforcement official (*police officer, police chief, bomb squad, investigators, authorities*) • Regional/state law enforcement official (*county sheriff, state officers*) • National law enforcement official (*FBI agent or other federal officer, branches of military, DOJ*) • First responder (*emergency personnel other than law enforcement; paramedics, firefighters*)
2	**Government, regulators and the judiciary**	• Judicial offices/officials <u>local</u> level (*attorneys for either side, jury, judges, legislative aides*) • Judicial offices/officials <u>district/appellate/federal</u> levels (*the Supreme Court*) • Regulatory body (*governmental entity, administrative authority; ATF, Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, federal government, government generally – any level*)
3	**Politicians**	• Politician – national leader (*president, vice president, their spokespersons, and advisers*) • Politician – regional leader (*governor, their spokesperson, advisers*) • Politician – local leader (*mayor, their spokespersons, advisers*)
4	**Lawmakers**	• Lawmaker– national legislator *(member of congress)* • Lawmaker – regional legislator *(congress person: state senator, representative)* • Lawmaker – local legislator *(city council, their staff, city manager)*
5	**Victims**	• Victims – (*Survivor(s) of mass shooting; as eyewitness; can be deceased*)
6	**Shooter**	• Shooter – (*gunman/suspect/accused/assailant/"terrorist"*)
7	**Members of the local community**	• Family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor (*with knowledge of…*) of victims *or* shooter • Community member (*resident, witness, neighbors, parent, teacher, minister, voters, fans, student, protester, churches, religious figures, citizens, gun owners, voters, athlete, singer*) • Community in general (*"the community" or "the public," city, state, county, neighborhood, Americans, racial group, nation, crowds, region, the South, quoted or referenced*) • Community group or group leader, social or political activists • Subject-matter experts in any area who are often quoted (*e.g., university professors, psychiatrists*) • Social media users (*Citizen media/journalists, the media itself as source of story – Twitter, Facebook*) • Internet (*as a quoted public, "Internet respondents say…" survey, polls, PEW*) • Customers, patrons, attendees, audience, moviegoers, buyers, consumers

Stakeholders – (Place in column 4 of Code Sheet)		
Code	**Cluster**	**Included Stakeholders**
8	**Community organizational members**	• Media (*apart from coverage when the media is identified as active public in the article, newspaper*) • Employees, workers, investors, staff (organization attached) • Businesses (*those affected by shooting or referenced in general; e.g., gun shops, range, or makers*) • Workplace or institution with responsibility as the site of the shooting (*universities or theaters*) • Healthcare provider (*medical and/or psychiatric institutions generally*) • Local, regional, and national organizations (*e.g., the Urban League, parents' groups, Red Cross, CDC, Mayors Against Illegal Guns or KKK*)
9	**Activist publics, lobbyists, and "special interests"**	• Gun control advocates/activists, supporter (e.g., *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*) • Gun rights advocates/activists (*gun enthusiasts; known to oppose gun control*) • National Rifle Association official or spokesperson • American Civil Liberties Union official or spokesperson

CODEBOOK: *Mass Shootings & Public Policies*   Page | 4

Unit of Data Collection: Public Policy Issue – *What policy issue(s) is mentioned in the article?*

Instruction: In column 6 of your code sheet, code for the type of public policy issue being discussed in the newspaper article. Choose a code from column 1 of this page that matches the type of policy issue then place it on your code sheet in column 6 labeled "public policy issue." If the public policy issue is not listed in the table below, use the *coder-defined* designation (#18) and add a brief description on the blank line on this page in your codebook. Finally, place the corresponding number on your code sheet in column 6.

CODE	Public Policy Issue – (Place in column 6 of Code Sheet)
1	Active shooter drills or training
2	Assault weapons ban
3	Background checks (*regarding application and license fees, permits, and renewals*)
4	Communication (*cross-agency sharing or among facility staff members*)
5	Enhanced security measures or precautions (*e.g., use of metal detectors, public safety efforts*)
6	Firearm training
7	Gun control measures, generally
8	Restriction on the number of rounds in magazine clips or the number of guns one can own
9	Ammunition – mail order via Internet or through a gun retailer, bulk purchasing
10	Mental health policies or screenings or precautions
11	Open carry laws
12	Second Amendment right to bear arms
13	Confidentiality
14	Legal safeguards
15	"Stand your ground" laws
16	Violence and/or crimes (*e.g., murder, gun trafficking*)
17	Ban high-capacity magazines
18	Other (coder defined)

Unit of Data Collection: Public Policy Issue – *What policy issue(s) is mentioned in the article?*

Instruction: For calculating the chi-square statistic use the groupings below that correspond to the 18 codes on page 3 above. Eighteen categories would yield an unmanageable number for calculating the degrees of freedom, so those public policy codes were pared down to this smaller set of public policies.

Public Policy Issues Clusters – (Place in column 6 of Code Sheet)		
Code	Cluster	Included Policy Issue Categories
1	**Gun control measures, generally**	• Gun control measures, generally • Open carry laws • Second Amendment right to bear arms • Legal safeguards • "Stand your ground" laws • Violence and/or crimes (*e.g., murder, gun trafficking*)
2	**Training & public safety measures**	• Active shooter drills or training • Firearm training • Enhanced security measures or precautions (*e.g., use of metal detectors, public safety efforts*)
3	**Weapons ban – firearm related**	• Assault weapons ban
4	**Interagency coordination**	• Communication (*cross-agency sharing or among facility staff members*) • Applicant confidentiality
5	**Background checks**	• Background checks (*regarding application and license fees, permits, and renewals*)
6	**Ammunition control**	• Ammunition – *mail order via Internet or through a gun retailer, bulk purchasing* • Ban high-capacity magazines • Restriction on the number of rounds in magazine clips or the number of guns one can own
7	**Mental health related**	• Mental health policies or assessments or precautions

CODEBOOK: *Mass Shootings & Public Policies*   **Page | 6**

Instruction: In column 6 of your code sheet, code for how the stakeholder in the article addressed the public policy issue in the newspaper article. This code captures stakeholders' views of <u>what can be done about gun control/rights policies</u>. Assign a code from the list below. If the way the stakeholder dealt with the public policy issue is not listed in the table below, use the *other, coder defined* designation (#12) and add a brief description on the blank line on this page in your codebook. Finally, place the corresponding number on your code sheet in column 7.

CODE	Stakeholders Addressing a Public Policy Issue – (Place in column 7 of Code Sheet)
1	*Creation* – create brand new policy
2	*Modification* – modify existing policy, including proposing restrictions
3	*Preservation* – maintain the status quo; conserve the policy as is
4	*Elimination* – repeal or void a policy or law
5	*Prevention* – block or prevent the passage of legislation
6	*Interpretation* – application of existing policy that address public policy issue
7	*Insufficient* – existing policies on the books does not properly address the issue
8	*Enforcement* – article talks about enforcing current policy
9	*Reinstatement* – call for a reinstatement of previous law such as assault rifle ban of 2004
10	*Discussion or Commentary* – stakeholder only comments on policy
11	*Futility* – maintain a "why bother" mentality and view policy effort(s) as pointless
12	Other (coder defined)

CODESHEET: *Mass Shootings & Public Policies* Page | 7

Name of newspaper: _____ Case: _____

30 days of coverage: From: __July 20, 2012__ To: __August 19, 2012__

Case No.	Article Number Sequential	Date of Article	Stakeholder **Mentioned** (only) in article regarding Public Policy (highlight code = yellow)	Stakeholder Directly **Quoted** in article (Discourse) (highlight code = green) Enter **Yes** if quoted Enter **No** if not quoted	These two are linked		coder note(s)
					Type of Public Policy Issue (code = blue)	How Public Policy Issue is Addressed (code = red)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SAMPLE 1	7	12/7/12	1 *Local officer*	12, 20	5 *Safety*	2 *Modify laws*	*Mirrors local newspaper article*

10.

COLOR CODING SCHEME	
Color Scheme	Meaning
Yellow highlights	Stakeholder referenced only
Green highlights	Stakeholder directly quoted
Blue highlights	Public policy issue mentioned
Red highlights	Suggested way public policy should be addressed

CODESHEET: *Mass Shootings & Public Policies*   Page | 8

Name of newspaper: **New York Times**   Case: **Aurora, Colorado (1)**

30 days of coverage: From: July 20, 2012   To: August 19, 2012

Case No.	Article Number Sequential	Date of Article	Stakeholder Referenced in article	Stakeholder Quoted in Article (Discourse) **[Yes or No]**	Type of Public Policy Issue	How Public Policy Issue is Addressed	Level of attention (Local, national)	coder note(s)
1	7	12/7/12	12, 20	1 *Local officer*	5 *Safety*	2 *Modify laws*	1 *local*	*Mirrors local newspaper article*
1	1	07/28/12	20, 12	20- yes 12-no	3, 7, 9, 12	7, 2, 6, 5	1, 3	✓

REFERENCES

Adams, W. C. (2000). Responding to the media during a crisis: It's what you say and when you say it. *Public Relations Quarterly*, *45*(1), 26-28.

Addington, L. A. (2009). Cops and cameras public school security as a policy response to Columbine. *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*(10), 1426-1446.

Altheide, D. L. (2009). The Columbine shootings and the discourse of fear. *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*(10), 1354-1370.

Alvarez, L. (2015, June 25). Families hope words endure past shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/charleston-families-hope-words-endure-past-shooting.html

Alvarez, L., & Blinder, A. (2015, June 18). Recalling nine spiritual mentors, gunned down during night of devotion. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/us/nine-victims-of-charleston-church-shooting-remembered.html

Alvarez, L., & Stewart, N. (2015, June 28). A day of determined hope as Charleston mourns 3 more. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/us/charleston-funerals.html

Alvarez, L., Stewart, N., & Pérez-Peña, R. (2015, June 26). In two funerals, remembering the victims of hate as symbols of love. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/26/us/charleston-south-carolina-shooting-funerals.html

Amerson, R. (2011). Making a case for the case study method. *Journal of Nursing Education, 50*(8), 427-428.

Applebome, P. (2012, December 19). In Connecticut, a methodical governor is tested by a heart-wrenching ordeal. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/nyregion/for-malloy-connecticut-shootings-provided-heart-wrenching-test.html

Applebome, P. (2013, January 1). 'We lost things and we can replace those things.' *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/nyregion/hurricane-sandy-and-sandy-hook-killings-distinct-but-for-a-name.html

Applebome, P. (2013, January 4). The children of a tragedy are returned to school life. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/04/nyregion/sandy-hook-students-return-to-class-in-new-building.html

Applebome, P. (2013, January 10). In Hartford, a promise to tighten gun laws. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/10/nyregion/gov-dannel-p-malloy-promises-action-to-prevent-future-violence.html

Applebome, P., & Stelter, B. (2012, December 17). Media spotlight seen as a blessing, or a curse, in a grieving town. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/business/media/newtown-has-mixed-feelings-about-the-media-horde-in-its-midst.html

Applebome, P., & Wilson, M. (2012, December 15). 'Who would do this to our poor little babies' *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/nyregion/witnesses-recall-deadly-shooting-sandy-hook-newtown-connecticut.html

Apuzzo, M., Schmidt, M. S., & Pérez-Peña, R. (2015, June 25). Federal hate crime charges likely in South Carolina church shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/campaign-to-remove-confederate-symbols-from-public-lands-builds.html

Avery, E. J., & Lariscy, R. W. (2012). FEMA and the rhetoric of redemption: New directions in crisis communication models for government agencies. In W. T. Coombs & S. J. Holladay (Eds.), *The handbook of crisis communication* (pp. 319-334). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Baker, Al, & Vadukul, A. (2012, December 20). Lockdown drill surprises some, scaring a school in East Harlem. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/education/lockdown-drill-scares-school-in-east-harlem.html

Baker, P. (2012, December 19). Obama facing critical choice after shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/us/politics/president-obama-facing-critical-choice-after-newtown-shooting.html

Baker, P. (2012, December 30). Biden is back for a 2nd run at gun limits. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/30/us/politics/newtown-task-force-returns-biden-to-gun-control-arena.html

Baker, P. (2015, June 19). A sense at the White House of horror, loss and resolve. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/us/politics/obama-charleston-shooting.html

Baker, P. (2015, June 23). Obama and Biden to attend funeral for Clementa Pinckney. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/23/us/obama-and-biden-to-attend-funeral-for-clementa-pinckney.html

Barbaro, M., & Martin, J. (2015, June 29). 5 days that left a rebel flag wavering, and likely to fall. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/29/us/how-the-rebellion-against-south-carolinas-confederate-flag-grew.html

Barnes, B. (2012, July 23). Batman sales high despite shootings. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Barnes, B. (2012, July 30). 'Dark Knight' leads at sluggish box office. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Barnes, B., & Carter, B. (2012, December 20). School massacre rattles studios. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/movies/newtown-massacre-changes-plans-at-movie-and-tv-studios.html

Barron, J. (2012, December 15). Gunman massacres 20 children at school in Connecticut; 28 dead, including killer. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/nyregion/shooting-reported-at-connecticut-elementary-school.html

Barron, J. (2012, December 16). Pupils were all shot multiple times with a semiautomatic, officials say. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/nyregion/gunman-kills-20-children-at-school-in-connecticut-28-dead-in-all.html

Barron, J., & Schmidt, M. S. (2012, December 18). Computer in Connecticut gunman's home yields no data, investigators say. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/nyregion/security-increased-at-connecticut-schools-as-investigation-into-shooting-continues.html

Barry, D. (2012, December 18). With the why elusive, two boys, two burials. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/nyregion/two-funerals-for-two-6-year-old-boys-in-newtown.html

Bechler, C. (2004). Reframing the organizational exigency: Taking a new approach in crisis

research. In D. P. Millar & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Responding to crisis: A rhetorical approach to crisis communication* (pp. 63-74). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Bellafante, G. (2012, December 23). An incubator for violence. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/23/nyregion/intense-alienation-can-be-an-incubator-for-violence.html

Benoit, W. L. (1995). *Accounts, excuses, apologies: A theory of image restoration strategies*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Benoit, W. L. (1997). Image repair discourse and crisis communication. *Public Relations Review, 23*, 177–186.

Berger, J. (2012, December 19). Facing the unendurable, families lay to rest two children, both 6. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/nyregion/more-funerals-held-in-newtown-after-massacre.html

Berger, J. (2012, December 20). Remembering the passion of a teacher who died protecting students. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/nyregion/remembering-the-passion-of-victoria-soto-a-sandy-hook-teacher.html

Berger, J. (2012, December 21). Cardinal finds a Biblical parallel in a school aide's selfless life and death. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/nyregion/newtown-conn-school-aide-is-remembered-for-her-devotion.html

Bernstein, V. (2015, July 3). Nascar racetracks ask fans to put away Confederate flags. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/sports/autoracing/nascar-asks-fans-to-put-away-confederate-flags.html

Bilton, N. (2013, January 7). Smart guns can't kill in the wrong hands. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/06/disruptions-smart-gun-technology-could-prevent-massacres-like-newtown/

Birkland, T. A. (1997). *After Disaster: Agenda setting, public policy, and focusing events*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Birkland, T. A. (1998). Focusing events, mobilization, and agenda setting. *Journal of Public Policy, 18*(1), pp. 53-74.

Birkland, T. A. (2006). *Lessons of Disaster: Policy Change After Catastrophic Events.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Birkland, T. A., & Lawrence, R. G. (2009). Media framing and policy change after Columbine. *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*, 1405-1425.

Birkland, T. A., & Schneider, C. A. (2007). Emergency management in the courts: Trends after September 11 and Hurricane Katrina. *Justice System Journal, 28*(1), 20-xx.

Blair, J. P., Martaindale, M. H., & Nichols, T. (2014). *Active shooter events from 2000 to 2012*. Retrieved from the Federal Bureau of Investigation website: http://leb.fbi.gov/2014/january/active-shooter-events-from-2000-to-2012

Blinder, A. (2015, June 29). As church mourns, Biden adds his prayers. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/29/us/as-charleston-church-mourns-biden-adds-his-prayers.html

Blinder, A. (2015, June 30). Church mourns one more beloved victim. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/30/us/emanuel-ame-church-mourns-myra-thompson.html

Blinder, A. (2015, July 2). 2 weeks after killings, memorials still grow. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/02/us/grief-and-hope-resonate-outside-charleston-church.html

Blinder, A. (2015, July 3). Unnamed donors give millions to Charleston scholarship fund. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/us/anonymous-donors-give-over-3-million-for-charleston-scholarship-fund.html

Blinder, A. (2015, July 6). Debate over Confederate flag is set to move inside South Carolina's capitol. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/06/us/south-carolina-legislators-gird-for-confederate-flag-debate.html

Blinder, A. (2015, July 7). South Carolina's senators take step to remove the Confederate flag. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/07/us/south-carolina-capitol-confederate-battle-flag.html

Blinder, A. (2015, July 8). Opponents of Confederate flag win one round, but a fight still looms. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/08/us/confederate-batttle-flag-debate-charleston-shooting.html

Blinder, A., & Fausset, R. (2015, July 10). South Carolina house votes to remove Confederate flag. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/10/us/confederate-flag-south-carolina.html

Blinder, A., & Fernandez, M. (2015, June 20). Outrage vs. tradition, wrapped in a high-flying flag of Dixie. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/outrage-vs-tradition-wrapped-in-a-confederate-flag.html

Borda, J. L., & Mackey-Kallis, S. (2004). A model for crisis management. In D. P. Millar & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Responding to crisis: A rhetorical approach to crisis communication* (pp. 117-137). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Boutilier, R. (2012). A stakeholder approach to issues management. New York, N.Y.: Business Expert Press, LLC. Retrieved from Amazon.com.

Bronn, P. S., & Bronn, C. (2002). Issues management as a basis for strategic orientation. *Journal of Public Affairs, 2*(4), 247-258.

Bronner, E. (2012, July 25). Other states, and other times, would have posed obstacles for gunman. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Bronner, E. (2012, August 2). Tough legal issues converge in Colorado shooting case. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Brown, R. (2013, January 8). Youth charged with plotting school attack. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/08/us/alabama-teenager-charged-in-plot-to-stage-mass-attack.html

Brown, T. S. (2003). Powerful crisis communications lessons. *Public Relations Quarterly*, *48*(4), 31-34. Retrieved from Communication & Mass Media Complete database.

Buckley, C. (2012, December 17). A painful task in a community preparing to bury its children. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/nyregion/in-newtown-finding-words-for-a-mother-burying-her-boy.html

Calmes, J. (2012, December 18). After tragedy, partisanship may cool a bit. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/us/politics/newtown-tragedy-may-soften-hearts-in-washington.html

Calmes, J., & Weisman, J. (2012, December 20). Obama and Boehner diverge sharply on fiscal plan. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/us/politics/obama-says-republicans-given-fair-deal.html

Capretto, L. (2015, October 21). Shooting victim sent heartbreaking text to her mom just before attack. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/ aurora-shooting-victim-mom_us_5626a40fe4b0bce34702b33c?utm_hp_ref=aurora-shooting

Carey, B. (2012, December 15). Tips for talking to children about the shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/health/tips-for-talking-to-children-about-the-elementary-school-mass-shooting.html

Carey B. (2012, December 17). Tips for talking to children about the shooting. *The New York Times*, p. A26.

Carr, D. (2012, December 24). A TV voice rang true in clamor of shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/24/business/media/john-miller-of-cbs-at-home-on-both-sides-of-the-police-tape.html

Carter, B. (2013, January 14). Real-world killings pressure TV fiction. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/14/arts/television/real-violence-puts-pressure-on-tv-fiction.html

Cave, D. (2012, July 25). At a nation's only gun shop, looking north in disbelief. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Chase, W.H. (1984). *Issue management - Origins of the future*. Stamford, CT: Issue Action Publications

Chozick, A. (2015, June 24). Clinton says Confederate flag 'shouldn't fly anywhere.' *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/24/us/politics/hillary-clinton-says-confederate-flag-shouldnt-fly-anywhere.html

Chyi, H., & McCombs, M. (2004). Media salience and the process of framing: Coverage of the Columbine school shootings. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 81*, 22-35.

Cieply, M. & Barnes, B. (2012, July 21). Hollywood struggles for proper response to shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Clifford, S. (2012, December 19). Some gun retailers make changes after school shootings. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/business/some-gun-retailers-make-changes-in-aftermath-of-newtown-shootings.html

Clifford, S. (2012, December 22). Shop owners report rise in firearm sales as buyers fear possible new laws. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/22/nyregion/gun-shop-owners-report-spike-in-sales-as-enthusiasts-fear-possible-new-laws.html

Cohen, P. (2012, July 31). 'Dark Knight' composer writes song for victims. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Coombs, W. T. (1999). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Coombs, W. T. (2012). Crisis communication and its allied fields. In Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, J. S. (Eds.). *The handbook of crisis communication* (pp. 17-53). Malden, MA: Wiley- Blackwell.

Coombs, W. T. (2012). Parameters for crisis communication. In Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, J. S. (Eds.). *The handbook of crisis communication* (pp. 17-53). Malden, MA: Wiley- Blackwell.

Coombs, W. T. & Holladay, S. J. (2001). An extended examination of the crisis situations: A fusion of the relational management and symbolic approaches. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 13*(4), 321-340.

Coombs, W. T. & Holladay, S. J. (2012). The paracrisis: The challenges created by publicly managing crisis prevention. *Public Relations Review, 38*, 408-415.

Coombs, W. T. & Holladay, S. J. (Eds.). (2012). *The handbook of crisis communication.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Confessore, N., Cooper, M., & Luo, M. (2012, December 18). Silent since shootings, N.R.A. could face challenge to political power. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/nyregion/silent-since-shootings-nra-could-face-challenge-to-political-power.html

Cooper, H. (2012, July 26). Obama delivers defense of his policy efforts. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Cooper, M. (2012, December 16). Debate on gun control is revived, amid a trend toward fewer restrictions. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/us/politics/connecticut-shooting-revives-gun-control-debate.html

Cooper, M. (2013, January 12). Gun sales surge as nation weighs tougher limits. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/12/us/as-us-weighs-new-rules-sales-of-guns-and-ammunition-surge.html

Corasaniti, N., Pérez-Peña, R., & Alvarez, L. (2015, June 19). Charleston massacre suspect held as city grieves. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/us/charleston-church-shooting.html

Coscarelli, J. (2015, June 21). D.J.s at urban radio stations offer comfort and community after shootings. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/21/arts/radio-djs-offer-comfort-and-community-after-charleston-church-killings.html

Cushman, Jr., J. H. (2012, July 28). Man held in Maryland threats had 25 guns, police say. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Cutler, A. (2004). Methodological failure: The use of case study method by public relations researchers. *Public Relations Review, 30*, 365-375.

Dao, J. (2012, July 24, 2012). Aurora gunman's arsenal: Shotgun, semiautomatic rifle and, at the end, a pistol. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Darlin, D., & Merrill, J. B. (2015, June 27). Honoring Confederates, for thousands of miles. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/upshot/honors-for-confederates-for-thousands-of-miles.html

Darmon, K., Fitzpatrick, K., & Bronstein, C. (2008). Krafting the obesity message: A case study in framing and issues management. *Public Relations Review 34,* 373–379.

de Bussy, N.,M., & Kelly, L. (2010). Stakeholders, politics and power. *Journal of Communication Management, 14*(4), 289-305.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative* Research. Newbury Park: Sage.

Dixon, C. (2015, July 1). Charleston gathers for farewell a 9th time. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/01/us/charleston-gathers-for-farewell-a-9th-time.html

Dixon, C. (2015, July 8). South Carolina legislators to watch on Confederate flag bill. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/08/us/south-carolina-legislators-to-watch-on-confederate-flag-bill.html

Dolnick, S. & Grynbaum, M. M. (2012, December 15). Two educators are recalled as going the extra mile for students. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/nyregion/sandy-hook-principal-and-school-psychologist-went-the-extra-mile.html

Dolnick, S., & Wilson, M. (2012, December 18). Seeking comfort in song amid the whiz of bullets. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/nyregion/amid-the-whiz-of-bullets-seeking-comfort-in-song.html

Downs, A. (1972). Up and down with ecology-The 'issue-attention cycle.' *The Public Interest 28*, 38-50.

Duggan, D. (2012, December 20). Cruz consoles family of his hero. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/sports/football/giants-victor-cruz-visits-family-of-boy-killed-in-newtown.html

Duhe, S. F., & Zoch, L. M. (1994). Framing the media's agenda during a crisis. *Public Relations Quarterly*, *39*(4), 42-45.

Duriau V., Reger R., Pfarrer M. D. (2007). A content analysis of the content analysis literature in organization studies: Research themes, data sources, and methodological refinements. *Organizational Research Methods, 10*, 5-34.

Dwyer, J. (2012, August 10). If guns do not kill, tax the bullets. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/10/nyregion/taxing-bullets-as-de-facto-gun-control.html

Dwyer, J. (2012, December 15). 'There's been a shooting': Running and hoping to find a child safe. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/nyregion/after-newtown-shooting-running-and-hoping-to-find-a-child-safe.html

Dwyer, J. & Rueb, E. S. (2012, December 16). In a town of traditions, grief engulfs holiday joy. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/nyregion/for-newtown-horror-halts-a-season-of-celebration.html

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(4), 548–549.

Eligon, J. (2015, June 24). Charleston unites but seeks lasting change. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/24/us/charleston-residents-seek-lasting-change-from-moment-of-unity.html

Eligon, J., & Fausset, R. (2015, June 22). Defiant show of unity in church that lost 9 to racial violence. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/us/ame-church-in-charleston-reopens-as-congregation-mourns-shooting-victims.html

Eligon, J., & Fausset, R. (2015, June 21). Moving on, a southern tourist destination exhibits life after death. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/21/us/after-killings-a-southern-tourist-destination-charleston-remains-calm-and-open.html

Eligon, J., Kovaleski, S. F., & Santora, M. (2012, July 23). Obama consoles Aurora as city begins healing. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Eligon, J., & Santora, M. (2012, July 22). Police at home of Colorado suspect disarm major threats. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62*, 107-115.

Enander, A., Lajksjo, O., & Tedfeldt, E. (2010). A tear in the social fabric: Communities dealing with socially generated crises. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management, 18*(1), 39-48.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication 43*(4), 51-58.

Falkheimer, J., & Heide, M. (2006). Multicultural crisis communication: Towards a social constructionist perspective. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management, 14*(1), 180-189.

Fandos, N. (2015, June 21). Clinton says America's struggle with racism is 'far from finished.' *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/21/us/politics/hillary-clinton-calls-americas-struggle-with-racism-far-from-over.html

Fausset, R. (2015, June 20). Steeped in racial history, Charleston ponders future after massacre. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/steeped-in-racial-history-charleston-reflects-on-its-relationship-with-blacks.html

Fausset, R. (2015, June 24). Governor points to personal reasons, not politics, for shift on Confederate flag. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/24/us/politics/south-carolina-governor-nikki-r-haley-points-to-personal-reasons-not-politics-for-shift-on-confederate-flag.html

Fausset, R. (2015, July 8). 'Complicated' support for flag in white south. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/08/us/a-georgia-county-where-the-rebel-flag-is-still-revered.html

Fausset, R., & Blinder, A. (2015, July 11). Era ends as South Carolina lowers Confederate flag *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/11/us/south-carolina-confederate-flag.html

Fausset, R., & Blinder, A. (2015, July 9). Oratory shows deep divisions on rebel flag. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/09/us/confederate-flag-debate-south-carolina-house.html

Fausset, R., & Blinder, A. (2015, July 10). South Carolina settles its decades-old dispute over a Confederate flag. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/10/us/relief-and-resentment-after-confederate-flag-vote-in-south-carolina.html

Fausset, R., Eligon, J., Horowitz, J., & Robles, F. (2015, June 21). A hectic day at church, and then a hellish visitor. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/21/us/a-day-at-the-statehouse-and-a-night-of-slaughter.html

Fearn-Banks, K. (2011). *Crisis communications: A casebook approach* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Fender, J., & Ingold, J. (2013, January 9). James Holmes preliminary hearing: Holmes took photos of Aurora theater in advance. *The Denver Post.* Retrieved from http://www.denverpost.com/2013/01/09/james-holmes-preliminary-hearing-holmes-took-photos-of-aurora-theater-in-advance/

Fernandez, M. (2012, August 16). Appeals court delays trial in Fort Hood shooting to rule on question of beard. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/16/us/fort-hood-shooting-trial-delayed-pending-ruling-on-beard.html

Fink, S. (1986). *Crisis management: Planning for the inevitable*. New York, NY: AMACOM.

Fink, S. (2013). *Crisis communications: The definitive guide to managing the message.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Flegenheimer, M., & Somaiya, R. (2012, December 16). A mother, a gun enthusiast and the first victim. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/nyregion/friends-of-gunmans-mother-his-first-victim-recall-her-as-generous.html

Fleming, A. (2012). *Gun Policy in the United States and Canada: The Impact of Mass Murders and Assassinations on Gun Control*. New York: Continuum Publishing.

Fleming, A. K., Rutledge, P. E., Dixon, G. C. and Peralta, J. S. (2016), When the smoke clears: Focusing events, issue definition, strategic framing, and the politics of gun control. *Social Science Quarterly, 97*, 1144–1156

Fox, J. A., & DeLateur, M. J. (2014). Mass shootings in America: Moving beyond Newtown. *Homicide Studies, 18*(1) 125-145.

Franke-Ruta, G. (2012, July 20). Obama, Romney statements on Aurora, Colorado, shooting. The Atlantic. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/ archive/2012/07/obama-romney-statements-on-aurora-colorado-shooting/260108/

Freedman, S. G. (2012, December 29). In a crisis, humanists seem absent. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/29/us/on-religion-where-are-the-humanists.html

Freeman, M. (2014). The hermeneutical aesthetics of thick description. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20*(6), 827-833.

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach.* Boston, MA: Pitman Publishing.

Frey, L. R., Botan, C. H., Friedman, P. G., & Kreps, G. L. (1992*). Interpreting communication research: A case study approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Friedman, A. L. & Miles, S. (2002). Developing stakeholder theory. *Journal of Management Studies*, *39*(1), 1-21.

Friedman, M. D. (2012, December 18). In gun debate, a misguided focus on mental illness. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/health/a-misguided-focus-on-mental-illness-in-gun-control-debate.html

Frooman, J. (1999). Stakeholder influence strategies. *Academy of Management Review, 24*(2), 191-205.

Frosch, D. (2012, July 22). An 'all-America city' turns inward in a search for answers that may never come. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Frosch, D. (2012, July 28). Colorado shooting suspect was getting psychiatric care. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Frosch, D., & Johnson, K. (2012, July 21). Gunman kills 12 at Colorado theater; scores Are wounded, reviving debate. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Gabriel, T. (2012, December 20). Many owners say semiautomatic weapons are just another hobby. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/us/owners-of-assault-weapons-dismiss-idea-of-federal-ban.html

Gabriel, T. (2012, July 24). Obama and Romney do not change course over outcry on gun violence. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Gerston, L. N. (2004). *Public policy making: Process and principles.* Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharp, Inc.

Gilpin, D. R. & Murphy, P. (2012). Complexity and crises: A new paradigm. In W. T. Coombs, & S. J. Holladay (Eds.), *The Handbook of Crisis Communication* (pp. 683-690). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Glaberson, W. (2012, December 15). Nation's pain is renewed, and difficult questions are asked once more. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/nyregion/sandy-hook-shooting-forces-re-examination-of-tough-questions.html

Gladstone, R. (2015, June 19). Many ask, why not call it terrorism? *The New York Times.*

Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/us/charleston-shooting-terrorism-or-

hate-crime.html

Goidel, R. K., Shields, T. G, & Peffley, M. (1997). Priming theory and RAS models: Toward an

integrated perspective of media influence. *American Politics Quarterly*, *25*(3), 287-318.

Goode, E. (2012, August 17). The night the E.R. staff can never forget. *The New York Times.*

Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/17/us/colorado-mass-shooting-tested-

an-er-staff.html

Goode, E. (2012, December 17). Rifle used in killings, America's most popular, highlights

regulation debate. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/us/lanza-used-a-popular-ar-15-style-rifle-in-

newtown.html

Goode, E., & Frosch, D. (2012, July 22). In dark theater, heroes in life and in death. *The New*

York Times. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Goode, E., & Stolberg, S. G. (2012, December 26). Legal curbs said to hamper A.T.F. in gun

inquiries. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/26/us/legislative-handcuffs-limit-atfs-ability-to-fight-

gun-crime.html

Goodman, D. (2012, December 27). Outcry over a newspaper's map of handgun permit holders.

The New York Times. Retrieved from http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/26/a-

newspaper-publishes-names-of-gun-permit-holders-sparking-outrage/

Goodman, D., & Wright, C. (2015, June 22). A show of solidarity in Harlem churches after

Charleston killings. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/nyregion/a-show-of-solidarity-in-harlem-churches-after-charleston-killings.html

Goodstein, L. (2012, December 20). Religious leaders push congregants on gun control, sensing a watershed moment. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/us/religious-leaders-push-congregants-on-gun-control.html

Goodstein, L. (2015, June 25). Massacre in Charleston is adding to security fears in places of worship. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/charleston-attack-security-churches.html

Griffin, A. (2014). *Crisis, issues and reputation management: PR in practice* (ebook). London, United Kingdom: Kogan Page Limited. Retrieved from Amazon.com.

Grunig, J. E., & Repper, F. C. (1992). Strategic management, publics, and issues. In J. E. Grunig (Ed.), *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management* (pp. 117-157). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Grynbaum, M. M. (2012, December 21). Bloomberg, incensed by shooting, pledges a stiffer fight on guns. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/nyregion/bloomberg-vows-stiffer-fight-to-overhaul-us-gun-laws.html

Gruszczynski, M. W., & Michaels, S. (2012). The evolution of elite framing following enactment of legislation. *Policy Sciences, 45*(4), 359-384.

Guggenheim, L., Jang, S. M., Bae, S. Y., & Neuman, W. R. (2015). The dynamics of issue frame competition in traditional and social media. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 659*(1), 207-224.

279

Gun control demands reiterated by theater shooting victim's father after CT school shooting

Friday. (2012, December 14). *7NEWS & TheDenverChannel.com*. Retrieved from

http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/gun-control-demands-reiterated-by-

theater-shooting-victims-father-after-school-shooting-friday

Hakim, D., & Kaplan, T. (2013, January 11). New York legislators debate details of gun law.

The New York Times. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/nyregion/cuomo-urges-swift-action-on-gun-laws-

but-offers-no-timeline.html

Halbfinger, D. M. (2012, December 15). A gunman, recalled as intelligent and shy, who left few

footprints in life. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/nyregion/adam-lanza-an-enigma-who-is-now-

identified-as-a-mass-killer.html

Halbfinger, D. M. (2013, January 12). Democrats urge Christie to back tougher gun laws. *The

New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/democrats-urge-christie-to-back-new-gun-

laws/

Halbfinger, D. M., & Kaplan, T. (2013, January 10). New York nears law tightening limits on

guns. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/10/nyregion/new-york-nears-gun-control-tightening-

laws.html

Hale, J. E., Dulek, R. E., & Hale, D. P. (2005). Crisis response communication challenges:

Building theory from qualitative data. *International Journal of Business Communication*,

42(2), 112-134.

Harding, D. J., Fox, C., & Mehta, J. D. (2002). Studying rare events through qualitative case studies: Lessons from a study of rampage school shootings. *Sociological Methods & Research, 31*, 174-217.

Harlow, W. F. (2013). "Compensation and Corrective Action as the BP Response to the Deepwater Horizon Incident." *Communication Research Reports*, *30* (3), 193-200.

Harlow, W. F., Brantley, B. C., & Harlow, R. (2011). BP initial image repair strategies after the Deepwater Horizon spill. *Public Relations Review*, *37*(1), 80-83.

Harmon, A. (2012, December 18). Fearing a stigma for people with autism. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/health/fearing-a-stigma-for-people-with-autism.html

Harris, J. M, & Harris, R. B. (2012). Rampage violence requires a new type of research. *American Journal of Public Health*, *102* (6), 1054-1057.

Haughney, C. (2013, January 7). After pinpointing gun owners, paper is a target. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/07/nyregion/after-pinpointing-gun-owners-journal-news-is-a-target.html

Healy, J. (2013, January 11). Governor of Colorado calls for stricter controls on gun sales. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/us/governor-of-colorado-calls-for-background-checks-on-all-gun-sales.html

Healy, J. (2015, June 26). Defense tries to put focus on sanity of gunman. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/26/us/defense-tries-sanity-focus-to-spare-life-of-aurora-gunman-james-holmes.html

Healy, J. (2015, July 2). Human toll in Colorado theater shooting goes beyond the testimony. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/02/us/full-toll-from-aurora-theater-shooting-goes-untold-at-trial.html

Healy, J. (2012, July 28). In Colorado, remembering lives that were, and might have been. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Healy, J. (2012, July 30). Mother shot at theater in Colorado miscarries. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Healy, J. (2015, July 15). Sides deliver last words in trial of suspect in Colorado shootings. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/us/sides-issue-last-words-for-colorado-shooting-trial.html

Healy, J. (2012, July 23). Suspect bought large stockpile of rounds online. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Healy, J. (2015, June 19). Testimony in Colorado of gunfire and loss. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/testimony-in-james-holmes-trial-of-gunfire-and-loss.html

Healy, J., & Frosch, D. (2012, July 31). Colorado suspect is told he faces 142 counts as case inches forward. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Healy, J., & Frosch, D. (2012, July 24). Court hearing in theater shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Healy, J., & Frosch, D. (2013, January 8). At hearing, police recall details of horror at Colorado movie theater. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/08/us/hearing-expected-to-offer-details-of-plotting-before-colorado-massacre.html

Healy, J., & Frosch, D. (2013, January 14). U.S. debate on gun laws is put to a test in Colorado. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/14/us/colorado-may-pass-major-gun-control-legislation.html

Healy, J., & Kovaleski, S. F. (2012, July 22). Pain and puzzles in wake of deadly Colorado attack. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Healy, P., & Martin, J. (2015, June 25). Sanders an unknown among black voters. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/politics/bernie-sanders-lags-hillary-clinton-in-introducing-himself-to-black-voters.html

Hearit, K. M., & Courtright, J. L. (2003). A social constructionist approach to crisis management: Allegations of sudden acceleration in the Audi 5000. *Communication Studies, 54*(1), 79-95.

Heath, R. L. (2002). Issues management: Its past, present and future. *Journal of Public Affairs, 2*(4), 209-214.

Heath, R. L. (2006). Best practices in crisis communication: Evolution of practice through research. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 34*(3), 245-248.

Heath, R. L., & Cousino, K. R. (1990). Issues management: End of first decade progress report. *Public Relations Review, 41*(1), 6-18.

Heath, R. L., & Palenchar, M. J. (2009). *Strategic Issues Management: Organizations and Public Policy Challenges*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Herda-Rapp, A. (2003), The Social Construction of Local School Violence Threats by the News Media and Professional Organizations. *Sociological Inquiry, 73,* 545–574. doi:10.1111/1475-682X.00071

Holladay, S. J. (2009). Crisis communication strategies in the media coverage of chemical

accidents. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *21*(2), 209-217.

Holpuch, A. (2012, July 20). Colorado movie theater shooting as it unfolded – timeline. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jul/20/colorado-movie-theater-shooting-timeline

Horowitz, J. (2015, June 30). Bush calls the Confederate flag a 'racist' symbol. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2015/06/29/jeb-bush-calls-confederate-flag-a-racist-symbol/

Horowitz, J., Corasaniti, N., & Southall, A. (2015, June 18). South Carolina police search for shooter at black church. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/us/church-attacked-in-charleston-south-carolina.html

Houston, J. B., Pfefferbaum, B., Rosenholtz, C. E. (2012). Disaster news: Framing and frame changing in coverage of major U.S. natural disasters, 2000-2010. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 89*(4), 606-623. doi 10.1177/1077699012456022

Hu, W. (2012, December 22). Varied paths toward healing for sites of terrorized schools. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/22/nyregion/after-rampages-officials-often-give-schools-different-life.html

Huetteman, E. (2012, July 27). Call to both campaigns for plan on gun violence. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Hulse, C. (2013, January 9). Guns and federal debt lead agenda for Pelosi. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/09/us/politics/after-newtown-congress-must-act-pelosi-says.html

Illinois: Governor wants ban on assault weapons. (2012, August 1). *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Itzkoff, D. (2012, August 9). Jokes about killings test comedy boundaries. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Itzkoff, D. (2012, July 27). Paper says it erred with comic's 'gunshots.' *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Jaques, T. (2007). Issue management and crisis management: An integrated, non-linear, relational construct. *Public Relations Review*, *33*, 147-157.

Jacques, T. (2008). A case study approach to issue and crisis management: Schadenfreude or an opportunity to learn? *Journal of Communication, 12*(3), 192-203.

Jaques, T. (2009). Issue and crisis management: Quicksand in the definitional landscape. *Public Relations Review*, *35*, 280-286.

Jin, Y. & Cameron, G. T. (2007). The effects of threat type and duration on public relations practitioner's cognitive, affective, and conative responses in crisis situations. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 19*(3), 255-281.

Jordan-Meier, J. (2011). *The four stages of highly effective crisis management: How to manage the media in the digital age*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Joslyn, M. R., & Haider-Markel, D. P. (2013). The politics of causes: Mass shootings and the cases of the Virginia Tech and Tucson tragedies. *Social Science Quarterly, 94*(2), 410-423.

Kaminer, A. (2012, August 16). Professor faces firing for joke tied to shootings. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/16/nyregion/professor-may-be-fired-for-joke-about-suspect-in-colorado-shootings.html

Kaplan, T. (2012, August 7). After shootings, a push for tougher gun laws. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/07/nyregion/after-shootings-a-push-for-stricter-gun-laws-in-new-york.html

Kaplan, T. (2012, December 21). Cuomo says he'll outline gun proposal next month. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/nyregion/cuomo-says-he-will-outline-gun-measures-next-month.html

Kaplan, T. (2013, January 9). Cuomo to press for wider curbs over gun access. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/09/nyregion/cuomo-to-propose-more-expansive-ban-on-assault-weapons.html

Kaplan, T. (2013, January 14). Upstate gun owners cast a cold eye on Cuomo effort. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/14/nyregion/upstate-new-york-gun-owners-cast-a-cold-eye-on-new-laws.html

Kaplan, T. (2015, July 11). Plan to require background checks for ammunition sales is suspended. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/11/nyregion/plan-to-require-background-checks-for-ammunition-sales-is-suspended-in-new-york.html

Kaplan, T., & Hakim, D. (2013, January 10). Cuomo and legislative leaders say they're close to deal on new gun laws. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/10/nyregion/cuomo-on-gun-control-and-storm-issues-in-annual-address.html

Kima, S., Avery, E. J., & Lariscy, R. W. (2009). Are crisis communicators practicing what we preach?: An evaluation of crisis response strategy analyzed in public relations research from 1991 to 2009. *Public Relations Review, 35*, 446-448.

286

Kingdon, J. W. (1995). *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. New York: Harper
Collins.

Kleinfield, N. R. (2012, December 17). Gunman took big supply of ammunition to school after
killing mother at home. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/nyregion/sandy-hook-school-shooting-in-
newtown.html

Kramer, A. E. (2012, August 15). Importing Russia's top gun. *The New York Times*. Retrieved
from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/15/business/a-kalashnikov-factory-in-russia-
survives-on-sales-to-us-gun-owners.html

Krieger, N. (2012, December 18). Quotation of the day. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/pageoneplus/quotation-of-the-day-for-tuesday-dec-
18-2012.html

Krippendorff, K. (1995). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Beverly Hills,
CA: Sage.

Laczniak, G. R. & Murphy, P. E. (2012). Stakeholder theory and marketing: Moving from a
firm-centric to a societal perspective. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, 31*(2),
284-292.

Landler, M., & Baker, P. (2012, December 17). Obama tells town 'these tragedies must end'. *The
New York Times.* Retrieved from
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/us/politics/bloomberg-urges-obama-to-take-action-
on-gun-control.html

Landler, M. & Goode, E. (2012, December 15). Obama's cautious call for action sets stage to
revive gun debate. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

boilerplatewww.manaraa.com

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/us/politics/obamas-reaction-to-connecticut-

shooting-sets-stage-for-gun-debate.html

Langman, P. (2009). Rampage school shooters: A typology. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*

14, 79–86.

Lattman, P. (2012, December 19). Dropping its guns. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/cerberus-to-sell-gunmaker-freedom-group/

Lawrence, R. G., & Birkland, T. A. (2004). Guns, Hollywood, and school safety: Defining

the school shooting problem across public arenas. *Social Science Quarterly, 85*(5): 1193–

1207.

Lee, M. P. (2011). Configuration of external influences: The combined effects of institutions

and stakeholders on corporate social responsibility strategies. *Journal of Business Ethics,*

102, 281–298.

Leonhardt, D., & Parlapiano, A. (2015, June 30). A march toward acceptance when civil rights is

the topic. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/30/upshot/why-gun-control-and-abortion-are-different-

from-gay-marriage.html

Lichtblau, E. (2012, December 21). N.R.A. leader, facing challenge in wake of shooting, rarely

shies from fight. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/nyregion/in-wake-of-newtown-shootings-nra-

leader-faces-big-challenge.html

Lichtblau, E. (2012, December 24). N.R.A. says it won't budge on gun rules or cooperate with

Obama's panel on violence. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/23/n-r-a-leaders-defiant-in-television-appearances/

Lichtblau, E. (2013, January 12). Makers of violent video games marshal support to fend off regulation. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/12/us/politics/makers-of-violent-video-games-marshal-support-to-fend-off-regulation.html

Lichtblau, E. (2015, June 22). Campaign donations linked to white supremacist. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/us/campaign-donations-linked-to-white-supremacist.html

Lichtblau, E., & Rich, M. (2012, December 22). N.R.A. envisions 'a good guy with a gun' in every school. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/22/us/nra-calls-for-armed-guards-at-schools.html

Lieber, R. (2012, December 22). Walking the tightrope on mental health coverage. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/22/your-money/walking-the-tightrope-on-mental-health-coverage.html

Liptak, A. (2012, December 19). Supreme Court gun ruling doesn't block proposed controls, experts say. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/us/gun-plans-dont-conflict-with-justices-08-ruling.html

Liptak, A. (2015, June 19). Supreme Court upholds Texas ban of license plates with Confederate flag. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/us/supreme-court-says-texas-can-reject-confederate-flag-license-plates.html

Littlefield, R. S., McRoberts, D. A., Novak, J. M., & Spiering, K. L. (2007). Visualizing the other. *Journal of International Communication, 13*(2), 31-50.

Liu, B. F. & Pompper, D. (2012). The crisis with no name: Defining the interplay of culture, ethnicity, and race on organizational issues and media outcomes. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 40*(2), 127-146.

Luo, M., & Cooper, M. (2012, December 20). Lessons in politics and fine print in assault weapons ban of '90s. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/us/lessons-in-politics-and-fine-print-in-assault-weapons-ban-of-90s.html

Maguire, B. Maguire, G.A. Weatherby, & R.A. Mathers. (2002). Network news coverage of school shootings. *Social Science Journal, 39*, 465-470.

Martin, J. (2015, June 22). A capitol's Confederate flag is a test for G.O.P. hopefuls. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/us/politics/republicans-tread-carefully-in-criticism-of-confederate-flag.html

McCormack, S. (2014, October 15). Harvard researchers: Every 64 days there's a mass shooting. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/15/mass-shootings-tripled_n_5992702.html

McKinley, C. (2015, June 16). James Holmes had homicidal thoughts 3-4 times a day, psychiatrist testifies. ABCNews. Retrieved from http://abcnews.go.com/US/james-holmes-homicidal-thoughts-times-day-psychiatrist-testifies/story?id=31814357

Mehta, A. & Xavier, R. (2012). Tracking the defining moments of crisis process and practice. *Public Relations Review, 38,* 376-384.

Meier, B., & Martin, A. (2012, December 25). Real and virtual firearms nurture a marketing link. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/25/business/real-and-virtual-firearms-nurture-marketing-link.html

Millar, D. P. (2004). Exposing the errors: An examination of the nature of organizational crises. In D. P. Millar & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Responding to crisis: A rhetorical approach to crisis communication* (pp. 19-31). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Millar, D. P., & Heath, R. L. (2004). *Responding to crisis: A rhetorical approach to crisis communication*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Mitroff, I. I. (1994). Crisis management and environmentalism: A natural fit. *California Management Review*, *36*(2), 101-113.

Morton, R. J. & Hilts, M. A. (2005, September). Serial Murder: Multi-disciplinary perspectives for investigators. *Serial Murder*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, San Antonio, TX.

Moss, M., & Rivera, R. (2012, December 17). In town at ease with its firearms, tightening gun rules was resisted. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/nyregion/in-newtown-conn-a-stiff-resistance-to-gun-restrictions.html

Muschert, G. W. (2007). Research in school shootings. *Sociology Compass 1*(1), 60-80.

Muschert, G. W. (2009). Frame-changing in the media coverage of a school shooting: The rise of Columbine as a national concern. *The Social Science Journal, 46,* 164–170.

Muschert, G. W., & Carr, D. (2006). Media salience and frame changing across events: Coverage of nine school shootings, 1997–2001. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 83*(4), p. 747-766.

Nagourney, A. (2012, December 19). States' leaders proposing steps to control guns. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/us/states-leaders-proposing-steps-to-control-guns.html

Neurendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Onishi, N. (2013, January 12). Lawmaker seeks public reply on guns. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/12/us/politics/in-california-lawmaker-seeks-public-response-on-guns.html

Parker, A. (2015, June 20). Returning home to console, a presidential hopeful joins the mourning. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/politics/returning-home-to-console-lindsey-graham-joins-the-mourning.html

Patterson, T. (2012, July 21). Police chief: Suspect bought over 6,000 rounds of ammunition through Internet. *CNN*. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2012/07/20/justice/colorado-shooting-weapons/index.html

Pauchant, T.C., & Mitroff, I. I. (1992). *Transforming the crisis-prone organization*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pérez-Peña, R. & Blinder, A. (2015, July 9). In impassioned debate on South Carolina Confederate flag, three voices emerge. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/10/us/in-impassioned-debate-on-south-carolina-confederate-flag-three-voices-emerge-.html?_r=0

Pérez-Peña, R. & Blinder, A. (2015, July 10). In an impassioned debate, two distinctive voices emerged: Michael A. Pitts. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/10/us/in-impassioned-debate-on-south-carolina-confederate-flag-three-voices-emerge-.html?_r=0

Perrow, C. (1984). *Normal accidents: Living with high-risk technologies*. New York: Knopf.

Podnar, K. & Jancic, Z. (2006). Towards a categorization of stakeholder groups: An empirical verification of a three-level model. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 12*(4), 297–308.

Preston, J. (2013, January 9). Arizona: Giffords and husband start campaign against gun violence. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/09/us/arizona-giffords-and-husband-start-campaign-against-gun-violence.html

Quenqua, D. (2012, December 18). Children can usually recover from emotional trauma. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/health/for-young-survivors-odds-of-emotional-recovery-are-high.html

Ramsey, R. (2012, December 21). Arming more citizens to fight gun violence in a gun-loving state. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/us/arming-more-texans-to-fight-gun-violence.html

Remarks by Mitt Romney on the shootings in Aurora, Colo. (2012, July 21). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Remarks by the President on the shootings in Aurora, Colo. (2012, July 21). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Reuters. (2012, August 5). Guilty plea is expected in rampage that wounded Giffords. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Reynolds, C. (1997). Issue management and the Australian gun debate. *Public Relations Review, 23*(4), 343-360.

Rich, M. (2012, December 17). The nation heads back to school with new worries about safety. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/us/in-wake-of-newtown-shooting-grappling-with-what-to-tell-the-children.html

Rich, M. (2012, December 19). Schools across nation look again at safety measures once dismissed. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/education/after-newtown-shootings-schools-consider-armed-security-officers.html

Rich, M. (2012, December 21). Real or not, world's end is trouble for schools. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/education/doomsday-prophecy-prompts-rumors-of-violence-in-schools.html

Rich, M. (2012, December 23). N.R.A. call to guard schools is criticized as too simplistic. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/23/us/mixed-reaction-to-call-for-armed-guards-in-schools.html

Rivera, R. (2013, January 6). Asking what to do with symbols of grief as memorials pile up. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/06/nyregion/as-memorials-pile-up-newtown-struggles-to-move-on.html

Rivera, R. (2013, January 14). Newtown debates building's fate after shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/14/nyregion/newtown-debates-the-fate-of-sandy-hook-elementary-school.html

Rivera, R., & Cowan, A. L. (2012, December 24). Gun industry uses leverage in Connecticut. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/24/nyregion/gun-makers-based-in-connecticut-form-a-potent-lobby.html

Robbins, L. (2012, December 22). Mourning a boy who flapped his wings, and 25 other lives in Newtown. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/22/nyregion/a-newtown-conn-boy-who-flapped-his-wings-is-mourned.html

Robbins, L., & Goldstein, J. (2012, December 26). Gunman's note said 'killing people' was what he liked best. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/26/nyregion/gunman-who-shot-firefighters-left-chilling-note.html

Robbins, L., & Kleinfield, N. R. (2012, December 25). Gunman kills 2 firefighters in an ambush. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/25/nyregion/2-firefighters-killed-in-western-new-york.html

Robertson, C. (2012, August 1). Handgun ban tests a British Olympian. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Robertson, C. (2015, June 24). Flag supporters react with a mix of compromise, caution and outright defiance. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/24/us/politics/supporters-of-confederate-battle-flag-watch-as-symbol-is-stripped-from-public-eye.html

Robertson, C., Davey, M., & Bosman, J. (2015, June 24). Calls rise to remove symbols of

Confederacy. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/24/us/south-carolina-nikki-haley-confederate-flag.html

Robertson, C., & Fausset, R. (2015, June 28). Southern customs yield to a new age: 'A flag is not

worth a job.' *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/us/straddling-old-and-new-a-south-where-a-flag-is-

not-worth-a-job.html

Robles, F. (2015, June 21). Roof's photos appear on site with manifesto. *The New York Times.*

Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/21/us/dylann-storm-roof-photos-

website-charleston-church-shooting.html

Robles, F. (2015, June 27). Police say they found rifle parts months ago in car of suspect in

massacre. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/us/dylann-roof-was-questioned-by-police-in-march-

record-shows.html

Robles, F., Fausset, R., & Barbaro, M. (2015, June 23). Governor joins the call to take down

rebel flag. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/23/us/south-carolina-confederate-flag-dylann-roof.html

Robles, F., Horowitz, J., & Dewan, S. (2015, June 19). Flying the flags of white power. *The New

York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/us/on-facebook-dylann-

roof-charleston-suspect-wears-symbols-of-white-supremacy.html

Robles, F., & Stewart, N. (2015, July 17). A church shooting defendant with 'a darkness to his

life.' *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/17/us/charleston-shooting-dylann-roof-troubled-past.html

Rocque, M. (2012). Exploring school rampage shootings: Research, theory, and policy. *The Social Science Journal 49*, 304-313.

Rogers, K. (2015, June 20). Charleston shooting reignites debate about Confederate flag. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/charleston-shooting-reignites-debate-about-confederate-flag.html

Rogers, K. (2015, July 10). Jenny Horne's plea to remove the Confederate flag. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/10/us/south-carolina-representative-jenny-anderson-horne-flag-speech.html

Rogers, K. (2015, June 20). Jon Stewart addresses Charleston shooting in 'Daily Show' monologue. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/jon-stewart-addresses-charleston-shooting-in-his-daily-show-monologue.html

Rosen, K. (2015, June 28). Two charged in flag removal at capitol. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/us/2-charged-in-confederate-flag-removal-at-south-carolina-capitol.html

Rourke, L., & Anderson, T. (2004). Validity in quantitative content analysis. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 52*(1), 5-18. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.wayne.edu/stable/30220371

Ruderman, W. (2012, August 1). A surprising pair, allied against violence. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Ruderman, W. (2012, August 8). Court prompts Twitter to give data to police in threat case. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/08/nyregion/after-court-order-twitter-sends-data-on-user-issuing-threats.html

Sack, K. (2015, June 26). Called to pulpit, then to politics in life cut short. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/26/us/clementa-pinckney-felt-called-to-spiritual-and-political-service.html

Sack, K., & Harris, G. (2015, June 27). Obama scorns racism in soaring, singing eulogy. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/us/thousands-gather-for-funeral-of-clementa-pinckney-in-charleston.html

Santora, M. (2012, December 23). A bleak procession of funerals for shooting victims ends in Newtown. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/23/nyregion/newtown-mourns-last-of-its-children-killed-in-massacre.html

Santora, M. (2012, December 28). Woman posed as aunt of Newtown victim to commit fraud, the F.B.I. says. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/28/nyregion/woman-posed-as-newtown-victims-aunt-in-fraud-scheme-fbi-says.html

Santos, F. (2012, August 6). Competence was linchpin for both sides in Tucson case. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Savage, C. (2012, December 16). Justice dept. shelved ideas to improve gun background checks. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/us/politics/justice-dept-studied-and-shelved-ideas-to-bolster-gun-database.html

Schannon, M. (2006). Risk, issue, and crisis management: Ten observations on impediments to effectiveness and what can be done about them. *Journal of Promotion Management, 12:3/4,* 7-38.

Schildkraut, J. (2012). Media and massacre: A comparative analysis of the reporting of the 2007 Virginia Tech shootings. *Fast Capitalism, 9*(1). Retrieved from: http://www.uta.edu/huma/agger/fastcapitalism/9_1.html

Schildkraut, J., & Hernandez, T. C. (2014). Laws that bit the bullet: A review of legislative responses to school shootings. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 39*, 358-374.

Schildkraut, J., & Muschert, G. W. (2013). Violent media, guns, and mental illness: The three ring circus of causal factors for school massacres, as related in media discourse. *Fast Capitalism.* Retrieved from: http://www.uta.edu/huma/agger/fastcapitalism/10_1/ schildkraut10_1.html

Schildkraut, J., & Muschert, G. W. (2014). Media salience and the framing of mass murder in schools: A comparison of the Columbine and Sandy Hook massacres. *Homicide Studies, 18*(1), 23-43.

Schmidt, M. S. (2012, December 19). Killer's mother was shot 4 times, official says. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/nyregion/lanzas-mother-shot-4-times-in-head-medical-examiner-says.html

Schmidt, M. S. (2012, December 27). NBC's display of a 30-shot gun magazine prompts a police inquiry. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/27/us/washington-police-investigating-nbc-over-gun-device.html

Schmidt, M. S. (2013, January 14). Both sides in gun debate agree: Punish background-check liars. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/14/us/politics/us-may-focus-more-on-gun-background-checks.html

Schmidt, M. S. (2015, July 4). Hate groups and suspect in contact, officials say. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/us/dylann-roof-was-in-contact-with-supremacists-officials-say.html

Schmidt, M. S. (2015, July 11). Background check missed Charleston suspect. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/11/us/background-check-flaw-let-dylann-roof-buy-gun-fbi-says.html

Schmidt, M. S. (2015, July 14). Clerical error cited in sale of gun used in Charleston. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/us/clerical-error-played-role-in-gun-sale-to-dylann-roof.html

Schmidt, M. S., & Savage, C. (2012, December 21). Gaps in F.B.I. data undercut background checks for guns. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/us/gaps-in-fbi-data-undercut-background-checks-for-guns.html

Schultz, F., Kleinnijenhuis, K., Oegema, D., Utz, S., & Atteveldt, W. V. (2012). Strategic framing in the BP crisis: A semantic network analysis of associative frames. *Public Relations Review*, *38*, 97– 107.

Schultz, F. & Raupp, J. (2010). The social construction of crises in governmental and corporate communications: An inter-organizational and inter-systemic analysis. *Public Relations Review*, *36*, 112–119.

Schwartz, J. (2012, July 21). In Columbine's wake, Colorado had become key player in gun law debate. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Schweber, N. (2012, December 21). Service held for mother of Connecticut gunman. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/nyregion/memorial-held-for-nancy-lanza-mother-of-newtown-gunman.html

Schwirtz, M., & Broder, J. M. (2012, December 31). Newtown the worst day of his presidency, Obama says. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/31/us/politics/obama-wants-gun-measures-passed-next-year.html

Seeger, M. W., Griffin Padgett, D. R. (2010). From image restoration to renewal: Approaches to understanding postcrisis communication. *The Review of Communication*, *10*(2), 127-141.

Seeger, M. W., Sellnow, T. L., & Ulmer R. R. (2003). *Communication and organizational crisis*. Westport, CN: Praeger.

Seeger, M. W., & Ulmer, R. R. (2002). A post-crisis discourse of renewal: The case of Malden Mills and Cole Hardwoods. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 30*(2), 126-142.

Seeger, M. W., Ulmer, R. R., Novak, J. M., & Sellnow, T. L. (2005). Post-crisis discourse and organizational change, failure and renewal. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 18*, 78-95.

Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2013). *Theorizing Crisis Communication*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell – electronic edition.

Seon-Kyoung, A, & Gower, K. K. (2009). How do the news media frame crises? A content analysis of crisis news coverage. *Public Relations Review, 35*, 107-112.

Shane, S. (2015, June 25). Most U.S. attacks are homegrown and not Jihadist. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/tally-of-attacks-in-us-challenges-perceptions-of-top-terror-threat.html

Shear, M. D. (2012, December 20). Obama vows fast action pressing for gun control. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/us/politics/obama-to-give-congress-plan-on-gun-control-within-weeks.html

Shear, M. D. (2013, January 10). Biden, meeting gun control advocates, vows action. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/10/us/politics/biden-meeting-gun-control-advocates-vows-action.html

Shear, M. D. (2013, January 12). Gun control group urges expanded background checks. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/12/us/politics/gun-control-group-urges-expanded-background-checks.html

Shear, M. D. (2015, June 23). Making a point, Obama invokes a painful slur. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/23/us/obama-racism-marc-maron-podcast.html

Shear, M. D., & Baker, P. (2013, January 11). Tough path seen by Obama on ban of assault arms. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/us/politics/biden-to-meet-with-gun-advocates-including-nra.html

Silver, N. (2012, December 19). Party identity in a gun cabinet. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/in-gun-ownership-statistics-partisan-divide-is-sharp/

Smith, M. (2012, December 28). Lawmakers look to boost guns in school. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/28/us/lawmakers-consider-ways-to-put-more-guns-in-texas-schools.html

Somaiya, R. (2015, June 25). A community's pain reported, and felt. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/charleston-newspaper-brings-local-perspective-to-shooting.html

Sommer, J. (2015, June 28). Does a pistol belong in your portfolio? *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/your-money/does-a-pistol-belong-in-your-stock-portfolio.html

Sorkin, A. R. (2012, December 18). Gun reform not a cause on Wall St. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/wall-street-invested-in-firearms-is-unlikely-to-push-for-reform/

Steinhauer, J. (2015, July 8). Black Republican sees barriers coming down. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/08/us/senator-tim-scott-finds-his-voice-and-others-ears-after-charleston-church-attack.html

Steinhauer, J. (2015, June 20). Gun control voices in Congress seem to lose their resolve. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/gun-control-voices-in-congress-all-but-silent-after-charleston-shooting.html

Steinhauer, J. (2015, June 26). Search for Confederate symbols finds them aplenty in Washington. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/26/us/politics/search-for-confederate-symbols-finds-them-aplenty-in-washington.html

Steinhauer, J., & Savage, C. (2012, December 18). Pro-gun democrats signaling openness to limits; town starts the mournful task of saying goodbye. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/us/politics/pro-gun-democrats-signal-openness-to-limits.html

Steinhauer, J., & Weisman, J. (2015, July 10). G.O.P. yields as flag issue roils Congress. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/10/us/republicans-back-down-on-confederate-flags-at-us-cemeteries.html

Stephens, K. K., Malone, P. C., & Bailey, C. M. (2005). Communicating with Stakeholders during a crisis: Evaluating message strategies. *Journal of Business Communication*, 42(4), 390-419.

Stewart, N., & Pérez-Peña, R. (2015, June 20). 'I will never be able to hold her again. But I forgive you.' *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/charleston-shooting-dylann-storm-roof.html

Stocker, K. P. (1997). A strategic approach to crisis management. In Caywood, C. L. (Ed.), *The handbook of strategic public relations & integrated communications* (pp. 189-203). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Stolberg, S. G. (2015, July 7). Even as museum piece, rebel flag is in dispute. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/07/us/even-in-museums-sounds-of-battle-over-confederate-flag-are-heard.html

Stout, H. (2015, June 24). As retailers move to halt sales of divisive symbol, some buyers stock up. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/24/business/amazon-big-retailers-remove-confederate-flag-merchandise.html

Sussman, D. (2012, August 8). Mixed views are found on stricter laws for guns. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/08/us/politics/polls-find-opposition-to-stricter-gun-laws.html

Swarns, R. L., & Robertson, C. (2015, June 20). Black church is target again for deadly strike at the heart. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/us/in-charleston-black-church-is-target-again-for-deadly-strike-at-the-heart.html

The Associated Press. (2012, August 1). Illinois: Governor wants ban on assault weapons. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

The Associated Press. (2012, August 8). Ohio: Man armed at movie says he wanted protection. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/08/us/ohio-man-armed-at-movie-says-he-wanted-protection.html

The Associated Press. (2012, July 27). Colorado: Judge bans release of school records in shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

The Associated Press. (2013, January 5). Giffords sees victims' kin in Newtown. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/05/nyregion/giffords-shot-in-tucson-visits-families-of-newtown-victims.html

The Associated Press. (2015, June 27). Earnhardt opposes Confederate flag. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/sports/autoracing/earnhardt-opposes-confederate-battle-flag.html

The New York Times. (2012, December 31). Body of Connecticut gunman has been claimed for burial. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/31/nyregion/adam-lanzas-body-claimed-for-burial.html

The New York Times. (2013, January 1). Father of gunman claimed remains. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/nyregion/father-claimed-connecticut-gunmans-body.html

The New York Times. (2015, July 4). Views clash where Confederate flags fly. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/us/views-clash-where-confederate-flags-fly.html

Thompson, W. B. (2001). Policy making through thick and thin: Thick description as a methodology for communications and democracy. *Policy Sciences, 34*(1), pp. 63-77.

Turkewitz, J. (2015, July 9). Aurora gunman legally insane, psychiatrist says. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/09/us/aurora-gunman-james-holmes-legally-insane-psychiatrist-says.html

Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. [Kindle edition] Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Tushman, M. L., Newman, W. H., & Romanelli, E. (1986). Convergence and upheaval: Managing the unsteady pace of organizational evolution. *California Management Review,* 29(1), 29-44.

Ulmer, R. R., Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2011). *Effective crisis communication: Moving from crisis to opportunity* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Ulmer, R. R., Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2012). Considering the future of crisis communication research: Understanding the opportunities inherent to crisis events through the discourse of renewal. In W. T. Coombs & S. J. Holladay (Eds.), *The handbook of crisis communication* (pp. 691-697). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Van Der Meer, T. G., Verhoeven, P., Beentjes, H., & Vliegenthart, R. (2014). When frames

align: The interplay between PR, news media, and the public in times of crisis. Public

Relations Review, 40, 751-761.

Veil, S. R. (2011). Mindful learning in crisis management*. Journal of Business Communication, 48*(2), 116-147. doi:10.1177/0021943610382294

Walsh, M. W., & Cooper, M. (2013, January 10). Big teachers' fund to sell its gun shares. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/10/business/california-teachers-fund-to-divest-of-gun-

stock.html

Waymer, D., & Heath, R. L. (2007). Emergent agents: The forgotten publics in crisis

communication and issues management research. *Journal of Applied Communication

Research, 35*(1), 88-108.

Weisman, J. (2015, June 19). Scene of carnage has long history of pain, pride and dignity. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/us/charleston-

killings-evoke-history-of-violence-against-black-churches.html

Wilson, M. (2012, December 21). Police dept. to use internet to try to stop mass shootings. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/21/nyregion/police-

dept-to-use-internet-to-try-to-stop-shootings.html

Wilson, M., & Roberts, S. (2012, August 1). City's used police shells, reloaded for market in the

south. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Wines, M., & Alvarez, L. (2015, June 23). Group promotes white primacy, and G.O.P. ties. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/23/us/politics/views-

on-race-and-gop-ties-define-group-council-of-conservative-citizens.html

Wines, M., & Saul, S. (2015, July 6). Supremacists extend reach through web. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/06/us/white-supremacists-extend-their-reach-through-websites.html

Wondemaghen, M. (2014). Media construction of a school shooting as a social problem. *Journalism, 15*(6), 696-712.

Wragg, D. W. (1992). *The public relations handbook*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.

Xu, K. & Li, W. (2013). An ethical stakeholder approach to crisis communication: A case study of Foxconn's 2010 employee suicide crisis. *Journal of Business Ethics, 117*, 371-386.

Yaccino, S., Schwirtz, M., & Santora, M. (2012, August 6). Gunman kills 6 at a Sikh temple near Milwaukee. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/us/shooting-reported-at-temple-in-wisconsin.html

Yee, V. (2013, January 13). Despite protests, gun show in upstate New York goes on and draws crowds. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/13/nyregion/despite-protests-upstate-new-york-gun-show-goes-on.html

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, Inc.

ABSTRACT

MASS SHOOTINGS AS ISSUE MANAGEMENT EXIGENCIES AND FOCUSING EVENTS FOR PUBLIC POLICY DEBATES

by

MELVIN GUPTON

December 2017

Advisor: Dr. Matthew W. Seeger

Major: Communication Studies

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

This content analysis of multiple mass shooting cases examines a crisis genre that is not as frequently studied as other crises such as natural disasters or organizational exigencies. Though just as rich with stakeholders' communicative exchanges and neatly traversing the three crisis stages, mass shootings have yet to be fully elaborated. To further the examination of these crises, this dissertation identifies those actors who hold the principal stakes in the aftermath of a mass shooting incident, and explores what these stakeholders are saying. By applying focusing events and issue management theories, it uncovers the prominent public policy issues reported in national print news reporting following mass shootings. Three cases were analyzed for teasing out the nuances of this crisis type: 1) a theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado; 2) a school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut; and 3) a church shooting in Charleston, South Carolina. At issue was what if any difference exists in the media coverage of the typical shooting incident, which stakeholder voices are most prominent, and what public policies emerge as dominant in the aftermath of a mass shooting.

The study suggests that community stakeholders are among the most referenced and widely quoted in the national press along with family members, national politicians and lawmakers.

Therefore, as mass shootings unfold, it would be useful for policy makers and organizations interested in managing or advocating for community-related issues, post-shooting, to strengthen relationships with community stakeholders as these crises develop. This dissertation also notes how mass shootings activate not just a single issue, but they can magnetize several competing frames at once, depending on the specifics in each shooting case. Those responsible for managing issues for their organizations, particularly public policy issues, could benefit from insights into the emerging nature of these crises. Although common elements exist in mass shooting coverage, the notion that no two shootings are identical is confirmed. Frame-changing in the print media is a common feature as these exigencies unfold.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Melvin Gupton earned both his B.A. in Journalism and M.A. in Public Relations/ Organizational Communication from Wayne State University. During his doctoral studies, he served as an adjunct instructor at three institutions: Henry Ford College, Walsh College of Accountancy and Business, and Wayne State University. Collectively, he taught classes in organizational communication, business and professional presentations, business and technical writing, business communication methods, basic speech, and composition. His appreciation for effective written and spoken communication is informed by a successful career in public service, after having worked as an executive for the city of Detroit's workforce development department, a local Michigan Works! agency.

His research interests include crisis management, prevention, and opportunities for renewal and recovery following the crisis "trigger" event. He also studies issue management, which resulted in a co-authored entry in the 2017 volume of the *International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication.* Other areas of interest include communication response strategies (apologia), media framing, and agenda-setting. Gupton has examined the role and relative influence of organizational and community stakeholders (company leaders, employees, media, shareholders, government, or the public) during and following a crisis. He is currently co-authoring an article on the issue of student college retention. His most recent publication is a co-authored book chapter on dialogic communication, which is included in Long and Gilchrist-Petty's, *Contexts of the Dark Side of Communication* (2017).