RACE, GENDER, AND MEDIA PRACTICES:

A CRITICAL FRAMING ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF

USDA WORKER SHIRLEY SHERROD

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

On July 19, 2010, conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart posted a story on his website claiming USDA worker Shirley Sherrod was racist in her work with farmers. The edited video included with the story as proof, showed Sherrod speaking at an NAACP banquet. Sherrod was subsequently vilified in the media and fired from her job, only to be exonerated and rehired later that week.

Although the media claims their routine writing and reporting practices (such as newsworthiness, source selection, objectivity, and perpetual news cycle) make the industry better, researchers have shown that these practices lead to the use of shortcuts and stereotypes. This is especially detrimental to Black women because of the double-dose of stereotyping they are subject to when they are portrayed in the media.

The purpose of this study was to understand how media practices influenced the framing of race and gender in the media coverage of Sherrod. In order to integrate key elements of critical theory (i.e. activism, intersectionality, speaking position, subjectivity) I chose a mixed-methods approach for my framing analysis. This included open-ended reading of the news stories, constant comparative analysis of possible frames, quantitative coding sheet, analysis of statistics in SPSS, and inclusion of qualitative examples.

I analyzed a total of 93 news articles from 12 news sources for this study. Most of the news stories came from newer, online publications (n=67, 72.0%) and over half came from new sources with a liberal philosophy (n=47, 50.5%). I found three frames

that were used to describe Sherrod in terms of race and gender: victim, good woman, and above her place. I also found that these frames were closely aligned with news values that help determine a story's newsworthiness. I found seven sources were used repetitively and selectively associated with the frames. I also found differences in frames by news source type and philosophy. Finally, I found that the frames followed an identifiable news cycle.

The results of this study show that the media do indeed utilize negative stereotypes of Black women in their products and that media's use of routine writing and reporting practices exacerbate this problem.

DEDICATION

This one is for the boy.

For believing in me, supporting me, and dreaming with me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Even if you don't know *this* story, you know *the* story.

It is the story where disreputable yellow journalists manipulate fears grounded in

racism to target and vilify a person of color. In this instance it is Fox News, the

NAACP, video manipulation and Ms. Sherrod. (McMillan-Cottom, 2012, para.

5-6, emphasis original)

Case History

On the morning of Monday, July 19, 2010, White, conservative blogger Andrew

Breitbart posted a story claiming he had proof that a Black employee of the United

States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Shirley Sherrod, was racist and had

discriminated against White farmers during her work. The story was accompanied by a

heavily edited video of a speech Sherrod gave during an even held by the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) earlier in the year (Media

Matters for America, 2012).

Shortly after, the story was picked up by Fox News and several other blogs. Over

the course of the afternoon, Sherrod was painted as a racist in both traditional and new

media. On Monday evening, CBS and *The Drudge Report* ran the story, followed by *The

O'Reilly* Factor and *The Sean Hannity Show* later that night. The media also began to

suggest that Sherrod may have resigned because her racist behavior had been uncovered.

Monday night the NAACP released a statement disavowing Sherrod and her actions, while CNN and several other blogs ran the story throughout Monday evening and overnight (Media Matters for America, 2012). (See Figure 1).

Early Tuesday morning, Fox and MSNBC ran the story coupled with a discussion of racism and government ineptitude. In contrast, CNN and *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* interviewed Sherrod and ran stories claiming, (a) the video was taken out of context and incomplete, (b) the story Sherrod told was 24 years old and from before her time at the USDA, and (c) she was pressured to resign by high ranking USDA officials. Fox and other conservative media continued running the "Sherrod is a racist" story until mid-morning, then, citing her interviews, stated that they needed more context to be fair (Media Matters for America, 2012).

Figure 1. A satirical depiction of the media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley

Sherrod. From *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, by David Horsey, 2010. Copyright 2010

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(see Appendix A).

Around noon on Tuesday, CNN ran an interview with an individual claiming to

be the White farmer referenced in the video and defending Sherrod. Through the course

of the afternoon, conservative news media continued to attack Sherrod (claiming she was

racist, she was whining about her job, she was the face of big government) and defend Breitbart (claiming he did not have the original video, someone emailed him the video, the story fallout was not his fault). Later that afternoon, the NAACP backtracked and said it was investigating the matter, while the White House placed the blame for the spiraling situation fully on the Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack (Bastasch, 2012). Conservative news outlets continued running the original story throughout the afternoon, some even claimed that the liberal media was trying to bury the story (Media Matters for America, 2012).

Tuesday evening CNN stated that they had watched the original video and that Sherrod's remarks were taken out of context. The NAACP released a similar statement after viewing the original video, blaming the conservative media for fooling them. Breitbart continued to defend his work, ironically asking if the media had done any "extra reporting" rather than "just taking someone's word" (Media Matters for America, 2012, para. 54). The USDA released a statement promising a review of additional facts, and later, along with the White House, formally apologized to Sherrod and offered to rehire her. Although Sherrod later agreed to work in a consulting capacity for the USDA on diversity matters, she refused their original job offer stating that she lost trust in them when they listened to the media rather than reaching out to speak to her directly.

Media Stereotypes

According to researchers, notions of race and gender in the United States are deployed through cultural mediums such as the media (Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1999; Downing, Mohammadi, & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1995; Entman & Rojecki, 2000;

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Florence, 2009; Gill, 2007; Hall, 2003; Hallin, 1985; Harrigan & Brown Dunlap, 2004; Hill Collins, 2005, 2009; Kellner, 2003; Levin & Medfis, 2012; Rose et al., 1995; Tuchman, 1978, 1979; Van Sterkenburg, Knoppers, & De Leeuw, 2010; Wood, 1994; Woods, 2002). According to Wood (1994) media are "…one of the most pervasive and powerful…" influences on how we view people because they are "…woven throughout our daily lives…" and "…insinuate their messages into our consciousness at every turn." (p. 31).

Because the media are such a powerful source of information and learning in the United States, it is important that they depict race and gender correctly. Many times, unfortunately, the media rely on stereotypes of race and gender in their products. According to Potter and Kappeler (2012), "…the end result of these media portrayals is a reinforcement of ethnic, gender, and class stereotypes, cobbled together in brief, dramatic, and disturbing images and words" (p. 9). Similarly, Douglas (2010) called the media a fun house mirror, because it depicts a warped and distorted version of reality.

> Many producers insist that the mass media are simply mirrors, reflecting reality, whatever that is, back to the public. Whenever you hear this mirror metaphor, I urge you to smash it… Because if the mass media are mirrors, they are fun house mirrors…exaggerating certain kinds of stories, certain kinds of people, certain kinds of values and attitudes, while minimizing others or rendering them invisible. (Douglas, 2010, pp. 18-19)

Research has shown that women and Blacks are represented in the media at a far lower rate than White men are, and when they are represented, they are usually shown in

a negative light (Douglas, 2010; Downing, Mohammadi, & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1995; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazier, & Phillips, 1997; Gans, 2003; Gibbons, 2012; Harrison, 1995; Kellstedt, 2003; Levin & Madfis, 2012; Potter & Kappeler, 2012; Pugh Yi & Dearfield, 2012; Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002; Tuchman, 1978; Van Sterkenburg, Knoppers, & De Leeuw, 2010; Wood, 1994; Woods, 2002). "We have known for years, based on many social science studies that underrepresentation and negative depictions in media have broad societal effects" (Pugh Yi & Dearfield, 2012, p. 10).

These stereotypical representations used in the media can result in a skewed version of reality wherein members of the media audience perceive racist and sexist stereotypes to be the norm (Domke, McCoy & Torres, 1999; Downing, Mohammadi & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1995; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Florence, 2009; Gill, 2007; Hall, 2003; Halling, 1985; Harrigan & Brown Dunlap, 2004; Hill Collins, 2005, 2009; Kellner, 2003; Levin & Madfis, 2012; Rose et al., 1995; Tuchman, 1978; Van Sterkenburg, Knoppers, & De Leeuw, 2010; Woods, 2002). "Prolonged exposure to the mass media creates and cultivates attitudes which are less based in reality and more consistent with a false, media-conjured version of the world" (Levin & Madfis, 2012, p. 241).

Race in the Media

According to Denzin (2002), "A majority of Americans know and understand the American racial order through the mass media. Accordingly, those who control the media, including cinema and television, shape and define a society's discourse about

race, and race relations" (p. 2). This is furthered, often, by Whites' lack of contact with Blacks on a day-to-day basis (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gallagher, 2003; Hill Collins, 2009; Kelldstedt, 2003). "Lacking much opportunity for repeated close contact with a wide variety of Blacks, Whites depend heavily on cultural material, especially mediated messages, for cataloging Blacks" (Entman & Rojecki, 2000, p. 49). This can be seen in Whites' overestimation of the nonWhite population and their belief in a sinister Black population (Entman & Rojeck, 2000; Gallagher, 2003; Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazier & Phillips, 1997).

For example, many people consider Blacks to be lazy, violent, criminal, poor, and sexually deviant (Denzin, 2002; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gandy, Knopp, Hands, Frazier & Phillips, 1997; Kelldstedt, 2003; Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001). Entman and Rojecki (2000) found that the media depict Blacks and Whites as members of separate moral universes and fundamentally different from each other. According to Kelldstedt (2003), "…the vast majority of the existing literature has shown that media coverage of Blacks in America focuses disproportionately on stories that confirm preexisting (and almost always negative) White stereotypes of Blacks" (p. 18).

News coverage of poverty, for example, shows Blacks as welfare recipients at twice the rate they actually receive this type of assistance (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Media researchers have shown that the notions poor and Black are tied so closely together in the United States media, that it is almost impossible to untie them (Hall, 2003; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Means Coleman, 2003; Soloranzao & Yosso, 2001). Blacks appear three to four times more often than Whites when the media is covering

crime stories, making them appear to be more threatening as a group (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gerbner, 2003; Hall, 2003). Stereotypes of Blacks as promiscuous or sexually deviant also abound, calling into question Blacks' ability for self-control and normalcy (Denzin, 2002; Gerbner, 2003; Hill Collins, 2009). "The frequent pairing of social pathology (crime, cheating, violence, low self-discipline) and unpopular policy (welfare, affirmative action 'preferences') with Blacks helps sustain the largely unconscious linkages that guide [Whites'] information processing" (Entman & Rojecki, 2000, pp. 208-209).

Gender in the Media

According to the *State of the Media* report published by the Women's Media Center, women have been consistently underrepresented across the media for the last decade (Pugh Yi & Dearfield, 2012). A United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization report stated that based on the current rate of gender depiction, it will take the media 75 years to show gender equality (World Savvy, 2009). Women are quoted as sources in news stories in both new and traditional media forms at half the rate of men (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2005). They are even less likely to be the subject of a news story—between 20-25% of news stories are about women (Pugh Yi & Dearfield, 2012). And, when news stories do focus on women, they are typically shown as victims of physical and/or sexual violence (Miss Representation, 2011; Pugh Yi & Dearfield, 2012). In the real world, women account for more than half of the world's population and a majority of graduates of media education programs (Gibbons, 2012; Miss Representation, 2011; Pugh Yi & Dearfield, 2012). This underrepresentation of

women in the media and the products they produce "…tempts us to believe that there really are more men than women and, further, that men are the cultural standard" (Wood, 1994, p. 31).

According to researchers, there is a dualistic portrayal of women in the media. "Media have created two images of women: good women and bad ones. These polar opposites are often juxtaposed against each other to dramatize differences in the consequences that befall good and bad women" (Wood, 1994, p. 33). Good women, who are rarely seen, are shown as the sainted wife and/or mother (Tuchman, 1979; Wood, 1994). "Good women are pretty, deferential, and focused on home, family and caring for others. Subordinate to men, they are usually cast as victims, angels, martyrs, and loyal wives and helpmates" (Wood, 1994, p. 33). Bad women, on the other hand, are the polar opposite—evil, manipulating, hard, cold—and ever present in media products (Wood, 1994; World Savvy, 2009). Bad women "…are the witch, bitch, whore, or non-woman, who is represented as hard, cold aggressive-all things a good woman is not supposed to be" (Wood, 1994, p. 33).

Despite the media's more recent depictions of girl power, women are rarely seen in the media working, holding positions of leadership, or achieving their goals (Azad, 2012; Douglas, 2010; Miss Representation, 2011). They are more likely, rather, to be shown embracing notions of romance, shopping, and looks (Douglas, 2010; Miss Representation, 2011). And this media focus on how women should look—tan, long straight hair, thin stomachs and thighs, large breasts and butts—has lead to an image of women that most cannot obtain (Kimmel, 2004; Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002;

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Wood, 1994; World Savvy, 2009). "In the United States, women's beauty is placed at such a high premium and the standards of beauty are so narrow than many women feel trapped by what Naomi Wolf called the 'beauty myth'—a nearly unreachable cultural ideal of feminist beauty" (Kimmel, 2001, p. 232).

The most harmful, and well-known, depiction of women in the media is that of the sex object (Berg, 2009; Collins, 2011; McFarland, 1990; Pugh Yi & Dearfield, 2012; Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002; Tuchman, 1979; Wood, 1994; World Savvy, 2009). Women's bodies, either as a whole or as individual parts, are shown partially or fully unclothed over and over again. Woods (1994) suggests,

> A final theme in mediated representations of relationships between women and men is representation of women as subject to men's sexual desires. The irony of this representation is that the very qualities women are encouraged to develop (beauty, sexiness, passivity, and powerlessness) in order to meet cultural ideals of femininity contribute to their victimization. (p. 36)

This hypersexualization of women, their bodies, and their appearances, has lead to the objectification of women.

> On a societal level, the ubiquity of the 'perfect' female form and, more specifically, the objectification of the female body, has been linked to social pathologies such as sexual harassment, subordination in the workplace, and rape. This body objectification of women has also been linked to such psychological pathologies as eating disorders, obsessive dieting and low self-esteem among women. (Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002, p. 177)

Black Women in the Media

Black women are subjected to even more harmful stereotypes than Black men or White women in the media, because they are judged both for being Black and for being female. It is therefore important to analyze "…the particular controlling images applied to African-American women [to reveal] the specific contours of Black women's objectification as well as the ways in which oppression of race, gender, sexuality, and class intersect" (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 72).

Scholars who study media, race, and gender have all documented stereotypes of Black women related to work (mammy, Black lady), family (welfare queen, matriarch), autonomy (bitch, sapphire), and sexuality (sapphire, hoochie, jezebel) (Hill Collins, 2000, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Wing, 1997;). Hill Collins (2000) stated "…because the authority to define societal values is a major instrument of power, elite groups, in exercising power, manipulate ideas about Black womanhood" (p. 69).

The welfare queen stereotype presents Black women as dependent on welfare and other public assistance programs, thereby taking hard-earned money from the everyday (read White) citizen (Hill Collins, 2000). Related is the hoochie or jezebel stereotype, wherein Black women are seen as promiscuous and sexually deviant (Hill Collins, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). The promiscuity leads to the welfare queen, while the sexual deviance helps to other Black women. The bitch stereotype, showing Black women as stubborn, bossy, unattractive, and controlling, leads to the demonization and defeminization of Black women (Hill Collins, 2005; Landson-Billings).

Mammy is perhaps the oldest and most well known stereotype used for Black women. This image of Black women as overweight, happy-go-lucky, dark complexioned, and in love with helping Whites is still seen on grocery store shelves today (Hill Collins, 2000; Ladson-Billings). A more modern stereotype connected to today's middle-class Black women is that of the Black lady. The Black lady has learned control and is not sexually deviant while mixing the strength of the bitch with the work ethic of the mammy (Hill Collins, 2005).

Conceptual Framework

According to Van Sterkenburg, Knoppers & De Leeuw (2010), stereotypes have been embedded in the United States' media since the 18th century. Because race and gender are defined in American culture in terms of dichotomy (i.e. White versus Black, men versus women), the terms, and people associated with them, will always hold the place of other in our culture.

This is not to say that media professionals are consciously placing stereotypes in the news to create racial or gender aversion. Rather, as Entman & Rojecki (2000) state, gendered and racialized stereotypes arise from a complex interaction of dominant culture, journalistic norms, individual shortcomings, and organizational restraints. Media practices such as newsworthiness, or what is worthy to become news; source selection, or relying on known/easy sources; objectivity, or believing in value-free writing; and the perpetual news cycle, or living in a 24-hour/immediate news climate, can lead to the use of shortcuts that can help build or reinforce stereotypes (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 2002; Woods, 2000).

These shortcuts, known as frames, are made up of culturally developed ideas and help organize social reality by simplifying large quantities of information into small, easily accessible ideas (Hertog & McLeod, 2001). " Frames highlight and link data selectively to tell more or less coherent stories that define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies" (Entman & Rojecki, 2000, p. 49). How a news story is reported, who is quoted and in what order, along with word choice, and corresponding images all frame a story towards one viewpoint or another (Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Zoch, 2001). Media researchers suggest that media professionals first ask themselves if gender and/or race is relevant to the story they are working on, and if it is, to explain why to the audience (i.e. provide context) (Kellstedt, 2003; Woods, 2000).

Problem Statement

If media use shortcuts, such as media practices, and shortcuts in the media process can lead to steretoypes, then do media practices result in stereotypes?

The media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod involved the use of new and traditional media to disseminate the story, took place on a short news cycle, and saturated the media. This combination of brief time frame and intense coverage provides a unique opportunity to understand how the media practices affect stereotypes in the media's products.

Additionally, although all the sources to be used in this study come from mainstream media, it will give agriculural communications professionals an idea of how the use of race and gender can influence the public's perception of agriculture.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how media practices influenced the framing of race and gender in the media coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How did media practices affect the media's framing of race and gender in the media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod?

RQ1a: What frames were used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender? [media practice: newsworthiness]

RQ1b: What sources were associated with the frames used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender? [media practice: source selection]

RQ1c: What were the differences in the frames presented by the varying news sources? [media practice: objectivity]

RQ1d: What were the differences in the frames presented from the beginning of day one to the end of day seven of this news cycle? [media practice: perpetual news cycle]

Significance of the Study

The media's coverage of Black, female, USDA worker Shirley Sherrod is unique because the news cycle was over a truncated one-week-period, which allows us to study macro ideas (media practices, stereotypes, intersectionality) at a micro level (seven days in 2010).

Delimitations

The researcher used online news stories from six traditional newspapers (*New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Atlanta Constitution Journal, Seattle Times/PI,* and *St Louis Post Dispatch*) and six new media sources (CNN, Fox News, *Huffington Post*, *Breitbart*, *The Daily Caller*, and *Politico*) for a week-long period starting Monday, July 19, 2010 and ending Sunday, July 25, 2010. These stories were gathered using Lexis Nexis, ProQuest, and media archives.

Assumptions

An assumption of this study was that all news stories related to Shirley Sherrod from the above-mentioned media outlets were available online.

Limitations

A weakness of this study was its specificity, therefore results are not generalizable.

Definition of Terms

Several key terms were used throughout this study. For a more thorough understanding, please reference the list in Appendix B.

Dissertation Organization

Chapter II contains a review of the literature for this study. The review of literature examines:

1. Journalism

2. Media Practices

3. Race

4. Gender

5. Framing Theory

Chapter III describes the methodology, data collection, and data analysis used in the study. This includes:

1. Epistemological Background

    a. Critical Theory/Activism

    b. Intersectionality

    c. Standpoint

    d. Speaking/Voice

    e. Subjectivity

2. Methodological Background

    a. Framing Analysis

    b. Critical Media Research

3. Restatement of Research Problem/Questions

4. Data collection/analysis techniques

5. Researcher Positionality

Chapter IV discusses the data analysis, results, and findings of the study. Chapter V contains the summary, results, discussion, contributions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

That's what happens for many people who see themselves rarely reflected in the

mythical mirror journalism holds up to the world each day. Their voices are often

muted, their stories untold or poorly told. Their communities are alien territory to

many in the working press. Their images are distorted by journalism that fails,

time and again, to capture the depth and complexity that would make their stories

truer, more accurate, fairer, more complete. (Woods, 2002, p. 106)

Journalism

Definition

Although there are many descriptions of what journalism is or is not, can or

should be, I ascribe to Stuart Adam's (2002) definition: "Journalism is an invention or a

form of expression used to report and comment in the public media on the events and

ideas of the here and now" (p. 10). This definition can be broken down into five parts:

expression, reporting, judging, public voice, and time.

Expression. Journalists speak individually (as writers) through a cultural format,

the news story. "It is a creation—a product of the Imagination—in both an individual

and cultural sense. It is a form of expression in which the imaginative capacities both of

individuals and of a culture are revealed" (Adam, 2002, pp. 12-13).

Reporting. Journalists gather information on a variety of subjects (people, events,

ideas) and then present that information to the public.

Judging. Journalists use their own judgments in choosing news and in writing it. "Like all storytellers, journalists inscribe meaning on the facts and events they describe" (Adam, 2002, p. 30).

Public voice. Journalists gather, write and report news to be seen by the public.

Time. Journalists deal with subjects that are not only in present time, but are often time sensitive. "Journalism is concerned with events in time…events in the here and now" (Adam, 2002, p. 19).

History

The roots of journalism in America can be traced to the seventeenth century when newspapers were run and staffed by the town printer/reporter (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). Although small, local enterprises, newspapers at this time focused on the government and its activities (Adam, 2002). Newspapers began to grow in size and coverage in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, forming the backbone of today's large media conglomerates.

During the eighteenth century, newspapers oftentimes had a single owner (individual or political organization) whose views they espoused (Fuller, 1996; Hallin, 1985; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). "The U.S. newspaper of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a vehicle of political debate and action. Neither objectivity nor political neutrality, the key values of contemporary journalism, was considered a virtue" (Hallin, 1985, p. 127). In the mid-1800s, the penny papers debuted, bringing with them sweeping changes to American journalism. First, these cheaper newspapers allowed the everyday citizen access to the news. Second, the penny papers turned from the news of the time

(political and partisan) and began to establish journalism norms that are still in use today (Hallin, 1985; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986).

The 1900s was a time of turmoil for American journalism. Although journalists shied away from the political news coverage of the 1800s, they were nonetheless activists, claiming they were defenders of the public good (Hallin, 1985). Activist journalists sought to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" (Fuller, 1996, p. 33). This was, however, quickly replaced with the notion of objectivity (Hallin, 1985; Hohenberg, 1978). Journalists would ask the 'five Ws' (who, what, when, where and why) but leave all personal values, political or otherwise, out of the news. "By the early twentieth century realism had become objectivity: 'a faith in "fact," a distrust of "values," and a commitment to their segregation'" (Hallin, 1985, p. 130).

The political and social upheaval seen during the latter part of the twentieth century brought change to American journalism once more, seeing the pendulum swing back towards a press for the people (Hallin, 1985). This did not last, and today's journalism is once more immersed in the notion of objectivity. "Journalists came to think of themselves not as participants in the process of political discussion, even of a nonpartisan character, but as professionals, standing above the political fray" (Hallin, 1985, p. 130).

Recent History

More recently, changes in technology such as the Internet and mobile devices have allowed people to interact with American journalism in new and different ways (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2012; Usher, 2010). According to Usher (2010),

the Internet has allowed everyday citizens to participate more actively in the news process. "The web has heralded the birth of what has been called the 'citizen journalist' or 'participatory journalism,' where anyone can actively create and question news…" (p. 913). The widespread use of mobile devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones has allowed more people to reconnect with traditional news media in an innovative way (PEJ, 2012; Usher, 2010). "People are taking advantage, in other words, of having easier access to news throughout the day—in their pocket, on their desks and in their laps" (PEJ, 2012, para. 4).

While new technology has affected how the everyday citizen can receive their news, other recent changes have affected the way journalists create and disseminate the news. The 24-hour, or perpetual, news cycle, for example, forced journalists to learn new ways of gathering and reporting news in a world of constant immediacy (Palmer, 2000). The consolidation of media outlets into large media conglomerates has narrowed the spectrum of viewpoints available to the public, bringing memory of the partisan newspapers of Joseph Pulitzer, William Randolph Hearst and other giants of the newspaper business of the nineteenth century (Levin & Madfis, 2012).

Media Practices

Today, many people (researchers, educators, and journalists alike) question if the profession is living up to its historical ideals. Some claim that journalism can no longer be a voice for the people, as it was intended, because media professionals are in the business of making and selling news.

On the one hand they represent a societal institution that is ascribed a vital role in

relation to such core political values as freedom of expression and democracy.

On the other hand, they are a business that produces commodities—information

and entertainment—for a market." (Allern, 2002, p. 137)

In contrast, others claim that today's journalists are balancing these roles and

creating a stronger form of journalism.

In this sense, the modern journalist attempts to blend the classical *critical* role of

the journalist—as interpreter or contemporary historian—with the technical

requirements of disseminating great volumes of *descriptive* information…the two

major roles, interpretative and disseminator, appear to be complementary.

(Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, p. 144, emphasis original)

According to media researchers, the restraints put on today's journalists have led

to a set of routines that helps them balance their ideals, such as objectivity and truth,

with industry pressures, such as deadlines, word limits, and technology (Adam, 2002;

Becker & Vlad, 2009; Brighton & Foy, 2007; Fuller, 1996; Gans, 2004; Gill, 2007;

Hohenburg, 1978; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; Palmer, 2000; PEJ, n.d.; Shoemaker &

Reese, 1996; Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2009). Defined in 1996 by Shoemaker and

Reese as "…patterned, routinized, repeated practices and forms that media workers use

to do their jobs" (p. 100), media routines include practices such as writing in inverted

pyramid form and attributing statements directly to people by name. These routines, or

practices, guide the behavior of the industry in deciding what is news, who has authority,

and how to behave (Adam, 2002; Becker & Vlad, 2009; Brighton & Foy, 2007; Fuller,

1996; Gans, 2004; Gill, 2007; Hohenburg, 1978; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; Palmer,

2000; PEJ, n.d.; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2009).

> The standardized, recurring patterns of news and entertainment content result in
>
> large part from these routine practices. These routines ensure that the media
>
> system will respond in predictable ways and cannot be easily violated. They form
>
> a cohesive set of rules and become integral parts of what it means to be a media
>
> professional. (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 101)

It is important to note that journalists do not have a checklist they go through when they

are choosing a news story. According to researchers, these routines are embedded in the

very fabric of journalism, from formal education to the newsroom culture, and are

adhered to subconsciously (Braun, 2010; Entman & Rojecki, 2002; Shoemaker & Reese,

1996; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). But, because these practices are adhered to across the

media industry, they result in a cookie cutter effect, where news coverage begins to look

the same across media organizations (Becker & Vlad, 2009; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996;

Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; Woods, 2002). Media products, "…are shaped, too, by

professional norms that guide behavior and judgment, often without clear awareness on

the part of the media workers subject to them" (Entman & Rojecki, 2000, p. 72).

Newsworthiness

Perhaps the most important of the media practices is how journalists determine

what is news. According to O'Neill and Harcup (2009) "Ideas about what news is and

how it is selected have long fascinated the practitioners and scholars of journalism

alike…" (p. 161). At its most basic meaning, news is the events and ideas of the day that

journalists report to the public (Adam, 2002). Or as Fuller (1996) stated, "News is a report of what a news organization has recently learned about matters of some significance or interest to the specific community that news organization serves" (p. 6).

On any given day, however, there are a multitude of events and ideas in a number of communities. How then, do journalists pick which stories to write about and publish? This is where step three of Stuart Adam's (2002) definition of journalism comes into play—judgment. Journalists use their judgment in deciding what is and is not worthy of becoming news. According to Harcup and O'Neill (2001), "…journalists have ground rules that inform their answers to the question 'What is news?'" (p. 261). Known as news values, these guidelines form a common understanding of what news is and how it should look (Allern, 2002; Braun, 2010; Brighton & Foy, 2007; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Hyuk Lee, 2009; O'Neill & Harcup, 2009; Palmer, 2000; Usher, 2010; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986).

> These values are in effect a system of criteria which are used to make decisions about the inclusion and exclusion of material, and also—crucially and less obviously—about which aspects of stories to present in the form of news output. (Palmer, 2000, p. 45)

Although some claim that these criteria are a secret set of guidelines that journalists refuse to reveal (Allern, 2002; McGregor, 2002; O'Neill & Harcup, 2009), they can be found in almost any journalism textbook and 50 years worth of academic research. According to Price, Tewksbury and Powers (1997),

…researchers and journalists alike have arrived at more or less the same basic

lists of values that undergird journalism in America. Most of these news values

can be traced to a general concern with capturing the audience attention and

holding on to it. (p. 484)

These values include, but are not limited to, timeliness, proximity, prominence,

consequence, human interest, the unusual, impact, dramatic appeal, entertainment,

community interest, conflict, and celebrity (Allern, 2002; ASNE, 2002; Brighton & Foy,

2007; Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1999; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gandy, Kopp, Hands,

& Frazer, 1997; Harrigan & Brown Dunlap, 2004; Palmer, 2000; PEJ, 1998; Price,

Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997; Rich, 2000; Whitaker, Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2009).

The more news values a story contains, the more likely it is to be considered

newsworthy and therefore become news (Galtung & Holmboe Ruge, 1965).

This process of determining a story's newsworthiness can become problematic,

however, if it results in a skewed construction of cultural reality (Becker & Vlad, 2009;

PEJ, 1998; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). According to O'Neil and Harcup (2009), "While

there is an assumption that adherence to news values is implicitly more 'professional,'

eliminating bias, political or otherwise, this can be problematic in that news values may

create uniformity, negativity and reduction to stereotypes" (p. 170). As the old saying

goes, "Dog bites man is not news, but man bites dog is" (Palmer, 2000, p. 26). And

although published in this manner, this story would attract readers, would it give them a

full and accurate understanding of the situation?

Source Selection

Another media practice that can influence a media professional's work is source selection. A source is anyone who provides information for a news story, through direct quotation or indirect attribution (Hohenberg, 1978; PEJ, 2005). It is important to note that journalists and sources have a symbiotic relationship (Fuller, 1996; Gans, 2003; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), "…for while the sources need the journalist, the journalists also need the sources and therefore cannot afford to alienate them" (Gans, 2003, p. 51).

This dependence on sources is problematic because most media professionals rely on official sources (such as public relations officers, government spokespeople, etc.) to shape their stories (ASNE, 2002; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, 1989; Gans, 2004; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; PEJ, 1998; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Media professionals use official sources because they are convenient to reach, have readily available opinions, and have learned to work within the media's routines (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

> Time, habit and editors keep most reporters on the telephone with sources they know will be available during office hours…there is newsroom resistance to the idea that people without titles have expertise. And journalists get comfortable with sources that fit preconceived notions and predetermined niches in the story. (ASNE, 2002, para. 63-64)

Journalists claim they seek only truthful information, but if they do not look to who they are speaking to and why that source is speaking to them, journalists can create bias in their own work (Fuller, 1996). "The trouble is, news sources always have

motives, even when they are passing on true information" (Fuller, 1996, p. 41).

Additionally, journalists' reliance on official sources not only lends more credibility to

the dominant viewpoint (typically White, middle-class, male), it leads to ignoring or

demonizing alternative viewpoints (ASNE, 2002; Baran & Davis, 2012; Clark, 2002;

Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gans, 2003).

Objectivity

Journalists began claiming objectivity as a media practice during the mid-1800s.

The desire to be objective was rooted in a pushback against partisan papers, a time of

scientific discovery, and a wish to be transparent (Fuller, 1996; Hallin, 1985;

Hohenberg, 1978; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). In order to gain the trust of the public,

journalists had to be impartial, describing the truth without the influence of opinions or

values (Gans, 2004; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007). "If journalists were not viewed as

being objective, every story could be criticized as resulting from one or another

journalistic bias, and the news would be distrusted by even larger numbers of viewers

and readers" (Gans, 2004, p. 186).

Today's journalists use objectivity as a contract.

Journalists justify their right to individual autonomy by the pursuit of objectivity

and detachment; in a way, they strike an implied bargain, which allows them

autonomy in choosing the news in exchange for leaving out their personal values.

The outcome restricts the news to facts (or attributed opinions), which journalists

argue, are gathered objectively. (Gans, 2004, p. 183)

Although journalists may strive for objectivity, media researchers state that it is "…an unattainable standard of perfection" (Fuller, 1996, p. 28). Values, whether individual or professional, will always influence the media's work (ASNE, 2002; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Fuller, 1996; Gans, 2004; Hohenberg, 1978).

Perpetual News Cycle

The final media practice can be linked to the advent of technology and the digital age—the perpetual news cycle. Traditionally, the news cycle was the time between newspaper publications or television broadcasts. Today, online newspapers and news-only television channels have led to a 24-hour-a-day news publication cycle. In order to stay competitive in this world of constant immediacy, journalists had to learn new ways of gathering and reporting the news (Gans, 2003, 2004; Gill, 2007; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; Palmer, 2000; PEJ, 2010). "What is called the perpetual news cycle therefore requires, more than ever before, that a fresh product be manufactured in the fastest, most routinized, and efficient way possible" (Gans, 2003, p. 50).

Unfortunately, this 24-hour-a-day pressure resulted in media professionals using shortcuts that harm the product. For example, rather than creating new stories, many media professionals simply keep adding to or updating the original version (Gill, 2007; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; PEJ, 2010). This can be especially problematic if the original story was not fact-checked due to the need for speed or was published with little attention to alternative viewpoints or sources (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; PEJ, 2010).

In the age of the 24-hour news cycle, journalists now spend more time looking
for something to add to existing news, usually interpretation, than trying to

independently discover and verify new facts. Once a story is hatched, it's as if all

the herd behavior is true. The story is determined by one medium—one

newspaper or TV account. (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 86)

Race

Definition

Race has had many meanings in the history of the United States—biological,

political, and social (Harrison, 1995; Katz, 2003; Outlaw, 2005). Today, we see race as a

social construct used to define and/or categorize people (Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004;

Katz, 2003; Outlaw, 2005; Shields, 2008; Soloranzo, 1997; Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001;

Van Sterkenburg, Knoppers, & De Leeuw, 2010; Weber, 2004).

> The notion of race—that is, a way of conceptualizing and organizing social
>
> worlds composed of a person who's shared physical and cultural differences are
>
> used to arrange them into groups that come to be called races—has had a
>
> powerful career in Western society. (Outlaw, 2005, p. 84)

Race can be a cultural identity that one claims or a cultural identity that one is labeled.

According to Soloranzo and Yosso (2001), "…race can be viewed as an 'objective'

phenomenon until human beings provide the social meaning" (p. 4). Racial identity has

the power to influence how people view themselves and how we view them (Katz, 2003;

Shields, 2008; Soloranzo, 1997; Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001; Van Sterkenburg, Knoppers,

& De Leeuw, 2010). Soloranzo and Yosso stated that not only is race a socially

constructed idea used to differentiate, it also signals one group's superiority over

another. "The social meaning applied to race is based upon and justified by an ideology of racial superiority and White privilege" (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001, p. 4).

This racial superiority, in turn, is based on essentialism, the idea that there is a fundamental nature to an identity (Valdes, Culp, & Harris, 2002; Wing, 1997). Historically, essentialism has been tied to biological traits such as hormones, body type, and skin color, "…as if people are the way they are, act and think and feel the way they do, have the abilities and resources and occupy social status that they have become because of their race-specific-biology" (Valdes, Culp & Harris, p. 72).

Racism

There are many definitions of racism, and just as many statements as to how or why racism cannot be defined. Some researchers state that the word racism has become demonized in a post-civil rights era, being both over- and mis-used (Fredrickson, 2002; Katz, 2003). It has been used to describe hate, disinterest and antipathy. It has been used to describe individual behavior and institutional patterns. Katz described racism as the "day-to-day indignities" (p. 9) that people suffer, while Fredrickson stated that racism is more than "group-centered prejudice and snobbery" (p. 1). In describing racism, Soloranzo (1997) said that not only does one group think it is superior, the group must have the power to demonstrate that superiority. For the purpose of this research, I utilized Audre Lorde's definition of racism—"the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance" (Lorde as cited in Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001, p. 4).

In the United States, racism takes the form of a Black-White dichotomy (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Fredrickson, 2002; Rose, Ross, Kelley, Wood, Winant, Jones, Dyson, Harper, Gregory, Farred, Dent, Roediger, Baraka, Aronowitz, Gordin, & Gaines, 1995; Weber, 2004; Yancy, 2004). According to Fredrickson (2002) racism as White superiority/Black inferiority was developed as a way to justify slavery as a social institution. In other words, Blacks were meant to be slaves because of who they were (note the connection to notions of essentialism that was discussed previously). "…in the United States, *racism* means *antiblack racism*. All other groups are assessed and ultimately discriminated against or favored in terms of the extent to which they carry residue of Whiteness or Blackness" (Rose et al., 1995, p. 41, emphasis original).

White Privilege

This dichotomy exists because one group (Whites) has the power to subordinate another group (Blacks). Although outright bondage is no longer the problem, more subtle forms of control help maintain this imbalance. One such form is White privilege. White privilege is the unearned, and usually unacknowledged, privileges Whites enjoy simply by being a member of the long-term, dominant group in the United States (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Jensen, 1998; Katz, 2003; McIntosh, 1998; Twine & Gallagher, 2008; Weber, 2004; Yancy, 2004). These privileges empower one group over another (McIntosh, 1998) and come from a history of racial preference (Entman & Rojecki).

White privilege is often invisible to those who possess it. We attribute our success and opportunities to our own hard work, moral character, and overall

worthiness. We do not recognize the degree to which racial status and an uneven

playing field gives us an advantage. (Katz, 2003, p. 10)

As part of their long history of dominance in the United States, Whites are

considered the norm. McIntosh (1998) stated that: "…Whites are taught to think of their

lives as morally neutral, normative, and average" (para. 8). In other words, Whites do

not see themselves as raced, and in fact consider themselves neutral or not having or

belonging to a race (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Katz, 2003; Twine & Gallagher, 2008;

Twine & Warren, 2000; Wing, 1997). "Because U.S. culture is centered on White

norms, White people rarely have to come to terms with that part of our identity…*White*

people do not see ourselves as White" (Katz, p. 14, emphasis original). This normalizing

of the White viewpoint/lifestyle is another subtle form of control.

Denial

Research has also shown that despite a myriad of evidence otherwise, many

Whites in the United States claim that racism no longer exists or was fixed years ago.

There is a curious view that racism more or less vanished with the success of the

civil rights struggles against segregation and for voting rights of the 1950s and

1960s. This claim lies somewhere between hypocrisy and willful blindness to

everyday realities. (Downing, Mohammadi, & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1995, p.

345)

Today, people say they do not see race or treat everyone the same, that society has come

so far or that no one behaves like that. This notion of being color blind is yet another

privilege Whites enjoy (Katz, 2003; Twine & Warren, 2000; Wing, 1997). "In not

discussing race, in working to not recognize it, many U.S. Whites also, of course, tend to direct their attention away from racism" (Twine & Warren, 2000, p. 146).

Gender

Definition

Notions of gender have been similarly skewed in the United States, blurring the lines between physical and social and creating a dichotomy where women/female is the other to man/male (Berg, 2009; Bravo, 2007; Code, 2000; Fine, 2010; Gilligan, 1993; Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2001; hooks, 1995; Kimmel, 2004; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Lorber, 1995; Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002; Tuchman, 1978). According to Lorber (1995),

> … we see two discrete sexes and two distinguishable genders because our society is built on two classes of people, 'women' and 'men.' Once the gender category is given, the attributes of the person are also gendered: What a 'woman' is has to be 'female'; whatever a 'man' is has to be 'male.' (p. 34)

This can be seen in how society in the United States defines ideas such as gender, sex, and identity. In our early history, Western society considered women to be man's inverse, biblically and biologically. "Until the eighteenth century, Western philosophers and scientists thought that there was one sex and women's internal genitalia were the inverse of men's external genitalia; the womb and vagina were the penis and scrotum turned inside out" (Lorber, 1995, p. 33). Today, women and men are still considered more different biologically than similar based on the reproductive organs they are born with. This is why, in the United States, the term "sex" describes the biological categories

32

(man and woman) humans are born into as based on their reproductive organs or chromosomes (Gilligan, 1993; Kimmel, 2004; Lorber, 1995).

These accepted sex identities are then associated with appropriate and inappropriate ways to be a man or woman in the United States—how to dress, how to speak, how to act, and much more. "Gender is not simply the outcome of our biological sex assignments, but a kind of 'cultural accomplishment' that is at play in both women's and men's lives in an everyday ongoing way" (Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002, p. x). In other words, gender is a socially constructed notion of what is means to be a man (male/masculine) and a woman (female/feminine) in our society (Berg, 2009; Code, 2000; Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2001; Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004; Kimmel, 2004; Lorber, 1995; Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002; Shields, 2008; Tuchman, 1978; Weber, 2004). "Gender is both something we do and something we think with, both a set of social practices and a system of cultural meanings" (Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002, pp. x-xi).

It is important to understand the origins of the terms sex and gender, and how they play out in our society. This allows us to look as these categories as what they are—a set of norms constructed in our society to uphold a dichotomy between men and women (Berg, 2009; Gilligan, 1993; Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002; Weber, 2004).

Acknowledging that gender representations are culturally produced and reproduced allows us to deconstruct or analytically take apart, how seemingly 'natural' gender relationships can be and how they are maintained. It allows us to

ask the question, 'In whose interest was it that gender be defined this way at this

time?' (Rutledge Shields & Heinecken, 2002, p. xi)

And as with any dichotomy, the interests that Rutledge Shields & Heinecken (2002)

refer to can be found on the side considered normal which is the side comparisons are

based on.

But since it is difficult to say 'different' without saying 'better' or 'worse,' since

there is a tendency to construct a single scale of measurement, and since that

scale has generally been derived from and standardized on the basis of

men…psychologists 'have tended to regard male behavior as the "norm" and

female behavior as some kind of deviation from that norm.' Thus, when women

do not conform to the standards of psychological expectation, the conclusion has

generally been that something is wrong with the women. (Gilligan, 1993, p. 14)

Sexism

McFarland (1990) defined sexism as a set of attitudes and values that manifest in

an individual's behavior. These behaviors, usually directed at women, range from small

indignities to outright discrimination, in the home, workplace, and public (Berg, 2009;

Swim, Eyssell, Quinlivan Murdoch, & Ferguson, 2010). And even though the man-

woman dichotomy is based more on trivialization/patronization than on demonization as

seen in the White-Black dichotomy, the effects are nonetheless powerful and lasting

(Bravo, 2007). After all, "…whenever a group has legally been declared inferior for

centuries, there's bound to be a powerful legacy of inequality and a slew of structural

barriers that remain [even after they achieve equal status legally]" (Bravo, 2007, p. 8).

One example is the inequality that women experience in the workplace. According to the United States Department of Labor (USDOL, n.d.), around 50% of women are working and they make up 47% of the workforce. Although Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act expressly forbids treating women differently in the workplace, research has shown that women are treated differently in terms of pay, job types, and behavior (Berg, 2009; Bravo, 2007; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d. a; Fine, 2010; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; National Council for Research on Women, 2006; Pascale, 2007). "The magnitude of difficulties working women currently face is nearly incomprehensible" (Berg, 2009, p. 191).

One form of workplace inequality that women experience is sexual harassment. There are two types of sexual harassment, and both are considered illegal based on Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (EEPC, n.d. b; McFarland, 1990). The first type of sexual harassment is quid pro quo in which a person, usually male, asks an employee or coworker, usually female, for favors, usually sexual, in return for something good happening, such as a promotion, or to prevent something bad from happening, such as being fired (EEOC, n.d. b). The second type of sexual harassment is known as hostile work environment, and occurs when a person, usually male, makes the work life of an employee or coworker, usually female, miserable based on unwanted and inappropriate comments and/or actions (EEOC, n.d. b). "Many people, especially men, don't realize that sexual harassment isn't just a nuisance. It creates a hostile work environment that drives women out of jobs" (Maloney, 2008, pp. 31-32). Research has shown that

between 35 to 50% of working women have been sexually harassed during their careers (Bravo, 2007; Fine, 2010).

Another form of workplace inequality that women experience is occupational job segregation, both horizontal and vertical. Horizontal job segregation describes how men and women dominate different kinds of occupations while vertical job segregation describes how men and women hold different types of jobs within an occupation (Code, 2000; Padavic & Restin, 1994). For example, the majority of women in the workforce are clustered in what are considered female fields, such as nursing and teaching, and female jobs, such as support or administrative positions (Amparano Lopez, 1995; American Association of University Women, 2012; Berg, 2009; Bravo, 2007; Creedon, 1989; Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2001; Jamieson, 2001; Marlane, 1999).

In fact, just over 40% of women in the workforce are in traditionally female roles (AAUW, 2012).

> It shows up in all the statistics, but we rarely see it as happening. Still, the results are visible all around us—more men than women at executive meetings, few women in hard hats at construction sites, more male floor managers and more women cashiers… (Maloney, 2008, p. 1)

And while critics might say that women just like these types of jobs better, research has shown that jobs held by women, whether in the past or present, are undervalued in terms of prestige, pay, and advancement (Amparano Lopez, 1995; AAUW, 2012; Berg, 2009; Bravo, 2007; Creedon, 1989; Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2001; Jamieson, 2001; Marlane, 1999).

This can be seen in the way in which women's salaries have failed to reach

equality with those of their male counterparts. In the United States, on average, women

working full-time earn 77% of what men working full-time earn (AAUW, 2012; Berg,

2009; O'Neill, 2011, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). That is 77 cents for every dollar

that men earn, and can result in a lifetime net loss of nearly half a million dollars in

salary for women (AAUW, 2012; Berg, 2009; Bravo, 2007; O'Neill, 2011, 2012; U.S.

Census Bureau, 2010). Furthermore, salaries for women of color are even lower because

of the dual discrimination they face (Berg, 2009; O'Neill, 2011, 2012). While critics will

claim that women make choices that affect their salary levels, researchers have shown

that salary inequalities still exist when factors such as education, age, experience, etc. are

taken into account (AAUW, 2012; Berg, 2009; Maloney, 2008; National Organization of

Women, 2012).

> Because the truth is that women make less than men at every level, from
>
> corporate manager (68 percent) and professional positions such as doctor (77
>
> percent) and financial manager (69 percent) to low-wage jobs like retail sales (64
>
> percent) and poultry workers (71 percent). (Bravo, 2007, p. 21)

Women also face what is known as a glass ceiling in the workplace, a seemingly

invisible barrier that keeps women out of upper-level management positions and from

advancing in the same manner as their male counterparts (Berg, 2009; Cleveland,

Stockdale & Murphy, 2000; DeLaat, 1999; Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Maloney,

2008). "The 'think leader, think male' mind-set continues to dominate America, and

'this narrows the range of effective behaviors [for women] within the workplace'" (Berg,

2009, p. 206). Researchers have found that women are missing as upper-level managers, executives, board members, and presidents/CEOs across industries despite a 25-year-pipeline of women in the workforce (Berg, 2009; Maloney, 2008). "The lack of women at the top in just about all professions has barely gotten the attention it deserves. We're 50 percent of the population and almost half the workforce. Shouldn't we be way past the time of tokenism?" (Berg, 2009).

The choice to become a parent affects working women differently than it does working men (AAUW, 2012; Berg, 2009; Gilligan, 1993; Kimmel, 2004; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Maloney, 2008; USDOL, n.d.). Research has shown that having a child negatively affects a women's income, advancement, and career (Maloney, 2008; AAUW, 2012). Inversely, becoming a parent results in greater career opportunities for men in the work force (AAUW, 2012; Maloney, 2008). This is based, in part, on the notion of traditional work roles associated with the sexes—the men in the workforce, earning, the women in the home, caring (Berg, 2009; Kimmel, 2004). But as Berg (2009) states, "…we are no longer a country of breadwinner dads and bread-maker moms—an arrangement true for only 30 percent of the workforce and 16 percent of families" (p. 208). In fact, nearly 75% of all mothers are in the workforce according to the United States Department of Labor (n.d.). Yet because mothers are viewed as more kind and warm after having a child, they become seen as less competent in the workforce. "A high warmth rating makes you more likely to be smiled at in the hallway, it won't help you get equal pay" (Maloney, 2008, p. 13).

Denial

Yet, despite all of this evidence, many people deny that sexism exists and is in play in the United States. "But sexism has become camp. It's riotous and cool. It's chest-thumping fun, powerful and self-reinforcing" (Berg, 2009, p. 318). And it is wearing new clothes. Today, women are faced with enlightened sexism and feminist backlash. Both movements seek to help women find their way in the world, patting them on the head for encouragement all the while taking away hard-earned victories and rights (Berg, 2009; Bravo, 2007; Douglas, 2010; Faludi, 1991; Maloney, 2008).

Enlightened sexism claims that women have made progress because of feminism, so much progress in fact, that things are now equal and nothing else needs to be done (Douglas, 2010). This can be seen in the results of a 2001 poll in which seven out of ten people thought that equal rights for women were already guaranteed in the United States Constitution (Maloney, 2008). According to Douglas (2010),

> Enlightened sexism is feminist in its outward appearance (of course you can be or do anything you want) but sexist in its intent (hold on, girls, only up to a certain point, and not in any way that discomforts men or pushes feminist goals one more centimeter forward). (p. 10)

Backlash, on the other hand, does not even pretend to support women's rights or feminism (Bravo, 2007; Faludi, 1991). Instead, women are told over and over that they are unhappy and that feminism is the reason why (Berg, 2009; Bravo, 2007; Faludi, 1991).

The [feminist] backlash is at once sophisticated and banal, deceptively

'progressive' and proudly backward. It deploys both the 'new' findings of

'scientific research' and the dime-store moralism of yesteryear…the backlash

convinced the public that women's 'liberation' was the true contemporary

American scourge—the source of an endless laundry list of personal, social, and

economic problems. (Faludi, 1991, p. 10)

Women are told that everything wrong in their life is because they wanted too much (i.e.

got out of 'their' place) and if they would only return to more traditional (gendered)

roles they would once again be happy (Berg, 2009; Bravo, 2007; Faludi, 1991).

Framing Theory

I would like to stress that most media professionals are not intentionally placing

stereotypical material in their work to perpetuate the racial imbalance currently seen in

the United States. Instead, the choices they make (who to interview, what topic to write

about, etc.) affect what is in the news.

Definition

Known as the framing process, this is when one piece of information (idea, point

of view, comment, etc.) is chosen and is either highlighted or obscured (Baran & Davis,

2012; D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; Entman, 1993; Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009;

Stone, Singletary, & Richmond, 1999).

The term *framing* can generally be understood as the process in which a 'point of

view' on a given issue or event is used to interpret and present 'reality'—

magnifying or shrinking aspects of that issue or event to make it more or less

salient. (Hardin & Whiteside, p. 313, emphasis original)

Originally conceived by Goffman as "the organization of experience" (Stone, Singletary

& Richmond, 1999, p. 277), framing is a psychological, sociological, and

communicative way of looking at social experience (Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano,

2009; Hertog & McLeod, 2001). It has been called a fractured paradigm, a theory, a

media effect, an active process, a method of analysis, a result, a noun, a verb, a

conscious process, and an unconscious process (Baran & Davis, 2012; D'Angelo &

Kuypers, 2010; Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1999; Entman, 1993; Entman, Matthes, &

Pellicano, 2009; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

At the core of the idea of framing is the frame. Stone, Singeltary, and Richmond

(1999) defined frames as "…general principles around which information is structured,

defined, labeled and categorized. They are like mental pegs on which information,

usually expressing a point of view, is hung" (p. 277). As mental organizing principles or

ideas, frames provide structure to our social experiences (Baran & Davis, 2012; Entman,

1993; Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009; Gamson & Lasch, 1981; Gamson &

Modigliani, 1987; Lemert & Branaman, 1997; Stone, Singletary, & Richmond, 1999).

Media Framing

In terms of the media, framing can be understood as media professionals telling

us how to think about our social reality through story selection, choice of words/phrases,

images printed, and sources used (Baran & Davis, 2012; Carragee & Roefs, 2004;

D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1999; Entman & Rojecki, 2000;

Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997; Scheufele, 1999; Stone, Singletary, & Richmond, 1999; Woods, 2002).

Over the years, researchers have concluded that when communicators print or broadcast news, they use news frames. These are abstract or concrete cues, frameworks or organizing principles that *help audiences categorize, label, interpret and evaluate information*…In short, news frames are organizational structures used by the mass media to present specific perspectives or points of view. A news frame can also be described as the 'take, spin or angle' of a news story. (Stone, Singeltary, & Richmond, p. 278, emphasis original)

Because frames are usually based on cultural understandings, they are easy for media professionals to access (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; Gill, 2007; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Lemert & Branaman, 1997; Ryan, Carragee, & Meinhofer, 2001). This is not to say that all cultural concepts are frames. They only become frames when someone such as a media professional gives them meaning by applying them to a media product (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; Woods, 2002).

Frames and Culture

Relying on culturally embedded ideas or frames can be both beneficial and detrimental. They are beneficial in that they can help us access ideas that are already stored in our brains, thereby helping us to process what we are seeing.

Culturally embedded frames are appealing for journalists because they are ready for use. On the basis of their narrative ingredients it is possible to assign roles to

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the principal actors of an issue (e.g. good-bad, advocate-opponent), specify what

the problem is and who is responsible, and so forth, all of which contributes to

the dramatization and the emotional appeal of the news. (Van Gorp, 2010, p. 87)

Schema(s)

 For this same reason, the ability to connect to what we already know, frames can

be detrimental. Human beings are mentally lazy and store data in mental clusters, known

as schemas, which we use as shortcuts when accessing ideas (Domke, McCoy, & Torres,

1995; Entman, 1993; Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009; Entman & Rojecki, 2000;

Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazier, & Phillips, 1997; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Lemert &

Branaman, 1997). "Organized prior knowledge or preconceptions—schemas of all

types—smooth our information management and social experiences. The point is that

people seek simplicity and good-enough accuracy understanding the world around them,

and schemas are guides" (Fiske, 1995, p. 163).

Schemas are easily accessed because they are stored closer to the surface of the

brain and are cued by things we see in our social environment (Domke, McCoy, &

Torres, 1995; Entman, 1993; Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009; Entman & Rojecki,

2000; Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazier, & Phillips; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Lemert &

Branaman, 1997). As shortcuts, schemas tend to categorize people, places and events,

which can lead to stereotyping. "Schemas for roles are equivalent to stereotypes,

people's expectations about people who fall into particular social categories" (Fiske,

1995, p. 162).

Media's Influence

     Because the media is a powerful source of cultural learning in the United States, it is important to study and understand the choices media professionals make (Baran & Davis, 2012; Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1995; Downing, Mohammadi, & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1995; Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gill, 2007; Hall, 2003; Hill Collins, 2009; Kellner, 2003; Smith, 1987;). (See Figure 2).

> Media has become a primary means by which most of us experience or learn about many aspects of the world around us. Even when we don't learn about these things directly from media, we learn about them from other people who get their ideas of the world from the media. (Baran & Davis, 2012, p. 211)
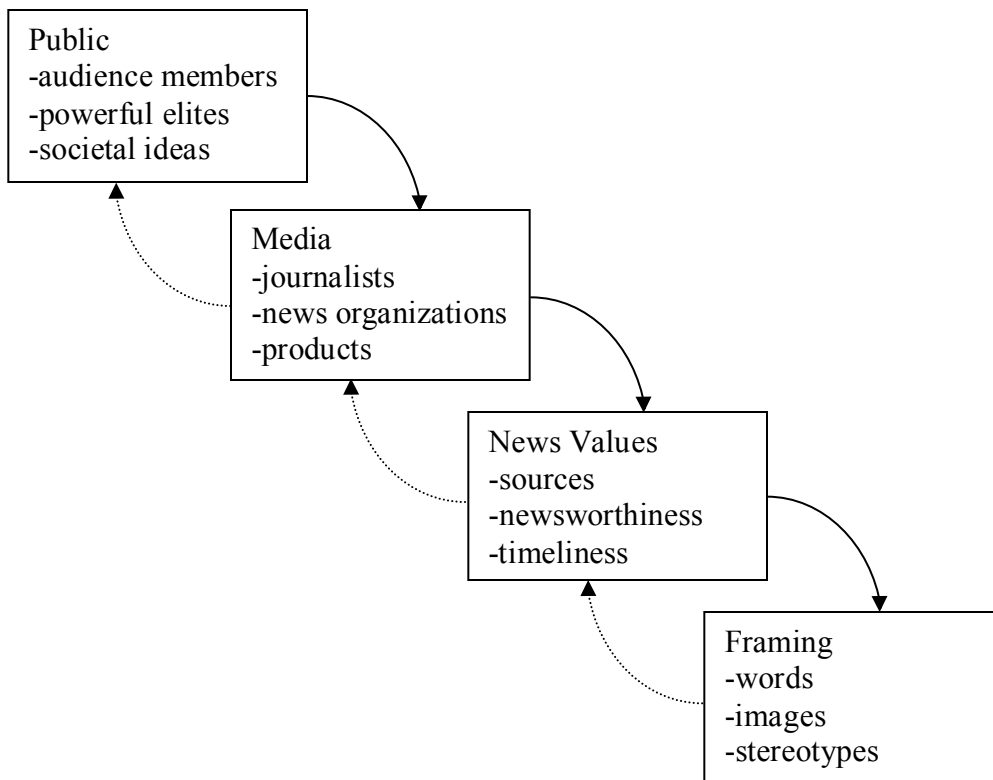
Figure 2. Model of the media's influence on culture and stereotypes.

According to researchers, the media teaches us how to act in terms of gender, race, class, sexuality, and so on (Baran & Davis, 2012; Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Hall, 2003; Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1995; Downing, Mohammadi, & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1995; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gill, 2007; Hill Collins, 2009; Kellner, 2003; Levin & Madfis, 2012; Smith, 1987). "Media stories provide the symbols, myths, and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture" (Kellner, 2003, p. 9).

It is important to note that framing can happen at the subconscious level and that most media professionals are not trying to skew the products they produce.

Unfortunately, many of the news values discussed above (source selection for example) can lead to media framing and therefore, the loss of the objectivity that media professionals covet so much (Baran & Davis, 2012; PEJ, 1998). "Journalists framing by rote may be failing to ask the right questions, choose the right stories and serve the public as they intend" (PEJ, 1998, para. 86). And in doing so, they help to perpetuate ideas of race and racism in the United States.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In societies where scientific rationality and objectivity are claimed to be highly

valued by dominant groups, marginalized peoples and those who listen

attentively to them will point out that from the perspective of marginalized lives,

the dominant accounts are less than maximally objective. Knowledge claims are

always socially situated, and the failure by dominant groups to critically and

systematically interrogate their advantaged social situation and the effect of such

advantages on their beliefs leaves their social situation a scientifically and

epistemologically disadvantaged one for generating knowledge. (Harding, 2004,

p. 43)

A good research design answers three questions, (a) What is the research about?,

(b) How will the research account for ethical, political, and moral concerns?, and (c)

How will research questions and methods be linked? (Schwandt, 2007). This research

study is about how media practices can lead to stereotypes of race and gender in the

media, more specifically the media's treatment of one woman, Shirley Sherrod.

By conducting this media framing analysis from a critical standpoint concerning

ideas of epistemology and methodology, I accounted for ethical, political, and moral

concerns. My critical knowledge base included theories such as critical race theory,

critical feminism, and critical media theory. Utilizing these critical social theories as a

lens allowed me to include ideas of activism, intersectionality, speaking position, and

subjectivity in my analysis. By treating framing as both a theory of media effects and a method of analysis, I was able to create a critical link between my research methods and my research questions. More importantly, by combining these epistemological and methodological positions, I was able to critically study how Shirley Sherrod was treated in the media as a Black woman.

<div align="center">**Epistemological Background**</div>

Critical Theory/Activism

Critical social theories originated in Europe, more specifically in the Frankfurt School, during the 19th century (Curry Jansen, 2002; Outlaw, 2005). With a base in Marxist social analysis and Freudian psychology, critical social theories look to the flaws in society, seek to overturn domination, and follow a path of social justice (Baran & Davis, 2012; Curry Jansen, 2002; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; Hill Collins, 2000; Outlaw, 2005). Researchers who believe in critical social theories "…start from the assumption that some aspects of the world are deeply flawed and in need of transformation" (Baran & Davis, p. 14). By gaining knowledge of the world around them, whether through traditional research methods or more informal methods, critical social theorists seek to change society.

At the core of critical social theory is a rejection of the world and its assumptions, a conscious integration of theory and practice, and a regular call for self reflection (Schwandt, 2007). Additionally, critical social theorists question the world around them, its assumptions, categories, and truths. Baran and Davis (2012) stated that critical social theories "…do more than observe, describe or interpret; they criticize" (p.

<div align="center">48</div>

14) while Curry Jansen (2002) stated that "…the duty, the moral obligation, of critical scholars is to think 'otherwise'" (p. 15). This need for questioning is what gives critical social theories their power. Once critical social theories came to the United States, they narrowed their scope (Outlaw, 2005). Rather than looking at any problem in society, critical social theories in the United States focused on group-based discrimination.

One example of a U.S.-based critical social theory is critical race theory, also known as CRT or crit. Although originally based on the work of critical legal scholars, today's critical race theory is interdisciplinary, drawing ideas and participants from a wide array of places both inside and outside of academia (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, 2001; Hill Collins, 2007; Wing, 1997).

> Critical race theory tends to be organized around core questions [of race] that reach into several disciplines and that require multiple strategies. Critical race theory requires using a broader definition of social science and humanities as well as the intersections between the. (Hill Collins, 2007, p. 1)

Although the scope of focus is narrower, we can still see the influence of European critical social theories in critical race theory's focus on social justice and activism. "Unlike some academic disciplines, critical race theory contains an activist dimension. It not only tries to understand our social situations, but to change it" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 3).

Another critical social theory at work in the United States is feminist theory. It is considered cross-disciplinary, has participants inside and outside of the academic world, and is based on a position of activism and change (Agger, 2006; Bravo, 2007; Curry

Jansen, 2002; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004; Martin, 2003; Rhode, 1990; Rooney, 2006; Weber, 2004). As a theory, it seeks to explain why women hold devalued positions in society and to develop ways to change this position. Because feminist researchers consider the knowledge that women hold to be important, their research focuses on women's lives, stories, and voices (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004; Weber, 2004).

> Mostly, feminists conduct research for women. Whether it be seeking knowledge from and about women in order to record their valuable life experiences, or to change women's lives through social policy, a feminist methodology aims at creating knowledge that is beneficial to women and other minorities. (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004, p. 22)

A third example of critical social theory used in the United States is critical race feminism. Although this may seem redundant as other critical theories look at the oppression of Blacks or of women in the United States, critical race feminism is necessary because Black women cannot be viewed as Blacks who happen to be women or women who happen to be Black (Hill Collins, 2000, 2005; Rooney, 2006; Wing, 1997). According to Crenshaw (1989): "Neither Black liberationist politics nor feminist theory can ignore the intersectional experiences of those whom the movements claim as their respective constituents" (p. 166). As a result, critical race feminists force critical race theorists and feminist theorists to reject the use of essentialized, universal notions of Black and woman (Agger, 2006; Darling-Wolf, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Gill,

2007; Narayan & Harding, 2000; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004; Hill Collins, 2000, 2005; hooks, 1989, 1995, 2000; Lorber, 1995; Rooney, 2006; Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008; Shields, 2008; Wing, 1997; Zack, 2007).

> Critical race feminists are anti-essentialists who call for a deeper understanding of the lives of women of color based on the multiple nature[s] of their identities. They emphasize conscious considerations of the interaction of race, class, and gender by placing them at the center of analysis. (Wing, 1997, p. 4)

By looking at the intersection of race and gender, critical race feminists help highlight the unique position, and resultant knowledge, experience, discrimination, and so forth, that Black women hold in the United States (Hill Collins, 2000, 2005; Rooney, 2006; Wing, 1997).

Intersectionality

First used by Crenshaw in 1989, and later popularized by Black feminists, queer theorists, and postmodernists, the term intersectionality deals with the multiple and relational nature of people's social identities (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004; hooks, 1995; Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008; Shields, 2008; Rigoni, 2012; Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012; Weber, 2004; Zack, 2007). Although this definition seems simple on the surface, to understand intersectionality we must understand its components. As discussed in the literature review chapter, people learn who they are (Black/White or male/female for example) through the definitions used in the society in which they live, therefore, they

have social identities. It is possible for a person to have more than one social identity depending on their location in place and time. Finally, because they are socially constructed, these identities are defined in relation to each other (i.e. dichotomies used in the United States). "Consequently, scholars and theorists who endorse this theory [of intersectionality] must attend to myriad overlapping and mutually reinforcing oppressions…" (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008, p. 5)

By embracing the idea that every part of a person's identity (race, class, gender, age, etc.) interacts, critical researchers were able to show how all forms of oppression (racism, classism, sexism, agism, etc.) also intersect (Hall, 1999; Harding, 1987; Hill Collins, 2000, 2005; hooks, 1989, 1995, 2000; Stefancic & Delgado, 2000, 2001; Valdes, Culp, & Harris, 2002; Wing, 1997).

> Groups at the intersection of two or more identity categories are left out of focus
> in both analysis and politics: Black women, ethnic minority women, or 'women
> of colour' [sic], groups positioned at the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity,
> become marginalized as a group… (Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012, p. 226)

Embracing intersectionality prevents us, as researchers, activists, and humans, from assuming that the term woman refers only to White women and that the term person of color refers only to Black men (Shields, 2008).

Standpoint

Because each person has a unique set of identities, they also have unique understandings of the society they are located in. Whereas more traditional positivist researchers might insist that individuals only have opinions, critical social researchers

believe that each person has their own truth, which should be respected (Harding, 2004;
Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2004). Critical
researchers take "…a critical stance toward[s] traditional knowledge-building claims that
argue for 'universal truths'" (Harding, 2004, p. 3). Instead they embrace what are known
as situated knowledge, or "…knowledges that are historically, materially, culturally,
linguistically mediated, finite, and secured within, although not necessary homologous
with, a field of power relations" (Curry Jansen, 2002, p. 31).

The belief that each individual has their own knowledge based on their identity is
known as standpoint. "Standpoint begins by rejecting positivism's pretentions of
creating a view from nowhere in favor of the postulate that each subject is specific,
located in a particular time and place. Thus, a knower has a particular perspective…"
(Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004, p. 80). According to standpoint researchers,
marginalized people have a dual perspective on society, that is, their own situated
knowledge based on their intersecting identities, and the knowledge of the dominant
group (Crenshaw, 1989; Harding, 2004; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Sprague &
Kobrynowicz, 2004).

> Starting research from the standpoint of the oppressed is valid because it is often
> the lives and experiences of oppressed people that provide significant insight and
> perspective. Complex human relations can become visible when research is
> started at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Starting at the top of the hierarchy,
> as traditional science has often done, can actually hide some of the daily

processes, events, and experiences that occur within society. (Hesse-Biber,

Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004, p. 16)

Speaking/Voice

According to critical race feminists, to understand the experience of Black

women, we must listen to their stories. And to listen to their stories, we must hear their

voices. But critical race feminists caution Whites who want to research, write, and speak

about Black women (Alcoff, 1991-1992; Hall, 1999; hooks, 1989, 1995, 2000; Nunan,

1999; Schwandt, 2007; Twine & Warren, 2000; Wing, 1997). They say that many White

scholars who try to use critical race feminism in their research try to speak for women of

color or fail to acknowledge their own positionality (Alcoff, 1991-1992; Faucette, 2001;

Hall, 1999; hooks, 1989, 1995, 2000; Nunan, 1999; Wing, 1997). White researchers

cannot speak for women of color because White women cannot truly understand racism

and White men cannot understand sexism or racism. Additionally White researchers,

both men and women, receive more authority for their work because they are White.

When the experiences of Black women are discounted, a power imbalance occurs within

the field of critical race feminism and the larger arena of academia (Agger, 2006; Alcoff,

1991-1992; Curry Jansen, 2002; Darling-Wolf, 2004; Hall, 1999; Hardin & Whiteside,

2010; Harding, 1987; hooks, 1989,1995, 2000; Nunan, 1999; Schwandt, 2007; Smith,

1987; Wing, 1997).

Instead, critical race feminists recommend that researchers who wish to do this

type of research be critically reflexive about who they are, what they are researching,

and why they are doing it (Alcoff, 1991-1992; Darling-Wolf, 2004). According to Hesse-Biber and Yaiser (2004),

> …reflexivity is the process through which a researcher recognizes, examines, and understands how her social background, positionality, and assumptions affect the practice of research…reflexivity also requires that the researcher make visible to both the research audience and possibly the participants one's own social locations and identities. (p. 115)

This is because who we are (i.e. the social position or identities from which we speak) influences what we see and therefore how we conduct research (Alcoff, 1991-1992; Darling-Wolf, 2004). "Who is speaking to whom turns out to be as important for meaning and trust as what is said; in fact what is said turns out to change according to who is speaking and who is listening" (Alcoff, 1991-1992, p. 12).

This is not to say, however, that Whites cannot participate in critical race feminist research. By being critically reflexive of their own position and all that entails, Whites can learn to speak with, rather than for, Black women (Alcoff, 1991-1992; Darling-Wolf, 2004; Hall, 1999; Harding, 1987; Hill Collins, 2000; hooks, 1989, 1995, 2000).

Subjectivity

In embracing notions of political action, situated knowledges, and reflexivity, critical social theorists rejected many of the tenets of positivist science. While positivist researchers believe that there is a single truth that can be determined if correct and rigorous methods are used, critical social researchers believe that truth is fragmented and

situational, that neither the research nor the researcher can be value free, and that the knowledge holder is as important as the knowledge seeker (Darling-Wolf, 2004; Harding, 2004; Harding & Whiteside, 2010; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Schwandt, 2007; Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004). Their research then "…is *openly politically committed* and generally rejects the positioning of 'objectivity' and 'rationality' [and claims that]…social science research and its association with empiricism [is] inherently biased in [its] definitions and depictions of social reality" (Hardin & Whiteside, 2010, pp. 316-317, emphasis original).

Critical social researchers recognize that there is a power dynamic present in any research study (Darling-Wolf, 2004; Harding, 2004; Harding & Whiteside, 2010; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Schwandt, 2007; Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004). Under positivism, the researcher is seen as having the ability to gather knowledge and present it in proper form, thereby making it legitimate.

> So one's social situation enables and sets limits on what one can know; some social situations—critically unexamined dominant ones—are more limiting than others in this respect, and what makes these situations more limiting is their inability to generate the most critical questions… (Harding, 2004, p. 43)

To correct this power imbalance, critical social researchers embrace the idea of knowledges and often ask the people they are interacting with to give input on the research they are conducting (Darling-Wolf, 2004; Harding, 2004; Harding & Whiteside, 2010; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Schwandt, 2007; Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004).

Critical social researchers also recognize that both the research process and the researcher are a part of society and can never be value-free as positivists claim (Darling-Wolf, 2004; Harding, 2004; Harding & Whiteside, 2010; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Schwandt, 2007; Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004). As Sprague and Kobrynowicz (2004) stated: "…science is as socially constructed as any other element of a culture" (p. 84). Critical social researchers openly engage with their own values in both the research process and the subsequent writing (Darling-Wolf, 2004; Harding, 2004; Harding & Whiteside, 2010; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004; Schwandt, 2007; Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004).

Methodological Background

Framing Analysis

As an interdisciplinary field, communications research draws theories and methodologies from across the social sciences, disciplines such as history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, literary analysis, and more (Baran & Davis, 2012; Curry Jansen, 2002; Hertog & McLeod, 2001). It should be no surprise then that the method I used in this research, framing analysis, is also interdisciplinary in nature. This could be interpreted as both a benefit (a greater array of thinkers contributing to the research) and a detriment (a research paradigm run amok).

That framing analysis has risen to a place of prominence in political science, sociology, and media studies is demonstrated by the many and diverse researchers undertaking framing analyses, the wide array of theoretical approaches and method employed, and the significant and expanding framing

literature…It has not, however, settled on a core theory or even a basic set of propositions, nor has a widely accepted methodological approach emerged. The range of approaches political scientists, sociologists, media researchers, and others bring to the study of frames and framing is both a blessing and a curse. (Hertog & McLeod, 2001, p. 139)

At its core, framing analysis seeks to describe the frames within media products and trace their origins (Communications Consortium Media Center, 2004; D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; Entman, 1993; Kellner, 2003; Hertog & McLeod, 2001). A more critical media analysis also attempts to link the discovered frames to powerful elites and audience behavior (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Communications Consortium Media Center, 2004; Entman, 1993; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; Kellner, 2003). Researchers conducting a framing analysis begin by selecting a topic, a time frame, and a set of stories (Communications Consortium Media Center, 2004). Framing researchers must choose which news outlets to use, how long to look at their topic, and from where to retrieve the stories (Communications Consortium Media Center, 2004). They then must decide how they will approach the framing analysis, a deductive approach (i.e. preset, quantitative) or an inductive approach (i.e. open-ended, qualitative).

A deductive approach starts with a predetermined, finite set of categories or frame definitions and then looks to find (i.e. quantify) them within the media products being studied (Entman, 1993; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Van Gorp, 2010). According to researchers this reliance on a preset list of categories limits the value of deductive framing analysis because it cannot be flexible and evolve. In

contrast, an inductive approach is more open-ended, allowing for the development of categories or frame definitions throughout the research process (Entman, 1993; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Saldana, 2009; Van Gorp, 2010). This method is criticized by researchers for its subjective nature, unclear research process, and inability to be generalized. Many framing researchers call for a mix of the two methodologies to utilize the strengths of both and create a better research analysis (Entman, 1993; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; Hertog & McLedo, 2001; Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Saldana, 2009; Van Gorp, 2010).

Critical Media Research

In borrowing theories and methods from other fields, communications researchers have opened themselves up to critiques from outsiders. According to Curry Jansen (2002), "...the discipline risks irrelevance as its subject matter becomes the common feast and fodder of the social sciences, humanities, and the commercial world" (pp. 36-37). Detractors claim that the field of communications research is stuck in the past, utilizing empiricist methods, and clinging to notions of objectivity and truth (Agger, 2006; Aldoory, 2003; Aldoory & Toth, 2001; Curry Jansen, 2002; Dow & Condit, 2005; Gill, 2007; Kellner, 2003). However, by embracing methodologies that analyze gendered and racialized forms of communication, the distribution of power in society, and their interconnectedness with knowledge, communications researchers can keep the field up-to-date and relevant in the social sciences (Curry Jansen, 2002; Gill, 2007; Kellner, 2003).

A critical feminist communications study should include, (a) paying attention to gender and race based power relations, (b) placing women and people of color at the center of analysis, (c) embracing intersectionality, (d) incorporating an activist component, and (e) providing those being researched with the opportunity to provide feedback (Aldoory, 2003). Because, as Gill (2007) stated,

> We live in a world that is stratified along lines of gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, disability, sexuality and location, and in which the privileges, disadvantages and exclusions associated with such categories are unevenly distributed. We also live in a world which is increasingly saturated by media and information and communication technologies. (p. 7)

Both feminist and race researchers have tried to document the problems they see within the media industry through a variety of methods. These include studying media texts and images, conducting focus groups with media audiences, and surveying the culture of media organizations (Aldoory, 2003; Aldoory & Toth, 2001; Curry Jansen, 2002; Kellner, 2003). For this study, I chose to focus on media content because it is central to the communications process and is not always analyzed carefully or with attention to gender and/or race (Curry Jansen, 2002; Kellner, 2003; Marris & Thornham, 2000). "The products of media culture require multidimensional close textual readings to analyze their various forms of discourses, ideological positions, narrative strategies, image construction, and effects" (Kellner, 2003, p. 14).

Restatement of Research Problem

If media use shortcuts, such as media practices, and shortcuts in the media process can lead to steretoypes, then do media practices result in stereotypes? The purpose of this research was to answer this question in the case of the media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod.

Restatement of Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how media practices influenced the framing of race and gender in the media coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod.

Restatement of Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How did media practices affect the media's framing of race and gender in the media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod?

RQ1a: What frames were used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender? [media practice: newsworthiness]

RQ1b: What sources were associated with the frames used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender? [media practice: source selection]

RQ1c: What were the differences in the frames presented by the varying news sources? [media practice: objectivity]

RQ1d: What were the differences in the frames presented from the beginning of day one to the end of day seven of this news cycle? [media practice: perpetual news cycle]

Data Collection

The time-frame used for this study was a one-week period encompassing Monday July 19, 2010 to Saturday July 25, 2010. These dates were chosen based on the news cycle sourrounding the media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod. The original story, and therefore the beginning of the coverage, began with a post on BreitBart.com the morning of Monday, July 19th and ended later that week when the White House and NAACP offered public apologies (Bastasch, 2012; Media Matters for America, 2012). Additional evidence for this time frame came from the Project for Excellence in Journalism which stated that media coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod made up 14% of all news stories the week of July 19-25, 2010 (Sartor, 2010a).

To confim this date range as the news cycle for the media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod, I conducted a series of media searches by entering the search term "Shirley Sherrod" into the Lexis Nexis database "all news (English)" function. (See Table 1). The results showed that the majority of media coverage (N=1,855) of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod was for the month of July 2010. Within that month, the majority of media coverage (N=1,299) of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod was for the week of July 19th to 25th. This confirmed that the news cycle for the media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod, and therefore the date range for this study, was Monday July 19, 2010 to Saturday July 15, 2010.

Table 1

Lexis Nexis News Cycle Research

Date(s)	Article Count
June 2010	0
July 2010	1,855
August 2010	563
Week of July 1-4	0
Week of July 5-11	0
Week of July 12-18	0
Week of 19-25	1,299
Week of July 26-31	556

Note. Data from Lexis Nexis Database.

The news sources used for this study were made up of a combination of more traditional publications and newer, interactive, online publications in order to encompass the variety of news sources that can be found in today's media. (See Table 2).

The six traditional news sources were the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Atlanta Constitution Journal*, *Seattle Times/PI*, and *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* were chosen because they are highly circulated national newspapers (Lulofs, 2012). The *Atlanta Constitution Journal* was chosen because USDA worker Shirley Sherrod lived and worked in Georgia, and the *Seattle Times/PI* and *St. Louis Post Dispatch* were chosen to round out the coverage by geography. The *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* are thought to have either a neutral or liberal point of view, while the *Washington Post* is considered conservative (Hawkins, 2009). (See Table 2).

The six newer news sources were CNN, Fox News, *Huffington Post*, *Breitbar*t, *The Daily Caller*, and *Politico*. The first two, CNN and Fox News, are regularly visited national news sites (Nielsen, 2012). The last four, *Huffington Post*, *Breitbart*, *The Daily*

Caller, and *Politico*, are all popular, national level, political/news blogs (Can, 2012;

ebizmba, 2012; Rothstein, 2012). Three of these newer news sources, Fox News,

Breitbart, and *The Daily Caller*, are considered conservative news sources, while the

other three, CNN, *Huffington Post*, and *Politico*, are thought of as liberal (Can, 2012;

Hawkins, 2009; Rothstein, 2012). (See Table 2).

In choosing these news sources, I tried to find a balance in type of coverage, area

of coverage, amount of coverage, and viewpoint/philosophy used in coverage in order to

create a more rigorous data set.

Table 2
News Sources Analyzed

Type	Circulation	Coverage Area	Philosophy
Traditional			
New York Times	1,586,757/day[4]	national	liberal
Washington Post	507,615/day[4]	national	conservative[2]
Los Angeles Times	589,735/day[4]	national	liberal
Atlanta Constitution Journal	402,602/day[4]	local	unknown
Seattle Times/PI	236,929/day[4]	local	unknown
St. Louis Post Dispatch	187,990/day[5]	local	unknown
New			
CNN	62,101,000/month[3]	national	liberal
Fox News	21,555,000/month[3]	national	conservative[2]
Huffington Post	54,000,000/month[1]	national	liberal
Breitbart	1,700,000/month[6]	national	conservative[6]
The Daily Caller	4,600,000/month[7]	national	conservative[7]
Politico	5,000,000/month[1]	national	liberal

Note. Circulation data from the following sources: [1]ebizmba.com, [2]rightwingnews.com, [3]blog.nielsen.com, [4]accessabc.wordpress.com, [5]stltoday.com, [6]thewrap.com, and [7]mediabistro.com.

The articles used for this study were gathered using a variety of online search

databases. These included Lexis Nexis Academic, ProQuest Newsstand, and the source's

own online archives. I used these databases because they allowed me to search by key

term ("Shirley Sherrod"), news source (see Table 2), and date range (7/19/2010-7/25/2010). In order to ensure a more complete data set, I tried to obtain articles from each media source from more than one database. (See Table 3). Once collected, I compared the article lists, combining and eliminating as needed to create one article set.

Table 3
Location of News Sources

News Source	Lexis Nexis	ProQuest	Archives
New York Times	y	y	n/a
Washington Post	y	y	n/a
Los Angeles Times	n	y	y
Atlanta Constitution Journal	y	y	n/a
Seattle Times/PI	y	n	y
St. Louis Post Dispatch	y	y	n/a
CNN	y	n	y
Fox News	n	n	y
Huffington Post	n	n	y
Breitbart	n	n	y
The Daily Caller	n	n	y
Politico	y	n	y

Because my focus in this study was media framing, more specifically, media framing of race and gender in the news, I decided to only use the news articles available from each source. This meant eliminating any editorials, reprints from other news sources, and wire articles. I also eliminated articles that only mentioned USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in passing or in relation to other topics, instead including only articles that discussed her situation, from first publication of the video through public apologies and media callouts.

Data Analysis

Hertog and McLeod (2001) stated that "…it is essential that researchers outline their own approaches to frame/framing study in detail" (p. 140) in order to provide clarity. My approach to framing analysis used a mixed-methodology in order to integrate the critical theory notions of activism, intersectionality, speaking position, and subjectivity into my research design. I began with an open-ended coding of my data set (i.e. news articles), compiling a list of possible frames as I read. According to Van Gorp (2010),

> To do an open coding means that texts are analyzed without the use of a predefined coding instrument…The most important guideline is not to focus on what a text is about, but on how the story is told. (p. 94)

This allowed me to take the frames from the data, rather than imposing a predetermined, rigid list on my data.

I then used the constant comparative method to narrow and refine my list of possible frames into more concrete categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). (See Figure 3.) According to Saldana (2009), this method

> …enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories of 'families' because they share some characteristic—the beginning of a pattern. You use classification reasoning plus your tacit and intuitive senses to determine which data 'look alike' and 'feel alike' when grouping them together. (pp. 8-9)
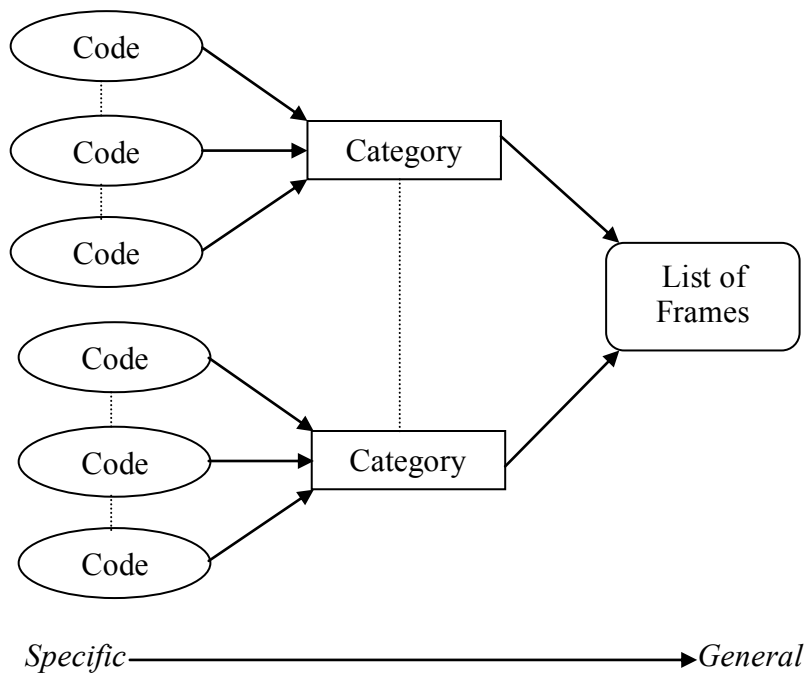
Figure 3. Model of coding for frames.

After determining my final list of frame categories, I created a coding sheet to use in analyzing the news articles. I chose to use a quantitative coding sheet in order to create a more strenuous framing analysis. As Hertog and McLeod (2001) stated,

> Counting the number of times certain categories are used, terms relating to a frame employed, column inches devoted to a particular source or source category, or the number of times various categories of sources are quoted can be very helpful in ascertaining the frames employed and rhetoric applied. (p. 152)

I also noted qualitative examples of each frame and source within the articles as I conducted my coding, in order to satisfy my critical research intentions.

After coding my news articles, I entered the counts in the Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16.0 for Windows, which I then used to develop frequencies and run cross tabs to answer my research questions.

Researcher Positionality

An integral part of the critical social paradigm calls for researchers to achieve a critical consciousness by reflecting on their own identity(s), how their identity(s) give them privilege, and how their identity(s) shape the research they are conducting (Darling-Wolf, 2004, Hall, 1999; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; Harding, 1987; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; hooks, 1989, 2000).

> Another way to put this point is that the beliefs and behaviors of the researcher are part of the empirical evidence for (or against) the claims advanced in the results in the research. *This* evidence too must be open to critical scrutiny no less than what is traditionally defined as relevant evidence. (Harding, 1987, p. 9, emphasis original)

This is easier said than done, however. According to Hertog and McLeod (2001), the very things that we need to lay bare as critical researchers are the very things that we accept as the norm.

> One of the most difficult tasks for the researcher is to critically analyze her own culture and its structure. The very taken-for-grantedness of your own culture blinds you to important assumptions, values, and beliefs that should be a matter of critical analysis…Once made clear, these features of our own culture should be written into the [research]. (Hertog & McLeod, 2001, p. 150)

Therefore, in keeping with the values of critical social research, I provide the following information in hope of laying myself bare and achieving critical consciousness. As an educated White woman from a high socio-economic status, I have privilege. I try to be aware of these privileges and name them in everyday life, for example, I can walk through my neighborhood at night in a hooded sweatshirt and not fear for my life. Some of the privileges I experience are still unknown to me, and therefore, I can take things for granted. I come from a place of social activism—I hold a degree in women's studies, I worked for women's and GLBT organizations, I researched issues of marginalized groups in agricultural communications, and I fought for social justice issues. Still, I cannot know what it is like to be another identity, a gay man, a Black woman, or otherwise. I have trained for, worked in, and researched about the media industry for years. This means that at one point, whether intentional or not, I framed a news story. And, despite my beliefs that the media perpetuates stereotypes, when people complain that the media is biased, I defend the industry because in my opinion they do not understand what it is like to be a reporter.

Although I have spent quite some time writing out who I am for this research project, I must acknowledge that my identity is not static. Each day brings movement, sometimes forward, sometimes backward, in my quest to understand who I am. But as hooks (1989) stated, "…coming to critical consciousness is a difficult, 'trying' process, one that demands that we give up set ways of thinking and being, that we shift our paradigms, that we open ourselves to the unknown, the unfamiliar" (p. 25). Though critical reflection is challenging, avoiding it would do a disservice to the critical

researchers who came before me, laid bare their own identities, and achieved critical consciousness. Because "if we do not change our consciousness, we cannot change our actions or demand change from others" (hooks, 1989, p. 25). Therefore, I write all of this to acknowledge that who I am influences how I see the world. More importantly, who I am and how I see the world influences how I conduct research. I conduct research from a feminist standpoint through a lens of critical theory, acknowledging that I cannot speak for Black women. As one of a handful of people in the world researching diversity issues in agricultural communications (J. Evans, personal communication, July 28, 2012), however, I can speak with them. Or, as Florence (2009) stated, "I [can] 'speak treason fluently,' as an 'angry White female' who hears Black rage and can 'feel-with' those who suffer from the pain of racism" (p. 23).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

"I never met a text I didn't feel like revising, this one included" (Clark, 2002, p.

45).

The purpose of this chapter is for me to present my findings related to my

primary research question: "How did media practices affect the media's framing of race

and gender in the media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod?" In order to

provide a clear picture, I divided my findings by the following sections: General

Findings, Research Question 1a (quantitative and qualitative), Research Question 1b,

Research Question 1c, and Research Question 1d.

General Findings

I analyzed a total of 93 news articles from 12 news sources for my study. (See

Table 4). The most prolific news sources that I analyzed were national level

publications, CNN (n=14) and *Politico* (n=13), while the least prolific news sources

were local level publications, *Seattle Times/PI* (n=0) and *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (n=2).

Table 4
Article Count & Length by News Source

News Source	Article Count Week of July 19-25	Article Lengths (in words)
New York Times	4	455-1,169
Washington Post	5	692-1,045
Los Angeles Times	6	566-1,113
Atlanta Constitution Journal	9	353-1,385
Seattle Times/PI	0	0
St. Louis Post Dispatch	2	367-638
CNN	14	207-2,286
Fox News	9	639-1,264
Huffington Post	10	174-1,539
Breitbart	10	119-1,398
The Daily Caller	11	65-1,647
Politico	13	26-1,085

The news stories I studied ranged in length from 26 words to 2,286 words, with an average story length of 696 words. The shortest stories came from newer, online publications such as *Politico* (n=26) and *The Daily Caller* (n=65) while the longer stories were more evenly distributed across the publication types. Interestingly, the majority of the news sources I studied (n=9) had similar word counts for their longest stories except for one national level publication, CNN (n=2,286) that used an additional 1,000 words.

Most of the 93 news stories that I analyzed came from newer, online publications (n=67, 72.0%) while just over half came from publications that are thought to have a liberal philosophy (n=47, 50.5%). (See Figures 4a & 4b). Interestingly, one of the publications that I, and most media scholars, consider to have a liberal philosophy, *Los Angeles Times*, ran stories with a more conservative writing style.

Figure 4a

26	■ Traditional
67	■ New

Figure 4b

11	■ Liberal
47	■ Conservative
35	■ Unknown
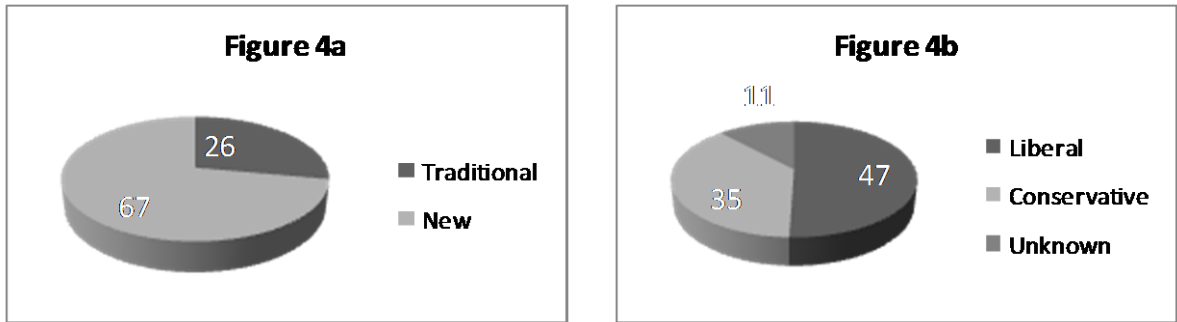
Figure 4. News stories studied, divided by (a) news source type and (b) news source philosophy, respectively.

As I discussed in chapter three, I chose the date range of Monday, July 19, 2010 to Sunday, July 25, 2010 because I felt it most closely reflected the news cycle for this story. By charting the 93 news stories I studied by date, I was able to confirm this news cycle and identify the trend in my data. (See Figure 5).
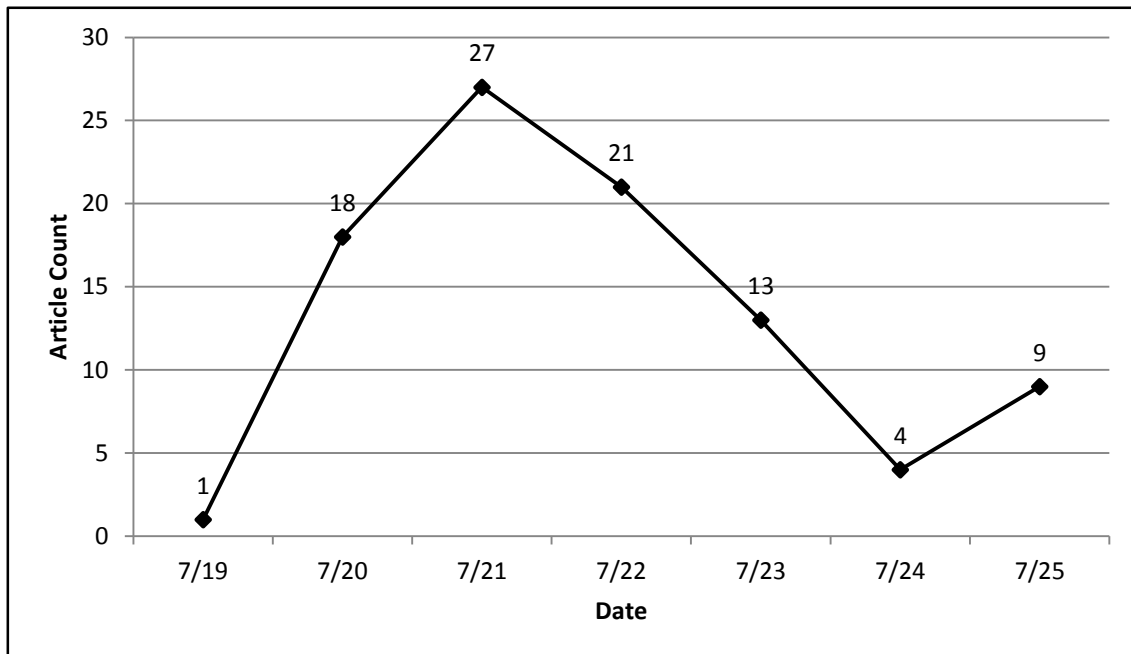
Figure 5. Article count by date for articles analyzed.

The number of stories steadily increased from Monday, July 19th (n=1), which was the date of the initial posting on Breitbart's website, to Wednesday, July 21st (n=27), when the unedited video came out and officials began apologizing. After that, the number of news stories declined through Saturday July 24th (n=4) as the news cycle came to a close. Interestingly, there was a small increase in the number of news stories on Sunday July 25th (n=9), which is when the politicos typically visit the Sunday morning talk show circuit.

Research Question 1a

The purpose of Research Question 1a was to determine what frames were used in the news stories to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender. In order to do so, I developed frequency tables in SPSS from the data I gathered using quantitative coding sheet I created. I also pulled qualitative examples from my open-ended readings.

General Frames

Before I could understand how the media framed USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender, I decided I must first understand how they framed the overall story narrative. My analysis showed five major frames that were used across the news stories: race, media, shift blame, time, and reaction. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Frames Used in Articles about USDA Worker Shirley Sherrod

Frame	Frequency	Percentage
race	73	78.5
media	65	69.9
shift blame	46	49.5
time	38	40.9
reaction	29	31.2

Note. Most news stories contained more than one frame.

Race. The most dominant frame (n=73, 78.5%) that I found in the news stories I studied was the race frame. This frame employed words and phrases such as institutional racism, move beyond, post-racial, transcend racism, teachable moment, race card, national dialogue on race, racially tinged, racial tension, racial redemption, beyond race, racial unity, racism battle, tolerance, forces of racism, racist elements, racial smear, racial double standard, racial schism, racially charged, race-baiting, and racial lies.

It was not surprising to me that a race frame was present in the news stories because the video of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod showed her talking about race, Breitbart accused her of being racist, and she was condemned and fired for making racist remarks. What I found interesting were the different ways race was discussed within the news stories: race and USDA worker Shirley Sherrod/her video, race and the USDA, and race and society.

In the first race frame subframe, the news stories framed race in relation to USDA worker Shirley Sherrod, at first in relation to her video and later in relation to her own words. Many of the news stories used direct quotes from the video of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod discussing an apparently racist situation in her past. For example:

Atlanta Journal Constitution: Shirley Sherrod of Albany was the keynote speaker at an NAACP banquet in March when *she admitted to the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer* whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: '*I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land*. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough,' [Sherrod said].

CNN: The poor-quality video shows Sherrod telling her audience that *the farmer she was working with 'took a long time…trying to show me he was superior to me.'* As a result, she said, she '*didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough*.'

Fox News: 'He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was *I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him,'* she said.

Breitbart: '*I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him,'* she [Sherrod] said.[1]

After her firing, USDA worker Shirley Sherrod made contact with several news

organizations in an effort to clear her name. These news stories contained direct quotes

of her discussing her desire to move beyond race from conversations and/or interviews.

For example:

CNN: 'I told them to get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and see how I tell them *we have to get beyond race and work together*,' [Sherrod said].

Atlanta Journal Constitution: Against all odds, *Sherrod came to embrace all colors*. She learned, she said, that the people who needed her were *not black, or white, but the poor of every hue.*

Atlanta Journal Constitution: '*We've got to get beyond this black versus white issue* and move to a place where we can all work together,' she [Sherrod] said.

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[1] Emphasis added to all framing examples.

In the second race frame subframe, the news stories framed race in relation to the

USDA's own history of discrimination. This included a history of discrimination against

women and people of color, both within the department towards employees and from the

department towards farmers. For example:

> *Breitbart*: 'There is *a zero tolerance policy for discrimination at USDA*, and I
> strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person,' Agriculture
> Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. 'We have been working hard
> through the past 18 months *to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the
> department* and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.'
>
> CNN: 'I want to renew *the commitment of this department to a new era in civil
> rights*. I want to *close a chapter on a very difficult period in civil rights*,'
> [Vilsack said].
>
> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: Sherrod said Vilsack described the role as one that
> would, among other things, *help to end discriminatory practices the department
> was accused of* in a since-settled lawsuit filed on behalf of black farmers in 1997.

In the third race frame subframe, the news stories framed race in terms of a

societal problem/discussion. Many described moving beyond race, the difficulty of

dealing with race, and how race is discussed in today's society. For example:

> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: He [Lewis] said the episode has given Sherrod an
> opportunity to *begin some racial healing*.
>
> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: Gibbs acknowledged as much, *calling the whole
> Sherrod affair a 'teachable moment.'*
>
> *New York Times*: In many ways, Ms. Sherrod's ordeal followed *a depressingly
> familiar pattern in American life, in which anyone who even tries to talk about
> race risks public outrage and humiliation*.
>
> *Politico*: Asked during her CNN interview what her story said about *the state of
> race relations in the country, Sherrod said 'it makes me wonder just how far
> we've come.'*

Several of the news publications with a more conservative philosophy; however, described race in terms of disbelief or skepticism. For example:

> *Breitbart*: '…the media has focused on the *manufactured racial schism*…waste our time poking and prodding at *the racial hornet's nest that was supposed to be removed* with this post-racial presidency…' [Breitbart said].[2]

> *Breitbart*: 'There's also a *largely unspoken racial double standard* at play here,' [Breitbart said].

> Fox News: But what has been revealed, once again, is *the pattern of race-baiting and racial lies* that is used by the left and right when they convince themselves there are larger, more righteous political goals to reach.

Media. Over two-thirds (n=65, 69.9%) of the news stories I studied employed a media frame. These news stories used words and phrases such as out of context, misconstrued, whole tape, incomplete, misleading, proper context, much fuller context, excerpted video, intense media coverage, omitted key context, tell her side of the story, omitted key details, maliciously edited, heavily edited, news cycle, snippet of video, selectively excerpted, Internet video, media spotlight, media frenzy, and pressure. This frame also had several subframes: editing/context, new media, self-reflection, and conservative paranoia.

In the first media frame subframe, the news stories discussed how the initially published version of the USDA worker Shirley Sherrod video had been edited down to a short clip. Many of the news stories in this subframe focused on the lack of context the video clip and USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's remarks were given. For example:

> *Huffington Post*: The first three words of the story that launched this controversy now smolder with irony. 'Context is everything.' *Context was sorely lacking*.

---

[2] Breitbart examples edited for space and clarity.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: USDA official ousted over *edited tape*.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: *The 2 1/2 minute clip*, Gibbs told reporters, was *obviously out of context*, as the White House and the rest of the world would later learn.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: 'The next time I hear about an event like this and a decision that's make, [I'll] stop and ask, "*Did we look at the whole context? Did we look at everything?"* [Gibbs said].'

Breitbart: Today *Sherrod said the video was taken out of context*. She said that a video of her entire speech would reveal that she described a 24 year old incident as a turning point in her life.

CNN: '*I told them to get the whole tape and look at the whole tape* and see how I tell people we have to get beyond race and work together,' [Sherrod said].

Fox News: That *twisted tape* was placed for all to see on a right-wing website, BigGovernment.com, as a *two and half [sic] video clip*.

Politico: But the NAACP late Tuesday posted *the full, unedited video* of Sherrod speaking at an NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner, and it showed the remarks had been *taken out of context in the version posted by Breitbart*. Breitbart said that he had *posted the full version he was given*, and did not immediately respond for a request for a comment after Sherrod's full speech surfaced.

In the second media frame subframe, the news stories discussed the current state of the media, how the online and fast-paced nature of news today affects the way the media has to do business and the way politicians and administration officials behave. For example:

Atlanta Journal Constitution: White House learns that *when blogs jump*, it can't.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: Woodrow Wilson and Calvin Coolidge ushered in the era of radio in the White House, Franklin Roosevelt was in office for the advent of television. *Barack Obama is there for the rise of Internet video, partisan bloggers and 24-hour news cycles*.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said it was *the changing nature of media* generally---and not just Breitbart's web site---that helped push Vilsack and the White House into a corner when confronted with

what on its surface appeared to be a video of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod
making racist remarks.

Los Angeles Times: The video sparked a *conflagration in the blogosphere and cable news that at first outraced the facts.*

Los Angeles Times: The events came as an embarrassment to Obama administration officials, who have sought to depict themselves as immune to *the blogosphere and demands of the news cycle.*

New York Times: *Politically charged stories often take root online before being shared with a much wider audience on Fox. The television coverage, in turn, puts pressure on other news media outlets to follow up.*

Politico: *With the cable networks then able to peg the video to statements from the NAACP and Vilsack, the clip exploded on each of the cable networks—before producers had seen the full video…*

Politico: Breitbart's ability to spark the controversy is *symptomatic of a larger problem with the Internet's influence on the news cycle…*

In the third media frame subframe, the news stories took an introspective tone

and became critical of the way the USDA worker Shirley Sherrod story was handled.

Some of these stories call out specific news publications while others discuss the

problems they see with today's news media in general. For example:

The Daily Caller: '*All Americans need to question the legitimacy of Fox News.* They're the ones who peddled obviously sliced and diced video,' Fleming said.

Fox News: '*It's about reporting and responding. There were hasty news reports* about this,' [Clyburn said].

Fox News: 'We live in a different world today,' Clyburn said. *'Dicing, splicing that takes place by people who are media causing a lot of harm.'*

Huffington Post: '*An ideologue injects poison into the internet, other people rush to judgment on camera*, and an administration gets stampeded and commits this travesty of justice,' [Gergen said].

Huffington Post: Political opponents of Breitbart, meanwhile, are using the incident to drive home their argument that *his hybrid form of activist-reporting work should no longer be trusted.*

Huffington Post: '*What you see on Fox News, and what you read on Right Wing websites, is the utter and complete perversion of journalism*, and it can have no place in civilized society,' Olbermann said. 'Its words crashed together, never to inform, only to inflame.'

Huffington Post: Maddow used the *[Fox News] channel's role* in hyping the Shirley Sherrod story as a springboard for *a broader discussion of the history of using media to pit whites against blacks* in the United States.

Politico: 'There are plenty of people in the news media who wished they had *stopped and thought of the fundamental job of journalism* before they started asking for reaction to something that wasn't there - - based on their original reporting,' she [Dunn] said.

Washington Post: *And for all the focus on Fox, much of the mainstream media ran with a fragmentary story* that painted an obscure 62-year-old Georgian as an unrepentant racist.

Although the fourth media frame subframe also involves media criticism, it is less about being self-critical and more about taking down the establishment. In this subframe, I began to see Breitbart's zealous dislike of the mainstream media and devotion to exposing what he considers its faults. For example:

Atlanta Journal Constitution: *Blogger's ambition: skewering big media*.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: '*They [the mainstream media] want to control the narrative*,' Breitbart told NPR. '*I'm saying, "No more!"*'

Breitbart: The media that provided the left a platform…Again, *the mainstream media inserts itself as the number one weapon in the progressive weapons stash*…trumps all in PC America and her *afflicted media*…

Breitbart: *But the new media would not be silenced. It will not allow for the main stream media to propagate hateful and hurtful lies* in order to save the Democratic Party from the toxic choices it has made over the past few years.

Breitbart: …*24-hour parade of feces dressed up as news…exposed the laziness of the media…fill up a few news cycles*

Politico: An *unrepentant Andrew Breitbart* told POLITICO on Thursday that the Obama administration and its allies have *manufactured a controversy* over the video he posted of Shirley's Sherrod speech to the NAACP as part of an *orchestrated effort to take him down*.

Shift blame. I found the shift blame frame in almost half (n=46, 49.5%) the new stories that I studied. In this frame, major participants in the story blamed others for what happened both in the news and to USDA worker Shirley Sherrod rather than admitting their own culpability. The first of these was Breitbart himself, who blamed everyone from the mainstream media to the NAACP to the White House administration for what happened to USDA worker Shirley Sherrod. For example:

Atlanta Journal Constitution: Breitbart told CNN Tuesday that *releasing the video was 'not about Shirley Sherrod*. This was *about the NAACP attacking the tea party*, and this is showing racism at an NAACP event,' he said. '*I did not ask for Shirley Sherrod to be fired.'*

Breitbart: Sherrod immediately became the scapegoat for the embarrassed NAACP and USDA, but *she was never the target, the NAACP itself was*.

Breitbart: *The original article was critical of Ms. Sherrod, but she was not the piece's focus*.

CNN: Breitbart told CNN's 'Anderson Cooper: 360' that he saw *no reason to apologize: 'What would warrant an apology?...I'm not the one who threw her under the bus.'*

Politico: Breitbart has been *unapologetic* in defending his decision to post the original edited video, *blaming the NAACP* in a recent interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity for having picked a fight with the tea party. '*I could care less about Shirley Sherrod, to be honest with you. This is not about Shirley Sherrod,*' Breitbart told Hannity.

The second major participant in the news stories to shift blame was Benjamin Jealous, the national president of the NAACP. After initially condemning USDA worker

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Shirley Sherrod for her supposedly racist comments, Jealous backpedaled and began

blaming conservative news media and activists. For example:

> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: But *the NAACP*, which had released a statement late Monday critical of Sherrod, *backtracked Tuesday, saying it was 'snookered' by Andrew Breitbart*, whose Web site biggovernment.com released the edited video of Sherrod's speech.

> *Breitbart*: With regard to the initial media coverage of the resignation of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, we have come to the conclusion *we were snookered by Fox News and Tea Party activist Andrew Breitbart* into believing she had harmed white farmers because of racial bias.

> Fox News: Late Tuesday, *Jealous effectively retracted his earlier statement and blamed the media for the confusion*.

> *Politico*: Jealous pointed to the NAACP's recent conflict with the tea party, but *blamed the 'lengths to which extremist elements will go to discredit legitimate opposition.'*

The third major participant in the news stories to shift blame was the White

House/the Obama administration. The emphasized the fact that Secretary of Agriculture

Tom Vilsack was responsible for the decision to fire USDA worker Shirley Sherrod and

that the media was responsible for how she was portrayed. For example:

> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: White House spokesman Robert Gibbs apologizes, but says *the decision to call for Sherrod's resignation was Vilsack's, not Obama's*.

> CNN: A White House official also told CNN that '*the White House did not pressure her or the USDA over the resignation. It was the secretary's decision, as he has said.'*

> *Huffington Post*: President Obama said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack erred in pushing out Shirley Sherrod over allegations of racism that later proved unsubstantiated, but *the real culprit, he told ABC News, was the media*.

Interestingly, Vilsack was the only major participant in the news stories to take

responsibility for his own actions (and possibly the actions of others). For example:

Atlanta Journal Constitution: Vilsack told CNN on Tuesday that 'he didn't speak to anyone at the White House…*I made this decision, it's my decision*. Nobody from the White House contacted me about this at all.'
The Daily Caller: *Vilsack has taken full responsibility for the decision* late Monday to force Sherrod out of her job as Georgia director of rural development for USDA.

Time. Just under half (n=38, 40.9%) of the news stories employed the time frame. As the name suggests, this frame used references to time such as take time, think before acting, 24-hour media culture, hyper web, swiftly, immediate, whirlwind, haste, fast-paced few days, hasty, rush to judgment, shoot-from-the-hip response, deadline-every-second pace of the Internet, hyper reactionary, warp speed, whip around, acted too quickly, jumped the gun, rushed and quick. The time frame was used by news stories to describe both how quickly the story moved and how quickly people responded to it. For example:

> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: 'That was stunning, *how everything moved so quickly, how quickly the damage spread and how quickly the White House went into damage control mode*,' said Susan Herbst, professor of public policy at Georgia Tech. 'They *geared up so fast* to manage the risk, that became the damage they had to apologize for.'

> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: After *the clip went viral, jumping from blog to cable to network*, Sherrod was *abruptly* ordered on Monday to resign as Georgia field director of rural development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

> *Breitbart*: This President often decries *the 24-hour, hyper-reactionary media cycle,* yet his adminstiration *repsonded with warp-speed* to toss Sherrod overboard.

> CNN: Gibbs added that 'we live in a culture [in which] *things whip around, peope want fast responses, [and] we want to give fast reponses.*'

> Fox News: The ex-official spoke following a *whirlwind 48 hour period* in which the Obama adminsitration completely reverse its positoin toward Sherrod.

Los Angeles Times: The *rapid-fire denunciation* of Sherrod, followed by *hasty backtracking* by her critics, underscored *how quickly controversies can mushroom and then disitegrate in the current media age*.

Reaction. Finally, I found the reaction frame in a little over a third of the news stories I studied (n=29, 31.2%). This frame employed words and phrases such as overreact, shameful, back pedaling, administration overreaction, media frenzy, controversial, flap, political firestorm, vilify, bungled, appalled, firestorm of debate, fallout, fracas, disservice, injustice, knee jerk response, saga, expose, outrage, embarrassment, appalled, fray and scandal.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: Sherrod, interviewed by various news organizations, says she is a victim of *the Obama administration's overreaction* to the Breitbart clip, which took her comments out of context.

Breitbart: The *scandal* surrounding the firing of Shirley Sherrod is *getting weirder* by the second.

CNN: She [Sherrod] called the ensuing *controversy 'unbelievable.'*

Race/Gender Frames

My analysis showed three major frames the news stories used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of her race and gender: victim, good woman, and above her place. (See Table 6).

Table 6
Race and Gender Frames Used in Articles about USDA Worker Shirley Sherrod

Frame	Frequency	Percentage
victim	49	52.7
good woman	32	34.4
above her place	22	23.7

Note. Most stories contained more than one frame.

Victim. In over half (n=49, 52.7%) of the news stories that I studied, USDA worker Shirley Sherrod was framed as a victim. The frame used words and phrases such as forced out, forced to resign, ousted, demand the resignation, harassed, pushed out, abruptly fired, summarily dismissed, hurt, humiliated, ordeal, out of her control and abrupt termination. This frame had several subframes: describing USDA worker Shirley Sherrod herself and describing USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's treatment.

In the first victim frame subframe, news stories described USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of being a victim and not having control. For example:

> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: *Sherrod is no stranger to racism*.

> *Huffington Post*: *Sherrod felt hurt* by the harsh position initially taken by the NAACP's national leadership, who apparently weren't aware of the entire context of the speech she gave to the local branch of the group.

> *Huffington Post*: 'I did not think before I acted and for that *this poor woman* has gone through a very hard time,' [Vilsack] said.

> *Los Angeles Times*: Throughout the conversation, Sherrod said she was *not given a chance* to present her side of the story.

> *Politico*: 'You know *the thing that really hurts*? It was *so easy for them* to make a decision to throw me under the bridge without looking…It was easy *to put the blame on me* [and] get me out of there,' [Sherrod said].

> *Washington Post*: Shirley Sherrod is a woman who has been *failed by the system again and again*.

In the second victim frame subframe, news stories described how the media and administrations treatment of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod during this week made her a victim. For example:

> *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: Comment at NAACP event *forces USDA official to leave Ga. post*.

Breitbart: Sherrod immediately became *the scapegoat for the embarrassed NAACP and USDA*, but she was never the target…

Breitbart: *The administration's thoughtless abandonment of Sherrod* indicates a hair-trigger climate of paranoia about al issues racial within the West Wing.

Breitbart: However, in doing so, they also *threw Shirley Sherrod under the bus*.

CNN: Asked *why did she resign instead of fought*, Sherrod said, '*I didn't have any support from USDA*. What would I do?'

CNN: 'They [the White House] asked me to resign, and in fact *they harassed me* as I was driving back to the state office form West Point, Georgia yesterday,' she [Sherrod] said.

The Daily Caller: USDA worker says *White House forced her to quit*.

Washington Post: This week she *endured becoming a caricature* on cable news as a video clip from a speech she gave in March spun for 24 hours. Sherrod was *labeled as a racist* black woman, *ousted from her job* within the Agriculture Department and *condemned by the NAACP*, whose members she had joined in the struggle for racial equality.

Good woman. Over a third (n=32, 34.4%) of the news stories framed USDA

worker Shirley Sherrod as a good woman. In this frame, news stories described USDA

worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of feelings and personality traits rather than job

description or competency. For example:

Atlanta Journal Constitution: '*This is a good woman*,' said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who apologized to Sherrod on Wednesday. 'She's been put through hell.'

CNN: Spooner's wife, Eloise, remembered Sherrod as, *'nice-mannered, thoughtful, friendly; a good person.'*

CNN: '*I can't praise Shirley enough*,' he [Paige] said. '*She holds no malice in her heart.'*

CNN: Sherrod 'has *shown tremendous character* through the events of the last few days,' [Vilsack said].

New York Times: By the end of the day, the official, Shirley Sherrod, had gained instant fame and emerged as *the heroine of a compelling story* about race and redemption.

Politico: 'This…is a bunch of hogwash, in my opinion,' he [Spooner said] on 'Anderson Cooper: 360.' '*She was just as nice to us as anyone could have been.*'

Politico: Vilsack said Sherrod, who is black, was '*extraordinarily gracious'* in accepting the apology…

Above her place. Almost a quarter (n=22, 23.7%) of the news stories that I studied framed USDA worker Shirley Sherrod as being above her place. In this frame, the news stories I studied described USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of being out of place or out of her league. The first subframe for the above her place frame was how many of the news stories chose to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod without her job title. For example:

CNN: *A black Agriculture Department employee* who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context.

Fox News: Agriculture Secretary Tom *Vilsack said Wednesday he has offered to rehire the civil servant he forced to resign* two days ago over her comments about race that were taken out of context in a brief video clip.

Fox News: The idea that *the black president had a black official* who discriminated against white people fit with a recent burst of charges coming from some of the president's conservative critics.

New York Times: The president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People apologized Tuesday to a *black civil servant* whose ouster the civil rights organization had originally cheered.

New York Times: The White House and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack apologized profusely and repeatedly on Wednesday to *a black midlevel official* for the way she had been humiliated and forced to resign her Agriculture Department job after a conservative blogger put out a misleading video clip that seemed to show her admitting antipathy toward a white farmer.

The second subframe for the above her place frame involved more general

descriptions of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod which questioned her abilities both

directly and indirectly. For example:

> *Breitbart*: 'Having reviewed the full tape, spoken to Ms. Sherrod, and *most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story*, we now believe the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans,' [Jealous said].

> CNN: 'She's a political appointee, and her job is basically to focus on job growth in Georgia, and *I have deep concerns about her ability to do her job without her judgments being second-guessed*,' [Vilsack said].

> Fox News: It is also important to know that *Sherrod is a black southerner who has revealed that her father was killed by a white farmer*.

> *Los Angeles Times*: Obama administration officials have voiced discomfort with *Sherrod's many TV appearances*.

> *Politico*: 'If anyone reads *the sainted, martyred Sherrod's* entire speech, this person has not gotten past black vs. white,' he [Breitbart] said.

In the third subframe for the above her place frame, several of the news stories

questioned the motives behind USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's original appointment to

the USDA, citing her participation in a recently settled discrimination lawsuit against the

USDA. For example:

> Fox News: *Ousted official from agriculture department had taken USDA to court, won.*

> Fox News: But it's not the first time Sherrod faced off against the federal government. *Days before she was appointed to the USDA last year, her group reportedly won a $13 million settlement* in a longstanding discrimination suit against the USDA known commonly as the Pigford case.

> Fox News: *A USDA official told FoxNews.com on Tuesday that the settlement had 'nothing to do with' Sherrod's hiring last year*—likewise, the official said her resignation was only the result of her comments in the video.

Huffington Post: She [Sherrod] and her husband, Charles, were part of a multi-million dollar lawsuit against the USDA stemming from civil rights violations in the 1980s. *That case wasn't settled until May of last year, just two months before her appointment to the agency.*

Los Angeles Times: In 2009, Sherrod's nonprofit was awarded nearly $13 million. *The couple were [sic] awarded $330,000 for 'pain and suffering,' Sanders said…Sherrod was appointed as the USDA's Georgia director for rural development shortly afterward.*

Not enough. Although the final frame I found was used to describe United States President Obama rather than USDA worker Shirley Sherrod, it dealt with issues of race and racism and therefore fit most clearly in this section. The not enough frame was present in a little over a third of the news stories (n=34, 36.6%) and was used to described President Obama in terms of his perceived shortcomings: he was not involved enough, he was not presidential enough, and he was not Black enough.

In the first not enough frame subframe, President Obama was described as not being involved enough in how USDA worker Shirley Sherrod was treated by the media and his administration. For example:

CNN: They are *emphasizing that it was not a White House-driven decision* and the review of the situation now taking place is not a White House review.

CNN: *Aides are doing the best they can to keep the resignation of Sherrod as far away from the president as possible.*

The Daily Caller: All week, *the president has steered clear of the topic, and White House press secretary Robert Gibbs has in fact been the only administration official to speak about the controversy*, fielding a barrage of questions a daily press briefings.

CNN: *Until Thursday's phone discussion between Sherrod and Obama, the White House had tried to separate the president from the issue* by emphasizing that Obama played no role in the decision to force Sherrod to resign.

In the second not enough frame subframe, the news stories describe President

Obama's shortcomings and lack of control in order to show he is not presidential

enough. For example:

Fox News: Sherrod also initially said she was not certain that Obama 'fully' supports her but would *like the opportunity to teach him some life lessons*, describing him as '*not someone who has experienced some of the things I've experienced in life*.'

Atlanta Journal Constitution: Hounded from the right and the left---and incredibly broad spectrum covering everyone from Glenn Beck to the NAACP---*an embarrassed White House* apologized to Shirley Sherrod Wednesday and offered her a new job with the Agriculture Department.

Atlanta Journal Constitution: With its shoot-from-the-hip response to the Shirley Sherrod video, the *Obama administration has committed the worse kind of political blunder---the kind that could have been avoided.*

CNN: Throughout Obama's time in office, *the administration has done a weak job of quashing rumors…*

Fox News: How is it possible that such a bright man as *the president repeatedly reacts without the facts* when it comes to a topic so explosive as race?

Los Angeles Times: The events came as *an embarrassment to Obama administration officials*, who have sought to depict themselves as immune to the blogosphere and demands of the news cycle.

Los Angeles Times: That touched off a fury in conservative media outlets, which have *forced White House retreats* in the past.

In the third not enough frame subframe, President Obama was described as not

being Black enough, in terms of his background, lack of knowledge, and refusal to

engage. For example:

Atlanta Journal Constitution: 'But *he's got to bring Michelle* [Obama],' she [Sherrod] said.

CNN: As for a national discussion on race, Quelch said it's *not an issue the administration is interested in addressing* in a high-profile manner right now.

The Daily Caller: In the process, however, the White House has faced questions about *why the nation's first black president is not doing more to move the nation's conversation on race forward*.

Huffington Post: The incident dramatized *how the nation's first black president has occasionally struggled with racial tensions* since he took office a year and a half ago, after saying repeatedly during his campaign that he wanted to bridge America's racial divide.

New York Times: Mr. *Obama has shied away from making race relations a major theme of his presidency*, yet somehow racially charged controversies keep cropping up.

New York Times: *We might have hoped that the election of a black president would somehow make the subject less sensitive and volatile, in the way that John F. Kennedy's election seemed to allay the last, lingering tension between American Catholics and the country's Protestant establishment.*

Politico: 'I know *he's African-American or part African-American*, and many of us are not totally black in our genes. I'm one of them. But when you get down to where the rubber meets the road, I think *he needs to understand a little more of what life is like* at that level,' [Sherrod said].

Research Question 1b

The purpose of Research Question 1b was to determine what sources were associated with the frames used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender. I first had to determine what sources were being used in the news stories. In order to do so, I developed a frequency table from my data in SPSS and found seven major sources being used. (See Table 7). They were USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-quote, USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-video, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, NAACP President Ben Jealous, conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart, the White farming couple the Spooners, and President Obama.

The two most utilized sources were quotes from USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's interviews (n=124) and quotes from USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's video (n=62). Vilsack (n=51), Jealous (n=49), and Breitbart (n=48) were the next most frequently quoted sources and were also almost even in their number of quotes. The two major sources least quoted were the Spooners (n=34), the farming couple mentioned in Sherrod's video story, and President Obama (n=15). The remaining quotes (n=173) came from an assortment of media, administration, and political officials.

Table 7
Sources Used in Articles about USDA Worker Shirley Sherrod

Source	Frequency
Sherrod-quote	124
Sherrod-video	62
Vilsack	51
Jealous	49
Breitbart	48
Spooners	34
Obama	15
Other	173

Note. Most stories contained more than one source.

To determine which sources were associated with the frames used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender, I created a cross tabulation table. (See Table 8).

Table 8

Sources Associated with Frames Used in Articles about USDA Worker Shirley Sherrod

	Sherrod-quote	Sherrod-video	Vilsak	Jealous	Breitbart	Spooners	Obama	Other
race	29	47	23	16	6	5	2	26
media	11	0	1	7	2	0	4	39
shift blame	3	0	1	21	30	0	1	12
time	2	0	6	1	0	0	9	13
reaction	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
victim	10	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
good woman	0	0	14	2	0	21	0	11
above her place	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	4
not enough	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	26

Note. Most sources referenced more than one frame.

Quotes from USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's interviews (n=29) and USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's video (n=47) were the most frequent sources for the race frame, although all of the seven major sources contributed to this frame at least once. (See Table 8). The media frame was dominated by quotes from other sources (n=39), such as media scholars and media practitioners. Breitbart (n=30) and Jealous (n=21) were the sources quoted most frequently in the shift blame frame. In the time frame, Obama (n=9), Vilsack (n=6), and others (n=13), usually administration spokespeople, were quoted most frequently.

Quotes from USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's interviews (n=10) and Vilsack (n=7) were the most frequent sources for the victim frame. The good woman frame was dominated by the Spooners (n=21) and Vilsack (n=14). In the above her place frame, Vilsack (n=4) and other (n=4), usually retired administration officials, were quoted most frequently. And although quotes from USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's interviews (n=3) were used in the not enough frame, the majority of the contribution came from other sources (n=26) in the media, politics, and academia.

Research Question 1c

The purpose of Research Question 1c was to determine what the differences in framing were by the varying news sources. In order to do so, I developed cross tabulations tables in SPSS to compare the frames I found in the news stories by news source type (traditional, new) and news source philosophy (liberal, conservative, unknown).

When I looked at the major frames by news source type, I found that the newer, online news sources dominated every frame. (See Table 9). This was not surprising as the newer, online news sources had a higher news story count than the traditional news sources. What was interesting, however, is how similar their most dominant frames were. The most dominant frames for the newer, online news sources were race (n=50), media (n=50), shift blame (n=35), and victim (n=35). The most dominant frames for the more traditional news sources were race (n=23), media (n=15), time (n=15), and victim (n=14).

The newer, online news sources also used the race and gender frames I found within the news stories more frequently. The victim frame and the good woman frame were used the most by both the newer, online news sources (n=35 and n=21, respectively) and the more traditional news sources (n=14 and n=11, respectively). Interestingly, the newer, online news sources used not enough (n=25) almost twice as much as they used above her place (n=11), while the traditional news sources used them almost evenly (n=11 and n=9, respectively).

Table 9
Frames Used in Articles about USDA Worker Shirley Sherrod by News Source Type

Frame	Source Type	
	Traditional	New
race	23	50
media	15	50
shift blame	11	35
time	15	23
reaction	6	23
victim	14	35
good woman	11	21
above her place	11	11
not enough	9	25

When I looked at the major frames by news source philosophy, I found that the liberal news sources used all of the frames more than the news sources with conservative or unknown philosophy. (See Table 10). Again, this is not surprising because almost half of the news stories came from news sources with a liberal philosophy.

The most dominant frames used by the liberal news sources were race (n=36), media (n=38), victim (n=26), shift blame (n=25), and not enough (n=22). The most dominant frames used by the conservative news sources were race (n=29), media (n=22), victim (n=18), and time (n=16). The most dominant frames used by the news sources with unknown philosophy were race (n=8), media (n=5), time (n=5), victim (n=5), and good woman (n=5). Interestingly, the liberal news sources and conservative news sources used the time (n=17 and n=16, respectively) and good woman (n=15 and n=12, respectively) frames almost the same number of times.

Table 10
Frames Used in Articles about USDA Worker Shirley Sherrod by News Source
Philosophy

Frame	Source Type		
	Liberal	Conservative	Unknown
race	36	29	8
media	38	22	5
shift blame	25	17	4
time	17	16	5
reaction	17	10	2
victim	26	18	5
good woman	15	12	5
above her place	12	6	4
not enough	22	11	1

Research Question 1d

The purpose of Research Question 1d was to determine what the differences in framing were across the news cycle. In order to do so, I developed a cross tabulation table in SPSS and then charted the results.

On the first day of the news cycle, Monday July 19th, only two frames—race and media—were being used in the news stories. (See Table 11). By day two; however, every major frame was in use. The most dominant were the race frame (n=17) and the victim frame (n=12), while the least used frames on Tuesday July 20th were good woman (n=5) and time (n=3). Wednesday July 21st showed the most frame activity of all the days in the news cycle, with media (n=20) and race (n=19) being the most used frames, followed closely by shift blame (n=17) and time (n=15). On this day, not enough (n=7) and above her place (n=5) were the least prevalent frames.

On Thursday July 22nd, the race (n=16) and media (n=16) frames continued to dominate the coverage, while reaction (n=6) and above her place (n=4) were used the least. The race (n=10) and media (n=10) frames were also the ones used most in news stories on Friday July 23rd. In the news stories from Saturday July 24th, however, the race frame (n=4) and the victim frame (n=3) were the most prevalent, with the reaction frame (n=0) not being used at all. Sunday July 25th saw a small increase in overall coverage, but similar patterns in frame usage: race (n=6) and media (n=6) were most dominant, while victim (n=2) and good woman (n=2) were least.

Table11
Frames Used in Articles about USDA Worker Shirley Sherrod Across the News Cycle

Frame	Story Date(s)						
	July 19	July 20	July 21	July 22	July 23	July 24	July 25
race	1	17	19	16	10	4	6
media	1	10	20	16	10	2	6
shift blame	0	9	17	8	5	2	5
time	0	3	15	10	6	1	3
reaction	0	6	10	6	4	0	3
victim	0	12	14	12	6	3	2
good woman	0	5	12	9	3	1	2
above her place	0	7	5	4	2	1	3
not enough	0	6	7	9	7	1	4

I then charted the results of my cross tabulation table by plotting the frequencies of the frames I found. (See Figure 6). This allowed me to more clearly see when the frames were used during the news cycle. The five general frames that I found in the news stories (race, media, shift blame, time, and reaction) all follow a similar pattern of gradual increase from Monday July 19th to Wednesday July 21st with a tapering off by Saturday July 24th. Interestingly, the four race and gender frames do not follow a pattern similar to the five general frames or even to each other. (See Figure 7). While the victim and good woman frames peak in usage on Wednesday July 21st, the above her place frame peaks on Tuesday July 20th. The final race theme, not enough used to describe Obama, peaks in use on Thursday July 22nd.
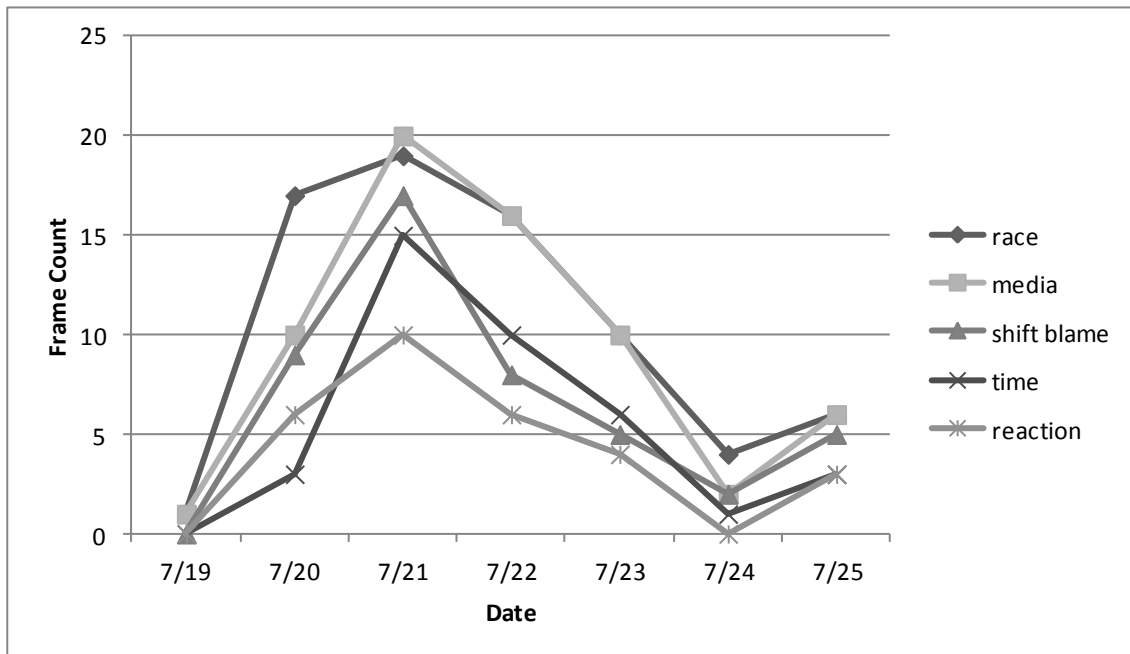
Figure 6. News cycle for general frames.
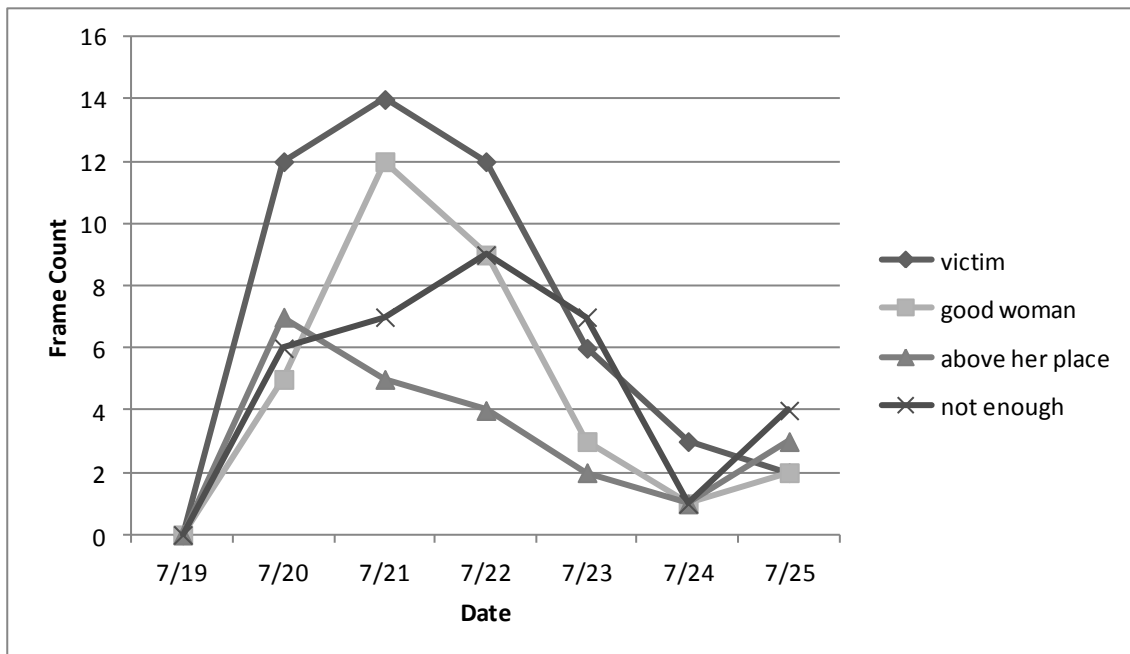
Figure 7. News cycle for race and gender frames.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Along with the power of the reported word comes responsibility to use the

language with courage, purpose, and an awareness of the harm it may cause.

Those who have been historically singled out to their detriment—this includes

religious groups, women, gays and lesbians, poor peole—are particularly

vulnerable to harm by journalists who give too little though to the matter.

Singling them out without reason unnecessarily perpetuates their *otherness*.

(Woods, 2002, pp. 111-112, emphasis original)

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand how media practices influenced the

framing of race and gender in the media coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How did media practices affect the media's framing of race and gender in the

media's coverage of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod?

RQ1a: What frames were used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in

terms of race and gender? [media practice: newsworthiness]

RQ1b: What sources were associated with the frames used to describe USDA

worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender? [media practice: source

selection]

RQ1c: What were the differences in the frames presented by the varying news sources? [media practice: objectivity]

RQ1d: What were the differences in the frames presented from the beginning of day one to the end of day seven of this news cycle? [media practice: perpetual news cycle]

I analyzed a total of 93 news articles from 12 news sources for this study. The news stories ranged in length from 26 words to 2,286 words, with an average story length of 696 words. Most of the 93 news stories came from newer, online publications (n-67, 72.0%) and just over half came from news sources with a liberal philosophy (n=47, 50.5%). The news stories increased in number from Monday, July 19, 2010 (the date of Breitbart's initial posting) through Tuesday, July 21, 2010 (the date that the unedited video came out) and then tapered off through Saturday, July 24th, with a slight increase again on Sunday, July 25th (Sunday morning political shows).

In order to integrate what I felt were key elements of critical theory (i.e. activism, intersectionality, speaking position, subjectivity) I chose a mixed-methodology approach for my framing analysis. I began with an open-ended reading of the news stories to identify possible frames and sources. I then used constant comparative analysis to narrow and refine my list of frames and sources. Based on this final list, I created a coding sheet which I used to analyze all of the news stories. I developed frequency tables in SPSS from the data I gathered using this quantitative coding sheet. I also pulled qualitative examples of frames from the news stories that I had noted during my open-ended reading.

Results

Research Question 1a

The purpose of Research Question 1a was to determine what frames were used in the news stories to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender. The findings were as follows:

- My analysis showed five major frames were used across the news stories: race, media, shift blame, time, and reaction.

- Race (n=73, 78.5%) was the most common frame in the news stories that I studied.

- Words common to the race frame included move beyond, post-racial, teachable moment, race card, racial tension, tolerance, racial lies, and racial unity.

- The race frame had four subframes: race and USDA worker Shirley Sherrod, race and the USDA's history, race and society, and race and disbelief.

- Media (n=65, 69.9%) was the second most common frame in the news stories that I studied.

- Words common to the media frame included out of context, whole tape, incomplete, heavily edited, media frenzy, news cycle, and intense media coverage.

- The media frame had four subframes: editing/context, new media, self reflection, and conservative paranoia.

- Shift blame (n=46, 49.5%) was the third most common frame in the news stories I studied.

- The shift blame frame was used by several major participants to blame others rather than admit responsibility.

- Time (n=38, 40.9%) was the fourth most common frame in the news stories I studied.

- Words common to the time frame included swiftly, warp speed, hyper reactionary, hasty, rush to judgment, jumped the gun, and rushed.

- Reaction (n=29, 31.2%) was the fifth most common frame in the news stories I studied.

- Words common to the reaction frame included overreact, shameful, controversial, bungled, appalled, fallout, saga, expose, outrage, and scandal.

- My analysis showed three major frames were used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender in the news stories: victim, good woman, and above her place.

- Victim (n=49, 52.7%) was the most common race and gender frame in the news stories I studied.

- Words common to the victim frame included forced out, harassed, hurt, humiliated, summarily dismissed, out of her control, and pushed out.

- The victim frame had two subframes: describing USDA worker Shirley Sherrod herself and describing how USDA worker Shirley Sherrod was treated.

- Good woman (n=32, 34.4%) was the second most common race and gender frame in the news stories I studied.

- The good woman frame was used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of feelings and personality traits rather than job description or competency.

- Above her place (n=22, 23.7%) was the third most common race and gender frame in the news stories I studied.

- The above her place frame was used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod as being out of her place or out of her league.

- The above her place frame had three subframes: lack of job title, questioning her abilities, and questioning her appointment.

- My analysis showed an unexpected race frame used to describe President Barack Obama in the news stories: not enough.

- Not enough (n=34, 36.6%) was used to describe President Barack Obama in terms of his perceived shortcomings and had three subframes: he was not involved enough, he was not presidential enough, and he was not Black enough.

Research Question 1b

The purpose of Research Question 1b was to determine what sources were associated with the frames used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender. The findings were as follows:

- My analysis showed seven major sources were used in the news stories: USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-quote, USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-video, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, NAACP President Ben Jealous, conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart, the White farming couple the Spooners, and President Barack Obama.

- USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-quote (n=124) and USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-video (n=62) were the two most common sources in the news stories I studied.

- Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack (n=51), NAACP President Ben Jealous (n=49), and conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart (n=48) were the third, fourth, and fifth (respectively) most common sources in the news stories I studied.

- The White farming couple The Spooners (n=34) and President Barack Obama (n=15) were the two least common sources in the news stories I studied.

- A variety of other sources (n=173), such as media, administration, and political officials, were also found in the news stories I studied.

- USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-quote (n=29) and USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-video (n=47) were the most common sources associated with the race frame.

- Other sources (n=39), in this case media scholars and practitioners, were the most common sources associated with the media frame.

- Conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart (n=30) and NAACP President Ben Jealous (n=21) were the most common sources associated with the shift blame frame.

- Other sources (n=13) and President Barack Obama (n=9) were the most common sources associated with the time frame.

- USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-quote (n=10) and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack (n=7) were the most common sources associated with the victim frame.

- The White farming couple The Spooners (n=21) and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack (n=14) were the most common sources associated with the good woman frame.
- Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack (n=4) and other sources (n=4), in this case retired administration officials, were the most common sources associated with the above her place frame.
- Other sources (n=26), in this case media, political, and academic, were the most common sources associated with the not enough frame.

Research Question 1c

The purpose of Research Question 1c was to determine what the differences in framing were by the varying news sources. Findings were as follows:

- The newer, online news sources dominated every major frame, both general and race and gender related.
- Race (n=50) and media (n=50) were the two most common frames found in the newer, online news sources. Time (n=23) and reaction (n=23) were the least common frames found in the newer, online news sources.
- Race (n=23) and media (n=15) were the two most common frames found in the more traditional news sources. Reaction (n=6) was the least common frame found in the more traditional news sources.
- Victim (n=35) was the most common race and gender frame found in the newer, online news sources. Above her place (n=11) was the least common race and gender frame found the in the newer, online news sources.

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- Victim (n=14) was the most common race and gender frame found in the more traditional news sources. Good woman (n=11) and above her place (n=11) were the least common race and gender frames found in the more traditional news sources.

- Not enough was almost three times more common in the newer, online news sources (n=25) than the more traditional news sources (n=9).

- The liberal philosophy news sources dominated every major frame, both general and race and gender related.

- Media (n=38) was the most common frame found in the news sources with a liberal philosophy. Time (n=17) and reaction (n=17) were the least common frames in the news sources with a liberal philosophy.

- Race (n=22) was the most common frame found in the news sources with a conservative philosophy. Reaction (n=10) was the least common frame found in the news sources with a conservative philosophy.

- Race (n=8) was the most common frame found in the news sources with an unknown philosophy. Reaction was the least common frame found the news sources with an unknown philosophy.

- Victim (n=26) was the most common race and gender frame found in the news sources with a liberal philosophy. Above her place (n=12) was the least common race and gender frame found in the news sources with a liberal philosophy.

- Victim (n=18) was the most common race and gender frame found in the news sources with a conservative philosophy. Above her place (n=6) was the least

common race and gender frame found in the news sources with a conservative philosophy.

- Victim (n=5) and good woman (n=5) were the most common race and gender frames found in the news sources with an unknown philosophy. Above her place (n=4) was the least common race and gender frame found in the news sources with an unknown philosophy.

- Not enough was twice as common in the news sources with a liberal philosophy (n=22) than the news sources with a conservative philosophy (n=11).

Research Question 1d

The purpose of Research Question 1d was to determine what the differences in framing were across the news cycle. Findings were as follows:

- Race (n=1) and media (n=1) were the only frames being used on Monday, July 19th in the news storied I studied.

- All major frames were used Tuesday, July 20th through Friday, July 23rd in the news storied I studied.

- Race (n=17) was the most common frame used on Tuesday, July 20th in the news storied I studied. Time (n=3) was the least common frame used on Tuesday, July 20th in the news storied I studied.

- Media (n=20) was the most common frame used on Wednesday, July 21st in the news storied I studied. Reaction (n=10) was the least common frame used on Wednesday, July 21st in the news storied I studied.

- Race (n=16) and media (n=16) were the most common frames used on Thursday, July 22nd in the news storied I studied. Reaction (n=6) was the least common frame used on Thursday, July 22nd in the news storied I studied.

- Race (n=10) and media (n=10) were the most common frames used on Friday, July 23rd in the news storied I studied. Reaction (n=4) was the least common frame used on Friday, July 23rd in the news storied I studied.

- Race (n=4) was the most common frame used on Saturday, July 24th in the news storied I studied. Reaction (n=0) was the least common frame used on Saturday, July 24th in the news storied I studied.

- Race (n=6) and media (n=6) were the most common frames used on Sunday, July 25th. Reaction (n=3) and time (n=3) were the least common frames used on Sunday, July 25th in the news storied I studied.

- All race and gender frames were used Tuesday, July 20th through Sunday, July 25th in the news stories I studied.

- Victim was the most common race and gender frame used on Tuesday, July 20th (n=12), Wednesday, July 21st (n=14), Thursday, July 22nd (n=12), Friday, July 23rd (n=6), and Saturday, July 24th (n=3) in the news stories I studied.

- Above her place was the most common race and gender frame used on Sunday, July 25th (n=3) in the news stories I studied.

- Good woman (n=5) was the least common race and gender frame used on Tuesday, July 20th in the news stories I studied.

- Above her place was the least common race and gender frame used on Wednesday, July 21st (n=5), Thursday, July 22nd (n=4), and Friday, July 23rd (n=2) in the news stories I studied.

- Good woman (n=1) and above her place (n=1) were the least common race and gender frames used on Sunday, July 25th in the news stories I studied.

- Not enough was used starting on Tuesday, July 20th (n=6), was used the most on Thursday, July 22nd (n=9) and was used the least on Saturday, July 24th (n=1) in the news stories I studied.

Discussion

Every news story must answer the 'five Ws'—who, what, when, where, and why—but a truly good news story must also answer a sixth—so what? It is this context that lets the reader know why the story is important and why they should care. Similarly, I must answer these questions for my research—why is this study important and why should people care about the results.

Media Stereotypes

Black women are demonized in the media, being subjected to a double dose of stereotyping because they are both Black and female (Hill Collins, 2000). Media researchers have shown that if Black women are included in media products, they are portrayed as lazy, sexually promiscuous, subservient, and/or bitchy (Hill Collins, 2000, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Wing, 1997). In the news stories I studied, I found three frames that were used to describe USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of race and gender: victim, good woman, and above her place.

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The first of these frames, victim, depicted USDA worker Shirley Sherrod as being a victim and not having control of her own life. In an example from *Politico*, Sherrod stated: "You know *the thing that really hurts*? It was *so easy for them* to make a decision to throw me under the bridge without looking…It was easy *to put the blame on me* [and] get me out of there" (Barbash, 2010, emphasis added). The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* declared that "*Sherrod is no stranger to racism*" (Garner, 2010, emphasis added) while the *Washington Post* called Sherrod "…a woman who has been *failed by the system again and again*" (Thompson, 2010, emphasis added). These examples show how the media turned USDA worker Shirley Sherrod into a victim, someone without control, powerless to act or make decisions.

The second of these frames, good woman, depicted USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of feelings and traits. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack repeatedly called USDA worker Shirley Sherrod "*a good woman*" (Cook & Garner, 2010, emphasis added) or "*this poor woman*" (Stein, 2010, emphasis added) when talking about her in news stories. He also said she was "*extraordinarily gracious*" (Thrush, 2010, emphasis added) and had "*tremendous character*" (CNN Staff, 2010c, emphasis added). Similarly, Eloise Spooner, the wife of the White farmer referenced in the video, described USDA worker Shirley Sherrod as "*nice-mannered, thoughtful, friendly; a good person*" (CNN Staff, 2010c, emphasis added). These examples show how the media chose to frame USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of her personality rather than her job or competency, once again rendering her powerless.

The third of these frames, above her place, depicted USDA worker Shirley Sherrod in terms of being out of her league. Many of the news stories I studied did not reference her title or job position as Georgia State Director of Rural Development, which was a federally appointed position. Instead, they referred to her as: "*A black Agriculture Department employee*" (CNN Staff, 2010a, emphasis added), or "*a black official*" (Williams, 2010, emphasis added), or "a *black civil servant*" (Wheaton, 2010, emphasis added). This frame also depicted an array of doubts concerning USDA worker Shirley Sherrod, from her ability to do her job to how she got her job. For example, in a news story on CNN, Vilsack said "*…I have deep concern about her ability to do her job without her judgments being second-guessed*" (CNN Staff, 2010b, emphasis added). In a story on Fox News it stated that "*Days before she was appointed to the USDA last year, her group reportedly won a $13 million settlement* in a longstanding discrimination suit against the USDA known commonly as the Pigford case" (Fox News Staff, 2010, emphasis added). These examples show how the media questioned her competency, cast doubt on her abilities, and portrayed her as above her place in life.

The results of this study show that the media do indeed utilize negative stereotypes of Black women in the media. It is important to focus on race and gender stereotypes in the media because research has shown that media audiences can internalize the negative stereotypes they see in the media and put them into practice in society (Bandura, 2001; Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Gallagher, 1981).

Media Practices

Over time, journalists have developed a set of routines that help them to do their jobs in a world driven by marketing and deadlines (Adam, 2002; Becker & Vlad, 2009; Brighton & Foy, 2007; Fuller, 1996; Gans, 2004; Gill, 2007; Hohenburg, 1978; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; Palmer, 2000; PEJ, n.d.; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2009). These routines, known as media practices, are embedded in both journalism education and newsroom culture (Braun, 2010; Entman & Rojecki, 2002; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). In this study I was interested in four media practices: newsworthiness, source selection, objectivity, and the perpetual news cycle.

The first media practice, newsworthiness, describes how journalists decide what is and what is not news. This decision-making process is guided by news values that include timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence, human interest, the unusual, impact, dramatic appeal, entertainment, community interest, conflict, and celebrity (Allern, 2002; ASNE, 2002; Brighton & Foy, 2007; Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1999; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gandy, Kopp, Hands, & Frazer, 1997; Harrigan & Brown Dunlap, 2004; Palmer, 2000; PEJ, 1998; Price, Tewksbury, & Power, 1997; Rich, 2000; Whitaker, Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2009).

In this study, I found that USDA worker Shirley Sherrod was framed by the media in terms of her race and gender in three ways: as a victim, as a good woman, and as being above her place. These frames all depicted her as being powerless with a lack of control—which is in line with the typical stereotypes of Black women in the media—

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suggesting that the journalists were framing by rote. Additionally, these frames aligned with several news values—prominence, human interest, impact, dramatic appeal, and conflict—suggesting that newsworthiness and framing are closely related.

The second media practice, source selection, describes how journalists often use the same sources over and over again. These sources are usually officials trained to deal with the media and have learned to work within the media's routines (ASNE, 2002; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, 1989; Gans, 2004; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; PEJ, 1998; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Unfortunately, this reliance on official sources is also a reliance on the dominant viewpoint (ASNE, 2002; Baran & Davis, 2012; Clark, 2002; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gans, 2003).

In this study, I found that seven sources were used frequently across the news stories: USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-quote, USDA worker Shirley Sherrod-video, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, NAACP President Ben Jealous, conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart, the White farming couple the Spooners, and President Obama. Although USDA worker Shirley Sherrod was the most frequently used source, the way the media continued to use racially-charged excerpts from the edited video negated the power of her own words. Additionally, she was the most frequent source for the race and victim frames, suggesting she was pigeonholed as a source.

The third media practice, objectivity, describes how journalists aim to be impartial, describe the truth, and avoid opinions (Gans, 2004; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007). Media researchers, however, state that humans are inherently value-laden and

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therefore their work cannot be value-free (ASNE, 2002; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Fuller, 1996; Gans, 2004; Hohenberg, 1978).

In this study, I found that there were differences in the frames utilized by various types of news sources. The newer, online news sources were more dominant than their traditional counterparts in every frame category, but they also had a greater number of news stories to begin with. By looking within the frames used by each type of news source I was able to determine that they used similar frames in frequency, except that the newer, online news sources used the shift blame frame more while the more traditional news sources used the time frame more. The liberal philosophy news sources were also more dominant than their conservative and unknown philosophy counterparts in every frame category, but they had a slightly higher number of overall stories. Again, I looked within the frames used by each type of news source and saw similar frequency of use, except that the two most dominant frames in the liberal philosophy news sources (media and race) were the opposite for the conservative philosophy news sources (race and media). The differences evident in framing by news source type and news source philosophy indicated that objectivity may be an unobtainable goal in media practice.

The fourth media practice, perpetual news cycle, describes the 24-hour-a-day news cycle that exists because of broadcast and online news (Gans, 2003, 2004; Gill, 2007; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; Palmer, 2000; PEJ, 2010). This pressure for immediacy can result in shortcuts in the news process that short change the story (Gill, 2007; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; PEJ, 2010).

In this study, I found that the news stories and the frames used within them followed a predictable news cycle. This news cycle started on Monday, July 19th with Breitbart's initial posting, peaked on Wednesday, July 21st with the height of coverage and the release of the unedited video, tapered off until Saturday, July 24th, and had a small spike on Sunday, July 25th with the Sunday morning political talk shows. Interestingly, the only frames that did not follow this news cycle were the two most negative: above her place and not enough. The above her place frame peaked on Tuesday, July 20th and the not enough frame peaked on Thursday, July 22nd. This suggests that media framing does change with the pressures of the news cycle.

Researcher Positionality

Researchers using the critical social paradigm try to achieve critical consciousness by reflecting on their own identity(s), how their identity(s) give them privilege, and how their identity(s) shape the research they are conducting (Darling-Wolf, 2004, Hall, 1999; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; Harding, 1987; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; hooks, 1989, 2000). I tried to do this in Chapter III, but after completing my research, realized that I had fallen short of the goal. Or realized that the goal may be a more fluid, continual process of self-identification and self-realization. I was confronted by my own privilege twice (that I am aware of) in this research process.

The first time was when I discovered the not enough frame related to President Barack Obama. I went into this research to study USDA worker Shirley Sherrod and how the media framed her in terms of race and gender. I was full of conviction about how I could show the wrong the media was committing in this story. I never thought

about the nation's first Black president in relation to this story, much less how his status was integral to the story, or that he would be framed as a part of the narrative. Upon finding the not enough frame, I realized that my privilege was working against me and had blinded me.

The second time was when I was writing up the above her place frame. I realized that I was taking the media to task for not using USDA worker Shirley Sherrod's title of Georgia State Director of Rural Development when I had been doing something similar myself. I had referred to her as 'USDA worker' the entire time I was conducting my research and writing my dissertation. I would like to believe I did this due to clarity or ease of writing, but I should have sought out and used her full title. And although I could have corrected my dissertation after I realized this mistake, I felt it was more authentic to leave the 'USDA worker' phrase in place in order to acknowledge my own privilege and work towards a more critical consciousness in an open fashion.

Contributions

This study generated new knowledge and insights into the influence news values have on the use of race and gender stereotypes in the media. The contributions made by this study include:

1. Expanding the research on stereotypes in the media by including a new area of study—the agriculture industry. This study showed that agriculture news stories include race and gender stereotypes similar to those seen in more mainstream media stories.

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2.   Expanding the research on the effects of media practices. This study showed that media practices such as newsworthiness, source selection, objectivity, and perpetual news cycle have an effect on how race and gender are framed in the media.

3.   Expanding the body of knowledge on framing, both as a theory and as a methodology. This study showed that critical social theories can interact with framing theory and methodology to create stronger and more responsive research. This study also showed that qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies used together can interact with framing theory and methodology to create a data set that is stronger, broader, and deeper.

4.   Expanding the body of knowledge agricultural communications researchers have to work with. This study showed that critical social theories can be applied to media stories that involve agriculture topics. The work of agricultural communications researchers would benefit from the more open and fluid nature of the critical social paradigm because it would allow them to expand beyond their present, repetitive, safety zone of research topics.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this research study, I have the following recommendations:

In Practice

1. Media professionals should ask themselves if race is even relevant to the story they are telling. According to Woods (2002), "Race and ethnicity are relevant and specific when the story is about race or ethnicity…Journalists must ask the question of

relevance before any racial reference appears in a story" (p. 112). If race is relevant, media professionals must make the reasoning implicit in their stories.

2. Media professionals should be aware of language shortcuts they use which have negative connotations (Woods, 2000, 2002). These language shortcuts include euphemisms, stereotypes, codes, and characteristics (Woods, 2000, 2002). Woods (2000) stated, "Be careful not to use welfare, inner-city, underprivileged, blue collar, conservative, suburban, exotic, middle-class, Uptown, South Side, or wealthy as euphemisms for racial groups. By definition, the White House is in the inner-city. Say what you mean" (p. 1).

3. Media professionals should practice self-reflection in order to understand themselves and any biases they may hold which can become a part of their work (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Woods, 2002). The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education developed a tool kit to help media professionals do so (ASNE, 2002; MIJE, 2001). They recommend that media professionals conduct a self-analysis of how they filter information for their stories through race/ethnicity, gender, generation, class, and geography (ASNE, 2002; MIJE, 2001). "Reporters who consider each of these as they cover complex stories, [Maynard] advised, can understand issues more clearly and build more accuracy into their work" (Lehrman, 2012, p. 1). Woods (2000, 2002) recommends that media professionals go outside their comfort zone (i.e ask different questions, engage with different people, and experience different places) in order to write a more complete story.

4. Media organizations should increase the number of women and people of color on their staffs because the racial and gender composition of media organizations can influence how issues related to race and gender are covered (ASNE, 2002; Gandy, Kopps, Hands, Frazier, & Phillips, 1997; Harrigan & Brown Dunlap, 2004). A more homogeneous media organization will be limited in not only the stories it chooses to cover, but the way in which the stories are covered (ASNE, 2002; Gandy, Kopps, Hands, Frazier, & Phillips, 1997; Harrigan & Brown Dunlap, 2004). According to Harrigan & Brown Dunlap (2004), "The first step might be to ask, how well does the newsroom reflect the community that is covers…The next step might be to examine who is being covered and who is being left out of news coverage…" (pp. 120-123). By increasing the presence of women and people of color in media organizations a broader range of opinions and experiences come into play (ASNE, 2002; Gandy, Kopps, Hands, Frazier, & Phillips, 1997; Harrigan & Brown Dunlap, 2004).

5. Agricultural communications practitioners should not only complete all of the recommendations listed above, they should also be more aware of stories that are being written about agriculture and race and/or gender. This awareness will allow them to manage how agriculture is depicted in the mainstream media in order to avoid portrayals of the agriculture industry as full of backwards White men (Bowen, Bowen, & Heinsoh, 1997; Sutphin & Newsom-Stewart, 1995).

6. Agricultural communications professors should look to their classrooms and recruitment strategies in order to be more inclusive to students of color. Because the agriculture industry can be perceived as backwards or unwelcoming (Bowen, 1993;

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Bowen, Bowen, & Heinsohn, 1997; Myers, Breja, & Dyer, 2004; Sutphin & Newsom-Stewart, 1995; Talbert & Larke, 1995; Talbert, Larke, & Jones, 1999), agricultural communications professors should actively participate in recruitment and retention programs, model inclusive behavior for White students, and maintain an open mind and open door policy (McGovney-Ingram, Rutherford, & Larke, 2011).

In Research

1. Future research on the media's framing of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod should include transcripts from broadcast news stations for the same time period because of the influence broadcast news stations have on the perpetual news cycle.

2. Future research on the media's framing of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod should include a cross reference to the race and/or gender of the journalists who wrote the stories because a journalist's race and/or gender can affect how a story is written.

3. Future research on the media's framing of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod should include the broader political climate in play during this time period because the election of the first Black president and the emergence of the Tea Party movement created a polarizing racial atmosphere.

4. Future research on the media's framing of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod should include a cross reference to the education/training of the journalists who wrote the stories because an absence of formal training may indicate an absence of media practices, many of which are beneficial in creating trust for readers.

5. Future research on the media's framing of USDA worker Shirley Sherrod should include a mapping of how the story was carried from news source to news source because understanding how news sources interact can lead to better media practices.

6. Future research on the media's framing of race and gender should include critical social theories because critical social theories' focus on activism, intersectionality, speaking position, and subjectivity allow for stronger and more responsive research.

7. Future research on the media's framing of race and gender should include other topics related to diversity and the USDA/the agriculture industry because this is a topic that has had little research attention.

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APPENDIX A

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MATERIALS RELEASE

Date:	July 27, 2012	
Anticipated Work:	Texas A&M University communication student dissertation.	("Work")
Description of Material:	One (1) political cartoon, "Beltway Chicken Littles," by David Horsey – published July 22, 2010.	("Material")
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APPENDIX B

Critical—a genre of theory where the researcher questions or challenges the assumptions of the society they live in

Framing—when a piece of information (idea, point of view, comment, etc.) is highlighted or obscured by the media thereby influencing how a story is told

Gender—society's expectations of what defines the biological categories of man and woman

Intersectionality—the multiple and relational nature of people's social identities based on place, time, and society

Mass media—using a medium, typically technology, to communicate with a larger audience

Media Practice(s)—an embedded set of routines developed over time that journalists use to do their job

New media—newer, social means of communications such as blogs, podcasts, internet; usually referred to as "interactive"

News—events of the day that journalists chose to report on based on news values such as timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence, human interest, the unusual, impact, dramatic appeal, entertainment, community interest, conflict, and celebrity

News cycle—historically, the time between newspapers publications or television/radio broadcasts; today, a perpetual, 24-hour news stream

Objectivity—in news: a promise to leave personal values out of reporting in order to be more trustworthy as a journalist; in research: rigorous methodology used by positivistic

researchers trying to learn the "single truth," rejected by almost all forms of critical research

Race—a social construct used to define and/or categorize people by so-called biologically inherent traits linked to their skin color

Traditional or legacy media—traditional means of communication such as print (newspapers, magazines) and broadcast (television, audio); usually referred to as the "press" or "news"

Source—anyone who provides information for a news story, through direct quotation or indirect attribution