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Media Portrayals of Police-Involved Deaths in U.S. Newspapers, 2013-2016

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Media portrayals of police-involved deaths in U.S. newspapers, 2013-2016

By

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2018

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In the past five years, there have been numerous newspaper reports on police-involved

deaths (PID) in the U.S, many of which have involved African American males as

victims (Shane, Lawson, & Swenson, 2017). Police-involved deaths (PID) is defined as a

death of an individual that results from police action (i.e., by firearm, by electroshock

weapon [commonly known as a Taser©], or by vehicle). Given the amount of coverage

of police-involved deaths, it is important to investigate which PID victims receive the

most coverage in U.S. newspapers. This study merges three databases (*Fatal Encounters*,

the *Washington Post*, and the *Guardian*) which collect information about PID cases that

occurred in the U.S. Once a list of PID victims was compiled, Nexis Uni (formerly Nexis

Lexis) was used to obtain U.S. newspapers that covered PID incidents. In this study, I

examine the race, age, region, and manner of death to distinguish which of these

independent variables are the strongest predictors of the number of words and articles

used in describing PID incidents. Using a linear regression model, the findings indicate

that PID incidents involving African American males had significantly more articles and

words written about them than PID incidents involving non-African American males and

this effect remained after controlling for other correlates of PID incidents. Additionally, PID incidents involving firearm deaths received significantly more media attention as well. Given the amount of newspaper coverage on PID victims, the ways in which the media portray the victims in those contexts can influence the criminal process for officers involved in the killing. In addition, media portrayals of these incidents can impact policies that revamp the ways in which officers communicate with people of color, specifically African American men (i.e., cultural sensitivity training).

DEDICATION

My dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Marie Hermine Bastien Louine, and father, Jean Lionel Louine. When my father was 17-years-old, he moved to the United States from Haiti with hopes of providing a better life for himself and to provide his future family with the life he always wanted as a child. My father and mother, also a native of Haiti, met in the early 1980s and eventually got married and had three beautiful children: Mariejessica Lionela Louine, Jeannice LaToya Louine, and Jonathan Lee Louine.

My parents informed us that to excel economically and socially, we must obtain an education. My parents taught me the value of hard work, of being resilient, and of trusting in the plans God has for me and my future. Without the parents that God blessed me with, I am not sure I would have made it this far. I am glad I was able to witness the trials, tribulations, and testimonies of my parents to learn that anything worth having is going to take time and much sacrifice. I love you so much Mommy and Daddy, and I am proud to be your daughter. I just pray that I continue to make you proud with the decisions that I will continue to make in the future.

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Daniel and Jennifer, thank you for being my friends these past seven years and for adopting me into your family. I am glad that I not only got to know you but also your three beautiful children: Rebekah, Jacob, and Hannah. These children have shown me so much love and, of course, laughs. Daniel thank you for helping me to improve my writing and providing support to make sure that I was on top of things the first two years of the graduate program. I will never forget the friendship and mentorship you offered me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, August 5, 2014, a 22-year-old African American male, John Crawford III, was shot and killed by a white male officer, Sean Williams, of the Beavercreek Police Department located in Beavercreek, Ohio. Crawford was on his cellular phone while inside a Wal-Mart store. As he was walking around the store, he picked up a pellet gun that was out of its packaging (Izadi, 2014; Noble, 2017). He held onto the gun and continued walking throughout the store when another Wal-Mart customer, Ronald Ritchie, called and stated there "was a gentleman walking around with a gun in the store" (Izadi, 2014, para. 3). The Wal-Mart surveillance video showed that Crawford was still on the phone when police arrived and the pellet gun that was in his possession was pointed toward the ground (Izadi, 2014). In the video, the police officers entered the frame of the surveillance camera and the video clearly shows Crawford looking toward the officers before being shot and killed by the officer (Izadi, 2014).

After Crawford's family viewed the surveillance video they made a statement saying, "The Wal-Mart surveillance video and eyewitnesses prove that the killing of John H. Crawford III was not justified and was not reasonable. It is undisputed that John Crawford III was in Wal-Mart as a customer and was not posing a threat to anyone in the store, especially the police officers" (Izadi, 2014). Following the death of Mr. Crawford, a grand jury decided that the officers were justified in their actions and declined to indict

any officers (Izadi, 2014; Noble, 2017). At the time of this writing, the family of Crawford is pursuing a civil case against the police officers involved in the shooting, the city of Beavercreek, and Wal-Mart (Edwards, 2017). The Crawford shooting is one of several police shootings of African American men across the U.S.

Situations like these in which an individual dies as a result of an encounter with a police officer in the line of duty are referred to as police-involved deaths (PID) (Shane, Lawson, & Swenson, 2017). Most police-involved deaths are police-involved shootings, but PID also occur when individuals are fatally asphyxiated by police, die as a result of being struck by a police vehicle or as the result of receiving an electric shock from a conducted electrical weapon (Taser). Police-involved deaths (PID) have brought an outcry from members of the African American community (Brooks, Ward, Euring, Townsend, White, & Hughes, 2016; Stinson, 2016).

Williamson, Trump, and Einstein (2018) maintain that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement aims to respond to state repression and police violence that specifically targets African American communities. Williamson et al. (2018) contend that recent social movements such as BLM are due to the criminal justice system disproportionately targeting members of the African American community in police stops, sentencing, and deaths at the hands of police (2018). Williamson et al. state that the BLM movement has been involved in 780 protests that occurred in 44 states and 233 localities (2018). In reference to localities, these scholars examine how BLM would also get involved with political engagement to help African American people become more involved with politics and voting as a means to change the political dynamic to potentially elect someone who will support and represent the African American community (Williamson

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et al., 2018). Their study stated that BLM is a modern-day replica of speeches given by Ida B. Wells-Barnett about the lynching of African American men by whites (Williamson, Trump, & Einstein, 2018).   These scholars implicate that social movements help to not only bring awareness to unfortunate events that are taking place but will bring about change within communities.

Between 2013 and 2016 alone, there were more than 1,000 PID incidents in the U.S. each year (Stinson, 2016); however, there has yet to be official data produced by governmental organizations to help better understand the causes, severity, and consequences of PID incidents (Hickman & Poore, 2016). Because of the lack of nationally representative data, other sources have been used to understand the amount of racialized police brutality that takes place.

Official Data about Police Contact and Deaths

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), between 2003 and 2009 (the most recent years for which data are available), there were 4,813 arrest-related deaths (Burch, 2011). Of these individuals, 42% (2,021) were white, 32% (1,540) were African American, and 20% (962) were Hispanic (Burch, 2011). Burch (2011) stated that about 60 percent of these arrest-related deaths were considered homicide (2,931) by law enforcement personnel whereas the other 40 percent were attributed to another manner of death (1,882). The 2010 U.S. Census stated that 13 percent (38.9 million) of people living in the U.S. identify as African American (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). Thus, arrest-related deaths are disproportionately higher for African Americans.

In 2011, the Bureau of Justice Statistics issued a special report about police behavior during traffic and street stops and their findings indicated that African American

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drivers were more likely than white and Hispanic drivers to be pulled over in a traffic stop (Langton & Durose, 2013). In addition, white drivers were both ticketed and searched at lower rates than African American and Hispanic drivers (Langton & Durose, 2013).

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2015), the Police Use of Nonfatal Force survey found that an average of 44 million U.S. residents age 16 or older had one or more face-to-face contacts with police per year (Hyland, Langton, & Davis, 2015). Of those interactions 1.6% stated that force was threatened or used and 1.2% of the respondents stated the force was excessive (Hyland, Langton, & Davis, 2015). In these encounters, African Americans were twice as likely as whites to have excessive force used against them by police officers (Hyland, Langton, & Davis, 2015). African Americans (4.9%) were also more likely than whites (1.8%) and Hispanics (2.5%) to experience nonfatal force during these police-initiated contacts (Hyland, Langton, & Davis, 2015). Thus, while citizens of all races interact with police, these interactions are more likely to be deadly and problematic when the citizens are African American (Langton & Durose, 2013).

Problems with Police Violence in U.S. and Lack of Police Use of Force Data

Almost six decades have passed since the Civil Rights Movement, yet police violence remains a problem in contemporary America (Brooks et al., 2016; Hickman & Poore, 2016). According to Hickman and Poore (2016), limited research and policy efforts have addressed the impact of police use of force. Although the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, an act that required the U.S. Attorney General to generate information on police use of force, was passed in 1994, these data have yet to be

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produced (Hickman & Poore, 2016). As a result, there is not a nationally representative dataset to empirically study police use of excessive force. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act is the largest crime bill in the history of the country and a bipartisan product that took six years to create. The bill received strong support from President Bill Clinton, who signed the bill into law (Palmiotto, 1998). The goal of the bill was to provide 100,000 new officers, $9.7 billion in funding for prisons, and $6.1 billion in funding for prevention programs. In addition, the bill required evaluative reports of policing agencies, especially around the topic of use of force, to be sent to the Attorney General as a means of tracking the amount of police violence that takes place.

Two decades after the passage of this bill, that goal has not been reached. Currently, the only national-level data collection that exists on police-public interaction is the Police Public Contact Survey (PPCS) administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (Hickman & Poore, 2016). The purpose of this dataset is to provide national estimates of the incidence and prevalence of citizen contacts with the police, the reason behind the contact, and whether or not police used or threatened to use force (Hickman & Poore, 2016). Other databases such as the 2002 BJS Survey of Inmates in Jails (SIJL) and BJS Deaths in Custody Reporting Program (DCRP) have also been used to understand police use of force. The PPCS and SIJL both found that males, African Americans, and youth are more likely to experience force (Hickman & Poore, 2016). The DCRP findings indicated that 30% of those killed while in custody were African Americans and 56% of arrest-related deaths involved a person of color (Hickman & Poore, 2016). Because of the prevalence of PID in the U.S., the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in collaboration with major law

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enforcement agencies, has developed and is currently pilot testing a national database that tracks use-of-force incidents that result in the death or serious bodily injury of an individual (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017).[1]

To gain a better understanding of the incidence and prevalence of police-involved deaths, this study will use data from three independent databases that collected detailed information on police use of excessive force in the U.S. to better understand PID incidents. The databases include: (1) *Fatal Encounters*, (2) the *Washington Post*, and (3) the *Guardian*. The *Washington Post* and *Guardian* started collecting data on police violence on January 1, 2015, while *Fatal Encounters* has been collecting data January 1, 2000. Because *Fatal Encounters* is the only source that collected data between 2000 and 2013, data from years 2013 and 2014 will be used from this specific source. In addition, *Fatal Encounters* stated that the most representative years to examine for research purposes are years 2013 to 2016 (Burghart, 2017). The proposed research questions are twofold. First, what factors contribute to media attention in reference to police-involved deaths in the U.S. between years 2013-2016? Next, do the media, specifically newspapers, give more media attention to African American males involved in police-involved deaths (PID) in comparison to the coverage given to PID incidents involving non-African American males?

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[1] Participation in the pilot data collection (July 1 – December 31, 2017) is open to all local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies involved with the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017). The data collected include incident information, subject information (i.e., victim/civilian/individual), and officer information. Because this data will not be available until late 2018, no federal data currently exist that thoroughly examines the police use of force in the U.S.

Purposes of the Dissertation Project

The goal of this study is to determine if the media, specifically newspapers, give more media attention to PID incidents involving African American males than those that involve non-African American males. Newspapers provide more detail on incidents over time and many of the larger news organizations archive the stories they report. Thus, a detailed examination is best conducted using newspapers as the source. In addition, this project will look at other factors that may contribute to media attention based on victim's age, criminal history, manner of death, and whether the victim was armed/unarmed. These details are more likely to be included in newspaper accounts than other sources (Obasogie & Newman, 2016).

The media often provide extensive coverage of controversial events, such as PID incidents; consequently, the media play an important role in shaping public opinion about cases surrounding police organizations and police use of force (Klahm, Papp, & Rubino, 2016). However, the way in which the media portray police violence in the U.S. makes it appear as though this phenomenon is limited to only minorities, specifically African American men. Media outlets often disproportionately depict African American males as criminal; however, that can be due to crime in the U.S. being racialized (Inwood & Yarbrough, 2010; Mears & Stewart, 2010). Inwood and Yarbrough maintain that the process of racialization, at best, has problematized the concept of race and has influenced people's understanding of race as a social category. Omi and Winant (2014) defined racialization as the process of "making up people" by imparting social and symbolic meaning to perceived phenotypical differences (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 111). Here, the concept of racialization occurs as an extension of racial meaning through an unclassified

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relationship, social practice, or group (Omi & Winant, 2014). Racialization occurs at both the micro- (i.e., racial profiling) and macro-level (i.e., slavery). Omi and Winant (2014) argue that the concept of race is a representation of different types of human bodies that are used to indicate differences among people as a way of providing meaning and social practices that are ascribed to these differences (Omi & Winant, 2014). By frequently discussing PID cases in various media outlets, the media have the potential to cause racial tension among African American men and police officers in the U.S. These media frames may invoke fears of one another across these two groups and may make officers more likely to use excessive force when interacting with African American men.

In Chapter 2, I discuss how crime is portrayed as a constant phenomenon and compare that portrayal to the actual violent crime statistics in the U.S. from 2012 to 2016. In that chapter, I examine negative depictions of African Americans in media outlets and how those depictions have created negative stigmas toward African American males and discuss how these images have helped in developing the "*criminalblackman*," a concept coined by Katheryn Russell-Brown (1998). Throughout the chapter, I discuss how the media participates in the racialization of African American people as it relates to crime. In Chapter 3, I outline the methodology for this particular study. Because there is not a national dataset on police use of force in the U.S., I merged three independent databases on police use of force incidents in the U.S. In chapter 4, I present the data analyses and results of the study using a variety of statistical techniques. In chapter 5, I place the findings of this study in the larger body of literature and discuss some of the limitations and future directions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disproportionate Victimization of African American Men

Robinson stated that, at any given time, local news will dedicate 30% of their news reports to crime (2011). However, crime usually makes the national news only when a crime or series of crimes warrant national attention (i.e., incidents of police brutality). Consequently, an increase in media coverage of PID incidents does not necessarily suggest that police use of excessive force (i.e., police brutality) has increased; rather, it only indicates an increase in the amount of media attention around officers' decision to shoot and/or kill an individual during their interaction (Adegbile, 2017; Kleider-Offutt, Clevinger, & Bond, 2016). Adegbile (2017) stated that police violence has become a popular topic for discussion because of video clips, protests, and media coverage on PID incidents and argued that communities of color share concerns about the frequency and degree of police interactions, in addition to the use of force that is used within this organization (Adegbile, 2017). Though every community does share concerns about police force, minority communities believe that police officers often base their suspicions about who committed a criminal event on a person's race or presence in a neighborhood, not necessarily the evidence around the crime (Adegbile, 2017).

The disproportionate victimization and profiling of African Americans by police officers may be partly due to the negative portrayals of this racial group within the media

(Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman, 1990, 1992; Oliver, 2003; Peffley, Shield, & Williams, 1996). Additionally, the strongest predictor of negative portrayals of African American men is local television news coverage that primarily focuses on crimes committed by African American individuals (Entman, 1990; Oliver, 2003). Local television news coverage is thus responsible for over-representing African American criminality (Entman, 1990, 1992), providing criminal images of African American males to activate racial stereotypes of African American males (Peffley, Shields, & Williams, 1996), and depict African American males as perpetrators rather than victims (Dixon & Linz, 2000). By the news presenting African Americans in this manner, it may increase the negative stereotypes of African Americans, particularly among white viewers (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Kleider-Offutt, Bond, & Hegerty, 2017; Oliver, 1999; Oliver, 2003) and produce attitudes and beliefs that African Americans are more violent than they actually are (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). Because African Americans are often stereotyped as criminals and are shown in local television news as violent, it can influence bias among African Americans by officers that can ultimately lead to either a hostile interaction or death. The hostile interaction is due to crime in America being racialized as an African American phenomenon.

Omi and Winant (2014) contend that race is often portrayed as either objective (whereby racial characteristics are fixed or concrete) or illusionary (a purely ideological construct that has no real meaning). These authors argue that race is neither objective nor illusionary; they argue that race is real as a social category with severe social consequences. The authors assert that, historically, race has been defined by people's phenotype (i.e., corporeal distinction) and this definition has been used to discriminate

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against non-European individuals since the 15th century. That is, an individual's physical characteristics became a basis to justify or reinforce differentiation, one of the elements Omi and Winant refer to in the process they define as racialization. The authors maintain that the perceived differences between people became racialized in some of the earliest documents such as the Bible; however, race as a concept was not present until the arrival of Europeans in the Americas (Omi & Winant, 2014). This is when distinctions and categorizations of groups by race appeared in religious, science, and political spheres. People often used religion, science, and political spheres to justify the exploitation and oppression of African American people. Omi and Winant contend that the institution of African slavery was the first racial formation project that produced race as a master status of individuals.

Littlefield (2008) maintained that media have engaged in a system of racialization where they perpetuate negative ideas and images about race and ethnicity. She stated that while American society has claimed to be pluralistic and accepting of racial and ethnic difference, in practice, pluralism is enforced through Anglo conformity that excludes groups that are outside the norm and scope of whiteness (Littlefield, 2008). Littlefield asserted that the media are a primary source of socialization where its consumers are often transformed by ideas concerning race on a global level.

Research has found that negative ideas portrayed by the media often support the white supremacist capitalist hierarchy (Littlefield, 2008; Welch, 2007). Historically, the media have perpetuated ideas pertaining to race that leave African American individuals at a disadvantage. The media perpetuate negative images, popularize these images, and present them as defining characteristics of members of the African American community

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(Littlefield, 2008). The media are strategic in how they construct reality by controlling the images and the information their consumers receive (Collins, 1990; Littlefield, 2008; Welch, 2007). Because the media possessing a selective reporting schema, they have the potential to reduce the ability of the public to make objective, informed decisions because the information they receive is biased and controlled (Littlefield, 2008; Murray, Schwartz, & Lichter, 2001). Since people often use the media as a tool to understand American society, the media play a powerful role in the process of racialization because they perpetuate the dominant culture's attitudes and behaviors surrounding race and ethnicity. Collins (1990, 2004) argued that the power of the media to create attitudes is a new form of racism because the media produce and disseminate the ideologies individuals possess as a means to justify racism. By portraying negative stigmas associated with African American people, the media may cause people to dehumanize and stigmatize members of the African American community, which once again objectifies their treatment in American society (Collins, 2004).

While some may suggest that the goal of the media is to provide individuals with information, media scholars suggest that the media serve the interest of those in power (Grossberg, Wartella, Whitney, & Wise, 2006; Robinson, 2011). Grossberg et al. (2006) maintain that the media's ability to produce and reproduce social identities may be the most powerful and important impact they possess. The media produce a way for individuals to distinguish who they are and who others are within American society (Grossberg, Wartella, Whitney, & Wise, 2006). Here, scholars argue that there are several dimensions that help individuals to formulate their identity. These dimensions include, but are not limited to, political (citizenship), social (social roles), cultural (social

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groups), and economic (consumers and members of an audience) identities. Though these four dimensions assist in formulating one's identity, media organizations use their audience as a way to determine how to market the material they disseminate.

Grossberg et al. maintain that the role of the media is thus important in the construction of people's social identities. The media present images and descriptions of people's social identity; however, some of the images presented are often stereotypes, particularly when depicting racial and ethnic minorities (Grossberg et al., 2006; Lippman, 1922; Welch, 2007). Stereotypes bring about negative stigmas of other people or identity of other groups (Lippman, 1922). While some stereotypes are often ignored, there are some pertaining to the African American community that date back to the late 1700s and these stereotypes continue to misrepresent this group (Devin, 1989). Stereotypes in this context outline people's expectations of how certain groups within society are supposed to behave (Grossberg et al., 2006).

Though media organizations claim to present information that people want to read or view, the truth is that the concept of an audience is also a social construction (Grossberg et al., 2006). That is, the idea of an audience is not an accurate description of the sum total of individuals living within the U.S. The audience is often constructed as either a consumer or commodity. In regard to the consumer market, media industries research information about their consumers to encourage their audience to buy their products (i.e., newspapers). On the other hand, a commodity market is a specific object that is created to be sold (Grossberg et al., 2006). These scholars suggest that part of the function of the modern mass media has been to change the ways in which people view themselves. Some of the major topics outlined by media organizations have the

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capability of producing, reproducing, and maintaining perceptions of social problems (Altheide, 1997; Robinson, 2011). Thus, the more media coverage a particular story receives, the more it becomes salient in the mind of the media's audience members and influences their decision-making and the conversations that these individuals have with their peers. This suggests that these corporations have an agenda when reporting on various stories. While the media are not the only source where individuals retrieve information (individuals also gain information from peers, family, school), the media play an important role in how people construct their own reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Robinson, 2011).

Because the media plays a powerful role in the process of racialization, it is easy to understand how the media can influence the manner in which police interact with individuals, specifically African American men. Police brutality has been a pervasive media topic in recent years. Typically, police brutality cases that garner the most media attention involve a white police officer killing an unarmed African American male (Brooks, Ward, Euring, Townsend, White, & Hughes, 2016). These reports and public reactions to these incidents illustrate how the media have the capability to influence and magnify the tension between members of African American communities and police organizations (Barlow & Barlow, 2002; Lundman, 2003). This tension that is created increases distrust of police officers in African American communities and, in turn, may cause police officers to have an elevated fear of nonwhite persons (Abegbile, 2017; Lundman, 2003; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002).

Research has found that the distrust among members of the African American community is derived from media portrayals of the interaction between police officers

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and African American men, especially when excessive use of force is depicted (Abegbile, 2017; Lersch & Feagin, 1996). While police brutality is an unacceptable act, some of the negative labels attached to each group involved in these reports (i.e., police officers and the African American community) have increased tension and fear in these two communities (Lundman, 2003; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). One cause of this tension and fear is the way the media frame African Americans, particularly African American males. In many forms of media, African American men are framed as thugs, hoodlums, aggressive, and uncontrollable (Altheide, 1997; Fuller, 2005; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). When these racialized depictions are a popular portrayal of African American men, it can influence the amount of fear individuals possess toward members of the African American community (Knepper, 2008; Mears & Stewart, 2010; Rader, Cossman, & Porter, 2012; Welch, 2007).

Mears and Stewart (2010) maintain that the racialization of crime may influence whites' fear of crime. These authors mention that while stereotypes of African American males have existed prior to 1980, it was during this decade that the media increasingly equated race and crime to associate criminality with people of color. Because of this, most people believe that criminals were largely from racial minority groups, specifically African Americans (Mears & Stewart, 2010). The authors asserted that when controlling for social and demographic characteristics of respondent, interracial contact is associated with great fear of crime among whites. These scholars explain that this could be partly due to negative stigmas of African Americans (Mears & Stewart, 2010). In addition, Mears and Stewart argue that during the time of collection of the survey data they

analyzed, racialized views of African Americans as criminal were prevalent in the media and in public discourse (Mears & Stewart, 2010).

Since African American men are often perceived as criminals, it increases the likelihood of discrimination in criminal justice decision making or policies geared toward racial and ethnic minority populations (Knepper, 2008). The author argued that because crime has been racialized as an African American phenomenon, disproportionate arrests may be actually due to disproportionate involvement of African Americans in crime and the criminal justice system or they could be due to discrimination held by police (Knepper, 2008). He contended that the media, police, and politicians all play a role in representing whiteness that continues to perpetuate the idea that African Americans, specifically men, should not be trusted but should instead be feared (Knepper, 2008).

Russell-Brown (1996) asserted that the media too often depict African American men as criminalistic by nature. This depiction has the potential to influence how and why some police officers fear African American men or overreact in the way they interact with these individuals. If the media constantly portray images of African American men in a negative fashion, the portrayal creates negative perceptions for members of the African American community and these perceptions can easily become reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Because of the way that African American men are framed as criminal, aggressive, and violent, even when they are not engaging in any activity that should be perceived as a threat, the Laquan McDonald case serves as an excellent example of the impact of media framing. In 2014, Laquan McDonald, a 17-year-old African American male from Chicago, Illinois, was killed by a law enforcement officer, Jason Van Dyke

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(Andone & Almasy, 2017). In the McDonald case, on October 20, 2014, members of the Chicago Police Department responded to reports that McDonald was carrying a knife. When officers arrived at the scene, they found McDonald with a knife in his possession; at the time of their arrival, evidence developed later indicated that he was not trying to harm himself or others with the knife. Officers gave McDonald verbal commands to drop the knife; however, McDonald ignored the verbal commands and punctured a tire on one of the police vehicles with the knife he had in his possession and walked away from officers (Davey, 2015). Officer Van Dyke advanced on McDonald as he walked away from the police officers on the scene. Van Dyke then shot McDonald and he fell to the ground. As McDonald was on the ground, Van Dyke fired several more shots into McDonald (Andone & Almasy, 2017).

The police dashcam video that was later released showed that McDonald was shot 16 times, with nine of the shots hitting his back (Davey, 2015). After the shooting, McDonald was taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead. Van Dyke was charged with six counts of first-degree murder and 16 counts of aggravated battery with a firearm. Additionally, Detective David March and officers Joseph Walsh and Thomas Gaffney were charged with conspiracy, official misconduct, and obstruction of justice due to reporting false information about what actually took place at the scene (Andone &Almasy, 2017).

At the time of this writing, the McDonald case is still under investigation; however, the family received a $5 million settlement for the wrongful death of McDonald (Davey, 2015; Husain, 2017). When people learned of what took place in the McDonald case, many disagreed with the acts of the police officers and thought it was disheartening

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to see another African American man, who was not a threat to the officer, killed. The McDonald case is similar to other cases that have received attention from various media outlets, including local television news, newspaper reports, and coverage in social media outlets (i.e. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat).

Due to the recent deaths of African American males in the U.S. by police officers, scholars have aimed to address the root cause of excessive force used by police officers toward African American males that may result in "justifiable homicide" (Gilbert & Ray, 2016). The criminalization of African American men has been embedded in U.S. history, which has resulted in an increase in negative police behaviors and generated inequitable life chances for African American males (Gilbert & Ray, 2016). Gilbert and Ray (2016) argued that the number of deaths of African American males by legal intervention (e.g., police officers) has reached an all-time high in the post-Civil Rights era. These scholars defined legal intervention as "the killing of a person by a law enforcement officer or other peace officer with specific legal authority to use deadly force acting in the line of duty, excluding legal executions" (Gilbert & Ray, 2016, p. 123). These scholars maintained that death by legal intervention is the third leading cause of violence-related deaths. In addition, this study indicated that African Americans are 21 more times likely to be killed by a police officer than white males, and this finding exists across both economic and educational strata (Gilbert & Ray, 2016; Krieger, Kiang, Chen, & Waterman, 2015). African Americans belonging to the middle- and upper-class are just as likely to experience police violence as African Americans in lower socioeconomic strata (Krieger et al., 2015; Parks & Hughey, 2010).

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The McDonald case demonstrated that while he [McDonald] had a knife in his possession, he was not in violation of any Illinois law. In addition, cases like this one demonstrated that officers are willing to use excessive force in situations where deadly force is not necessary (Fyfe, 1988; Gaines & Kappeler, 2011). As previously stated, McDonald was walking away from police officers and, according to the *Tennessee v. Garner* (1985) decision, police officers are prohibited from the use of excessive or deadly force toward civilians as a means of preventing escape of a suspected felon or individual (Exum, 2017). In addition, the ruling specifically stated that officers are allowed to use non-lethal force toward civilians, especially when officers' lives are not in danger (Exum, 2017). This case, among many PID incidents, sparked my initial interest in understanding the amount of coverage that is spent on cases pertaining to individuals killed by police. It is also worthwhile to examine the factors that contribute to individuals being murdered by the hands of police officers. Though African American men are not the only racial and ethnic group murdered by police, I believe that the media spend more coverage on individuals who racial identify as African American because these stories are perceived as newsworthy.

Media and Crime

The Portrayal of Crime in the Media

In order to understand the relationship between media and crime, one must understand the structure of the media in the U.S. (Surette, 2011). Surette (2011) asserts that print media was the first to generate a mass market in the beginning of the 1830s. Prior to the 1830s, crime news was limited to smaller audiences. He maintains that the *New York Sun* was one of the first newspapers to include police-courts news columns that

increased circulation. This increased circulation caused other print media to follow suit and crime stories became an essential component of popular newspapers due to the interest of their audiences (Surette, 2011). Beginning in the 1880s, dime novels, which were fictional detective and crime novels, became popular entertainment as well. Thereafter, print news media began to dramatize crime and criminals and this continues to be the case in contemporary America (Surette, 2011).

Surette (2011) maintains that news that is presented is often perceived as factual, current, and objective. Because this is the case, news media play a role in how individuals construct reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Surette, 2011). Here, the author contends that crime and justice news report on real situations (i.e., events and people); however, these instances are often rare or specific segments of abnormal criminal events. Surette (2011) states that crime news stories are often presented in three segments: announcement, scene of the crime, and the identity and apprehension of the offender. He outlines that the news story often announces the crime that occurred and provides information about the crime incident. Thereafter, news viewers are provided visual information (i.e., crime scene) to have an idea of the physical place where the event happened. Finally, the news will identify the criminal(s) involved and the role that law enforcement officials played in capturing the offender (Surette, 2011).

In order for criminal events to be presented in the news, they must be deemed newsworthy, which is defined as the criterion used by news producers to decide which events would be selected to be broadcasted (Surette, 2011). Surette states that there are two models used in the creation of news, the market model and the manipulative model. The market model is often based on public interest, whereas the manipulative model is

selected based on the interest of the news agency and not the interest of the public (Surette, 2011). It is through the manipulative model that the news media will purposefully distort reality as a means to shape public opinion (Surette, 2011). The author maintains that categorizing news creation into these two models is inadequate because it does not allow news organizations to be objective and unbiased. Surette asserts that an organizational model of news production should be used because it allows news to be subjective in its reporting without being biased (2011).

Research has documented that media, specifically news media, often discuss or portray crimes as occurring frequently (Cavender & Deutsch, 2007; Deutsch & Cavender, 2008; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994; Huey, 2010; Robinson, 2011; Surette, 2011). This media portrayal of crime is not always accurate, however. According to the FBI data, crime decreased from the 1990s until very recently (2014-2016) (Levitt, 2004; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015; 2016; 2017); however, crime continues to be a popular topic of discussion among the media audience. In 2016, the Gallup Poll surveyed individuals living in the United States and found that 53 percent of Americans worry a "great deal" about crime and violence, a rate higher than any year since 2001 (Davis, 2016). This suggests that crime continues to be a relevant topic; its relevance, however, may be due to many news organizations subscribing to the Associate Press (AP), which is responsible for compiling thousands of news stories and sending the retrieved information to local, regional, national, and international wires. As previously mentioned, there is a hierarchy in media; because this is the case, media outlets that are owned by large corporations have disproportionate power to deem what is considered newsworthy (Robinson, 2011). Thus, one AP story that is unfactual and biased often

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spreads like wildfire throughout the country, with little regard for fact-checking or accuracy of the story (Obasogie & Newman, 2016; Robinson, 2011).

The media are an important source from which consumers obtain information about what is taking place at a local or national level. Though the news are a valuable source of information, scholars have found that individuals are attracted to (or more interested in) news coverage concerning crime compared to other events such as sports, lifestyle, and other topics (Dupre & Mackey, 2001; Katz, 1987; Paulsen, 2002). Katz (1987) explored why readers were attracted to crime reporting. After reviewing the New York and Los Angeles daily newspapers over a seven-year time frame, Katz stated that people were interested in the crime reporting because the reports helped to shape the moral attitudes that individuals have in regard to crime. That is, reading a newspaper that mentions a rape, murder, and/or robbery that took place in an area encourages members of the community to protest or encourage their political leaders (i.e., mayor, governor) to create policies that can reduce further chances of these criminal events occurring. Because crime has decreased dramatically since the early 1990s, accurate portrayal of crime in the media would be associated with fewer stories on crime, or more coverage of why crime is decreasing. This change in coverage has not occurred.

Dupre & Mackey (2001) examined five newspapers in various New England communities to attempt to understand the public's fascination with crime news. The authors examined the letters to the editor from civilians about their perspectives, concerns, and opinions of a given story. Their findings indicated that people were most concerned about specific crimes such as murder and sex-offenses. In addition, they found that there was little concern about personal crimes such as robbery and assault.

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The reason why murder or sex-offenses were viewed as most important was because the letter writers believed those specific crimes could happen to them.

The media have also over- and under-represented the crimes that are taking place (Dupre & Mackey, 2001; Paulsen, 2002). Paulsen (2002) stated that since the 19th century, crime has been a major component in news coverage in the U.S. Paulsen reviewed the ways in which news organizations reported on homicides to determine whether these news organizations were suggesting that homicides took place in specific areas. Paulsen contended that although homicide is a popular crime story in all media outlets within the U.S., when the crime involves a white victim, the story is more likely to be reported than when a homicide involves a victim is a minority. Despite the fact that murder is the least common violent crime in the U.S., murder is predominantly portrayed within news media outlets. When homicide incidents are over-represented in the media, it may cause an individual to believe that this crime is happening more than it actually is occurring. In addition, these inaccurate portrayals of homicides can potentially increase an individual's fear of crime (Crowl & Battin, 2016; Scheider, Rowell, & Bezdikian, 2003). According to a 2016 Gallup Poll, 70% of Americans believed that more crimes took place than in the previous year (Swift, 2016). Swift (2016) stated that media reports of high-profile cases may perpetuate the idea that crime is higher than what it actually is in levels found in the Federal Bureau of Investigation annual crime reports.

Chermak (1994) stated that the media present a distorted picture of the types of crime known to the police because media organizations define what is important about crime. The author asserts that the media rely on criminal justice sources for crime information, which in turn influences the type of stories that are presented in various

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media outlets. Chermak collected content data from six print and three electronic media organizations. His findings indicated that one-fourth of all crimes mentioned in crime stories were murders, a proportion much higher than the actual percentage of murders that occurred in official statistics (Chermak, 1994). In fact, some news organizations, such as the Tribune, rank homicides according to their audience attractiveness to the crime (Chermak, 1994). Chermak argued that death is news; however, newsworthy homicides cannot be an ordinary, everyday homicide but an event that is more dramatic.

Research has determined that individuals who watch news media portrayals of people of color as offenders are more likely to perceive racial and ethnic minorities as criminals (Dixon & Azocar, 2007). Scheider, Rowell, and Bezdikian (2003) maintain that fear is what drives the media to report on crimes in the U.S. Because many people are said to fear crime, policing agencies have increased police presence to reduce both crime and fear (Scheider et al., 2003). One of the strategies used to reduce fear of crime is community policing. Community policing helps to build strong relationships within the community and encourages individuals to get involved in neighborhood watch groups, youth education, and cleanup programs. Nevertheless, Scheider et al. (2003) found that perceptions of increased community policing efforts did not directly reduce fear of crime, but the community policing efforts did significantly increase resident's crime prevention behaviors. On the other hand, Crowl and Battin (2016), using a cross-sample comparison among college students, found that students were less fearful when police were visible.

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Media and Race

Parks and Hughey (2010) state that race continues to be a problem in contemporary America in the areas of education, healthcare, and economic upward mobility. These scholars asserted that African Americans, despite their socioeconomic status, experience mistreatment from their counterparts, specifically authoritative figures such as police officers. Parks and Hughey interviewed successful African American men and some of these respondents mentioned that even though they had accomplished several goals, their skin complexion still caused these men to be humiliated and disregarded by their white counterparts and even police (Parks & Hughey, 2010). These respondents mentioned that it does not help that African American persons are misrepresented in a negative way in media outlets (Lundman, Douglas, & Hanson, 2004). Lundman et al. maintain that members of the African American community are often framed as offenders and not victims because framing African Americans as victims is not newsworthy (Cecil, 2007; Lundman, Douglas, & Hanson, 2004).

Historical Portrayal of African American Men in the Media (1900-1969)

According to Russell-Brown (1998), the media image of blackness, specifically the image of African American men, is often portrayed in updated versions of centuries-old stereotypes. Some of the centuries-old stereotypes such as the Tom, Coon, and Brute, were caricatures of African American men that were created to bring comic relief or fear to white audiences (Bogle, 1993; Russell-Brown, 1998). In 1903, American movies presented their first African American character, Uncle Tom (Bogle, 1993). Though this is the first African American character in an American film, this role was played by a white actor made up in blackface. Blackface is makeup used by non-African American

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actors in the film industry to portray members of the African American community. In

the early 20th century, it was common for white actors to play African American roles,

because African American people were not allowed to be part of the movie industry.

While Uncle Tom was the first African American character, there were other African

American male characters used in film such as the coon and brutal black buck (Bogle,

1993). Each of those roles is discussed in detail below.

The Tom was portrayed to be a socially acceptable character to depict "good"

African Americans. Although the Tom character was hounded, enslaved, and insulted, he

never turned against his white "massas" (i.e. slave masters), and remained submissive,

generous and stoic. The earliest film that featured the Tom character was *Confederate*

Spy (c. 1910) where his role was to be a spy for his slave masters (Bogle, 1993). This

was also the case in *For Massa's Sake* (c. 1911), where a former slave sold himself back

into slavery to be by his master's side. Typically, these characters were sweet and well-

tempered individuals who never challenged their white superiors.

The coon appeared as an African American character that was used as a buffoon

(Bogle, 1993). There were two types of coons played in film, the pickaninny and the

Uncle Remus. The pickaninny was a child character that appeared harmless and docile.

The coon role first emerged in *Wooing and Wedding of a Coon* (c. 1905), which was a

film that depicted an African American couple on their honeymoon who were portrayed

as stumbling and stuttering idiots. The latter type of coon, Uncle Remus, appeared

harmless and congenial. This character was the first cousin to the Tom, and he was

distinguished as naïve and quaint. In the early 1900s, he was featured in silent films;

however, this character did not fully bloom until the 1930s and 1940s in films such as

The Green Pastures (c. 1936) and *Song of the South* (c. 1946). Similar to the Tom character, Remus was used as a means to indicate an African American man's satisfaction with the system (i.e., slavery) and his place in it. While Tom and coon characters were used to depict African American males, the most problematic characters in terms of character assassination of the African American community has been the brutal black buck. This particular media portrayal of African American males set the tone for the recent media trends that are the focus of this dissertation.

D. W. Griffith's film, *The Birth of a Nation* (c. 1915) introduced the brutal black brute/buck (Bogle, 1993). Both the brute and buck were portrayed as hostile and destructive, but brutes directed physical aggression toward white males while bucks directed lust toward white females. The negative images presented brought about controversy and the film was considered the most anti-African American movie ever released (Bogle, 1993). In *The Birth of a Nation*, life was portrayed as idyllic prior to the Civil War. The dismantling of the slavery through emancipation meant that there was no system in place to control the urges of African American people, African American men in particular. In response, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) emerged to restore order (Bogle, 1993). *The Birth of a Nation* depicted African American males as brutes and black bucks. The film showed that white women were the epitome of beauty and a symbol of white power. The use of these two characters amplified white fear toward African Americans.

The film not only attempted to re-create history, but it also revealed racial bigotry in the writing and production of the movie. The movie illustrated the director's perception that American society could only be functional when whites were in control

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and African Americans knew their "place" (Bogle, 1993). That is, African Americans must continue to be in a subordinate position and never see themselves as equals to their white counterparts. The film was both influential and detrimental to the African American image and continues to influence people's reality of race in America today (Bogle, 1993).

The result of these media portrayals of African American males (i.e., Tom, Coon, and Brute) was to stress inferiority among the African American race. In the early 1900s, the film industry produced and reproduced African American stereotypes that existed since the days of slavery and popularized these images in American society. The negative characters in the film industry stigmatized the African American male and portrayed the image that members of the African American community essentially acted or behaved in that manner in reality. The racial archetype that resurfaced in varying forms of media (i.e., newspaper, local television news, reality-based shows, film) has been the black buck/brute, which has transformed into the modern day "*criminalblackman*" (Russell-Brown, 1998; Young, 2006).

"CriminalBlackMan"

Rather than refer to African American men as a brute or buck, since the post-Civil Rights era the archetype, the *criminalblackman*, has been examined in scholarly research to depict how African American men are portrayed within the media (Russell-Brown, 1998). When African American men are portrayed in the news media as criminalistic, many people inaccurately conclude this is the typical race and sex of a criminal offender. The *criminalblackman*, a concept coined by Katheryn K. Russell-Brown, suggests that when one thinks of crime and/or criminals, the first image that comes to mind is a young

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African American man (Russell-Brown, 1998). Images of African American deviance are frequently so overpowering in the media that it makes them impossible to ignore (Russell-Brown, 1998). Because of the regularity of these negative images, the *criminalblackman* has become part of people's collective consciousness. Due to this, it is easy to understand why many people believe that African Americans, specifically men, are responsible for committing most of the crimes within the U.S. (Russell-Brown, 1998). In fact, Omi and Winant (2014) would argue that the *criminalblackman* is an excellent exemplar of a racial project designed to shape perceptions of young black males as criminals. According to Omi and Winant (2014), a racial project is where the concept of race has used to structure perceptions of African Americans to affect one's everyday experiences. Thus, because the media portray African American young men as the *criminalblackman*, these projects have negatively shaped perceptions of African American men across all strata and situations.

Stories found in local newspapers and on television in the U.S. paint an image of crime that is represented by the *criminalblackman* (Kleider-Offutt, Bond, & Hegerty, 2017; Oliver, 2003; Young, 2006). The characterization of the *criminalblackman* is based on the over-representation of African American males as criminals in the media and higher rates of criminal involvement relative to their proportion of the population (Young, 2006). Because African Americans are frequently portrayed as criminals, this group has become perceived as "the problem" or "typical criminal" as it relates to crime although statistics suggest otherwise (Althiede, 1999; Reiman & Leighton, 2010; Young, 2006). As mentioned earlier, this image of the African American male as the *criminalblackman* is not supported by empirical evidence. According to the 2015 Federal

Bureau of Investigation data, whites accounted for 69.7% of all persons arrested; 60.1% of all arrests for violent index offenses (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault); and 69.2% of all property index offenses (burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, and arson). Conversely, African Americans accounted for 26.6% of all persons arrested; 36.4% of all arrests for violent index offenses; and 27.8% of all arrests for property index offenses (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015). Based on those figures, an accurate media portrayal of crime would emphasize the group who most frequently engages in crime in the U.S. (i.e., white males) but this has not been the case. The media have chosen to focus on the 26.6% participation of African Americans that engage in criminal behavior rather than focus on the plight of African Americans who make up around 13% of the total population.

The distorted imagery of African American men, as it relates to crime, has caused people to view this group as societal "villains" and "monsters." Conversely, when crime is committed by white individuals, it is often portrayed as an aberration or a product of mental illness (Heitzeg, 2015; Young, 2006). As previously mentioned, whites are responsible for the majority of crimes committed. In addition, white individuals account for the majority of serial killers, mass murders, and school shootings (Heitzeg, 2015; Young, 2006); however, the narrative of these persons differs drastically from the narrative through which African American criminals are depicted. Heitzeg (2015) stated that privilege and power are often held by those who are white, male, financially stable, and heterosexual; this may explain why white individuals, specifically men, are depicted differently in regard to crime. Serial killers such as Ted Bundy, John Wayne Gacy, Dennis Rader, and Donald Harvey were often described as handsome and cunning

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(Young, 2006) while headlines following the Columbine school shooting asked the question: "Why are our kids becoming so violent?" (Heitzeg, 2015).

This is not how the media present crimes committed by African American youth. Rather, news stories will point out the race of the offender with a headline such as "Violence amongst Black Youth" (Heitzeg, 2015). By creating a narrative such as this in the news, the media influence the public to believe that violence only runs rampant in African American communities. In addition, when print or local television news present the offenders/suspects, white criminals are presented in everyday photos, whereas mugshots are used for African American criminals (Heitzeg, 2015). Framing the African American man as dangerous not only stigmatizes African American men, but also instills the idea that individuals should fear them. While this narrative is disheartening, the idea of an African American man as dangerous has been perpetuated and evolved over centuries (Heitzeg, 2015).

The Common Day Buck

Since the 1970s, African American men have been frequently been associated with violence and criminality, most often portrayed as criminal offenders (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Dixon & Linz, 2002; Entman, 1990; Entman 1992; Entman, 1994; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Gilliam, Valentino, & Beckmann, 2002; Heitzeg, 2015; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Johnson, Adams, Hall, & Ashburn, 1997; Kleider-Offutt, Bond, and Hegerty, 2017; Leverentz, 2012; Mastro & Robinson, 2000; Oliver, 1994; Oliver, 1999; Oliver, 2003; Peffley, Shields, & Williams, 1996; Reiman & Leighton, 2010; Tyree 2011; Young, 2005). These portrayals play a vital role in producing and reproducing the stereotype of African American men as "criminal" (Entman, 1992; 1994; Oliver, 1994;

2003). Members of the African American community are often stereotyped and encounter oppression across a wide range of dimensions in their lives (Kleider-Offutt, Bond, & Hegerty 2017; Oliver 2003). Oliver (2003) maintained that due to African American men being identified as violent or dangerous, this phenomenon has caused individuals, including law-enforcement officers, to profile members of this group. African American male customers are often targeted as shoplifters (Oliver, 2003); white women feel the need to pay more attention to their purses when in close proximity of African American men (Oliver, 2003). White individuals have also expressed a greater fear of victimization at the hands of African American men (Entman, 1990; Entman, 1992; Entman, 1994; Oliver, 1994; Oliver, 2003) and white individuals are more likely to place guilt on the African American offender compared to the white offender (Oliver, 2003). While all forms of media have been known to influence the perceptions of crime and criminal that individuals maintain, research has found that local television news accounts have the strongest influence on viewers (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Dixon & Linz, 2002; Entman 1990; 1992; 1994; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Gilliam, Valentino, & Beckmann, 2002; Johnson, Adams, Hall, & Ashburn, 1997; Oliver, 1999; 2003; Peffley, Shields, & Williams, 1996).

The Use of Racial Hoax to Intensify the *criminalblackman* archetype

In 1989, Charles Stuart reported to police that he and his wife were on their way home from a Lamaze birthing class, when they were shot and robbed by an African American man wearing a jogging suit. Stuart's wife, Carol, and unborn child died following the attack. Police officers invaded mostly African American neighborhoods in Boston to search for the killer. In a police line-up, Stuart chose an African American

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man, Willie Bennett, as the attacker he described to police. However, Stuart's story was inconsistent and his brother, Matthew Stuart, gave incriminating information about him that caused officers to shift their investigation toward Charles Stuart (Russell-Brown, 1998). Thereafter, Charles Stuart committed suicide and police officers later determined that Stuart planned a hoax as a scheme to cash in on his wife's life insurance police (Russell-Brown, 1998).

In 1994, Susan Smith, a white woman from South Carolina reported to police that she was a victim of a carjacking and the offender drove off with her two sons, aged fourteen months and three years old. She described the carjacking/kidnapper as a young African American male between the ages of 20 to 30. Following the report, Susan Smith appeared on national television pleading for the lives of her children and stating how much she loved her children. Approximately nine days after the federal and state manhunt for the fictional African American carjacker, Susan Smith confessed to murdering her sons (Russell-Brown, 1998). In 1995, a Delaware state trooper, Dawn Frakes, reported that she had been shot by an African American teenager. She described the shooter as light-skinned, between 16 and 19, six feet tall, and weighing 160 to 170 lbs. After a two-month investigation, the officer admitted to falsely accusing an African American male in order to cover up the fact that she accidentally shot herself with her service weapon.

The incidents of Charles Stuart, Susan Smith, and Dawn Frakes are examples of racial hoaxes that have taken place within the U.S. According to Russell-Brown (1998), a racial hoax occurs "when someone fabricates a crime and blames it on another person because of his race OR when an actual crime has been committed and the perpetrator

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falsely blames someone because of his race" (Russell-Brown, 1998, p. 70). Hoaxes impose social, psychological, economic, and legal costs on society and are serious criminal offenses; however, most individuals perpetrating those hoaxes are often charged with filing a false police report.

Cases that involve a white person who falsely accuses someone African American of a crime are considered white-on-black hoaxes and are most likely to receive media attention (Russell-Brown, 1998). Russell-Brown (1998) argues that racial hoaxes that specifically target African American men create more of a social problem for this racial group compared to hoaxes that target other racial groups because African American already suffer from the *criminalblackman* stereotype. By these white-on-black racial hoaxes appearing in news media outlets, the *criminalblackman* is consistently perpetuated, which, in turn, causes crime and young African American men to become synonymous in the American mind (Russell-Brown, 1998).

Russell-Brown (1998) maintained that 77 racial hoaxes were perpetuated between 1987 and 1996. She contended that 70% of racial hoaxes were white-on-black and most frequently fabricated assault, rape, or murder. In addition, more than half of the hoaxes were revealed as fabrications in less than one week; nevertheless, less than half (45%) of the hoax perpetrators were charged with filing a false police report (Russell-Brown, 1998). Racial hoaxes were not exclusive to civilians; legal officials such as police officers also engaged in those hoaxes as well (Russell-Brown, 1998). Russell-Brown argued that there should be policies in place to harshly punish those who make false police reports to deter individuals from engaging these acts. Even when the media release information to suggest that the original report was falsified, people will still

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subconsciously believe that African American men are the main perpetrators of crime (Russell-Brown, 1998). This is one of the major differences between television and newspapers because newspapers typically follow an incident from beginning to the end as a means of telling a story.

Print Media *(*Newspapers*)*

Newspapers have been used in the U.S. for centuries as a source for readers to obtain information at the local, state, and national level (Robinson, 2011). Though local television news and newspaper are similar in some ways, they also differ. Local television news appears episodic, which suggests that these organizations report on daily crime stories at once whereas newspapers are thematic (Callanan, 2012; Iyengar, 1991). That is, newspapers provide in-depth coverage of events over time in multiple articles, which allows newspaper companies to unfold their coverage of the issue at hand.

Similar to local television news, newspapers are often criticized for using negative depictions of minorities, specifically African Americans, and failing to report on social inequalities and problems that the U.S. faces (Lester, 1994; Spratt, Bullock, & Baldasty, 2007). For example, newspapers could have used the 1965 Watts Riot in Los Angeles or the victimization of Rodney King in 1991 by police officers to discuss some of the racial injustices among African Americans. Instead the coverage by newspapers often analyzed and found fault with African American victims in police brutality events (Lester, 1994).

Lester (1994) used newspapers from 1937-1990 to examine three distinct time periods to determine how African Americans were portrayed: the pre-Civil Rights era (1937-1956), the Civil Rights era (1957-1972), and the post-Civil Rights era (1978-1990). He conducted a content analysis of pictorial treatment of African Americans in

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four newspapers (*New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*) for Monday to Friday issues for March, June, September, and December in 11 years (i.e., 1937, 1942, 1947, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983, and 1990). His findings indicated that stereotypical images about African Americans (i.e., crime, sports, and entertainment) were reflected in all four newspapers across all periods (Lester, 1994). Nevertheless, the highest proportion of stereotypical images was found during the pre-Civil Rights time period. While negative images of African Americans in reference to crime decreased over time, some newspaper organizations continue to perpetuate the negative stigmas that exist among this racial group (Lester, 1994).

Similar to Lester (1994), Hawkins, Johnstone, and Michener (1995) examined newspaper portrayals of homicides in Chicago to determine if the race and class of victims were significant predictors of newspaper coverage. According to Hawkins et al. (1995), there were 684 homicide victims in 1987, including 482 African Americans, 95 whites, 92 Latinos, and 17 victims of other or unknown races. Hawkins and his colleagues researched the victims' names in two Chicago newspapers, the *Tribune* and *Sun-Times*. Their findings indicated that if a homicide victim was African American or Latino, they were less likely to be featured in the Chicago newspapers compared to white homicide victims in 1987, even though African Americans were killed more frequently (Hawkins et al., 1995). By these newspapers not reporting on the victimization of African Americans, it appears that the lives of these individuals do not matter or are less important than those who are white (Hawkins et al., 1995). In addition, victims who were killed in affluent neighborhoods were more likely to be mentioned in the Chicago

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newspapers compared to homicides that took place in poorer neighborhoods (Hawkins et al., 1995).

Even in instances when African American homicide victims are presented in newspapers, some reports suggest that the murder was the fault of the victim (Spratt, Bullock, & Baldasty, 2007). For example, Spratt et al. (2007) conducted a content analysis of newspaper accounts of the Emmett Till murder that took place in Money, Mississippi, in 1955. Spratt and colleagues examined two newspapers from Till's hometown, Chicago, Illinois (*Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Defender*) and two from the state of Mississippi (*The Daily Sentinel-Star* and *Greenwood Commonwealth*). They found that the *Chicago Tribune* newspapers discussed the murder of Till without discussing the larger issues of race, civil rights, and desegregation. The *Chicago Tribune* newspapers had negative reporting of Till; however, the *Chicago Defender*, which is considered an African American newspaper press, framed Till as an innocent youth and discussed how the incident reflected a pattern of white oppression of African Americans living in the South and how people across the country should work toward promoting justice for African Americans in America. In regard to the Mississippi newspapers, the *Daily Sentinel-Star* would rarely report on Till's case; however, the *Greenwood Commonwealth* would run one to three articles pertaining to the case and these stories often made the front page and included pictures (Spratt, Bullock, and Baldasty, 2007). The *Greenwood Commonwealth* frequently reported on Till's case during the murder trial and these stories were often lengthy, taking up half a page or more of print. At best, the Daily Sentinel-Star would publish one article in an issue.

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Actual Crime Statistics vs. Media Portrayal of Crime

To better understand how the media distort the public's perception about crime in general, and police brutality in particular, it is important to compare crime statistics from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), which is conducted annually by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to media portrayals of crime. Considering that the media often frame minorities, specifically African Americans, as violent offenders, the next section will detail FBI statistics on violent index crimes (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) from 2013 to 2016. According to the UCR, violent crimes are defined as those offenses that involve force or threat (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014).

Table 1   Violent Crime Arrest Statistics by Racial/Ethnic Subcategory, 2013-2016
(by percentage of group arrest)

Year	Race	Total Violent Crime	Aggravated Assault	Robbery	Rape	Murder
2013	European-American/White	58.4	62.9	41.9	66.2	45.3
	African American	38.7	33.9	56.4	31.3	52.2
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.3	1.5	0.7	1.2	1.2
	Asian	1.4	1.5	0.8	1.3	1.2
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2014	European-American/White	59.4	63.7	42.3	67.2	46.3
	African American	37.7	33.1	55.9	29.9	51.3
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.4	1.5	0.8	1.3	1.0
	Asian	1.4	1.5	0.8	1.4	1.3
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
2015	European-American/White	60.1	64	44.4	68	45.9
	African American	36.4	32.1	53.5	28.2	51.1
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.8	2.0	0.8	1.7	1.2
	Asian	1.5	1.6	0.9	1.6	1.5
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.3
2016	European-American/White	59	62.8	43.4	67.6	44.7
	African American	37.5	33.3	54.5	29.1	52.6
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.8	2.1	0.9	1.3	1.2
	Asian	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.7	1.2
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3

Note: Within each type of crime by year, percentages equal 100%

Arrest data from the FBI UCR for years 2013 to 2016 are reported in Table 1.

The results depict the arrests by racial/ethnic sub-category to demonstrate racial

differences in arrests. In 2013, an estimated 1,163,146 violent crimes occurred in the

U.S. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). The data presented in Table 1 suggest that,

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of all the individuals arrested for violent crime, 58.4% were white, 38.7% were African American, 1.3% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.4% were Asian, and 0.1 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). These percentages remained relatively constant across 2014, 2015, and 2016 as well.

Murder

According to the UCR, murder and non-negligent manslaughter is defined as the willful killing of a person by another person (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015). In 2013, there were 8,383 arrests for murder in the U.S. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). In regard to offenders, 45.3% of individuals arrested for murder were white, 52.2% were African American, 1.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.2% were Asian, and 0.1% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). These percentages remained relatively constant across 2014, 2015, and 2016 as well.

Rape

According to the UCR, rape is defined as "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim" (2015). In 2013, there was an estimated 79, 770 arrests for rape in the U.S. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). There were 13,515 offenders arrested for rape and, of those offenders, 66.2% were white, 31.3% African American, 1.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.3% Asian, and 0.1% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). These percentages remained relatively constant across 2014, 2015, and 2016 as well.

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Robbery

Robbery is defined as "the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear" (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015). In 2013, there were 78,538 arrests for robbery in the U.S.; 41.9% of those offenders are white, 56.4% were African American, 0.7% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.8% were Asian, and 0.1% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). These percentages remained relatively constant across 2014, 2015, and 2016 as well.

Aggravated Assault

According to the UCR, aggravated is defined as "unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury" (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015). This form of assault is typically accompanied by the use of weapon or other means to produce bodily harm (i.e., death). In 2012, there were 299,943 individuals arrested for aggravated assault in the U.S., with 62.8% being white, 34.1% were African American, 1.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.6% were Asian/Pacific Islander (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012). These percentages remained relatively constant across 2014, 2015, and 2016 as well.

The purpose of reporting actual statistics of crime in the United States is to illustrate racial/ethnic differences among Part I violent crime. Table 1 indicates that white men are more likely to engage in aggravated assault and rape in the U.S. in comparison to other racial minorities. Even when examining the number of individuals who are murdered in the U.S., there are not any large (greater than 10%) differences

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between white and African American males who were arrested for murder. Though this is the case, the media have overrepresented African American men as the perpetrator of most crimes that take place when white males have committed crimes at similar rates. However, the media are not framing white males as negatively as African American males. Thus, the media, particularly in local television news and newspapers, continue to socially construct "criminals" as African American males (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman, 1992). Until the media decreases the amount of negative portrayals of African American men, individuals living within the U.S. will continue to perceive these men as aggressive, criminalistic, and intimidating.

Police and African American Relations

While African Americans encounter negative portrayals in the news media, police officers are often portrayed negatively as well. Stinson, Reyns, and Liederbach (2012) maintained that police officers have the legal authority to use excessive force toward suspects and other citizens; however, limited research has examined the nature of police corruption and misconduct, especially in reference to the use of Tasers (Stinson, Reyns, & Liederbach, 2012). Stinson et al. asserted that Tasers are effective less-than-lethal weapons that can be used to subdue dangerous offenders and reduce injuries to both parties (i.e., police and civilian). Though this is the case, Tasers can also be used excessively and inappropriately in comparison to other weapons used by police officers such as firearms, baton, and metal flashlights (Stinson et al., 2012).

The purpose of Stinson et al.'s study was to examine and describe the cases that involved the criminal misuse of Tasers by police officers through a content analysis of newspapers. In a 65-month time period, these scholars were able to find that 24 police

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officers were arrested for the criminal misuse of Tasers (Stinson et al., 2012). Their findings indicated that 41.7% of police officers were charged with aggravated assault and 37.5% were charged with simple assault. Of those 24 officers who were charged with the criminal misuse of Tasers, 33.3% of officers were terminated, whereas 20.8% of police officers resigned from their position. Many of these cases happened in the southern region (54.2%) and within a municipal police department (75%).

Although limited research has examined police corruption, a growing body of research has examined citizens' perceptions of police organizations, and how these perceptions vary by race and other factors. In the following section, I discuss the perceptions of police organizations in the U.S. using research around newspaper reporting as the framework for that discussion.

The history of tension between police and the African American community dates back to the origin of the police in the U.S. In the southern region of Colonial America, the first form of policing was slave patrols (Reichel, 1988). Slave patrols, comprised of white males between 16 and 60, were created in the early 1700s in South Carolina as a means to manage and control slave populations who were primarily African American males (Reichel, 1988). The duties of slave patrols included (a) chasing, apprehending, and returning runaway slaves to their owner, (b) providing a form of organized terror to deter slave revolts, and (c) maintaining a form of discipline for slaves who violated any plantation rules (Brooks et al., 2016; Reichel, 1988; Kappeler, 2014). While the goal of slave patrols was to ensure that slaves were compliant, slave patrols were known for using excessive physical force against slaves as a means to instill fear (Archbold, 2012;

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Brooks et al., 2016; Kappeler, 2014; Reichel, 1988). In addition, there were laws created that supported the development and continued use of slave patrols (Kappeler, 2014).

From the 1800s to 1900s, police agencies lacked organization, professionalism, and proper supervision and required little training (Archbold, 2012). These conditions continued to breed police misconduct, which included both abuse of authority and use of force towards civilians, and corruption (Archbold, 2012). The amount of violence used by officers was reportedly dependent on the perceived disrespect by the public and, even two centuries ago, was used disproportionately against African American people (Archbold, 2012). The use of excessive force by law enforcement officers, often called police brutality, became an issue that continues to be a public concern in contemporary America today (Brooks et al., 2016).

Although slave patrols were dismantled during the early years of Reconstruction, other organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) took on the duties of slave patrols and were known to incite severe violence toward slaves and freed African Americans (Kappeler, 2014). Members of the KKK were known for lynching and hanging African Americans and treated this racial group as subhuman (Gilbert & Ray, 2016). Between 1881 and 1968, lynchings were considered "justifiable homicide" and 70% of the lynchings were of African American males (Gilbert & Ray, 2016). The death of these African American males often occurred at public events for members of the community to witness the horrific deaths of these individuals (e.g., burned, shot, hanged, castrated, or tortured). In many of those instances, the persons responsible for the lynchings were not brought to justice, which is similar to the outcome of cases against some officers who kill civilians in the U.S. (Stinson, 2016). Stinson (2016) stated that, since 2005, only 78

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police officers who were involved with an on-duty shooting have been charged with murder or manslaughter. Of those 78, only 26 of those officers were convicted of manslaughter or a lesser offense, and one was convicted of murder (Stinson, 2016).

While African Americans were subject to injustices, police brutality extended outside the confines of the African American community. Because of the amount of citizen complaints toward officers, the Lexow Commission that was appointed in 1894 by the New York Senate was one of the first groups to investigate police brutality (Archbold, 2012). The findings of the Lexow Commission were published in 1895 and caused several officers to be fired from the policing agency and, in some instances; officers were convicted of criminal offenses (Archbold, 2012). Police violence remained an issue, and in 1929, President Hoover addressed the negative acts of police officers, stating that the physical and mental abuse of citizens by officers needed to be controlled (Lersch & Mieczkowski, 2005; Prenzler, Porter, & Alpert, 2013). However, some police officers continued to disregard the efforts made by President Hoover (Fyfe, 1988; White, 2001).

From the mid- to late-1900s, citizens pressured police organizations to make changes to the organizational structure; however, police reforms failed to address the racial tension between white police officers and members of African American communities (Archbold, 2012). During the Civil Rights Movement, local police officers contributed to the race riots because of their use of retaliation against peaceful protests and boycotts among African American persons (Archbold, 2012). The brutality used toward African Americans by law enforcement officers received national attention in newspaper and local television news. Due to the media attention around the violence and

force being used by police officers during the Civil Rights Movement, there was a push for new techniques to be established to eliminate the excessive force used by police (Archbold, 2012). Scholars began to examine this issue as well, and have specifically examined how police misconduct is portrayed through newspaper coverage to determine if citizens attitude toward police officers change (Chermak, McGarrell, & Gruenewald, 2006).

Chermak et al., examined newspaper coverage of police officers being involved in a bar fight in Indianapolis, Indiana. The incident was known as the Downtown Brawl, where officers caused physical harm to two customers, one African American and one white, in a bar. The news media claimed that the officers involved (and their supervisors) attempted to cover-up what actually took place. The reason for the cover-up was to minimize the responsibility of the officers because the officers involved were guests in the Mayor's suite at a minor league baseball game before the incident. During the investigation, the chief of police resigned, and officers moved around. A year after the incident, four officers, who were all white, from the Indianapolis Police Department went on trial for public intoxication and pointing a firearm (use of force) at individuals in the bar. Despite the role the officers played in the downtown brawl, the trial ended in a hung jury. Because the officers did not receive any punishment for the bar fight, Chermak and colleagues wanted to examine how the news coverage of the police misconduct trial affected attitudes toward the police (2006). These scholars composed a survey to examine whether intense media coverage of a police misconduct trial influences citizens attitudes toward police. Their findings indicated that race was moderately significant prior to the trial; however, the relationship strengthened after the trial to

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suggest that African Americans were significantly more likely to believe that police harass citizens compared to whites following the police misconduct publicity (Chermak, McGarrell, & Gruenewald, 2006).

According to Plant and Peruche (2005), race plays an important role in how police officers respond to criminal suspects in potentially deadly situations. Plant and Peruche (2005) argued that an officers' split-second decision to shoot a suspect may be influenced by the suspect's race, particularly in cases involving African American men. Previous scholarly research has conducted studies using computer simulation to determine whether a male suspect was holding a gun or not. The participants in the study were instructed to shoot those suspects who had a gun in their possession and if they did not have a weapon, they were instructed to press the "don't shoot" button. The participants were more likely to mistakenly shoot when the suspect was African American than when the suspect was white (Plant & Peruche, 2005). Plant and Peruche duplicated this study by selecting 48 certified sworn law enforcement officers in the state of Florida (83% male; 84% white, 10% African American, 2% Native American, and 4% Hispanic). Similar to previous research, Plant and Peruche's findings indicated that the police officers who participated in this study were more likely to mistakenly shoot an African American male suspect than a white male suspect. While this study showed that officers were more likely to shoot an African American male, they argue that officer bias can be eliminated through training. While training may lessen the amount of shooter bias among officers, racial profiling continues to be an issue among racial and ethnic minority motorists (Bell, Hopson, Craig, & Robinson, 2014).

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Police Use of Force

According to Fyfe (1988), police officers are the only American public servants authorized to make quick, unilateral, and irreversible decisions that could potentially lead to the deaths of Americans. Many police recruits learn in the academy that patrol officers possess more power in his/her holster than any other criminal justice official. This power (officers using firearms) has led to riots and civil and/or criminal litigation against police and their employers, police chiefs, elected official, and entire city administrations (Fyfe, 1988). Until the 1960s, most of the training police received pertained to how officers should respond to civilians in certain situations and how to use their firearms; however, police training ignored questions of when to shoot and when not to shoot (Fyfe, 1988). According to Fyfe (1988), there were two empirical studies of police deadly force incidents in the 1960s which include one by Robin (1963) and one by the American Civil Liberties Union (1966).

Robin (1963) analyzed all fatal shootings by Philadelphia police from 1950 to 1960, and compared their findings to other statistics from other cities. Robin's study had little influence among scholars until the following year when a 15-year-old African American boy was reportedly attacked by an off-duty police officer with a knife (Fyfe, 1988). As years progressed, young African American men were reported being accidentally shot by officers that led to riots such as the Watts Riot in Los Angeles (Fyfe, 1988). Fyfe (1988) asserted that police officers discharged their service weapons more than 300 times in two years in the city they conducted their analyses. However, more than one-third of these incidents occurred in car chases involving juvenile suspects (Fyfe, 1988). A study conducted by the Police Task Force chair, Samuel Chapman, found that

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54% of agencies did not have written policies in effect to govern the use of firearms (Fyfe, 1988).

Klahm, Papp, and Rubino (2016) examined police-involved shootings in print media that took place between January 1, 2014 and April 30, 2015. The purpose was to determine how the print media presented police-involved shooting incidents and to understand how the reporting shaped public opinion of its readers. Their results indicated that race was not a primary factor in print media, which was contrary to what the scholars thought they would find. Their findings maintained that neither the race of the suspect nor the race of the officer was mentioned in most stories, which hindered their understanding of reporting bias among news organizations (Klahm et al., 2016).

The difference between the study conducted by Klahm and colleagues and this dissertation is that Klahm et al. only used one database (i.e., the Washington Post) and their study wanted to distinguish if newspaper articles reported the race of the victim and officer of the police-involved shooting. In this study, newspaper articles are not reviewed for their content to extract themes; rather, newspaper articles are used to examine article and word count to understand total coverage and decisions made when and how much to cover. In addition, this dissertation merged three databases instead of using just one.

The Social Construction of Race

Social construction occurs when people create reality through their personal experiences and social interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Surette, 2011). Social constructionism is independent of human processes and is autonomous, based on unconnected events. That is, any given society may be interpreted in one way; however, people can interpret this same society in a different way and act accordingly (Surette,

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2011). Social constructionists aim to comprehend the process through which agreement is constructed and the factors that influence when an accepted construction changes (Surette, 2011). Surette (2011) asserts that within the social construction perspective, social knowledge changes as social conditions changes within a given society. He argues that social knowledge is obtained from: (a) personal experiences, (b) significant others, (c) other social groups and institutions, and (d) the media (Surette, 2011). Experienced reality is how people experience the society in which they live and how those experiences have a powerful influence on a person's constructed reality. He argues that the aforementioned sources of knowledge are considered symbolic reality (Surette, 2011). Symbolic reality refers to events that individuals did not personally experience but believe occurred or to be true (Surette, 2011).

The concept of race has been socially constructed in the U.S. (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; DuBois, 1903; Lopez, 1996; Omi & Winant, 2014; Roberts, 2011). The act of constructing race has made it possible for society to "other" people to restrict the amount of resources an individual receives and create social hierarchies (Omi & Winant, 2014). Since race is a master status to how we define individuals, the concept has shaped (and continues to shape) a person's social, economic, politic, and cultural identity in the U.S. (Omi & Winant, 2014). That is, race has become embedded in the social structure (i.e., education, healthcare, religion, labor force) (Bonilla-Silva, 1997) to create inequality, marginalization, and oppression. The Civil Rights Movement and second wave feminism have attempted to resist the unequal treatment; however, other racial caste systems were developed to continue oppression such as Jim Crow (Omi & Winant, 2014), mass incarceration (Alexander, 2008), and the school to prison pipeline (Wald & Losen, 2003).

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Omi & Winant's (2014) concept of racial formation is defined as "the social historical process by which racial identities are created, lived out, transformed, and destroyed" (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 109). Their concept suggests that there are multiple dimensions that helped in developing racial formation that include: (1) racialization, (2) racial projects, (3) racism, and (4) racial politics (Omi & Winant, 2014). Omi and Winant (2014) assert that the racial formation process is a result of the intersection between social structure and one's everyday life where race and racial categories are often agreed upon throughout time. The authors maintain that racial projects, which are the representation of race that is situated in social structures, often will (1) illustrate how racism still exists in the U.S., (2) justify why some people are granted limited resources, and (3) help understand how discrimination occurs in political and economic spheres. The purpose of using race in the U.S. is to provide assumptions of individuals based on the racial group that an individual belongs to (Omi & Winant, 2014).

As previously mentioned, in the early 1900s, race was defined as a process of outlining differences through biological characteristics, but Omi & Winant define racialization as a way to understand what race actually means in practice. That is, science and politics are often used to enforce power dynamics that exist to promote a racial hierarchy where whites are on one level and African American individuals are on a lower level (Omi & Winant, 2014). The authors state that in order for whites to exercise their power in a practical sense, they needed to distinguish the major racial differences between people, first through scientific means and later politically.

During the Enlightenment era, race became an inescapable concept where scientists such as Hegel, Kant, and Voltaire published racist opinions, not based on

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empirical evidence, to legitimize the exploitation of African Americans in slavery. In the 1700s, there were scientific criteria to demonstrate to people living within the U.S. of the natural basis of a racial hierarchy (i.e., whites as superior and African Americans as inferior). Scientists such as Voltaire wrote that African Americans were different from whites and, because of these differences, African Americans should be treated as less than whites. Many of these claims were perceived as accurate findings to limit the political and social rights of African American people (Omi & Winant, 2014).

It was not until the mid-1800s that scientists such as Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau published credible empirical studies on inequality of racial groups. de Gobineau rejected the racist empirical works that had suggested that blacks were inherently different than whites to justify the discriminatory treatment they received in society. His research influenced how people came to understand race and rejected the idea that superior races created superior cultures (Omi & Winant, 2014). In regard to politics, Omi and Winant assert that for centuries there were many disputes that existed in reference to racial categories by state to determine which individuals were considered free and unfree, who could be a naturalized citizen, and when individuals would be able to date or marry outside their race. Omi and Winant suggested that political spheres would use socially constructed definitions of race in legislation to impact the way race would be perceived in the U.S.

Lopez (1996) illustrated how race is also constructed by law. Lopez stated that legal institutions (i.e., courts, corrections, policing) were developed to maintain racial division (Lopez, 1996). That is, legal actors (i.e., judges, lawyers, legislators) participate in the legal construction of race to promote prejudicial and discriminatory practices

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toward racial and ethnic groups (Lopez, 1996). For example, immigration laws were said to contribute to the racialization of the U.S. population by granting citizenship to those persons who fit the U.S. ideology (i.e., white America). There were also laws such as anti-miscegenation (i.e., interracial marriage) and lynch laws that were created to promote social dominance across racial lines (Lopez, 1996).

States such as Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, and several others have legally defined racial groups to primarily focus on blackness and the African American identity. Lopez suggests that laws defining African American identity clearly confirm discriminatory practices based on race alone. One example of discriminatory practice through legal parameters was segregation laws, such as Jim Crow, which endorsed a culture of violence against African Americans. During Jim Crow, police brutality was commonly used against members of the African American community to enforce criminal laws, a practice some suggest still remains in contemporary America (Lopez, 1996). Lopez argues that the law may the most powerful component in affecting the construction of race due to the legal system finding ways to strip racial and ethnic groups of their legal rights. Even when considering sentencing practices, racism exists in the ways in which the court system provides harsher sentences to non-white persons when compared to white persons who have committed similar crimes (Lopez, 1996). So, while race as a concept has been socially constructed, Lopez illustrated how laws have historically played a role in constructing race. Because laws were purposefully created to designate who is white and who is not, and meanings based on those designations are attached to persons coming in contact with the criminal justice

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system, structures like these helped in creating negative labels, such as the racialization of crime, among African Americans.

Omi and Winant (2014) assert that racialization shapes perceptions and attitudes that have created racism in an array of social structures and racial projects. Racial projects, from their purview, are where race has been an idea that has structured each person's everyday experiences (Omi & Winant, 2014). Historically, racism (i.e., racial hate), which is discriminatory and prejudicial attitudes based on race alone, was once overt; however, in the 21st century, racism has become covert and subtle (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Omi & Winant, 2014).

Bonilla-Silva (1997) reviewed the works of race scholars such as Omi and Winant, to understand the concept of racism and how this concept should be studied to contribute to varying disciplines. Like the concept of race, Bonilla-Silva asserted that racism is an ideological practice that shape one's life chances. His concept of a racialized social system is a theoretical framework that outlines how societies are, at least partially, structured by the placement of people in racial categories in varying social systems (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). Bonilla agreed that the processes of racialization are embedded in social structures; however, he asserted that it is when people are placed in a position of power within these racialized social structures and are able to form racial hierarchies that the distinctions between racial groups (i.e., superior race vs. inferior race) are produced. He contended that when specific racial groups are placed in positions of power, the placement not only promotes segregation but social comparisons (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). This type of position of power was embedded in the institution of slavery where African American were subordinates to their slave owner. This is also found in contemporary

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America where businesses have white individuals in superior positions (i.e., managers, owners, CEO) while minorities hold blue- or pink-collar positions. Consequently, the ways in which people are classified in racial terms has been political in practice to exploit minority groups (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Lopez, 1996).

Social Construction of the Media

According to Surette (2011), the process of social construction of the media occurs in four stages (Surette, 2011). In the first stage, events that occur within specific communities or within the U.S. are often noted by individuals as a form of reality unless the construction created does not appear credible to the individual. In the second stage, competing constructions of the specific community or mainstream society allow different descriptions of what the actual world is truly like. These competing constructions bring about public reaction and individual policies to be enacted. The third stage is where the media assist in filtering competing constructions by favoring positions that are sponsored by powerful and elite groups that pre-exist in cultural themes. The author maintains that the third stage is the most powerful role the media play in the social construction process (Surette, 2011). When the media choose a position and filter facts through that construction, it makes it hard for outside constructions to access the media and promote their perspectives on reality. The fourth stage is the development of a dominant social construction of the world, society, and given communities that occurs because of the social construction of the media process.

In order for the social construction process within the media to work, there are other aspects that must be considered (Surette, 2011). Surette (2011) contends that claims makers (promoters, activists, and/or spokespersons who have an agenda and

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forward their agenda through the social construction process) socially construct media stories to advance their individual agendas. The author outlines two types of claims: (a) factual claims and (b) interpretative claims. Factual claims are statements that describe events that happened as objective facts about the world, whereas interpretative claims focus on what the events mean in their consequence. Interpretative claims suggest that people can develop explanations as to why factual claims are presented in a specific way or people can offer solutions to these claims (i.e., public policy). Through these two claims, the media target the beliefs and attitudes that people hold about the social world (Surette, 2011). Surette argues that the social construction of crime and justice within the media are built through frames that develop from these factual and interpretative claims. Frames are social construction templates that, when fully developed, allow people to categorize and label events. Crime and justice are placed in pre-existing frames because these frames help structure an individual's view of reality about these two components (Surette, 2011).

Surette maintains that there are five crime and justice frames that exist. These frames include: (a) faulty system (criminal justice leniency), (b) blocked opportunities (poverty and inequality), (c) social breakdown (family and community breakdown), (d) racist system (the criminal justice system operates in a racist fashion), and (e) violent media (violence in the mass media). However, for this study, racist system and violent media are the most relevant frames in understanding the construction of race as it relates to crime and justice. The racist system frame does not focus on crime itself but focuses on the criminal justice system. This frame portrays the court system and police as racist representatives of oppression among minorities, primarily African American individuals.

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Surette argues that black offenders are more likely than whites who commit similar crimes to be arrested and sentences (Surette, 2011). The violent media frame suggests that violence that is depicted through various mediums encourages and increases subsequent violence because the media portray human life as unimportant (Surette, 2011).

In addition to the pre-existing frames, narratives are also common in socially constructing crime and justice. Unlike frames, narratives are mini-constructions found within the media that outline crime and justice types often presented in the media (Surette, 2011). In reference to crime, the author contends that the most common narrative is the innately evil predatory criminal. This narrative is found not only in news media but within other media such as entertainment and infotainment. In some instances, there are symbolic crimes that are highlighted by claims makers regarding why the social construction of crime and justice should be accepted. For a crime to be considered symbolic, it must be the worst crime, be linked to a social construction that pre-exists, and it must increase the importance of the social construction to allow for additional policies to be developed to reduce this crime. The information provided states that narratives, symbolic crimes, and factual and interpretative claims are necessary in the media's social construction of one's reality about crime and justice in the U.S. (Surette, 2011).

Labeling Theory

In many of the communities within the U.S. there are certain norms and values that predate the members of that community. While it is best for each person to abide by the norms and values outlined by leaders of the community, there are some persons who

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will intentionally and unintentionally violate those norms. However, when that takes place, members of the community will reprimand the person for their action but if the act is deemed as criminal, the person may receive a negative label from his community members. In the field of criminology, labeling theory was developed to illustrate how and why people receive negative labels and to outline the tactics used to place these specific labels. Labeling theorists seek to explain why specific labels are used and the purposes these labels hold. (Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 2002).

Generally speaking, labeling theorists argue that labels are created as a means of socially controlling the actions and behaviors of individuals and to ensure that individuals are in compliance with the rules and regulations given by authoritative figures (e.g., law enforcement) (Vold et al., 2002). Though labeling theory developed around the explanation of why people are labeled, theorists have offered different arguments regarding the details of the theory. Scholars such as George Herbert Mead (1934), Frank Tannenbaum (1938), Edwin Lemert (1951), Howard Becker (1963), Erving Goffman (1963), Charles Horton Cooley (1983), and John Braithwaite (1989) contributed to the development of labeling theory, also known as social reaction theory.

Mead is viewed by some as the predecessor of what later became labeling theory. Mead (1934) stated that people use reflected appraisals that are based on how they are perceived by others (Mead, 1934; Shoemaker, 1996). He contended that individuals tend to apply new labels to others by examining the negative acts and behaviors from the past of the one being labeled. In essence, his argument suggested that one's past has the power to impact a person's life, even if they happened to change their ways. He maintained that individuals tend to use a person's past experiences as a proxy to

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distinguish what type of person an individual really is. Mead also wanted to understand the meaning of social exchange among individuals. He explained that language enforces many symbols that can be identified within far ranging communities. Thus, as reviewed earlier, media coverage of African Americans as criminals often worked to symbolize African Americans as criminal in the white community.

Similar to Mead, Tannenbaum (1938) asserted that labels are developed as a means to monitor people's actions that are deemed unacceptable. Tannenbaum (1938) asserted that labels are created as a means to punish or help someone to understand that their actions were unacceptable. However, in the labeling process, he stated that people can at times over-exaggerate an action that people in various societies would not deem as deviant or criminalistics. He maintained that when an act is committed, there exist different definitions of the situation. That is, some persons may define the act as deviant whereas others may not. This suggests that there is a conflict between what members within the same community define as deviant. While labels are often given to those who have violated a norm or value, Tannenbaum stated that if a person continues to be associated with a negative label, the person may essentially become the thing that he/she is described as being. Furthermore, even when someone is labeled deviant, sometimes the deviant act itself can be dramatized to be more evil than what it actually is (Tannenbaum 1938). That is, when a deviant act is committed, individuals define how deviant the act is at that time. Thus, Tannebaum would argue the fact that African Americans are continually depicted as criminal by the media makes it easier for them to accept the criminal label and engage in further (or even the first) crime. This idea relates to primary deviance and secondary deviance that is outlined by Lemert (1951).

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Lemert (1951) stated that primary deviance occurs when individuals are engaging in an act of deviance but it does not result in a personal internalizing themselves as deviant, whereas secondary deviance is the stage of deviant identity formation (Lemert 1951). Lemert maintained that it is not until an act becomes labeled or tagged as deviant that secondary deviance materializes. In contemporary America, there are conflicting ideologies in regard to what is deviant. While Lemert (1951) stated that an act has to be deemed deviant before someone is labeled, Becker (1963) maintained that once a negative label (i.e., criminal/deviant) has been attached to an individual, the label becomes a person's master status. Here, Becker asserted that once the deviant or criminal label is attached, the label creates an "us" versus "them" dichotomy that separates the evildoers from law abiding citizens (Becker 1963). Becker argues that over a period of time, a person has the opportunity to matriculate back into their community. However, the label will not necessarily disappear; instead, the label will no longer be that person's master status. Labels, from this perspective, are often used in a negative connotation in regard to crime and deviance; however, scholars such as Goffman (1963) argue that certain groups are often devalued due to a stigma attached to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and the like. For instance, people of color, specifically those who identify as African American, may view their race as their master status (Becker 1963); thus, negative stigmas such as laziness, aggressive, and even criminal that are frequently attached to the racial group limit their socioeconomic mobility in American society (Goffman 1963).

Goffman (1963) stated that society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the compliments of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of

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these categories. In Goffman's contributions to labeling theory, he stated that stigmas are associated with varying groups. He defined stigma as a failing, shortcoming, or handicap of an individual. In his work, he identified three types of stigmas: (1) abominations of the body or physical deformities, (2) blemishes of individual character, and (3) tribal stigmas (i.e., race, nation, religion). Similar to Becker's (1963) master status idea, stigmas for a certain group can become a person's master status. Goffman also stated that people who follow the norms and values that predate their given society are perceived to be "normal" and that the stigmas found in the community help normal persons to manage their impression to other community members (i.e., us vs them). Thus, Goffman would suggest that African Americans in the United States have been given a tribal stigma of criminality; this stigma could be considered a master status that limits their opportunities for upward advancement and just treatment by citizens and law enforcement alike.

Cooley has been referred to as one of the first labeling theorists. Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self-states that there are three stages in understanding how one is labeled (Cooley, 2007; Khanna, 2004). The first stage reflects how individuals imagine that they present themselves to others; the second stage reflects how people tend to evaluate others; and the third stage is the recognition of feelings that individuals develop because of the reactions that they receive from others. Cooley argued that the social self is an idea or system of ideas that are extracted from a communicative life that the mind cherishes (Cooley, 1902). He maintained that the second stage is the most essential because it impacts the pride or shame that individuals possess. The second phase focuses on the judgment of others, which shapes how people act around others

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(Cooley, 1902). When someone is judged positively by his or her peers, it increases that person's self-feeling/self-reflection. Conversely, Cooley would also suggest that when someone is judged negatively by their peers, as African Americans are when they are framed as criminalistic, it likely decreases their self-feeling and self- reflection.

Braithwaite (1989) stated that these negative labels place a level of shame toward individuals that are perceived deviant. Braithwaite (1989) mentioned, that based on an individuals' attachment to their community and/or the person who have placed the negative label, the person has the potential to change their behavior in order to reintegrate back into the community (Braithwaite 1989). Braithwaite asserted that once a negative label has been established, the individual must prove that they have changed in order to help in changing their master status to one that is more positive (Becker 1963; Braithwaite 1989). However, he explained that there is a process to giving a person a negative label. The process of making a criminal includes: (1) tagging, (2) segregating, (3) describing, (4) emphasizing, (5) making conscious, and (6) self-conscious. According to Braithwaite, tagging is when the label is transferred from act to actor to suggest that the act is no longer criminal, it is now the person who is criminal— this part is seen as the most important of the process of labeling. He stated that once a person is tagged, then law abiding persons will begin segregating themselves from the deviant/criminal and begin describing, emphasizing, and making conscious of how that label is deviant/criminal and use that label as a deterrent from similar acts. By the individual being labeled as deviant, that person will begin to internalize the label as one of their many identities.

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Braithwaite added to this theoretical framework by arguing that individuals use shaming as a labeling mechanism (Braithwaite, 1989; Shoemaker, 1996). Braithwaite defined shaming as the social process of expressing disapproval with the intention to invoke shame or remorse. Braithwaite stated that there are forms of shaming that reintegrate individuals (e.g., offender) back into the community prior to a negative label becoming a master status. However, there are other forms of shaming that create in-groups/out-groups (Braithwaite, 1989; Shoemaker, 1996). Braithwaite (1989) stated that these negative labels place a level of shame toward individuals perceived as deviant. Based on an individuals' attachment to their community and/or the person who have placed the negative label, the person has the potential to change their behavior in order to reintegrate back into the community. While labels are used to help people understand that their actions are inappropriate, labeling theory does not specifically state how individuals can escape the negative labels once they have been applied. Rather, Braithwaite stated that, as time passes, the negative label sometimes will slowly lose its "master status" and be replaced by other, more contemporary labels.

As previously mentioned, Braithwaite believed that labeling is used for shaming. From his perspective, he argued that shaming is a part of the socialization process. He explained that shaming can include direct verbal confrontation, indirect confrontation, broadcasts through varying mediums, or popularized mass culture. He maintained that shaming is more deterring when administered by people important to us as compared to those persons that we do not have any intimate personal relationships with. He asserted that it will essentially be the job of the family and/or close friends to provide practical support to the individual who has been shamed and matriculate them back into the larger

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community. As one could witness, labeling theory has made contributions to the field of criminology and it is currently being used in current research.

Labeling theory is useful in understanding how people are perceived by others; it is particularly helpful in understanding how relations between African American men and police officers are impacted by the negative labels they apply to one another. Alexander and West (2012) examined how race was associated with negative stigmas and suggested that these negative stigmas impacted the socioeconomic status of racial and ethnic minorities. Alexander and West (2012) maintained that racial and ethnic minorities, specifically African American men, are framed as aggressive and criminalistic in their actions and behaviors. Because these characteristics are the main depiction of African American men, they are often racially profiled by police officers and feared by the public. Alexander and West contend that the "criminalistic" label is often generalized to all persons that identify with a racial and ethnic minority group. These scholars stated that one way society controls this racial and ethnic group is by placing them into prison for petty crimes and imposing harsher sentences for violent and property crimes in comparison to their white counterparts. Even when individuals are released from prison, "criminal" becomes the master status of the individual.

In regard to police officers, these individuals are framed (or labeled) as abusing their authority on civilians, specifically those who belong to a lower socioeconomic status (Eck & Spelman, 1987). Fyfe (1988) argued that while all officers are not corrupt nor abusive with their authority, the negative labels have placed a strain on the organization at large.

In essence, it appears that both groups (African Americans and police officers) have perceived one another in an unfortunate way, which has led both groups to fear and disrespect one another. Because this is the case, it is easier to understand why officers, particularly white officers, are more aggressive toward nonwhite persons (Gaines & Kappeler 2011).

Problem Statement

The literature review demonstrated that African Americans have been racialized in media to make this racial group appear more criminalistic, aggressive, and dangerous than other individuals. Because crime in America has been racialized as an African American phenomenon, the media have perpetuated the idea that African American men should be feared (Boden, 2016; Cavender & Deutsch, 2007; Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Deutsch & Cavender, 2008; Hirschfield & Simon, 2010; Huey, 2010; Mastro, 2015; Tukachinsky, 2015; Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015). Associating crime with being African American justifies the oppression, dehumanization, and othering of African American men. Overall, the literature examined how negative labels of groups, specifically African-Americans, are problematic (Altheide, 1997).

Newspaper accounts of PID incidents may further exacerbate stereotypes and provide justification to people with underlying prejudices against African Americans for fear and other prejudices. This process may impact police officers as well as citizens. Bell et al. (2014) maintained that racial profiling continues to impact people of color in the 21st century. Bell and colleagues asserted that because people of color are profiled by officers, it illustrates that the U.S. has not evolved into a post-racial society. Minority drivers are frequently pulled over because of their skin color and in some instances, states

such as Arizona permit racial profiling where police can use skin color to determine citizenship and officers can ask for identification (Bell et al., 2014). Bell et al. (2014) conducted qualitative interviews among African American and white participants who were 18 years old or older. Their findings indicated that African American motorists anticipated being pulled over; however, African American motorists stated that due to recent PID incidents, many of these African American motorists try to survive to police interaction to prevent an unforeseen death (Bell et al., 2014, p. 36). Their findings showed that African Americans were often more fearful when stopped by white police officers for a traffic violation. The white participants in this study stated that they believed African American motorists are not being stopped for traffic law violations, but because they are being targeted by police through racial profiling (Bell et al., 2014). These findings were interesting because it illustrated that both African American and white participants alike were aware of racial profiling that exists among police organizations and members of the African American community. In addition, the media continue to racialize crime as an African American phenomenon, even though it is well-known that this racialization influences viewers' perception of African American people.

The research questions that I propose to answer are twofold. First, what factors contribute to media attention in reference to police-involved deaths in the U.S. between years 2013-2016? Next, do the media, specifically newspapers, give more media attention to African American males involved in police-involved deaths (PID) in comparison to the coverage given to PID incidents involving non-African American males? Using a variety of open source databases, I identify PID incidents in the U.S. between 2013 and 2016 and then examine the amount of media attention given to each of those PID within U.S.

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newspapers by using Nexis Uni (formerly Nexis Lexis) to identify both how many articles and how many words are written about each PID in the three months following the event. I will conduct a quantitative analysis of PID from 2013 to 2016 to examine the word count and article count about PID victims in the U.S.

In addition, this study aims to understand the factors that contribute to the amount of words in each article and number of articles used when discussing PID victims and their specific cases. An additional unique contribution of this study is that, for the first time of which I am aware, I will conduct a multivariate analysis of the impact of the victim's race on newspaper coverage of PID, controlling for demographic and contextual factors that might impact an officer's decision to use excessive force. These analyses will consider where or not PID incidents involving African Americans receive more media coverage and what factors increases the likelihood for PID incidents to be reported. In doing so, I hope to better understand the impact of race and other contextual factors of the victim on the amount of media attention a PID receives in the U.S.

Research Hypotheses

As reviewed above, a number of studies have examined the impact of media on perceptions of citizens in the U.S. Below I articulate the research hypotheses that will be examined in this study, then provide the background literature for those hypotheses.
Hypothesis 1: Reports of PID will have higher word count for incidents where victims are identified as an African American male than in incidents where the victim is identified as a non-African American male.
 Hypothesis 2: Reports of PID will have higher numbers of articles written about the incident when the victim is identified as an African American male (i.e., racial and ethnic

minority) than PID incidents where the victim is identified as non-African American male.

According to Hirschfield and Simon (2010), newspapers often use narratives of deadly force to legitimize police violence among the public (i.e., citizens). These scholars suggest that newspapers often report an individual's moral failings or criminal history of the deceased to justify the police homicide. Newspapers also often associate crime to blackness. That is, newspapers will often report on crimes, specifically violent crimes, where African American individuals are involved. When individual's constantly witness African Americans in the news media being involved in crime, it psychologically impacts their perception of who or which individuals are most likely breaking the law (Dixon & Azocar, 2007). Dixon and Azocar argue that the priming of the African American criminal stereotype, in addition to multiple exposure to African American criminals in the news, leads to cognitive activation of the stereotype. This, in turn, increases the negative perceptions of race and crime over time (Dixon & Azocar, 2007). Even when the victim of police homicide does not have a criminal record, newspapers will often use stereotypical frames to depict the deceased as a means to not hold officers accountable for their actions (Hirschfield & Simon, 2010; Huspek, 2004; Pratt-Harris, Sinclair, Bragg, Williams, Ture, Smith, Marshall, & Brown, 2016).

Hypothesis 3: PID incidents that took place in cities with a large population (more than 100,000 residents) will have a higher word count than PID incidents that took place in cities with a small population (less than 100,000 residents).

Hypothesis 4: PID incidents that took place in cities with a large population will have a higher article count than PID incidents that took place in cities with a small population size.

In the U.S. police departments play an integral role in the ways various communities function (Feinburg, 2002). Research has found that economic inequality, racial composition, the level of criminal activity, and other contextual factors are predictors of the size of local police departments (Feinburg, 2002). Nevertheless, Feinburg (2002) maintains that when many people are fearful of crime in a city, then city officials are motivated to expand resources to increase policing. Cities with larger populations typically have greater resources, and thus large police departments. He wanted to examine if larger police agencies would be more likely to receive media attention in local newspapers in comparison to smaller departments. He sampled local newspapers from 1990-1992, in 63 U.S. cities with populations greater than 100,000. The sample include cities in 25 states throughout the U.S., which include seven of the ten largest cities in the nation. He found that there was a greater percentage of police stories in local newspaper of larger police departments. This relates to this study because it allows the researcher to distinguish if size of a city influences the amount of words and articles used to discuss PID incidents. That is, will PID incidents that take place is larger cities such as St. Louis, New York City, and Miami have more word and article count than PID incidents that happen in Philadelphia, Mississippi, Wood River, Nebraska, and Ames, Iowa.

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Hypothesis 5: PID incidents where victims die from a gunshot will have a higher word count than incidents where victims died from other causes (i.e., asphyxiated/restrained, vehicle crashes, physical force).

Hypothesis 6: PID incidents where victims die from a gunshot will have more articles written about them than incidents where victims died from other causes (i.e., asphyxiated/restrained, vehicle crashes, physical force).

According to Zwach (2015), there is a national concern regarding the use of deadly force among law enforcement officers. The Uniform Crime Report (UCR) states that since the 1990s, crime has consistently declined; however, a content analysis of unarmed African American men involved in PID from 1999-2015 indicates a rise in the victimization of individuals by police (Chaney & Robertson, 2015). Chaney and Robertson maintained that when officers face individuals that are perceived dangers or a threat to their lives, officers are trained to "shoot to kill." While this is the case, Chaney and Robertson found that of the developed countries, the U.S. has a higher number of civilians shot and killed by law enforcement in comparison to England, Australia, and Germany. For example, American police murdered more people in March of 2015 than the entire United Kingdom police killed since 1900 (Chaney & Robertson, 2015). In addition, one should know that police officers in the United Kingdom are typically unarmed. Often times, officers would report mistakenly perceiving objects such as toy guns, BB guns, canes, or cell phones as lethal hand weapons which caused them to react in deadly force. This relates to the study because it shows that incidents where a weapon is not present will receive more media attention in comparison to incidents where the

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victim has a weapon. In addition, incidents where victims died from gunshot are more

likely to receive media attention.

Table 2   Hypotheses Table

Hypothesis #	Hypothesis
H1	Reports of PID will have a higher word count for incidents where victims are identified as African American males than reports where victims are identified as non-African American males.
H2	Reports of PID will have higher numbers of articles about the incident when the victim is identified as an African American male (i.e., racial and ethnic minority) than incidents where the victim is identified as non-African American male.
H3	Reports of PID incidents will have higher word count for incidents that took place in a city with a large population size than incidents that took place in a city with a small population size.
H4	Reports of PID incidents will have higher numbers of articles about the incident when the incident took place in a city with a large population than incidents where the incidents took place in a city with a small population size.
H5	Reports of PID incidents where victims died from a gunshot will have higher word count than incidents where victims died from other causes (i.e., asphyxiated/restrained, vehicle crashes, physical force).
H6	Reports of PID incidents where victims died from a gunshot will have more articles written about them than incidents where victims died from other causes (i.e., asphyxiated/restrained, vehicle crashes, physical force).

In Table 2, I outline the hypotheses for this study. Each of these hypotheses were

developed from extant literature around media depictions of criminal events.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) suggest that content analysis techniques date back to the 18th century; however, the method was first used in the U.S. as an analytic technique in the 20th century. Content analysis refers to a study of recorded human communication (Singleton & Straits, 2005). Social science researchers regularly use content analysis to analyze recorded transcripts of interviews with participants. For example, a researcher could examine the *New York Times* to see how this news organization frames crime around popular and non-popular cases. A content analysis can be used as either a qualitative or quantitative method depending on the question the researcher is aiming to answer. Qualitative content analysis refers to research method used to analyze text data where the main focus is to extract meaning from the characteristics of language of the text (Bryman, 2016; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Quantitative content analysis refers to text data coded into explicit categories and then described using statistics (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Singleton & Straits, 2005). In understanding content analysis, both recording units and context units are used (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1981). A recording unit is the smallest body of content in which the appearance of a reference is counted, whereas a context unit is the largest body of content that may be examined in characterizing a recording unit (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1981).

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There are both advantages and disadvantages in using content analysis. One advantage of using content analysis is that it has the ability to study processes that occur over a long period of time. It also provides reliability because it is easy to repeat the methods of the research design. Furthermore, content analysis is unobtrusive, which means that the data come from documents or from recordings of an event, which are often better data than interviews that communicate with someone who attended the event. In addition, content analysis is a highly flexible method because it can be used to analyze both mass media (print, radio, television) and semi- and unstructured interviews. A disadvantage of content analysis methods is the documents used for the particular study (Bryman, 2016; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The documents used in a content analysis must be authentic, credible, and representative in order for the study to be replicated by other researchers who may or may not try to extend knowledge in the discipline. Another disadvantage for content analysis is that it is limited to recorded communication between the researchers and the respondents. In addition, this type of method can be both time consuming and costly (Bryman, 2016).

According to Singleton and Straits (2005), there are several ways of quantifying data in content analysis. The most basic quantification includes categories such as: (1) time/space measures, (2) appearance, (3) frequency, and (4) intensity (Singleton & Straits, 2005). These scholars mention that time/space measures refer to the space (i.e., column inches) devoted to certain topics in newspaper articles or the time spent (i.e., number of hours spent on police violence). Appearance refers to whether a given category appear in a recording unit (Singleton & Straits, 2005). Frequency, the most common method of measuring content, refers to the frequency a given category appears

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in the contextual unit (Singleton & Straits, 2005). Intensity refers to the attitudes and values that are the objects of the research study (Singleton & Straits, 2005).

This dissertation uses a quantitative content analysis and focuses strictly on the word-count used to describe individuals involved in PID incidents and number of articles about each victim. The purpose of conducting this form of content analysis is to distinguish what victims received the most newspaper coverage, and what victim/contextual attributes impact the newspaper coverage. This methodology helps understand what instances are deemed newsworthy among newspaper organizations and the characteristics of individuals and PID situations in which individuals were not mentioned within U.S. newspapers.

In this dissertation, I decided to use a quantitative content analysis approach to understand PID incidents for three primary reasons. First, use of quantitative content analysis was chosen because article count and word count are the best ways to demonstrate the quantity and breadth of media coverage about PID incidents. Additionally, quantitative content analysis allows use of both bivariate and multivariate statistical procedures that would not be possible with other forms of qualitative content analysis. Finally, use of quantitative content analysis allowed for the creation of multivariate models where the impact of PID victim's race on article and word count could be examined while controlling for other variables, the first time (to my knowledge) that this has been attempted. Other forms of qualitative content analysis allow researchers to study documents and communication artifacts (i.e., pictures, newspapers, magazines, etc.) to extract meaning and themes found among the content. Though qualitative content

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analysis of the articles derived from this study for meaning and themes would contribute to the field of criminology that was not the goal for this specific study.

Data Source

This study seeks to understand the predictors of media coverage of PID. To operationalize media coverage, there are two dependent variables—word count and article count (described in detail below). A quantitative content analysis of electronic newspaper articles from Lexis Nexis (now Nexis Uni) for the four-year time frame being examined for this study. Nexis Uni is a large database that collects legal and journalistic documents (i.e., news, cases, law reviews, publications, blogs, etc.). The purpose of using the electronic newspapers was to examine how much media coverage a specific PID incident received over a three-month time frame immediately after its occurrence (i.e., January 1st to April 1st). The aim was to examine the amount of electronic newspapers reports for each individual PID victim to count both (1) the number of articles that were written about the PID incident and (2) the cumulative number of words written in these articles about the PID incident.

To identify the number of PID incidents in the U.S., information provided by *Fatal Encounters*, the *Guardian* (*The Counted*), and the *Washington Post* (*Fatal Force*) from 2013-2016 will be used for analysis. As previously mentioned, *Fatal Encounters* began collecting data on PID in the U.S. in 2000; however, the most complete years are from 2013-2016. The *Guardian* and *Washington Post* began collecting data at the start of 2015. These three databases were selected because these sources will help to triangulate missing data or any discrepancies between the three sources.

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The *Fatal Encounters* database contains records of individuals that have been killed through interactions with police officers since January 1, 2000 (Burghart, 2017). *Fatal Encounters* records the race, gender, and age of the victim killed by the police officer, the date of the incident, the location (address, city, state, zip code, and county) of the incident, the agency in which the officer involved in the shooting was employed, the cause of death, a brief description of the incident, and whether or not the victim had or showed any symptoms of mental illness. The reason this organization began collecting data on PID was to have a more accurate record of how often these incidents happen. *Fatal Encounters* uses three main methods of collecting information, including: (1) paid researchers, (2) public records requests, and (3) crowdsourced data. Paid researchers are used as a means of making sure the information obtained is accurate; they also conduct their own research to attempt to capture all cases where an individual was victimized by law enforcement officers. *Fatal Encounters* retrieves public records by the courts and law enforcement to confirm and obtain detailed information about PID. Crowdsourced data is where *Fatal Encounters* allows individuals within varying communities to report PID that took place within a given area. While these are the main methods of collecting data, 85% of the articles have been submitted by paid researchers who obtain their information through aggregated data from other large datasets such as Killed by Police (www.killedbypolice.net) or the *Los Angeles Times* "The Homicide Report." However, when an incident is reported by a volunteer (i.e., the crowd), every fact is compared to either published media reports or public records to verify its accuracy (Burghart, 2017). The *Fatal Encounters* project has made more than 2,300 public records requests of state, federal, and local law enforcement agencies. While this organization began collecting

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data in 2000, Dr. Brian Burghart, the founder of *Fatal Encounters*, stated that years 2013-2016 are the most complete years of the data collection (Burghart, 2017). Since the inception of *Fatal Encounters*, other organizations such as the *Guardian* and the *Washington Post* began reporting on PID. Both started their data collection on January 1, 2015.

The *Washington Post* is an American daily newspaper that was created in 1877 by Stilson Hutchins. This newspaper was the first to publish seven days a week and is one of the oldest newspapers in the U.S. This newspaper has won a number of Pulitzer Prizes and is well regarded for its coverage of stories from the White House, Congress, and U.S. government. Since January 1, 2015, the *Washington Post* has maintained a database (*Fatal Force*) to attempt to capture all victims that were shot and killed by police in the U.S. In addition to recording those killed, the *Washington Post* also records characteristics of the victims such as their race, gender, age, signs of mental illness, threat level (i.e., attack, other, undetermined), the state in which the event took place, and whether or not the victim was armed with a weapon. The Washington Post has a list consisting of over fifty weapons that people have used or had in their possession during the time of the police-public interaction. Weapons include (but are not limited to): guns, shovels, knives, baseball bats, crowbars, crossbows, chains, and axes to name a few. The *Washington Post* has the same victim characteristics categories as the *Guardian* (discussed below); however, the *Washington Post* has an additional category that include signs of mental illness (i.e., yes or no/unknown).

Similar to the *Washington Post*, the *Guardian* also started reporting police homicide data on January 1, 2015. The *Guardian* is a British daily newspaper that was

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founded in 1821 by cotton merchant John Edward Taylor. Similar to *Fatal Encounters*, the *Guardian* wanted to have a comprehensive record of the number of people killed by law enforcement. The *Guardian* database categorizes the killings of individuals by name, race, state, whether they were armed/unarmed, gender, age, and how each individual died (i.e., gunshot, Taser, struck by vehicle, death in custody, other, and unknown).

Currently, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) operates a voluntary program where law enforcement agencies may choose to submit their annual count of "justifiable homicides," which the FBI defines as the killings of a felon in the line of duty by a law enforcement officer. Their dataset is criticized because of its limited breadth (agency reports about its own officers) and a large amount of missing data (many agencies do not report to the FBI). Thus, the databases used in this study provide greater coverage and more details about PID than the FBI databases. All three organizations, *Fatal Encounters*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Guardian*, collect data from traditional police reports and witness statements by monitoring regional news outlets, research groups, and open-source reporting projects such as the websites *Fatal Encounters* and *Killed by Police*. Because the *Washington Post* and the *Guardian* began collecting data in January 1, 2015, the study is limited to using only data provided by *Fatal Encounters* for the years 2013 and 2014. However, for the years 2015 and 2016, there is a compiled list across the three databases of all the persons involved into a single spreadsheet to account for all persons victimized by PID in the years 2013-2016.

Data Management

The Microsoft Excel spreadsheet of *Fatal Encounters* (January 2013-December 2016), the Washington Post (January 2015-December 2016), and the *Guardian* (January

2015-December 2016) was accessed from their specific website. Afterwards, the appropriate data was downloaded, then created three separate cells that contained the victim's entire name, a cell for his/her first name, and a cell for his/her last name. In addition, the variable name in each column was named the same across the three databases (i.e. name, first, last, age, race, sex, city, state, and date) to assist with the merging process. Prior to merging the data, each database was checked to see if there were any duplicates within them. If the database contained duplicates within it, all information for that case that was available was completed within the database, then deleted the duplicate case from the database. At the end of this process, each database contained only one case for each PID incident. There were 10,582 cases across all three databases for the time period under study.

Cases with missing names were deleted from the dataset used in the study (i.e., unknown, TK, Jane/John Doe, and Name withheld from police N=221[2]). Once this task was completed, the three Microsoft Excel spreadsheets were imported into SPSS and matched the data by first name, last name, age, and city which brought the case number to 7,087. Afterwards, the dataset being used was checked to see if there were duplicates within the merged dataset and there were 390 duplicates in the file. After reviewing and fixing the errors found between the duplicate cases, the number of cases decreased to 6,696. To insure there were not any duplicates, the dataset was checked once more for duplicates matching on first name and last name only. The names were sorted in alphabetical order and highlighted the names that were identical. After highlighting the

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[2] There were 221 cases where the PID victims name was not reported. There were 64 victims without a name in 2013, 40 victims without a name in 2014, 33 victims without a name in 2015, and 84 victims without a name in 2016.

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duplicate names, the additional duplicate cases were deleted. The final number of cases

decreased to 6,477 cases.

Because this study is specifically examining males who were victimized by police

officers, cases involving female PID incidents were deleted, reducing the sample size to

5,905. Then, because victim's race is the primary variable of interest, all cases where the

victim did not have an identifiable race were deleted, which brought my sample to 5,165.

The cases from years 2013 and 2014 are strictly from the *Fatal Encounters* database

whereas years 2015 and 2016 are from all three databases (*Fatal Encounters*, the

Guardian, and the *Washington Post*).

Table 3   Police-Involved Deaths by Year and Database, 2013-2016

Databases	Year				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Fatal Encounters only	1315 (100.0%)	1255 (100.0%)	258 (19.4%)	262 (20.8%)	3090 (59.8%)
Washington Post only	0	0	4 (0.3%)	3 (0.2%)	7 (0.1%)
Guardian only	0	0	25 (1.9%)	26 (2.1%)	51 (1.0%)
FE/WP	0	0	22 (1.7%)	31 (2.5%)	53 (1.0%)
FE/G	0	0	191 (14.3%)	124 (9.8%)	315 (6.1%)
WP/G	0	0	21 (1.6%)	27 (2.1%)	48 (0.9%)
All	0	0	812 (60.9%)	789 (62.5%)	1601 (31.0%)
Total	1315 (100.0%)	1255 (100.0%)	1333 (100.0%)	1262 (100.0%)	5165 (100.0%)

Descriptive statistics for the three databases are presented in Table 3. There were

5,165 cases of PID from 2013-2016 within the three databases. Since the *Fatal*

Encounters database included two more years than the other two databases, most of the cases (3090; 59.8%), came from *Fatal Encounters* database only. *Fatal Encounters* listed 1,315 PID incidents in 2013 and 1,255 PID incidents in 2014; as stated earlier, the other databases began in 2015 and thus did not include incidents in those years. *Fatal Encounters* identified 258 PID incidents not found in the other two databases in 2015, and 262 PID incidents not found in the other databases in 2016. The Washington Post found only seven (four in 2015 and three in 2016) unique PID incidents while the *Guardian* found 51 incidents (25 in 2015 and 26 in 2016) not covered in the other two databases. However, there were 1,601 (31.0%) PID cases found in all three databases for years 2015 and 2016.

Dependent Variables - Article Count and Word Count

Nexis Uni (formerly Nexis Lexis) was used to obtain articles to operationalize the media coverage of the PID victims. One of the features of Nexis Uni is that it gives details of each article, which includes (but is not limited to): words used in each article, the date of the newspaper, the newspaper organization responsible for writing the article, and location (i.e., local, regional, national, international. All data collected from Nexis Uni were downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet.

JavaScript, which is an interpreted programming language, was then used to create a program to collect print newspaper articles from Nexis Uni (formerly Lexis Nexis) about PID victims and incidents. The JavaScript program uses an API (application program interface) that works with text (i.e., words) which made the program able to communicate with the Nexis Uni database to collect the data needed for this study. Using JavaScript, I ran all the PID victim's name with quotations marks around the victim's

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name (entire name and first/last name) to inform Nexis Uni database that I only wanted articles that included the name in quotation marks. In addition, I included the three-month time frame in the language as well. Once this task was completed, the program collected all the information pertaining to the name and time frame. For example, Tamir Rice was murdered on November 22, 2014, so the JavaScript program searched for "Tamir Rice" from November 22, 2014, to February 22, 2015.

After this step was completed, the data were filtered to only include print newspapers (1) in the United States and (2) those written in English. Because I wanted to only examine print newspaper articles that provided coverage of PID incidents within the United States, I deleted the following types of articles from Nexis Uni that included the name of the PID victim but were: (1) international newspapers, (2) newspapers where English was not the language used, (3) obituaries, (4) letters/emails to the editor, opinion, and editorials, (5) weblogs, vlogs, online newspapers, (5) sport columns, (6) cases where the article word count was less than five words, and (7) irrelevant articles (i.e., honor roll, graduating class, community calendar, etc.). Irrelevant articles were those articles that, after I read them, were classified as articles that did not pertain to the victim. The final number of print newspaper articles that yielded coverage of incidents including male PID victims was 16,394. These articles contained 9,278,746 words of text where PID incidents were discussed.

Independent Variables

In this study, there will be a number of independent variables that are derived from previous research on this topic; each variable is operationalized below. The *Fatal Encounters* and the *Washington Post* database provide information about each of the

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following categories. Independent variables analyzed in this study include: (1) victim's race, (2) victim's age, (3) region of the country where the PID occurred, (4) size of city of the PID incident, (5) manner of victim death, (6) a report of whether the victim was armed/unarmed, and (7) a variable that I created to represent the size of the police force where the PID incident occurred. Only PID incidents involving males (5,905 or 91.2% of the sample) were included in this study. The descriptive statistics for each of the variables are presented in the tables below. Prior to conducting the bivariate and multivariate analyses presented in the following section, I recoded race, city population, weapon present, and manner of death into dichotomous variables. Race was recoded so that African Americans were (1) all other races were (0). City population was recoded so that PID incidents occurring in cities with populations over 100,000 were coded as (1) and cities with populations under 100,000 were coded as (0). Whether or not the victim was armed was coded so that PID victims armed with firearms were coded (1) while all other PID victims were coded (0). The manner of death variable was recoded so that PID incidents resulting from gunshot, gunshots and Taser, or gunshots and others were coded (1) while all other PID incidents were coded (0).

In addition to the aforementioned independent variables, I created a control variable for the multivariate linear regression model to control for the number of police officers assigned to that city where the PID incident took place.   According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Reaves, 2015), on average, there currently are 2.4 officers per 1,000 residents for cities with populations of 1,000-2,499, 2.2 officers per 1,000 residents for cities of 2,500-9,999 residents, 1.9 officers per 1,000 residents for city populations of 10,000-24,999, 1.7 officers per 1,000 residents for cities of 25,000-49,000,

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and 1.6 officers per 1,000 residents for cities of 50,000-99,999 residents (Reaves, 2015).

For larger cities, there is an average of 1.7 officers per 1,000 residents for city

populations of 100,000-249,999 and 2.3 officers per 1,000 for cities with populations of

250,000 or more. Cities that do not fit in these categories have an average of 2.4 officers

per 1,000 residents (Reaves, 2015). In order to calculate the estimated number of police

officers for a given area, I had to also find the population of the cities where the PID

incident took place. The city population was retrieved from the 2010 U.S. Census. Once

I retrieved the city population for all the cases within my data, the formula below was

used to derive the estimated number of officers that should be serving each city. This

variable is used as a control variable in the multivariate linear regression models.

$$Estimate \quad i\ e = \frac{i\ e\ Rati}{1,000} * City \quad pu\ ati\ n$$

Descriptives for the independent variables are presented in tabular form below.

Table 4   Descriptives of the Race of PID Incidents among Males, 2013-2016

Race	N (%)
African-American/Black	1527 (29.6%)
European-American/White	2557 (49.5%)
Hispanic/Latino	919 (17.8%)
Other	162 (3.1%)
Total	5165 (100.0%)

The races of the PID victims are outlined in Table 4. Of the 5165[3] PID incidents,

1,527 (29.6%) involved African American victims, 2,557 (49.5%) incidents involved

European-American/White victims, 919 (17.8%) involved Hispanic/Latino victims, and

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[3] There were 5905 male PID incidents, however, cases where race was unspecified (740 cases) were excluded from the dataset.

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162 (3.1%) were victims of other races (Asian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Arab-American).

Table 5   Descriptives of PID incident Age, 2013-2016

Age	N (%)
0-14	52 (1.0%)
15-24	1117 (21.6%)
25-34	1631 (31.6%)
35-44	1121 (21.7%)
45-54	731 (14.2%)
55 +	494 (9.6%)
Missing	19 (0.4%)
Total	5165 (100.0%)

The age distribution of the PID victims is presented by categories in Table 5. The majority of PID victims were between the ages of 15 and 44 (74.9%). The table illustrates that most of the PID victims were between the ages of 25-34 (31.6%) followed by the age categories 35-44 (21.7%) and 15-24 (21.7%).

According to the U.S. Census, there are nine geographic regions in the United States. These regions include: Pacific, Mountain, West North Central, East North Central, Middle Atlantic, New England, West South Central, East South Central, and South Atlantic. However, in this study, the regions will be combined into four regions: South (West South Central, East South Central, and South Atlantic), Midwest (West North Central and East North Central), West (Pacific and Mountain), and Northeast (Middle Atlantic and New England). Region will be coded into four categories: 1=South (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina,

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Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia): 2=Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin); 3=West (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming); and 4=Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont).

In addition, I used 2010 U.S. Census to retrieve the population of each state (50) and the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.). The reason for obtaining the state population was to calculate the percentage of PID by state and compare that PID per 100,000 residents among states to have a better idea of which state(s) were more likely to have PID incidents. To calculate PID per capita, I used the formula below:

$$PID\ per\ Capita = \frac{Number\ of\ State\ PID}{State\ Population} * 100,000$$

Table 6   Descriptives of PID by State in the South Region, 2013-2016

Region	State	State Population	N (PID)	PID per 100,000 Residents	% of PID by State
	AL	4,785,579	106	2.21	4.56%
	AR	2,921,737	58	1.99	2.49%
	DE	899,712	14	1.56	0.60%
	DC	605,040	17	2.81	0.73%
	FL	18,846,461	352	1.87	15.14%
	GA	9,712,696	172	1.77	7.40%
	KY	4,347,948	65	1.49	2.80%
	LA	4,544,871	119	2.62	5.12%
South	MD	5,788,099	75	1.30	3.23%
	MS	2,970,437	67	2.26	2.88%
	NC	9,574,247	127	1.33	5.46%
	OK	3,759,529	144	3.83	6.19%
	SC	4,635,834	115	2.48	4.95%
	TN	6,355,882	103	1.62	4.43%
	TX	25,241,648	676	2.68	29.08%
	VA	8,025,206	77	0.96	3.31%
	WV	1,854,315	38	2.05	1.63%
Subtotal	17	114,869,241	2325	2.02	45.0%

In Table 6, the results suggest that the highest number of PID incidents (2,325, or 45% of all PID incidents) was reported in the South region. The southern region consists of 17 states with a total population of 114,869,241. Of all PID incidents, Texas (676) and Florida (352) had the most PID in the South during the time under study. These two states also account for the largest population with Texas having a population of 25,241,648 and Florida having a population of 18,846,461. However, when comparing the states' rates, PIDs were most likely to occur in Oklahoma (3.83 per 100,000), Washington, D.C. (2.81 per 100,000), Texas (2.68 per 100,000), and Louisiana (2.62 per 100,000).

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Table 7   Descriptives of PID in Midwest Region, 2013-2016

Region	State	State Population	N (PID)	PID per 100,000 Residents	% of PID by State
	IL	12,841,196	136	1.06	14.78%
	IN	6,490,029	89	1.37	9.67%
	IA	3,050,223	49	1.61	5.33%
	KS	2,858,403	60	2.10	6.52%
	MI	9,876,731	130	1.32	14.13%
	MN	5,310,711	58	1.09	6.30%
South	MO	5,995,681	116	1.93	12.61%
	NE	1,829,956	42	2.30	4.57%
	ND	674,518	8	1.19	0.87%
	OH	11,539,282	144	1.25	15.65%
	SD	816,227	16	1.96	1.74%
	WI	5,690,403	72	1.27	7.83%
Subtotal	12	66,973,360	920	1.37	17.8%

The Midwest region had 920 PID incidents (17.8% of all PID cases); those PID incidents are presented by state in Table 7. The Midwest region consisted of 12 states with a total population of 66,973,360. Ohio (144), Illinois (136), Michigan (130), and Missouri (116), had the most PID cases in the Midwest during the time period under study. However, when comparing the states' rates, PIDs were more likely to occur in Nebraska (2.30 per 100,000) and Kansas (2.10 per 100,000) than in other Midwestern states.

Table 8   Descriptives of PID by West Region, 2013-2016

Region	State	State Population	N (PID)	PID per 100,000 Residents	% of PID by State
	AK	714,015	16	2.24	1.07%
	AZ	6,407,002	169	2.64	11.29%
	CA	37,327,690	759	2.03	50.70%
	CO	5,048,029	101	2.00	6.75%
	HI	1,363,817	16	1.17	1.07%
	ID	1,570,912	27	1.72	1.80%
West	MT	990,507	22	2.22	1.47%
	NV	2,702,797	59	2.18	3.94%
	NM	2,064,607	78	3.78	5.21%
	OR	3,837,073	58	1.51	3.87%
	UT	2,775,260	50	1.80	3.34%
	WA	6,741,386	131	1.94	8.75%
	WY	564,376	11	1.95	0.73%
Subtotal	13	72,107,471	1497	2.08	29.0%

The West region contained 1,497 (29.0%) of the PID cases; the breakdown of PID by state in the West is presented in Table 8. The West region consisted of 13 states with a total population of 72,107,471. California (912) and Arizona (218) had the most PID in the West during the time period under study. California has the largest population (37,327,690) in the West region and the population of California is greater than the population of the other 12 states within this region combined. However, when comparing the states' rates, PIDs were most likely to occur in New Mexico (3.78 per 100,000) followed by Arizona (2.64 per 100,000).

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Table 9   Descriptives of PID by Northeast Region, 2013-2016

Region	State	State Population	N (PID)	PID per 100,000 Residents	% of PID by State
Northeast	CT	3,580,171	30	0.84	7.09%
	ME	1,327,568	16	1.21	3.78%
	MA	6,564,943	52	0.79	12.29%
	NH	1,316,700	11	0.84	2.60%
	NJ	8,803,708	61	0.69	14.42%
	NY	19,405,185	118	0.61	27.90%
	PA	12,711,063	123	0.97	29.08%
	RI	1,053,169	5	0.47	1.18%
	VT	625,842	7	1.12	1.65%
Subtotal	9	55,388,349	423	0.76	8.2%

The Northeast region was the region with the smallest proportion of 423 (8.2%) of PID incidents only because the region has the lowest population in comparison to the other three regions (South, Midwest, and West). The Northeast region consist of nine states with a total population of 55,388,349. PIDs for each state in that region are presented in Table 9. Of the Northeast PID cases, many took place in Pennsylvania (123), New York (118), New Jersey (61), and Massachusetts (52). However, when comparing the states' rates, PIDs were most likely to occur in Maine (1.21 per 100,000) and Vermont (1.12 per 100,000).

In comparing the states' rates across all four tables, Oklahoma, New Mexico, District of Columbia, Texas, and Arizona had the highest PID rates. Three of the states (Oklahoma, District of Columbia, and Texas) were in the south region while the other two (New Mexico and Arizona) were located in the west region. The west region was slightly more likely to have PID (2.08) than the south region (2.02). PID rates were clearly higher in these two regions than in the Midwest (1.37) and Northeast (0.76). The

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purpose of examining states' rates per 100,000 residents is to illustrate that while there are larger numbers of PID incidents occurring is particular states, it does not suggest that individuals living in those state are at greater risk of experiencing a negative encounter with the police. Considering the population of some states such as California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and Ohio, it is no surprise that these states have higher amounts of PID; however, states' rates depict a better visualization of where individuals are most likely to be victimized.

Table 10   Descriptives of PID by Manner of Death, 2013-2016

Manner of Death	N (%)
Gunshot	3730 (72.2%)
Tasered	152 (2.9%)
Vehicle	862 (16.7%)
Shot and Tasered	125 (2.4%)
Other	296 (5.7%)
Total	5165 (100.0%)

The results presented in Table 10 illustrate that most of the PID (3,730; 72.2%) were by gunshot; the next most likely PID incidents were deaths by vehicle (862; 16.7%). In a small proportion of PID incidents, victims were either Tasered (152; 2.9%) or shot and Tasered (125; 2.4%). The remaining individuals (296; 5.7%) died by other methods (i.e., choking, asphyxiation, medical emergency).

Table 11   Descriptives of PID by Armed/Unarmed, 2013-2016

Armed vs. Unarmed	N (%)
Deadly Weapon (Firearm)	994 (19.2%)
Unarmed	302 (5.8%)
Deadly Weapon (Other)	388 (7.5%)
Unknown	3336 (64.6%)
Vehicle	64 (1.2%)
Non-Lethal Firearm	81 (1.6%)
Total	5165 (100.0%)

As outlined in Table 11, in 3,336 (64.6%) of the PID incidents, the report did not contain information on whether the PID victim had a weapon. There were 994 (19.2%) cases where the PID victim had a firearm while 436 reported another deadly weapon (7.5%).

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CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Statistical Analyses

The analyses for this study are presented in three stages. First, in Tables 12-18, using chi-square test of significance, I examined the relationship between race and the other independent variables (age, manner of death, symptoms of mental illness, region of PID, armed vs. unarmed) to distinguish if these variables had a relationship with one another. The purpose of using chi-square test of independence to compare observed with expected frequencies and to compare two or more patterns of frequencies to see if the differences are significant (Hinton, 2004). In addition, Phi and Cramer's V were used to test the strength of the association (i.e., weak, moderate, strong) (Hinton, 2004).

Table 12   Cross-tabulation of PID Incidents by Race and Age Categories, 2013-2016

Race	Age (Groups)							
	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 +	Missing	Total
African-American/Black	21 (1.4%)	487 (31.9%)	511 (33.5%)	288 (18.9%)	140 (9.2%)	73 (4.8%)	7 (0.5%)	1527 (100.0%)
European-American/White	19 (0.7%)	365 (14.3%)	748 (29.3%)	579 (22.6%)	479 (18.7%)	360 (14.1%)	7 (0.3%)	2557 (100.0%)
Hispanic/Latino	11 (1.2%)	227 (24.7%)	310 (33.7%)	223 (24.3%)	96 (10.4%)	47 (5.1%)	5 (0.5%)	919 (100.0%)
Other	1 (0.6%)	38 (23.5%)	62 (38.3%)	31 (19.1%)	16 (9.9%)	14 (8.6%)	0 (0.0%)	162 (100.0%)
Total	52 (1.0%)	1117 (21.6%)	1631 (31.6%)	1121 (21.7%)	731 (14.2%)	494 (9.6%)	19 (0.4%)	5165 (100.0%)

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The results presented in Table 12, indicate that PID victims were most likely to be between the ages of 25 and 34 (31.6% of all PID victims). One in five PID victims were between the ages of 35 and 44 (21.7%) and between 15 and 24 years of age (21.6%). African American victims were more likely than victims of other races to be between the ages of 15 and 24 (31.9% of African American victims were in this age category) while white victims were more likely than victims of other races to be in the 45-54 age category (18.7% of all white victims) and the 55 and over category (14.1%). These differences were statistically significant (Chi-square = 354.984, df=18, p<.001), although the Phi test of association (Phi=.262, df=18) suggested that the relationship between race and age among the PID victims was relatively weak.

Table 13   PID per 100,000 Resident (Race and Age), 2013-2016

Race	Male (0-14)	Male (15-24)	Male (25-34)	Male (35-44)	Male (45-54)	Male (55+)
Hispanic/Latino	0.16	5.11	7.24	6.23	3.84	1.92
European-American/White	0.11	2.84	6.35	4.34	3.09	1.38
African American/Black	0.49	15.44	21.23	11.61	5.71	2.57
Other	0.06	2.94	4.44	2.32	1.43	0.99

When comparing African Americans, Hispanics, and European-American males by race and age, the results presented in Table 13 illustrate that African American males of all age categories are more likely to experience PID followed by Hispanics in every age category.

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Table 14   Cross-tabulation of PID Incidents by Race and Region Categories, 2013-
2016

Race	Region				Total
	South	Midwest	West	Northeast	
African-American/Black	835 (54.7%)	332 (21.7%)	194 (12.7%)	166 (10.9%)	1527 (100.0%)
European-American/White	1137 (44.5%)	508 (19.9%)	709 (27.7%)	203 (7.9%)	2557 (100.0%)
Hispanic/Latino	319 (34.7%)	53 (5.8%)	500 (54.4%)	47 (5.1%)	919 (100.0%)
Other	34 (21.0%)	27 (16.7%)	94 (58.0%)	7 (4.3%)	162 (100.0%)
Total	2325 (45.0%)	920 (17.8%)	1497 (29.0%)	423 (8.2%)	5165 (100.0%)

The results presented in Table 14, suggest that almost half of PID incidents
happen in the south region (2325; 45.0%) whereas PID incidents are less likely to take
place in the Northeast region (423; 8.2%). African American victims were more likely
than the other races to fall victim to PID incidents in the south (835 PID victims, or
54.7% of all PID victims in that region) and northeast regions (166; 10.9%). On the other
hand, other racial groups (94; 58.0%) and Hispanic (500; 54.4%) victims were more
likely than the other races to be a victim of PID in the west region. These differences
were statistically significant (Chi-square = 588.864, df=9, p<.001), although the Phi test
of association (Phi=.338, df=9) suggested that the relationship between race and age
among the PID victims was relatively weak.

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Table 15   PID per 100,000 by Race and Region, 2013-2016

Region	Race	Pop of Race (Region)	PID by 100,000
Northeast	Hispanic/Latino	6631617	0.71
	European-American/White	38247625	0.53
	African America/Black	6023744	2.76
	Other	3280609	0.21
Midwest	Hispanic/Latino	4399099	1.20
	European-American/White	52163464	0.97
	African America/Black	6772719	4.90
	Other	2123615	1.27
South	Hispanic/Latino	17028107	1.87
	European-American/White	68284437	1.67
	African America/Black	21148896	3.95
	Other	3916435	0.87
West	Hispanic/Latino	19668710	2.54
	European-American/White	37877246	1.87
	African America/Black	3177066	6.11
	Other	7894546	1.19

The results presented in Table 15 indicate that African American males are most likely to experience PID in all four regions. The table illustrates that PID for African American males are highest in the West region (6.11 per 100,000), followed by the Midwest (4.90 per 100,000), South (3.95 per 100,000), and Northeast (2.76 per 100,000) region. Hispanics are most likely to experience PID in the West (2.54 per 100,000) followed by the South region (1.87 per 100,000). Whites were more likely to experience PID in the West region (1.87 per 100,000) followed by the South region (1.67 per 100,000).

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Table 16   Cross-tabulation of PID Incidents by Race and Manner of Death Categories

| Race | Manner of Death (Groups) | | | | | Total |
	Gunshot	Tasered	Vehicle	Shot and Tasered	Other	
African-American/Black	1036 (67.8%)	62 (4.1%)	289 (18.9%)	26 (1.7%)	114 (7.5%)	1527 (100.0%)
European-American/White	1911 (74.7%)	62 (2.4%)	401 (15.7%)	72 (2.8%)	111 (4.3%)	2557 (100.0%)
Hispanic/Latino	661 (71.9%)	25 (2.7%)	151 (16.4%)	21 (2.3%)	61 (6.6%)	919 (100.0%)
Other	122 (75.3%)	3 (1.9%)	21 (13%)	6 (3.7%)	10 (6.2%)	162 (100.0%)
Total	3730 (72.2%)	152 (2.9%)	862 (16.7%)	125 (2.4%)	296 (5.7%)	5165 (100.0%)

The results presented in Table 16 suggest that PID victims were more likely to die by gunshot (3730; 72.2%) followed by vehicle (862; 16.7%). African Americans were more likely to die by vehicle (289; 18.9%) and other forms of death (114; 7.5%) and less likely to die by gunshot (1,036; 67.8%) when compared to the other racial groups in the study. PID incidents involving victims in the "Other" racial group category were most likely to involve gunshots (122; 75.3%) and situations where victims were shot and Tasered (6; 3.7%). There were less than 3% of PID victims to die by Taser (152; 2.9%) and a combination of being shot and Tasered (125; 2.4%). According to the chi-square value, the racial differences in manner of death were statistically significant (Chi-square=47.734, df=12, p<.001), however, the association between race and manner of death was weak (Phi=.096, df=12).

Table 17   Cross-tabulation of PID Incidents by Race and Armed/Unarmed Categories

Race	Deadly Weapon (Firearm)	Unarmed	Deadly Weapon (Other)	Unknown	Vehicle	Non-Lethal Firearm	Total
	Armed vs. Unarmed						
African-American/Black	275 (18.0%)	100 (6.5%)	68 (4.5%)	1044 (68.4%)	20 (1.3%)	20 (1.3%)	1527 (100.0%)
European-American/White	533 (20.8%)	144 (5.6%)	205 (8.0%)	1594 (62.3%)	31 (1.2%)	50 (2.0%)	2557 (100.0%)
Hispanic/Latino	161 (17.5%)	48 (5.2%)	87 (9.5%)	604 (65.7%)	9 (1.0%)	10 (1.1%)	919 (100.0%)
Other	25 (15.4%)	10 (6.2%)	28 (17.3%)	94 (58.0%)	4 (2.5%)	1 (0.6%)	162 (100.0%)
Total	994 (19.2%)	302 (5.8%)	388 (7.5%)	3336 (64.6%)	64 (1.2%)	81 (1.6%)	5165 (100.0%)

The results presented in Table 17 illustrate whether the PID victims were armed or unarmed during the police encounter. Most of the reports suggested that it was unknown whether the PID victim was carrying a weapon or not during the interaction (3336; 64.6%). There were 994 (19.2%) PID victims carrying a deadly weapon (firearm) at the time of the incident. White PID victims were more likely to have a deadly weapon (firearm) (533; 20.8%) and non-lethal firearm (50; 2.0%) present at the time of the police interaction in comparison to the other racial groups. African Americans were more likely to be unarmed (100; 6.5%) in comparison to the other racial groups. According to the chi-square (value=69.126, df=15, p<.001), the relationship between race and the presence of a weapon was statistically significant; however, the association was weak (Phi=.116, df=15).

The findings from Tables 12 – 17 illustrate that there is a significant relationship between race and age, region, manner of death, and presence of a weapon; however, the strength of these associations was weak. Though the relationship between race and the

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other independent variables were weak, the Phi indicated that race and region (Phi=.338) had the strongest relationship followed by race and age (Phi=.262).

Analyses Predicting Article and Word Count

To begin the multivariate analyses, I first conducted bivariate correlations (Table 20) to determine both the bivariate association between the variables and to examine whether multicollinearity between the variables included in later models was a problem. I then conducted independent sample t-tests to test Hypotheses 1-6. The independent sample t-test is most commonly used in the field of sociology to test the statistical differences between the means of two groups. Because the dependent variable is an interval-ratio variable and the independent variables are nominal for Hypotheses 1-6, the independent sample t-test is the correct procedure to use to test mean differences between the groups (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). The results from the t-tests are included in Tables 21-23. Finally, to examine the impact of each variable on article count and word count, controlling for all the other independent variables in the study, I used Ordinary Least Squares multivariate linear regression. Those results are presented in Tables 24-26. The analysis procedures are described in detail below.

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Table 18   Descriptives for Article Counts of Articles Written for PID Victim, 2013-
             2016

Number of Articles	N (%)
0 Articles	2970 (57.5%)
1 Article	952 (18.4%)
2 Articles	438 (8.5%)
3 Articles	267 (5.2%)
4 Articles	134 (2.6%)
5+ Articles	404 (7.8%)
Total	5165 (100%)

       To begin these analyses, in Table 18 I categorize the number of articles written
about each PID incident. The results presented in Table 18 suggest that over half of the
PID victims (2,970, or 57.5% of the sample) did not appear in any newspaper articles in
the Nexis Uni database in newspapers published in the three months after the PID
incident occurred. One article was written about 952 (18.4%) of the PID victims, two
articles were written about 438 (8.5%) of the PID victims and three articles were written
about 267 (5.2%) of PID victims. There were four articles written about 134 (2.6%) PID
victims and five or more articles written about 404 (7.8%) of PID victims.

Table 19   Descriptive of Number of Words Written for PID Victim, 2013-2016

Number of Words	Frequency (N)
0	2970 (57.5%)
23 thru 250	590 (11.4%)
251 thru 500	436 (8.4%)
501 thru 1000	392 (7.6%)
1001 thru 9999	686 (13.3%)
10000 thru HIGHEST	91 (1.8%)
Total	5165 (100%)

The results presented in Table 19 indicate that, in the same manner as article count, there were 2,970 PID victims who did not have any words written in reference to their incident. More than 1 in 10 victims (590, or 11.4% of PID victims) had between 23 to 250 words written about them to reference what took place during the police encounter. There were 436 (8.4%) PID victims who had 251 to 500 words written in reference to their encounter with police and 392 (7.6%) PID victims who had 501 to 1,000 words written about their killing. A slightly larger number (686, or 13.3% of PID victims) had 1001 to 9,999 words written about their death. There were only 91 (1.8%) of PID victims who had 10,000 or more words written about their victimization.

Table 20   Pearson's *R*s (N=5149)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(1) Estimated Police	-									
(2) Age	.036*	-								
(3) Race Binary (African American=1)	.152**	-.193**	-							
(4) City Population Binary (>100K=1)	.437**	-.080**	.202**	-						
(5) Firearm Present at Incident	-.008	.064**	-.019	-.014	-					
(6) Gunshot Deaths	.014	.053**	-.077**	.058**	.279**	-				
(7) Northeast Region	.213**	.015	.065**	-.063**	-0.025	-.032*	-			
(8) West Region	.022	.002	-.232**	.119**	.023	.115**	-.191**	-		
(9) Midwest Region	-.034*	-.049**	.066**	-.016	-.007	-.060**	-.139**	-.298**	-	
(10) Word Count	.023	-.055**	.076**	.031*	0.008	.068**	.033*	.029*	0.009	-
(11) Article Count	.042**	-.058**	.080**	.028*	0.016	.074**	.060**	0.021	0.013	.968**

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The Pearson's *r* bivariate correlation results for all variables included in the multivariate models are included in Table 20. The results indicate that there was a weak positive relationship between word count and race (*r*=.076; p<.01), city population (*r*=.031; p<.05), gunshot death (*r*=.068; p<.01), Northeast region (*r*=.033; p<.05), and West region (*r*=.029; p<.05). Word count had a weak negative relationship with age (*r*=-.055; p<.01). Thus, higher word counts about PID incidents occurred when the victim was African American, the city was larger, and the victim died by gunshot. PID incidents in the Northeast and West were also likely to have higher word counts than those in the South, and younger PID victims had higher word counts than older PID victims. Similar to word count, article count had a weak negative relationship with age (*r*=-.058; p<.01) and had a weak positive relationship with estimated police (*r*=.042; p<.01), race (*r*=.080; p<.01), city population (*r*=.028; p<.05), gunshot death (*r*=.074; p<.01), and Northeast region (*r*=.060; p<.01). As expected, article count and word count were strongly correlated (*r*=.968; p<.01).

Many of the independent and control variables were weakly correlated with one another, but there was no evidence of multicollinearity among those variables. There was a positive but weak or moderate *r* between estimated police and age (*r*=.036; p<.05), race (*r*=.152; p<.01), city population (*r*=.437; p<.01), and Northeast region (*r*=.213; p<.01) and a weak negative relationship with Midwest region (*r*=-.034; p<.05). Thus, higher rates of estimated police were associated with African American PID victims, older PID victims, higher city populations, and PIDS in the Northeast. Higher rates of estimated police were negatively correlated with PIDs occurring in the Midwest.

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Age had a weak negative relationship with race ($r=-.193$; $p<.01$), city population ($r=-.080$; $p<.01$), and Midwest region ($r=-.049$). Age had a weak positive association with PID incidents where firearms were present at the scene ($r=.064$; $p<.01$) and PID incidents caused by gunshot deaths ($r=.053$; $p<.01$). Thus, PID victims were older when they were non-African American, from cities less than 100,000 or in the Midwest, and when there was a firearm present at the incident or they died by gunshot.

Race had a weak positive relationship with city population ($r=.202$; $p<.01$), Northeast region ($r=.065$; $p<.01$), and Midwest region ($r=.066$; $p<.01$). The results state that there is a weak negative relationship between race and gunshot deaths ($r=-.077$; $p<.01$) and West region ($r=-.232$; $p<.01$). Thus, African American PID victims were associated with higher city populations and the Northeast and Midwest region. PID victims from the Midwest and who died by Taser were more likely to be non-African American.

City population (>100K) had a weak positive relationship with gunshot deaths ($r=.058$; $p<.01$) and Midwest region ($r=.119$; $p<.01$). The results state that there is a weak negative relationship between city population and Northeast region ($r=-.063$; $p<.01$). Thus, city populations were higher in the Midwest region than the South and gunshot deaths of PID victims were more likely in cities of large population. PID incidents from the Northeast region occurred in cities with smaller populations than PID incidents in the South.

Firearm present at incident had a weak positive relationship with gunshot deaths ($r=.279$; $p<.01$). Thus, PID incidents where a firearm was present were more likely to have resulted in gunshot deaths. Gunshot deaths had a weak positive relationship with

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the West region (r=.115; p<.01) and a weak negative with Northeast region (r=-.032; p<.05) and Midwest region (r=-.060; p<.01). PID victims were thus more likely to die from gunshots in the West than in the South and less likely to die from gunshots in the Northeast and Midwest regions than the South.

Table 21   Comparison of Means for Word and Article Count by PID Victim's Race
            (N=5149)

	Race	N	Mean	StDev.	t	Sig.
Word Count	Non-African American	3636	638.74	2617.655	-4.079	.000***
	African American	1513	1292.43	4605.080		
Article Count	Non-African American	3636	1.31	3.961	-4.309	.000***
	African American	1513	2.48	9.263		

The results presented in Table 21 illustrate that there was a significant relationship between race and the number of words and articles used in newspaper articles of PID incidents. Articles reporting PID incidents involving African Americans had significantly more words (1292.43 v. 648.74)) written about their PID incident than articles written about PID incidents involving non-African American victims (t = -4.079; p < .001). In reference to the number of articles written, African American men had significantly more articles (2.48 v. 1.31) written about them in comparison to the number of articles written about non-African American PID victims (t = -4.309; p < .001).

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Table 22   Comparison of Means for Word and Article Count by City Size of PID
            (N=5149)

	City Population	N	Mean	StDev.	t	Sig.
Word Count	Pop <= 100K	3018	728.48	3384.802	-2.109	.000***
	Pop > 100K	2131	975.77	4605.080		
Article Count	Pop <= 100K	3018	1.48	4.930	-1.885	.000***
	Pop > 100K	2131	1.83	7.331		

The results presented in Table 22 illustrate that there is a significant relationship
between city population and the number of words and articles written about PID victims.
PID incidents in cities with over 100,000 residents (975.77 v. 728.48) had significantly
more words written about the incident than PID incidents in cities of smaller size (t = -
2.109; p < .001). This is also the case for article count. PID incidents that occurred in
cities with populations greater than 100,000 residents had significantly more articles
(1.83 v. 1.48) written about PID incidents in comparison to articles written about PID
cases that take place in city populations of smaller size (t = -1.885; p < .001)

Table 23   Comparison of Means for Manner of Death and Word/Article Count
            (N=5149)

	Manner of Death	N	Mean	StDev.	t	Sig.
Word Count	Gunshot	3720	987.87	4383.253	2.998	.026*
	Taser	152	513.71	1736.808		
Article Count	Gunshot	3720	1.89	6.759	2.928	.035*
	Taser	152	1.16	2.779		

The results presented in Table 23 illustrate that there is a statistically significant
relationship between manner of death and word and article count. Significantly more
words (987.87) were written about PID victims who were killed by gunshot in

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comparison to words (513.71) written about PID victims who died from other causes (t=2.998; p < .05). There were also significantly more articles (1.89 v. 1.16) written when a PID victim was killed by gunshot in comparison than when victims were killed by means other than guns (t=2.928; p < .05).

For the multivariate analyses, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multivariate linear regression was used. OLS regression is used when two or more independent variables are used to predict the value of a continuous dependent variable. The goal is to distinguish which independent variables in the model are the strongest predictors on the dependent variable. When reviewing the model, one should pay attention to the F statistic to determine if the researcher should reject or fail to reject the model. In addition, R^2 represents the total variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables (Agresti & Finlay, 2009).   Consequently, OLS regression was the most appropriate statistic to use to examine the impact of PID victim race on PID media coverage, controlling for the demographic and contextual factors described and coded above.

Three multivariate linear regression models were estimated to examine the impact of race on article and word count, controlling for other factors known (or suspected to) be associated with media coverage of PID. Given heavily skewed nature of both dependent variables, 16 cases were deleted from the analyses because their value was 3.3 standard deviations among the mean value for Article Count, Word Count, or both. Additionally, both variables (and the variable representing the expected ratio of police per city) were logged to adjust their values for skewness. After making those adjustments, regression

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diagnostics were then estimated. The regression diagnostics suggested no further

adjustments were needed.[4] Each of those models is discussed in detail below.

Table 24   Multivariate Linear Regression Results of Regressing Article Count on Race
                and Other Control Variables

Variable	B	SE	β	T
Race (African American=1)	1.102	0.199	0.083	5.545***
City Pop (> 100K=1)	-0.064	0.197	-0.005	-0.325
Age	-0.021	0.006	-0.046	-3.217***
Estimated Police	0.000	0.000	0.015	0.910
Firearm Present at Incident	-0.020	0.221	-0.001	-0.088
Manner of Death (Gunshot=1)	1.139	0.202	0.082	5.624***
Northeast Region	1.561	0.33	0.071	4.726***
Western Region	0.741	0.207	0.056	3.574***
Midwest Region	0.577	0.235	0.036	2.459*
Constant	0.737	0.316		2.330*

Note. N=5149, F(9,5120)=12.657, p < .001; R^2 = .022

The results presented in Table 24 indicate that the number of articles written

about a particular PID incident had a statistically significant relationship with race

(African American), age, manner of death (gunshot), and region (Northeast, West, and

Midwest). That is, a larger number of articles were written about the PID incident when

the victims were African American (β=.083 p<.001), died by gunshot (β=.082, p< .001),

or were younger (β=-.046, p<.01). In addition, the results indicate that PID incidents that

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[4] In addition to the models presented herein, I dichotomized both article count and word count into
categories where the incident had no words or articles written about them (coded 0) compared to incidents
where they had one or more articles or words written about them (coded 1). I then estimated bivariate
logistic regression models to determine if there were substantive differences in the impact of the model's
variables on either article or word count. Because the impact of each significant association mirrored those
presented in the multivariate linear regression models, I chose to include the linear regression models rather
than the logistic regression models here.

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took place in the Northeast (β=.071, p<.001), West (β =.207, p<.001), and Midwest (β =.036, p<.05) had significantly more articles written about them than incidents that occurred in the South region. The R^2 indicates that only 2.2% of the total variation in the number of articles written about a PID incident is explained by the independent variables included in the model.

Table 25   Multivariate Linear Regression Results of Regressing Word Count on Race and Other Control Variables

Variable	B	SE	Beta	T
Race (African American=1)	705.66	129.726	0.082	5.440***
City Population (> 100K=1)	36.273	128.521	0.005	0.282
Age	-12.346	4.184	-0.042	-2.951***
Estimated Police	-0.006	0.027	-0.004	-0.222
Firearm Present at Incident	-83.588	144.51	-0.008	-0.578
Manner of Death (Gunshot=1)	684.957	132.229	0.076	5.180***
Northeast Region	672.841	215.747	0.047	3.119**
Western Region	490.513	135.356	0.056	3.624***
Midwest Region	301.284	153.16	0.029	1.967*
Constant	306.763	206.481		1.486

Note. N=5149, F(9,5120)=9.890, p < .001; R^2 = .017

The results presented in Table 25 indicate that there was a significant relationship between the number of words written about a PID incident and the victim's race, age, manner of death, and region (Northeast, West, and Midwest). PID victims that were African American (β=.082, p<.001), younger (β=-.042, p<.001), and died by gunshot (β=.076, p< .001) were more likely to have higher number of words written about their PID incident than their non-African American and older counterparts and PID victims who died from reasons other than a gunshot. In addition, the results indicate that PID incidents that took place in the Northeast (β=.047, p<.01), West (β=.056, p<.001), and

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Midwest (β=.029, p<.05) regions were more likely to have a high number of words written about PID than incidents that took place in the Southern region. The R^2 suggests that only 1.7% of the total variation in the number of words written about PID incidents was explained by the independent variables included in the model.

Table 26   Multivariate Linear Regression Results of Regressing Recoded Word Count on Race and Other Control Variables

Variable	B	SE	Beta	T
Race (African American=1)	1432.032	298.187	0.112	4.802***
City Population (> 100K=1)	152.939	288.187	0.013	0.529
Age	-22.511	9.492	-0.052	-2.372*
Estimated Police	5.00E-03	0.052	0.002	0.091
Firearm Present at Incident	-365.034	316.07	-0.025	-1.155
Manner of Death (Gunshot=1)	1179.501	322.501	0.081	3.657***
Northeast Region	430.006	438.514	0.024	0.981
Western Region	865.056	317.325	0.068	2.726**
Midwest Region	366.684	349.549	0.025	1.049
Constant	1002.536	501.126		2.001*

Note. N=2179, $F_{(9,2163)}$=6.383, p < .001; R^2 = .026

Given that (a) article count and word count were highly correlated and, in fact, over half the incidents (57.5%, see Table 18) did not have any articles written about them, I recoded word count to remove all cases where no article/words were written about the incident in the period under study. After removing those cases, the sample size was reduced to 2,179 cases. In Table 26, I present the results of regressing the word count variable that included only those cases where articles were written about the PID incident on the independent variables included in previous models. The results suggest that there remained a significant relationship between race, age, manner of death, and region (for the Western region) on word count. PID victims that were African American

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(β=.112, p<.001), died by gunshot (β=.081, p< .001), and were younger than their counterparts (β=-.052, p<.05) were more likely to have higher number of words written about their PID. PID incidents that took place in the West (β=.068, p<.01) were significantly more likely to have a high number of words written about them than incidents that took place in the Southern region. The R^2 suggests that only 2.6% of the total variation in the dependent variable (word count) is explained by the independent variables included in the model.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Dissertation

Historically, both the media and the criminal justice system have played a role in the process of racialization. The outcome of this process has been the establishment of African Americans males as criminals (Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994; Littlefield, 2008; Lopez 1996). Scholars have found that crime in the U.S. has been over-represented in the media as an event that occurs mostly among members of the African American community (Mears & Stewart, 2010) and this perception continues to be perpetuated within the media (Littlefield, 2008). Because the media are important in the process of racialization, it is not surprising to observe that African American males are over-represented in media depictions of criminal events, which in turn influences the negative perceptions and treatment that people have toward this racial group (Altheide, 1997; Littlefield, 2008; Oliver, 2004). Because crime has been racialized for decades, other forms of media (local television news and entertainment media) often produce, reproduce, and maintain these images; however, these portrayals do not reflect actual U.S. crime statistics that are annually reported by the FBI. Scholars maintain the reason African Americans continue to be discriminated against is because of the way that race has been socially constructed in the U.S. (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Bonilla-Silva, 1997; DuBois, 1903; Lopez, 1997).

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Omi and Winant (2014) assert that the act of constructing race has made it possible to create social hierarchies and limit the amount of resources that African Americans receive. These social hierarchies, and all the negative impacts of those hierarchies, have become a part of the social fabric of the U.S. and these negative definitions have been imbedded in social structures, which has created oppression for minority groups, particularly African American men. The literature maintains that African American men have been negatively portrayed for decades; however, in the past few years, the media have engaged in a large amount of coverage of police-involved deaths (PID), particularly when the officer involved in the PID is white and the victim is African American (Littlefield, 2008).

But why now? Is the media trying to be a part of the social movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) that are occurring? Are the media gaining a profit from the deaths of African American men at the hands of police officers? Or, conversely, are the media trying to help by bringing attention to the problem of disproportionate PID incidents in the African American community? It could also be that, as suggested by Surrett (2011), the media are pushing their own agenda and purposefully biasing public views about PID incidents.

Abegbile (2017) provides an alternative explanation. He argued that the reason for the amount of news coverage is due to the fact that many of these incidents have been captured through video clips from the police officers' dash cameras, body cameras, or from a civilian's smartphone. These video clips cause the media viewers to become aware of the police-pubic relationship in minority communities. Considering this large amount of media coverage of PIDs involving African American victims in the U.S., I

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wanted to have a better understanding of PID incidents receiving the most media coverage.

The purpose of this study was to examine the amount of news coverage, within U.S. newspapers, that PID incidents received in a three-month period. I wanted to examine what factors (i.e., race, age, armed vs. unarmed, manner of death) contributed to the amount of media coverage for PID cases between 2013 and 2016. In addition, I wanted to distinguish if African American PID victims received more media coverage in comparison to non-African American PID victims. This study was important to conduct partly because of how frequently the media cover PID incidents. Based on how often PIDs are presented, I thought it was useful to examine what factors contributed to newspaper coverage of these events to understand which PID incidents were considered newsworthy. The findings indicated that young African American males who died from gunshot were more likely to receive more news coverage and more often these cases saturated news media outlets.

This study merged data from three independent datasets (*Fatal Encounters*, the *Washington Post*, and *Guardian*) from 2013 to 2016 to compile a list of PID victims in the United States. The list consisted of 6,477 PID victims; given the very small number of female PID victims, for this specific study I limited my analyses to only males who had an identifiable race listed. Because the primary focus of this study was to examine the impact of victim's race on PID media coverage, all cases that did not have the victim's race in the datasets were deleted. This brought the sample size to 5,165 cases. Among these cases, African Americans were disproportionately more likely to be killed by police officers but white PID victims actually outnumbered African American PID

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victims across the three years of data. Thus, while the media primarily present African American victims, other racial groups have fallen victim to police use of excessive force. The data also showed that the largest proportion of men who were killed at the hands of police were between the ages of 25-34 (31.6%), followed by 35-44 (21.7%) and 15-24 (21.6%).

For this study, I tested six hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated that reports of PID would have a higher word count for incidents where victims were identified as African American males than reports where victims were identified as non-African American. This hypothesis was supported by both the bivariate and multivariate analyses. Independent sample t-test results compared means between African American and non-African American PID victims and determined that African American PID victims had two times the amount of words written about their cases in comparison to non-African American PID victims. Hypothesis 2 stated that reports of PID would have higher numbers of articles about the incident when the victim identified as an African American male rather than a non-African American male. This hypothesis was supported. Independent sample t-test results indicated that African American PID victims had almost two times the articles written about their case as white PID victims. The significant impact of race remained even after controlling for the other independent variables in this study.

This significant impact of race on article and word count was expected; however, the actual number of PID incidents (almost half of all PID incidents) involving white victims may be surprising to the general public given the wide media attention to PID incidents involving African American victims. Simmons (2017) argued that police

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killings have become a part of the national conversation, especially since 2014. She found that Associated Press polls demonstrate that U.S. citizens have become too familiar with the names of victims of police use of excessive force and they were most familiar with the incidents involving unarmed African American men. She reported that the most recognized PID incidents were those of Michael Brown, Eric Gardner, Freddie Gray, and Tamir Rice, all of whom were African American and later revealed to be unarmed, and contrasted those cases with others that did not become part of the national conversation (Simmons, 2017). The author determined that the process of selecting stories to disperse in the media was dependent on story availability and story suitability (Simmons, 2017). Simmons argued that journalists use reports from officials such as police officers or district attorneys to obtain information about what transpired during the police encounter with the deceased. After obtaining the information needed, journalists decipher whether the story was suitable (i.e., newsworthy) for the public.

Simmons (2017) maintained that journalists chose to write about African American PID victims to become a part of the national conversation for police killings when the incidents fell within the confines of the injustice frame. The injustice frame, as she defined it, occurs when a story is framed so that "injustices that generate righteous anger toward particular human actors who are deemed to be responsible for inflicting harm and suffering" (Simmons, 2017, p. 642). Her findings indicated that cases where an officer was not dispatched but engaged in an on-view arrest situation, and cases where the person did not appear to resist arrest from the officer, were significantly more likely to receive media coverage than other cases. In addition, incidents where there was a bodycam, police vehicle dash camera, or a witness recording the incident had increased

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media coverage of the incident. This point was interesting because it suggests that individuals who resist arrest, or are killed by officers responding to citizens' reports of deviant behavior, are often blamed for their own death and not deemed newsworthy (Simmons, 2017).

The disproportionate number of African Americans killed in PID incidents may be partly due to how African American men have been framed negatively throughout the media. While the media often depict cases that fit the injustice frame, one must understand that the media are profiting from the deaths of these men. That is, the same media outlets that use racial projects to perpetuate the *criminalblackman* frame as a means to influence negative perceptions of African American men are the same organizations that financially gain from reporting these stories.

In reference to police killings, the victim's race plays a role in which cases are reported. While police killings of individuals must fit an injustice frame to be reported, the results of this study suggest that stories where the PID victim is African American may increase news coverage as well. Does this mean that PID among white males are unimportant? No, rather, the media do not find these specific stories suitable to present to the public, particularly when the media believe that the individual is the cause of their own death.

Hypothesis 3 stated that reports of PID incidents would have higher word count for incidents that took place in a city with a large population size than incidents that took place in a city with a small population size. Independent sample t-test results supported this hypothesis; however, the relationship between PID media coverage and city size disappeared in the multivariate model, suggesting that city size may have been influenced

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by other factors included in the model. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Similar findings occurred for Hypothesis 4, which stated that reports of PID incidents that took place in a city with a large population size would have higher numbers of articles than incidents that took place in a city with a small population size. This hypothesis was also supported in the independent sample t-test results but not in the multivariate analysis. Though there were more articles to be written on average, the differences were not statistically significant.

The lack of support for Hypotheses 3 and 4 is counterintuitive, as one would think that PID incidents in cities with large populations would have more media coverage. Some research supports this intuition (Feinburg, 2002). In theory, because there are more newspaper organizations in larger cities, there should, by default, be more media coverage in larger cities in comparison to smaller cities. That is due to these news organizations in larger cities having access to more resources to help journalists craft the stories that they disseminate to the public.

Nevertheless, it could be that PID incidents are qualitatively different in small vs. large cities. As mentioned earlier, a qualitative content analysis that examined themes of the articles would be helpful in understanding if the facts surrounding these stories (e.g., did the PID victim resist arrest, did the PID victim brandish a weapon against the officers) may be responsible for these reporting differences.

A second explanation for the lack of statistically significant differences centers on the process of the social construction of the media discussed earlier. The process that Surette (2011) describes as claims-making is described by others as agenda-setting. The agenda-setting model may explain why media coverage of PIDs was not more extensive

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in large cities than in smaller cities. Agenda setting refers to the emphasis the media place on specific issues and the importance of presenting these issues to the media's viewers (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006). Agenda-setting helps in understanding how news is created, processed, and how the effects are produced. When agendas are set, information presented to the viewers is not nearly as important as how frequently the story is presented to the public. While police killings appear relevant to news organizations, coverage of police killings may not be the primary agenda for large news organizations, especially when other media are covering the story.

In addition, McCombs and Shaw (1972) suggest that newspaper organizations have a political ideology that is often presented in the stories that they cover. That is, some news organization may believe that presenting information about PID incidents, especially when the victim is a minority, may hinder the relationship that news organizations have with a political party or their audience that may appear to be more conservative in its behavior. This may not be as significant a concern in less populous cities, which are often covered by only one newspaper and thus less concerned about maintaining relationships with one political party or the other.

Hypothesis 5 stated that reports of PID incidents where victims died from a gunshot would have higher word counts than incidents where victim died from other manners of death. This hypothesis was supported by both the bivariate and multivariate analysis. Independent sample t-test results indicated that there was almost two times more words written about individuals shot by police in comparison to PID victims killed from other causes. Hypothesis 6 stated that reports of PID incidents where victims died from a gunshot would have more articles written about them than incidents where victims

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died from other causes. This hypothesis was also supported by both the bivariate and multivariate analyses. Independent sample t-test results illustrated that there were significantly more articles written about people who died by gunshot. The statistically significant impact of gunshot death on both word count and article count remained after controlling for the other variables in the multivariate models.

The fact that PID incidents that involved a firearm received more media coverage may be due to media awareness of the concept of weapon focus (Steblay, 1992). Steblay (1992) conducted a meta-analysis review of 19 tests that examined the weapon focus effect. Weapon focus, in this context, refers to visual attention eyewitnesses give to a perpetrator's weapon during a crime. That is, individuals are more likely to remember weapons used during a criminal encounter than a detailed description of the actual perpetrator of the crime because they focus on the weapon in the incident, not the weapon-holder's characteristics (Steblay, 1992). The weapon focus effect is a possible explanation to why journalists discuss PID incidents where the manner of death was a firearm in comparison to other causes of death. That is, the media may believe that individuals will be more inclined to remember PID cases where PID victims died from gunshot. Whatever its cause, incidents with firearms present receive more media coverage.

Unexpected Findings

The first unexpected finding from this study was that PID incidents in the South were less likely to be reported in the media than PID incidents from all other regions. Nisbett (1993) asserted that the U.S. south region has historically been more violent in comparison to the rest of the regions. Violence in the south has been a recurring theme

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since the American Revolution (Nisbett, 1993). Nisbett reviewed a variety of explanations for the higher rates of violence in the south. These explanations include, but are not limited to: (a) the fact that temperatures are higher in the South than other regions; (b) the fact that the South is the most impoverished region in the U.S.; (c) the institution of slavery in the South has increased interracial violence, particularly where white males invoke violence on African Americans, and (d) a Southern subculture of violence. Nisbett argued that the subculture of violence was the most accurate explanation due to the amount of homicides within the southern region. He contended that violence has become a part of the socialization process in the South and that people within this region are more likely to condone violence than residents of other regions.

In addition to the more positive attitudes Southerners have about violence, there are also higher levels of gun ownership among those living in the South (Dixon & Lizotte, 1987; Ellison, 1991). Gun ownership in the south has contributed to defensive violence and racial prejudice among white southern natives to use their guns on minority groups (i.e., African Americans) (Ellison, 1991). Because researchers have consistently found that the southern region is higher in violent crime in comparison to other regions, it is not surprising to see that South region had a higher amount of PID incidents than other regions. This acceptance of violence as part of daily life in the South could be the reason for PID incidents to be under-reported by media outlets. Media outlets, specifically those that report on police killings, may find it more newsworthy to report on incidents that take place in other regions (i.e., Midwest, Northeast, and West).

An additional factor that may have influenced regional differences in PID reports was that, with the exception of Alton Sterling (Louisiana), the most recognizable PID

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incidents did not happen in the South. For example, Michael Brown (Missouri), Tamir Rice (Ohio), Philando Castile (Minnesota), and Eric Garner (New York) are PID cases that happened outside of the South region. Even when PID cases are reported in the South, these cases do not receive as much coverage as cases in other regions without the history of violence found in the South. For example, Jonathan Ferrell was an African American man who died in North Carolina; he only had 14 articles written about his case. Philando Castile, on the other hand, died in Minnesota and had 324 articles written about his death. Both cases fall within the injustice frame described earlier. Another explanation regarding why incidents in the South may be under reported within newspapers may be due to these cases being qualitatively different from the PID cases in other regions of the country (Northeast, Midwest, and West).

The descriptive information presented in Table 8 illustrated that the West region had the highest PID rates in comparison to the other regions in the country (Northeast, Midwest, and South). Hirschfield (2015) conducted a study to examine why there were so many police killings in the U.S. He asserts that that the only nationally representative dataset that is available in reference to police killings was the justifiable homicides of felons that police voluntarily and unevenly report. However, he indicates that the most recent available database counting justifiable killings in the U.S. dates back to 2013. Because there is not a nationally representative dataset that tracks police-involved deaths, the author used the Fatal Encounters database from January 2013 to early May 2015 and found that 92.5 percent of the killings were by gunshot. Because of how PID incidents are reported in media outlets, one of the sociological explanations of police violence is racial threat. That is, police violence is used to control racial and ethnic minorities

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through racist tactics (Hirschfield, 2015). The author explained that while minorities are being killed by police, whites are also being killed at alarming rates as well (Hirschfield, 2015). While he discussed racial threat and racism as explanations to police violence, he wonders if these explanations can be applied to PID cases that take places in regions that are not heavily populated with African American men. He found that a large proportion of the PID cases happened in Mountain and Western regions (New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, Montana, Nevada, Utah, California, and Colorado). Similar to Hirschfield's arguments, the information provided in Table 8 indicates that within the Western region, New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska, Nevada, and Montana were the top five states where PID occurred (when comparing rates by state). The author asserts that a culture of hunting and shooting sports in the West, along with racialized fear, may be an explanation for higher rates of police killings in the West region. He states that guns are easily accessible, legally or otherwise. Because officers have no way of knowing whether individuals that they interact with have a weapon, officers may mistakenly shoot and kill these individuals. Because of the gun culture that exists, when a person reaches for something, the officer assumes that these individuals are reaching for a deadly weapon when it may be, in fact, another object (i.e., cellular phone, wallet, candy). As pointed out earlier, that same gun culture exists in the South. Consequently, more studies should examine the specific cases within these regions to have a better idea of what theoretical explanations can be used to understand PID incidents in the Western and Southern regions.

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<center>**Limitations**</center>

This study was not without limitations. As previously stated, I used Nexis Uni (formerly Nexis Lexis) to retrieve newspaper articles about PID incidents within the U.S.; however, Nexis Uni had four limitations. One of the limitations is that Nexis Uni had time constraints on some of the newspapers found within their database. For example, Nexis Uni had access to newspapers for *Chicago Tribune* for only the past six-month period. That is, incidents that happened between 2013 and 2016 and were only covered in the *Chicago Tribune* would not be included in my data because I did not begin collecting data until April of 2018. The *Chicago Tribune* is a nationally representative newspaper that reports on a wide-ranging number of stories. When reviewing the *Chicago Tribune* database available on their website, I was able to find a number of *Tribune* articles about PID victims that would have been captured in my study had Nexis Uni had full coverage of the *Chicago Tribune,* rather than just the past six months.

A second limitation of the study was that Nexis Uni included articles from throughout the world that covered the PID in the three databases use for this study and in languages other than English. I chose to limit my study to newspaper coverage by newspapers that were located in the U.S. and were written in English. Prior to deleting newspaper articles from outside the U.S. and those written in languages other than English, there were approximately 160,000 newspaper articles on the PID victims. However, once I deleted international and foreign language articles, the article count was reduced to 60,000 articles. Not including international articles and those written in languages other than English reduced understanding of how often these PID victims were

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presented in the newspapers outside the U.S. Nevertheless, given that my focus was on media framing in the U.S., this limitation is less important than the previous one.

The third limitation concerns shortcomings of the three independent databases (*Fatal Encounters*, the *Washington Post*, and *Guardian*) that I used to compile the list of PID victims. All three databases categorized an incident where a victim committed suicide in the presence of a police officer as a PID, which I believe is problematic. Essentially, I believe that categorizing a suicide victim as a PID victim suggests that the officer was responsible for causing the individual to kill himself/herself by the presence of the officer. This is an unlikely scenario at best. In addition to inflating the total number of PID incidents, including suicides as PID victims also impacted the accuracy of the manner of death variable. For example, if someone killed themselves with a gun, it was coded as a gunshot fatality at the hands of the officers, which is inaccurate and misleading. In the future, I think it would be worthwhile to create a category for self-inflicted wounds (i.e., suicide) because of police presence in the databases that count police killings. By adding this category, it can enhance the database to distinguish who actually was killed by officers from those who killed themselves.

This same limitation applies to vehicle deaths. When individuals were involved in a police chase that resulted in an accident, if the individual died in a crash or killed other civilians due to driving recklessly, these incidents were counted as PIDs as well. This infers that the officers were responsible for the fatality. I agree officers should be held accountable for giving chase, especially in instances when the policies within their organization do not support the action. Nevertheless, I believe that there should be additional categories to distinguish officers who actually hit someone with their police

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vehicle from those incidents when individuals kill themselves or others due to being chased by officers.

Another limitation is that the databases did not distinguish between PID incidents where the officer was off-duty from PID incidents involving officers in the line-of-duty. I believe that both off- and on-duty officers who kill someone should be reported; however, adding a category to distinguish between the two would allow researchers to determine the percentage of officers that harmed someone when they were off-duty in comparison to those that occurred in the line-of-duty. This limitation did not negatively impact my data; rather, this improvement would increase the effectiveness of these databases.

The next limitation of this study centers on the variable measuring whether or not victims were armed during the PID incident. In two-thirds (67 percent) of the PID incidents, it was unknown if the PID victim had a weapon present at the time of the encounter with the officer. The missing data did not give me the opportunity to thoroughly examine the impact of the type of weapon at the scene. I was only able to compare PID incidents where a firearm was reported as present with those that did not include a report of a firearm. To fully differentiate the impact of weapon on media coverage, I would need to use newspaper coverage of these cases to see if they report if the victim had a weapon or not. If these newspapers do not report on presence of the weapon, then it would remain unknown. I believe the research community would be better served if those compiling the three databases collected that information, because they may have more information about the case than what is reported within these databases.

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Another limitation is that this study specifically looked at males who had an identifiable race. The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that contributed to the number of articles and words used and one of the variables used was race. To understand if race was a predictor of news coverage, it was useful to delete cases where the PID victim did not have an identifiable race listed. In reference to sex, the media often spent a considerable amount of time covering PID cases where a male died at the hands of police. Instead of examining media coverage of both males and females, I wanted to look at males to compare the findings in this study to previous studies conducted to see if the findings were similar. For clarification purposes, there were 573 female PID in the database which accounted for 8.8% of the database. The exclusion of females and unidentifiable race did not influence my database considering that the majority of the cases were of male PID incidents. However, in the future, I would like to examine the difference in newspaper coverage among males and females PID cases.

Implications for Future Research

Based on the findings of this dissertation, there are a number of research questions whose answer would be useful to the field of criminology. The findings presented here suggest at least four areas of research to advance the discipline. These areas include: (1) police chase policies within police departments, (2) spatial analysis study to examine the areas where the PID incidents happened, and (3) depiction of officers and PID victims in newspaper articles.

Vehicle death (867; 16.7%) was the second leading cause of PID incidents after gunshot in my study. After reviewing some of the newspaper articles around these vehicular deaths (i.e., fatal crash), I think it would be interesting to focus on the vehicle

cases and the police departments associated with those deaths. After that information is collected, I would want to determine under what conditions police officers are allowed to give chase to those who are attempting to flee. In addition, I would like to examine what policies are in place for officers who accidentally hit someone because of their own reckless driving (i.e., speeding, texting while driving). This research would be helpful in creating policies to reduce the amount of fatal deaths caused by officers or the civilians who are fleeing the scene.

The second study that should be conducted would examine the areas where the incidents took place to determine if these areas are concentrated in minority communities. One unique aspect of *Fatal Encounters* is that it lists both the address and zip code where PID incidents took place. Researchers could examine those areas where PIDs take place to compare characteristics of these neighborhoods to identify similarities and differences in those areas where PIDs occur. *Fatal Encounters* also reports whether or not the police officer was dispatched to the scene; thus, a spatial analysis could reveal those areas where African American men are disproportionately killed in cases where officers are not called to a scene. This might yield further understanding of the causes of the disproportionate number of African Americans in these PID incidents.

The final study that should be conducted is to examine the ways in which the media, specifically newspapers, depict the officer and the victim in the PID cases. I recall that when Michael Brown was murdered, he was often described as having Hulk-like features and demeanor and this description was often portrayed in the media. Framing Michael Brown as aggressive and having supernatural physical powers could sway newspaper readers to support the actions of the officer. In addition, in PID cases

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where the victim had an injustice frame, it would be interesting to see how the officer(s) were portrayed and the specific words used to describe him/her. It would also be interesting to examine those instances where officers are presented positively in the media and compare those articles with those where they are portrayed negatively, to better understand media framing of the police.

Implications for Media Reporting

Newspapers have been in the U.S. since the 1700s, and they were created as a network of imagined and material relationships in society (Nerone & Barnhurst, 2003). While the mass media have become popular in mainstream society, scholars have not adequately examined the effect of mass media on society in both the 19th and 20th century (Marszolke & Robel, 2016). The reason is because media sources are organized through a hierarchy of controlling institutions that have the most influence on its audience members (Robinson, 2011). By the late 1980s, eight corporations controlled eight of the inner-ring media and a host of middle- and outer-ring media; however, since 2004, five corporations have owned most of the newspapers and other mediums (i.e., television stations, radio stations, movie studios, etc.) (Robinson, 2011). Because much of the media are owned by one of the major corporations, the media can serve as a gatekeeper for the powerful or elite members of American society.

Because the media often construct negative images of African Americans, particularly men, these images can influence how individuals interact and treat minorities (Littlefield, 2008). By the media frequently portraying African American males as criminals, Littlefield asserts that the media serve as a system of racialization and reproduce the idea that crime is a problem of African American males. That is, the media

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influence the perceptions individuals have about race, the racialization of crime, fear of crime, and how PID cases are presented based on the police encounter. As previously stated, crimes have been racialized since the 1980s; that is almost 40 years of the media disproportionately framing African American men negatively. When these messages are frequently portrayed, it has the capability of supporting the actions of police officers when they decide to shoot and kill unarmed African American men (Simmons, 2017).

The media should change the ways in which they present the story to help in reducing the number of negative stigmas that exist about minority groups (i.e., African American). If the media present an actual depiction of crime in the U.S., officers may change their perceptions or racial biases toward members of the African American community. Research states that the media serve the elite class and often portray or report topics that are in the interest of those groups. While this is the case, the media should better regulate itself to control the images that are presented to promote inequality and oppression that minorities face. The fact is that these negative images allow individuals to justify why minorities are mistreated within varying social structures.

Implications for Policing

The findings from this study indicated that African American males were disproportionately more likely to be PID victims and, because of this, there should be policies in place to eliminate or decrease the amount of racial bias in policing. To illuminate racial bias, officers should be required to have cultural sensitivity training every six months (i.e., twice annually) to reduce racial bias (Brooks et al., 2016). Previous research was conducted to distinguish when individuals, specifically police officers, decide when to shoot and who to shoot in high stress situations (Correll, Park, &

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Judd, 2007; Correll, Park, Judd, Wittenbrink, Sadler, & Keesee, 2007; Plant & Goplen, 2011). These studies placed participating officers in simulation labs of real-life scenarios to distinguish why officers were more likely to shoot and kill unarmed African American men in comparison to unarmed white men. Correll, Park, and Judd (2007) conducted a video game simulation to determine racial bias in shoot/don't shoot decision among non-African American undergraduate students. Prior to the participants using the video game simulation, they had to read newspapers about both African American and white criminals. Reading newspaper stories about African American criminals increased the error of mistakenly killing an African American person who was not a threat.

Correll et al. (2007) conducted a study to compare police officers with members of the community to see which group was most likely to have racial bias. Correll and colleagues maintained that officers were less likely to have racial bias when deciding when to shoot targets that are a threat, whereas members within the community where more likely to have quicker shoot responses when the individual was African American, armed or unarmed. Plant and Peruche (2005) conducted a similar study to determine if racial bias would be reduced if officers received extensive training. Their findings indicated that initially officers were more likely to mistakenly kill unarmed African American men, however, after extensive training, racial bias was eliminated by officers and the primary focus was whether or not the perpetrator had a weapon (Plant & Peruche, 2005). The findings from these studies suggest that officers can be trained to reduce their likelihood of mistakenly killing African American men at disproportionate rates. One method to do so is cultural sensitivity training, which allows officers to learn about

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different racial and ethnic groups to debunk some of the negative stigmas associated with these groups.

In addition, policies should be in place to hold officers accountable for their actions, especially when the force used was not necessary. Between 2013-2016 there were several PID incidents where officers were asked to resign or were fired from their position; however, most officers who resigned or were terminated were not criminally charged for their wrongdoings and, even when they were charged, most were not convicted. Goldman and Puro (2001) assert that the public should not count on the criminal justice system to hold officers accountable for their wrongdoings. Rather, administrative regulation (i.e., legislative action) is necessary to bring forth justice to local police departments. These scholars argue that officers involved in PID incidents that are ruled to be at fault should have their state certificates and licenses that is given to officers after his/her state-mandated training revoked. According to Goldman and Puro (2001), each state has a state agency, the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST), to hold hearings in cases of police misconduct to determine if his/her action requires a sanction. However, in many instances, officers are given the opportunity to resign rather than have their state certification revoked. When officers are given the opportunity to resign, the officer can then be hired by other police departments (and many are). Thus, officers are not truly being punished for their wrongdoings because they are not adequately reprimanded for their role in the death of the civilian. Police officers should be held accountable for their actions, if not through the criminal justice system, then from their own agency.

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Implications for Data

The three databases used in this study were useful in providing detailed information about PID victims (age, race, sex) and contextual data around those incidents (city, state, street address); however, the databases failed to give detailed information about the officer(s) involved in the encounter. The databases should include officer information to examine both the race and gender of officers involved in PID incidents. The reason that this is important is because the media often pay closer attention to PID cases where the victim is African American and the officer is white (Simmons, 2017). Thus, being able to compare interracial PID incidents with intraracial PID incidents would allow researchers to examine differences between the two in media coverage and other situational factors. It would also be interesting to see how female officers engage in PID incidents in comparison to their male counterparts.

Implications for Federal Databases

As previously stated, there is not a nationally representative sample of police use of force in the U.S. (Hickman & Poore, 2016); however, after 24 years of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began collecting data to understand the frequency of police killings. Though this is a step in the right direction, I believe the FBI should take all the recommendations for the data used for this study into consideration when compiling their data. That is, their data should include data about the police officer (i.e., name, race, age, time as an officer) involved in the PID. The FBI must also compare their database to the independent bases that already exist to help in creating their own method to improving how researchers, particularly criminologists and sociologists, understand police use of excessive force in

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the U.S. Also, these independent databases should not only continue collecting data, but these databases should be compared to the data found by the FBI to distinguish the differences. In addition, it would be interesting to see if there were large differences between the data used in my study and the reporting of the FBI. Because the dataset is in its beginning stages, I believe that researchers should not take their statements for face value until the data prove to be reliable and a valid source.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the amount of newspaper coverage of PID incidents. The dataset used for this study helped determine that race and manner of death were the strongest predictors of newspaper coverage in the U.S. While there is not a nationally representative sample to examine police use of excessive force, databases such as Fatal Encounters, the Washington Post, and Guardian are useful in bridging the gap of what criminologists understand about police use of excessive force in the U.S. While the media are useful for retrieving information about PID incidents, there are ways the structure of the media should change to reflect the actual depiction of crime in the U.S. That is, the media should change how they depict minorities as it relates to crime in the media; it is their responsibility to illustrate that both whites and African Americans commit crime and, for most crimes, whites commit more crime than African Americans. This is certainly not the story currently told by the media.

Because this is the first study of which I'm aware that merged data from three independent organizations collecting information about PID cases that happened in the U.S., I believe I have contributed to both the breadth and depth of knowledge around police-involved deaths. The knowledge gained from this study can be used to highlight

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injustices and racial bias found within policing organizations; more importantly, it can be used to highlight the injustices the media commit by racializing African Americans as criminals rather than individuals whose skin color is not nearly as important as their character.   Until these injustices are resolved, much work remains for researchers; not just in the area of media reporting on police-involved shootings, which is important, but in the area of the impact of the media on all walks of life.

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