

A LOOK AT THE CONTINUUM OF IMPRESSION FORMATION ON TWO CASES
OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE MEDIA

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: A Look at the Continuum of Impression Formation on Two Cases of Violent Extremism in the Media

This thesis investigates media impressions between radical far right violent extremism and radical Islamic violent extremism to see if impression formation explains differences in our associations of violent extremists. Focusing on two cases from 2015, the Charleston church shooting and the San Bernardino office shooting, this thesis examines impression formation to see if the initial categorizations of the extremists in the media change over time or remain consistent. This thesis explores whether violent extremists that are associated with the ingroup are more likely to have the impressions of them change over time to become more individuating than violent extremists associated with the outgroup which would remain more category-based. This thesis also addresses how to reduce bias that negative impressions of a group could cause, through intergroup contact.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|--|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| II. LITERATURE REVIEW | 5 |
| Stereotypes and Prejudice | 5 |
| Dehumanization | 7 |
| Impression Formation | 8 |
| Dual Model of Impression Formation..... | 8 |
| The Continuum of Impression Formation..... | 11 |
| Social Identity Theory..... | 17 |
| Expectations | 20 |
| III. METHODS | 23 |
| Events..... | 23 |
| Media Sources..... | 24 |
| Temporal Distribution..... | 25 |
| Coding..... | 26 |
| IV. RESULTS | 28 |
| Charleston and San Bernardino | 28 |
| Media | 35 |
| Summary of Results | 40 |
| V. DISCUSSION | 42 |
| Charleston | 42 |

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| San Bernardino..... | 43 |
| Media | 46 |
| Dehumanization | 47 |
| VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION..... | 50 |
| VII. CONCLUSION | 55 |
| APPENDICES | 57 |
| A. ARTICLE INFORMATION..... | 57 |
| B. CITATIONS FOR CODED MEDIA ARTICLES | 59 |
| REFERENCES CITED..... | 62 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Dual Model of Impression Formation (Brewer, 1988) | 10 |
| 2. The Continuum of Impression Formation (Fiske & Neuberg) | 13 |
| 3. Number of Fatalities and Incidents of Violent Extremism (GAO, 2017)..... | 18 |
| 4. Impression Formation of an Ingroup Perpetrator..... | 21 |
| 5. Impression Formation of an Outgroup Perpetrator | 21 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Shooting Nouns Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino..... | 29 |
| 2. Shooting Adjectives Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino | 30 |
| 3. Shooter Motivation Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino | 31 |
| 4. Shooter Adjectives Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino | 32 |
| 5. Shooter Extremism Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino..... | 33 |
| 6. Origin/Group Identity Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino | 34 |
| 7. Media Sources Comparison at T1 and T2..... | 36 |
| 8. Charleston Articles Time Distribution..... | 57 |
| 9. San Bernardino Articles Time Distribution | 57 |
| 10. Article Word Count..... | 58 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the days after September 11, 2001, Mark Strawman went on a shooting spree to kill as many Muslims as possible. He shot and killed two men, one from Pakistan and the other from India. On September 21, 2001, Strawman entered a Dallas convenience store and shot another man, Rais Bhuiyan, an immigrant from Bangladesh in the face. Strawman was convicted of murder and sentenced with the death penalty. In 2009, Bhuiyan fought unsuccessfully to keep Strawman from being executed. Before his execution, Strawman had the chance to speak with Bhuiyan. Bhuiyan reflected on his conversation:

The same person ten years back, his heart was full of hate and ignorance, but when he came to know me, he saw me as a human being. He was able to tell me that he loved me and called me brother (The Secret Lives of Muslims, 2016).

Bhuiyan is not the only victim of US-based violence against Muslims or people from the Middle East and South Asia since 9/11. In 2016, victims of anti-Islamic bias hate crimes accounted for 24.5 percent of all hate crimes (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2016). While anti-Islamic bias existed before September 11th, it has increased dramatically since then (Esposito & Kalin, 2011). Not all of this anti-Islamic bias is violent. In 2006, a USA Today-Gallup Poll found nearly a quarter of Americans, 22%, said they would not like to have a Muslim as a neighbor and about 40% favored more rigorous security measures for Muslim citizens than those used for other US citizens (Esposito & Kalin, 2011). Anti-Islamic rhetoric is also seen in our politics. In the 2008 Presidential campaign, John McCain corrected a woman on his campaign trail saying that Barack Obama was not Arab and that he was a decent person without correcting the implied notion that Arabs are not decent (Jackson, 2011). Lou Ann Zelenik, a 2010

Republican candidate for Tennessee state Senate, stated, “Until the American Muslim community find it in their hearts to separate themselves from their evil, radical counterparts, to condemn those who want to destroy our civilization and will fight against them, we are not obligated to open our society to any of them” (Esposito & Kalin, 2011 p. xxv). This implies that Muslims have not separated and condemned radical Islamic violence, even though they have repeatedly (Esposito & Kalin, 2011).

There have been many instances of violent extremism since September 11, 2001 in the United States. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report (2017) examining the success of the United States’ counter violent extremism programs, and in the appendix they list the violent extremist events that resulted in fatalities in the United States between September 12, 2001, to December 31, 2016. The report only includes far right extremist attacks and radical Islamist extremist attacks because during that time period there were no fatalities in attacks “carried out by persons believed to be motivated by extremist environmental beliefs, extremist ‘animal liberation’ beliefs, or extremist far left beliefs” (United States Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2017, p. 28). Far right extremism accounted for 62 attacks in this time period with 106 total victims, and radical Islamist extremism accounted for 23 attacks with 119 total victims (GAO, 2017). There were more attacks by far right extremists than Islamic extremists in the 15 year period, but more fatalities in the attacks by Islamic extremists.

In the United States, terrorism is largely associated with radical Islamic extremist organizations such as Al Qaeda, and ISIS. Radical Islamic extremists are not more dangerous than other violent extremists. Far right extremists have caused almost the same amount of deaths as radical Islamic extremists in the United States over the course of 15 years (GAO, 2017). However Islamic extremists are perceived to be a greater threat than

other forms of violent extremism. About 47% of Americans polled in 2007 felt very or somewhat worried that they or a family member would be a victim to a terrorist attack despite the actual chances of that being extremely low (Friedman, 2010). The risk of death from any extremists is quite low. Someone in the United States is more likely to die from hot water or the flu. Hot water taps cause about 100 deaths annually (US News, 2013). In 2015, the 8th leading cause of death in the United States was influenza/pneumonia with 57,062 deaths (Murphy, et. al, 2017). The average person does not fear dying from the flu, pneumonia, or hot water.

The consequences of the perception of Muslims as the main cause of violence are increased discrimination against Muslims, justification for the War on Terror, and the expense of that war. President George Bush identified Islam as a religion of peace while continually likening the Muslim world to terrorists (Cole, 2011). In the United States there is a heightened sense of concern for Islamic violent extremism, and when Islamic extremists are perpetuating violence, the negative reaction towards them gets pushed onto regular non-violent Muslims. However, there does not seem to be the same level of negative reactions to non-violent conservatives in response to far right violent extremism.

Why are Muslims associated more with violent extremists than other groups? How do the media depictions of far right extremists and Islamic extremists differ? To answer these questions, I use the theory of the continuum of impression formation (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990) to see how it applies to media discussion of two cases of violent extremism. Fiske and Neuberg's (1990) continuum of impression formation states that a person's impression of another starts with category-based impression and can become attribute-based if the other person does not seem to fit the initial categorization. A person's impression of another can change over time when the additional information

gained from the other person is not congruent with the first categorization. Specifically, I investigate media coverage for two events from 2015, the Charleston church shooting on June 17, and the San Bernardino office shooting on December 2. These events both occur in the same year, both involve shooting, and both involved the deaths of a large amount of people. The Charleston shooting is labeled in the GAO (2017) appendix under far right extremism, and the San Bernardino shooting is labeled as radical Islamist extremism. Looking at media coverage of these two events provides a way to compare if there are differences between how radical Islamic extremism and far right extremism is framed in the media, and if there is change over time.

This thesis is organized into five parts. Part one is a literature review discussing stereotyping, social identity, and Fiske and Neuberg's (1990) continuum of impression formation. Stereotyping and social identity form the foundation for the categories that impressions are based on. I expect that the Charleston shooter will move farther along the continuum of impression formation towards a more individuating, attribute-based impression than the San Bernardino shooters, which I expect will stay within their initial categorization. Part two discusses the methods of collection of the news articles and describes how the articles were coded. Part three examines the results, which shows that the discussion of the shooters was different. Part four analyses these results and indicates that in both shootings the initial impressions of the shooters did not change. Part five looks into implications for conflict resolution and how to reduce bias. One way to help alleviate the conflicts is through intergroup contact, which relies on the groups learning more about each other. The final chapter is the conclusion that summarizes the thesis.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter describes five different theories related to how people form understandings of each other. The first section is on stereotypes and prejudice. The next section focuses on dehumanization which can be a negative result of stereotypes and prejudice. The third section focuses on the continuum of impression formation, which relies on social categorizations. The fourth section is on social identity theory and how it creates social groups that aid in social categorization. Finally, I discuss my expectations about how these pieces will relate to the media coverage of the Charleston and San Bernardino shootings.

Stereotypes and Prejudice

Stereotypes and prejudice form the foundation for impression formation. They shape in simplified ways how people think about categories and other social groups. Prejudice and stereotypes can influence distinctions between people and create a justification for conflict-like behaviors.

Allport (1979) defines stereotype as “an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category” (p. 191). Stereotypes are often an over-simplification of a category for a person which is *shared* by large numbers of people (Tajfel, 2001, emphasis Tajfel’s). Social stereotypes function to help us categorize data (e.g., people’s jobs based on their clothes) that would be overwhelming to process individually (Tajfel, 2001). They also help preserve or create positively valued differentiations between one’s own and other social groups (Tajfel,

2001). Additionally, they explain and justify social actions by contributing to the creation and maintenance of group ideologies (Tajfel, 2001).

Stereotypes are often accompanied by prejudice but can also exist on their own (Tajfel, 2001). Allport (1979) defines prejudice as “a feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward a person or thing, prior to, or not based on actual experience” (p. 6). Prejudice helps reinforce the us-versus-them stance that occurs with group memberships (Allport, 1979). Prejudice shapes ideas about the other and creates social identities (Allport, 1979). It also gives the stereotype an emotional component, whether positive or negative, that then can influence response behaviors to the stereotype.

Both situations and brief phrases can prompt prejudicial stereotypic thinking. Stereotypes can be automatically activated by the mere presence of physical features or relevant objects or events associated with the stereotyped group (Bargh, Chen & Burrows, 1996). Situational cues such as talking about something relevant to the stereotype can trigger the stereotype even if it was not directly mentioned (Bragh, Chen & Burrows, 1996). For example, hearing of a mass shooting at a school will cue different ideas about the shooter as being bullied or mentally ill, whereas hearing of a mass shooting at a prominent government building may bring up concern about an attack on the country and associate the shooter with 9/11 and terrorism. In addition to situational cues, single words and sentences describing behavior can activate attitudes and produce spontaneous trait inferences (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Hearing of a police shooting of an African American can produce inferences that the police officer lacked restraint and was racist or that the person was a criminal, depending on perspective or identity. The words that the media uses to report and describe acts of violent extremism could create or

reinforce these associations that activate attitudes towards others that might fit into the category.

Dehumanization

One response that can happen when there is a negative outgroup stereotype is dehumanization. Dehumanization is perceiving a person or group as lacking human qualities (Haslam & Loughman, 2014). Dehumanization is based on stereotypes, and racial and other ethnic groups are often dehumanized (Haslam & Loughman, 2014). Infrahumanization is perceiving an outgroup as lacking uniquely human attributes relative to an ingroup (Haslam & Loughman, 2014). People dehumanize when the emotional connection to a group of people is disgust or contempt, when there are threats or perceived threats, and when there are historic motives to protect the ingroup (Haslam & Loughman, 2014). It is an active reluctance to accept the humanity of the outgroup, as the outgroup is believed to have different values and therefore a different humanity than the ingroup (Haslam & Loughman, 2014; Haslam, 2006).

Dehumanization tends to fall into two categories, animalistic dehumanization and mechanistic dehumanization (Haslam, 2006). Animals lack human uniqueness of self-control, refinement, rationality, and intelligence (Haslam & Loughman, 2014). People who are animalistically dehumanized are viewed as lacking culture, being amoral, irrational, and childlike (Haslam, 2006). Machines lack human nature of warmth, emotion, and individuality (Haslam & Loughman, 2014). People who are mechanistically dehumanized are viewed as being robot-like: cold, inert, rigid, passive, and superficial (Haslam, 2006). Animalistic dehumanization is associated with emotions of disgust,

revulsion and contempt, animalistic comparisons, and death (Haslam, 2006). Mechanistic dehumanization is associated with indifference (Haslam, 2006).

Consequences of dehumanization include reduced prosocial behavior, diminished collective helping, and increased antisociality. It can produce aggression as the perpetrator may feel that the violence is justified (Haslam & Loughman, 2014).

Dehumanization can occur when there are threats to social status and power, there is a perceived insult, or to justify bad treatment of the outgroup (Haslam & Loughman, 2014).

Dehumanization functions to provide information and explain about the social world about conflict, to shame group's worldview symbolically, and to justify revenge because other side had wronged first (Haslam & Loughman, 2014).

Impression Formation

When we encounter others, we make impressions of them. Whether these impressions are positive, negative or neutral, our impressions shape our expectations for that person's personality and traits. People's impressions of others are often based on stereotypes and prejudices about common social groups (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). There are several ideas and theories of how this process of impression formation occurs. Two are included below: Brewer's (1989) dual model of impression formation and Fiske and Neuberg's (1990) continuum of impression formation.

Dual Model of Impression Formation

Brewer (1988) produced a model for impression formation: the dual process model of impression formation. Brewer states that the majority of the time perception does not differ but when it does it is determined by the perceiver's purposes and

processing goals not by characteristics of another person (the target) (Brewer, 1988). Impressions of single individuals whose information is inconsistent with previously established expectations are processed more elaborately and recalled better than new information that is consistent with expectations (Brewer, 1988).

Brewer's dual model consists of automatic processing and controlled processing (Figure 1) (Brewer, 1988). Automatic processing starts with identification which places an individual along well-established stimulus such as gender, age, skin color (Brewer, 1988). Like Fiske and Neuberg's continuum model, if the individual target is not of interest to the target then the process stops there (Brewer, 1988). If the perceiver feels self-involvement, feelings of being closely related to or interdependent with the target person, then the process will continue to a personalization stage (Brewer, 1988). In personalization, the perceiver applies an individual schema to the target (Brewer, 1988).

If the perceiver does not feel self-involvement with the target person, then the perceiver goes through a typing process of placing the target into a category (Brewer, 1988). Typing tends to be visual and based on the stereotypes that the perceiver holds (Brewer, 1988). If the target fits into the social category then the process will stop (Brewer, 1988). If the target does not fit into the category then the target will be individuated (Brewer, 1988). In individuation, the target is considered a category subtype or exemplar done by feature differentiation (Brewer, 1988).

The likelihood of a category being activated has to do with the frequency and recency of that category being activated in the past (Brewer, 1988). Categorization is affected by salient cues and labels and influenced by the current or chronic processing goals of the perceiver (Brewer, 1988). Once a category is activated the threshold for matching is lowered (Brewer, 1988). If the first category is not a fit, then the perceiver

will look into a subcategory rather than looking for a new category to place the target into (Brewer, 1988). Once satisfying categorization has taken place all other attributes will be sorted into that category (Brewer, 1988). Individuation acts as a special instance of a more general type and it is easier to remember people who are not category aligned than ones who are congruent (Brewer, 1988).

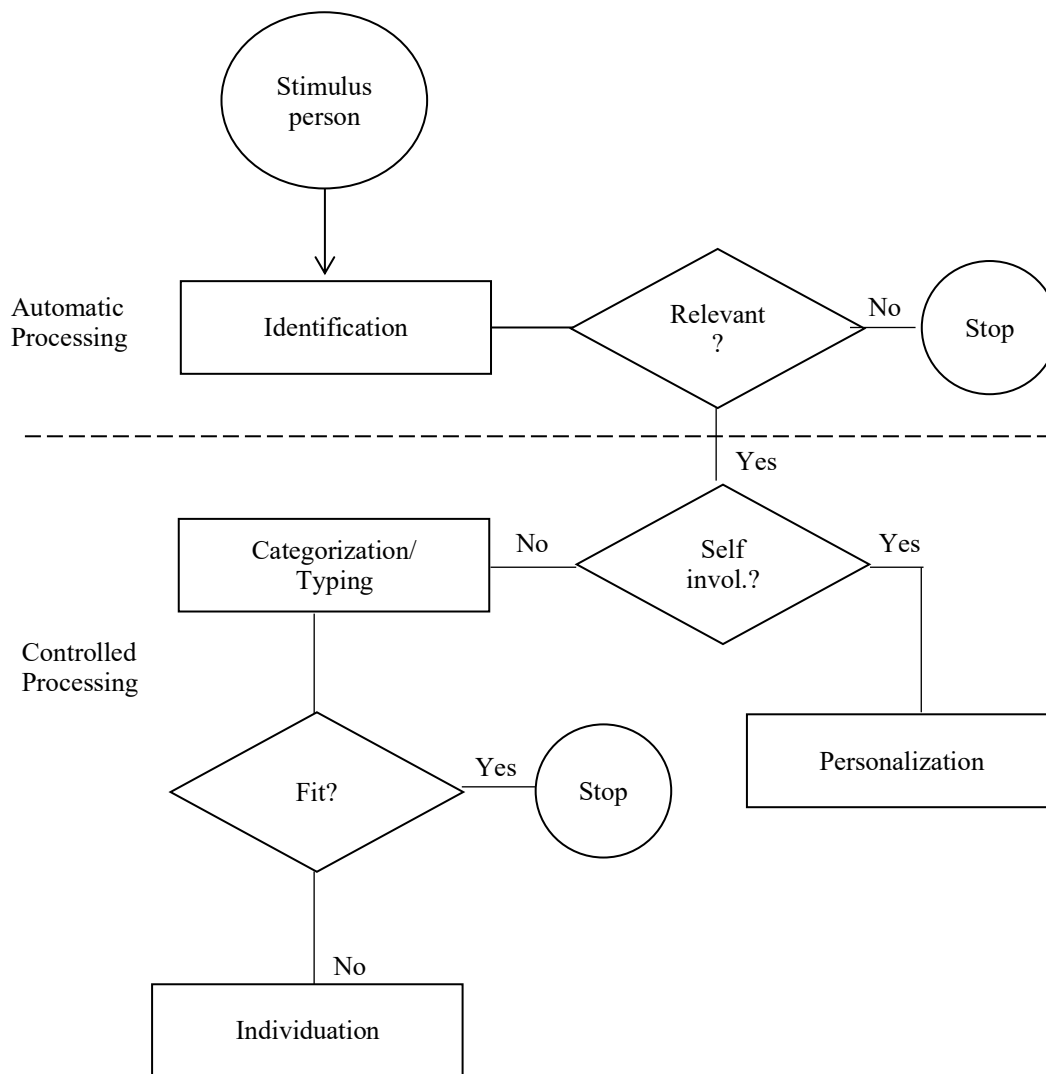


Figure 1. Dual processing model of person cognition (Brewer, 1988, p. 5)

Brewer uses the terms personalization and individuation as vague terms. Personalization is more person based than individuation (Brewer, 1988). In the individuation stage, the target person still belongs to a category at some level, an individual within the category, while personalization is based on the target person themselves (Brewer, 1988). With personalization, the person is their own category and their traits stem off of the person whereas in the category-based approaches the person stems off a category (Brewer, 1988). Personalization happens most to people who are similar to the perceiver and when the perceiver has goals of interdependency with the target (Brewer, 1988).

Fiske (1998) feels that Brewer's distinctive types of cognitive representations are not well founded because Brewer confuses the methods of the researchers in previous studies with the cognition of the participants in the studies. In further critiquing Brewer's dual process model, Fiske (1988) feels that the subtypes are not necessarily limited to the individuated stage and that verbal representation is not limited to just the personalization stage that Brewer places it in. Fiske (1988) favors her own continuum model because it allows for more holistic and elemental processing than Brewer's dual process model.

The Continuum of Impression Formation

Fiske and Neuberg's (1990) continuum model allows for motivational involvement and informational fit being used throughout the impression formation process rather than at the key stages that Brewer (1988) brings up. Fiske and Neuberg (1990) also separate initial categorization and recategorization into two separate stages because recategorization requires more attention to attributes. Fiske and Neuberg (1990) think of impression formation along a continuum with, at one end, first impressions based

on group categorization, and on the other, the piecemeal impressions of those we know well based on their individual characteristics (Figure 2). The continuum of impression formation model

proposes four general impression-formation processes: the rapid, “perceptual,” initial categorization process that requires no attention to potentially individuating attributes, and three “thoughtful” processes—confirmatory categorization, recategorization, and piecemeal integration—that do require attention to and interpretation of potentially individuating target information (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990, p.12).

Additionally, Fiske and Neuberg (1990) provide five premises to their theory on impression formation. The first one claims that category-based processes have priority over attribute-focused processes (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The second premise states that movement along the continuum “depends on the ease with which perceivers can interpret the target’s attributes as fitting an available category” (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990, p. 2). The third premise states that attention to attribute information is a mediator to the impression formation continuum (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The fourth premise states that motivation influences impression formation outcomes (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The fifth premise states that motivational influences are also mediated by attention and interpretive responses to attributes (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

The continuum of impression formation starts with a perceiver observing another person. When first observing the target, the perceiver categorizes the target into an initial category (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Physical features are a likely basis for categories because they are immediately apparent, they cue stereotypes, and visual cues may dominate nonvisual cues i.e. personality, even if both are present (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Category labels do not have to be verbal (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). They can be a single feature or a combination of features. Category labels are more likely to be based on social grouping rather than a personality trait (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

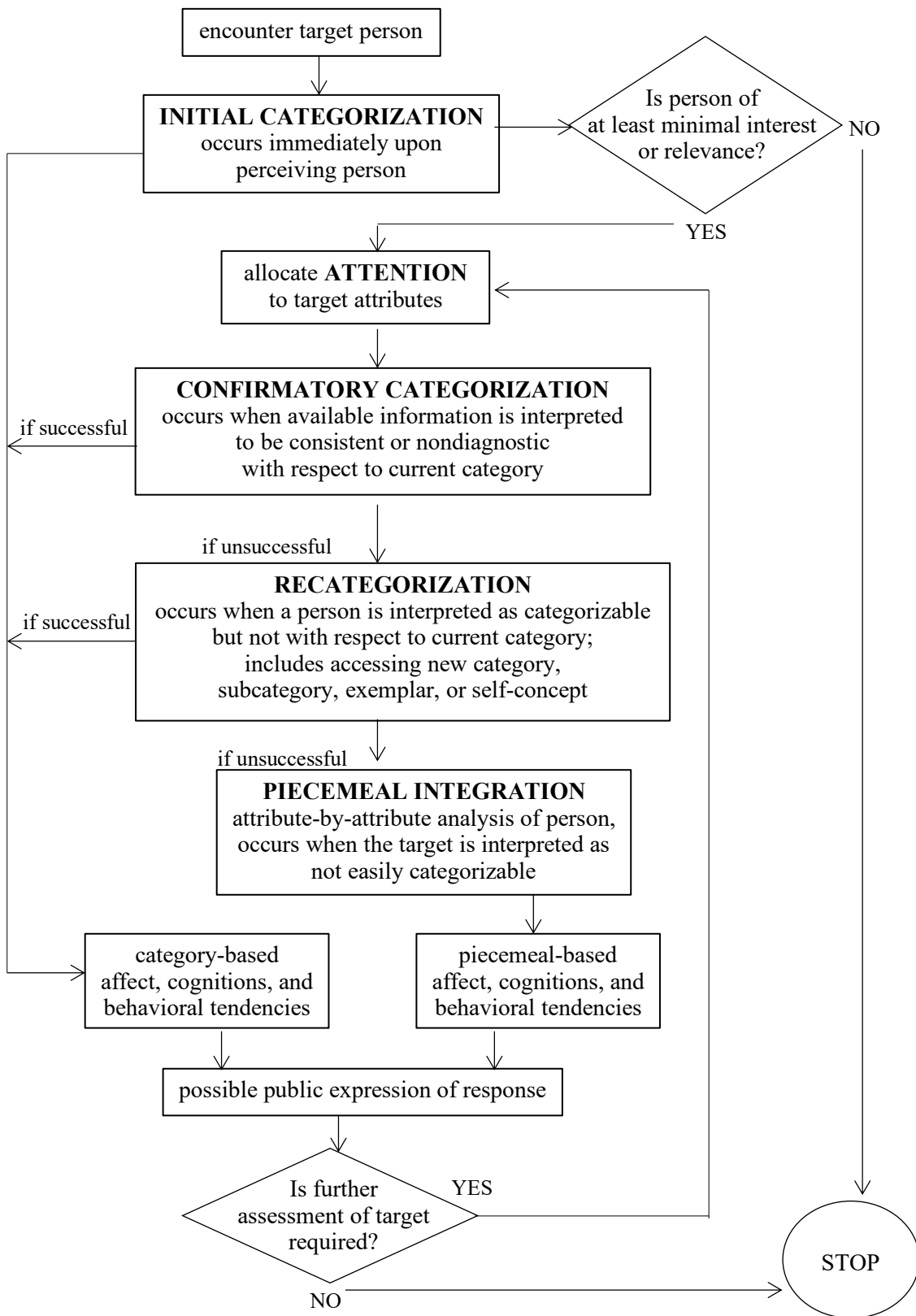


Figure 2. The continuum of impression formation (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990, p. 5).

The initial category tends to be based on group-based stereotypes because those are often the most salient characteristics (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). If the perceiver feels that their initial categorization does not quite line up, then they will recategorize the target into a new category (e.g., from woman to businesswoman) (Fiske & Neuberg 1990). If that new category still does not seem to fit the target, then the perceiver will put the target into a more piecemeal group that takes individual characteristics into account (Fiske & Neuberg 1990). When a category-based approach is used, the perceiver is focusing on the target person's category membership to the relative exclusion of the target person's particular attributes (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). When an individuating process is used, the perceiver focuses on the target person's particular attributes to the relative exclusion of category membership (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The extent to which the perceiver pays attention to attributes mediates the extent to which people use relatively stereotypic or relatively more individuating processes (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The more time and attention allocated should make for a more individuating process.

Initial categorization happens rapidly, and features are not organized ideally (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Perceivers can stop at their initial categorizing and not move elsewhere through the continuum. However, if the perceiver perceives the target as minimally interesting or relevant, then the perceiver allocate attention to the target's attributes to see if those line up with the initial categorization (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). For example, when William enters an office building and sees a woman, Mary, at a desk near the entrance, he initially categorizes her as a secretary for the office. If William does not need to interact with the assumed secretary, then he will not allocate more attention to whether or not his initial impression is correct. If he needs to ask Mary a question, then William will expand some effort to examine if his initial impression is correct.

If any new information that he gathers about the target fits the initial category, then William will confirm his categorization (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). When the category is confirmed, it is because the available information is considered to be consistent with the current category (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). After William asks Mary at the desk where the conference room is, if her response lines up with his assumptions of how a secretary would respond or does not obviously contradict those assumptions, then his initial category of her as a secretary will be confirmed. However if Mary's response did not line up with those assumptions or William sees Mary's role is more important than he would think a secretary would have in a meeting, then William will move on to the next step along the continuum of recategorization. When the target does not match the initial category after further inspection, the perceiver will recategorize the person into a new category incorporating more information about the person into this new categorization (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Stereotypes create the category frames, if the target does not fit the category, then they will be recategorized or put into a subcategory. Recategorization is an attempt to find a different category to adequately describe the current information (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Recategorization can be a subcategory of the initial one, an exemplar (e.g., "this person reminds me of my aunt"), self-schema, or a new category (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). With recategorization, the perceiver believes the target to still be categorizable but not in the first category (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

If the perceiver feels that the person still does not fit the category assigned to them or any other category, and if the perceiver has additional time and motivation, then the perceiver will start a piecemeal integration of the target's attributes (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Piecemeal integration is an attribute-by-attribute analysis of the person and occurs when the person is interpreted as not being easily categorizable (Fiske &

Neuberg, 1990). This is the most individuating stage of the continuum. If after interacting with Mary, William discovers they have a shared romantic interest, he will learn that she not only handles reception, but manages a team, is an avid golfer and enjoys sci-fi movies. His impression of her will be more individuated and attribute-based than his initial impression that was category-based. This attribute-based impression of Mary took time for William to form and would not have happened if he did not have time or interest interpret her as being inconsistent with her category.

Once the perceiver is satisfied with their impression of the person then any public response about the person will be an expression of their internal responses (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). If the perceiver is unhappy with the conclusion they drew, then they might decide that further assessment might be required and then they will loop back to other stages of the continuum (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). When searching for how to assess the target, perceivers will find the most current accessible category (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

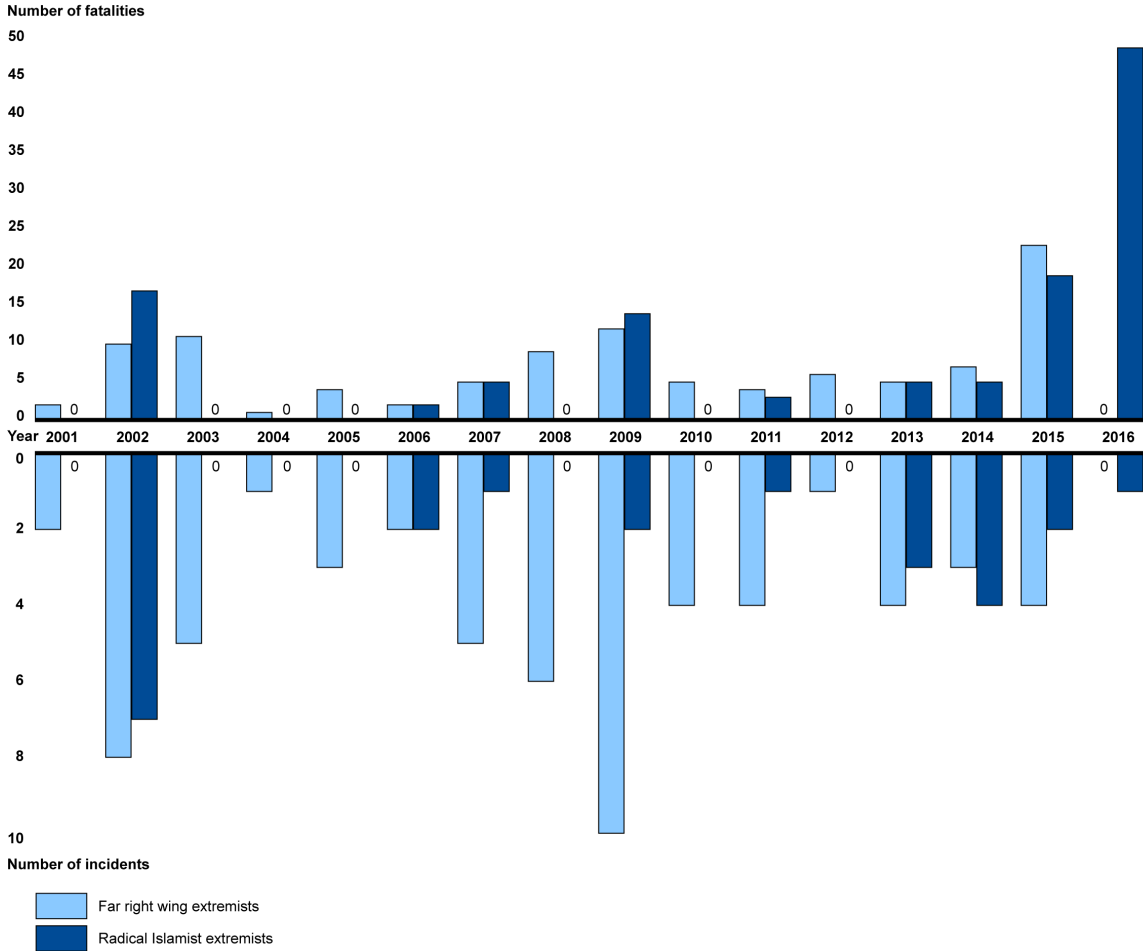
Perceivers give priority to category-based processes because it is fast and easy to use stereotypic knowledge (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Category-based processes also get priority because social categorizations are adaptive. Additionally, categories have priority over attribute-based processes because people do not have the cognitive ability to process all interpersonal information they receive (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

The target will cue whichever categorical response the perceiver has already set for that group (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Social identity makes group distinctions salient by helping determine who is in the ingroup or outgroup and might change how far someone gets through the continuum. If a target matches the perceiver's ingroup more closely then they will go farther in the continuum than if the target does not match the

perceiver's ingroup, because within ingroups more individual variation is allowed than to outgroup members. Categories function to discourage individuation (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Once a perceiver has a social category in mind it becomes harder to accurately respond to individual characteristics, making any individuating impression processes less likely (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The tendency to diminish the individuation of outgroup members based on social differences influences impression formation. Perceivers minimize the variability of a particular category, the idea that "they all look alike to me" (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Social categories influence the perceiver's interpretations of the target's actions (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Interpretation of the fit between categories and attributes determines where on the continuum a perceiver will stop (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The continuum of impression formation indicates that stereotypes are not stable over time because as a perceiver invests more time and interest toward the target the impressions of the target become more individualized.

Social Identity Theory

From September 12, 2001, to December 31, 2016, the number of fatalities caused by domestic violent extremists ranges from one to 49 per year (Figure 3) (GAO, 2017). However, there are different motives for the shootings. In the GAO (2017) report on *Countering Violent Extremism: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts*, the Charleston shooting is classified under "Far Right Violent Extremist-Motivated Attacks" and the San Bernardino shooting is under "Radical Islamist Violent Extremist-Motivated Attacks" (GAO, 2017). Far right and radical Islamists are likely to be seen in two different ways depending on a person's social identity.



Source: U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) of the University of Maryland National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). | GAO-17-300

Figure 3. Number of fatalities and incidents of violent extremism (GAO, 2017, p. 6)

The spectrum of human interaction ranges from “being purely interpersonal on one end to being purely intergroup on the other” (Hornes, 2008, p. 206). For social groups, stereotypes have a special social function that explains the social world and legitimizes past and current intergroup actions (Hornes, 2008). Social identity theory (SIT) provides a way to organize stereotypic thinking in terms of social categories that influence how people make impressions on others. SIT thus provides a way to explain why a violent extremist from one group might be treated differently than a violent extremist from another group. Social identity at its core states that people will divide themselves into arbitrary social groups and favor their own group over another group

(Hornsey, 2008). Social groups can be constructed from any type category that humans put themselves into including race, religion, ethnicity, occupation, and nationalities.

Social identity makes salient us-versus-them distinctions by categorizing people into either an ingroup, the group they identify with, or an outgroup, the group they do not identify with (Hornsey, 2008). When category distinctions are made salient people will automatically enhance similarities within the group and enhance differences among the group (Hornsey, 2008), meaning the other group will appear more unified while the differences between the ingroup and outgroup are seen as greater. As an example, to someone not involved with fraternities or sororities in college, sorority women might appear to have similar personalities and tastes. The differences between the sorority members and non-sorority members will seem greater than the similarities that they are both attending the same college. Social identity can thus lead people to overemphasize the assigned outgroup characteristics while making the outgroup seem that they are all the same (Hornsey, 2008). However, within the ingroup, there is room for individuality among members (Hornsey, 2008).

Social identity emphasizes the ingroup relationship to other groups (Livingston & Haslam, 2008). Hart and Nisbet (2011) showed that shared social identity with potential victims of climate change will influence support for climate change policies. The individual strength of political identity will moderate the relationship between message exposure and victim identity (Hart & Nisbet, 2011). Hart and Nisbet (2011) state:

partisan audiences are motivated to interpret and process information in a biased manner that reinforces their predispositions is termed motivated reasoning and has been found to operate across a wide range of contexts (Hart & Nisbet, 2011, p. 3).

How the media depicts violent extremist events is significant because single words can activate attitudes and sentences describing behavior can produce spontaneous

trait inferences. Mass media is a powerful socializing agent; its audiences learn and internalize some of its values, norms, and beliefs (Croteau, Hoynes, & Milan, 2012). Partisan media shapes how viewers see the other because they powerfully invoke viewers' partisan social identities (Levendesky, 2013). The host of the media show and viewer potentially share a common social identity of partisanship, and the host's message becomes especially compelling to the audience as messages from perceived ingroup members are especially persuasive (Levendesky, 2013).

Expectations

In the abstract, when there is an attack, the way the media coverage will be focused is dependent on whether or not the attacker is seen as part of the ingroup or outgroup. Social identity will influence whether or not the attacker is perceived as part of the ingroup or outgroup. The stereotypes associated with the ingroup or outgroup will be accessed by the media depending on the social identity of the perpetrator. The continuum of impression formation further influences how the media talks about the perpetrator over time. Since the news is reporting on the shooters, the shooters have already met the "of minimal interest check" that would cause there to be an allocation of attention for category confirmation.

If the perpetrator is viewed as being a member of the ingroup (Figure 4), then in the initial coverage of the attack (T1) the news source will have an initial categorization with weak focus on group membership of the perpetrator. In later coverage of the event (T2), the news will recategorize or piecemeal integration of attributes of the perpetrator because the perpetrator did not fit into the initial categorization that had been set forth. This will lead to an impression that is overall more attribute-based impression. If the

perpetrator is perceived to be a member of the outgroup (Figure 5), the news coverage will start with an initial categorization that is focused more on group membership (T1). In later coverage of the attack (T2), the initial categorization will be confirmed. The overall impression of the attacker will be more category-based. From the category-based impression, there can be an increased risk that dehumanization or prejudice towards the outgroup can occur to further distance the perpetrator from the ingroup.

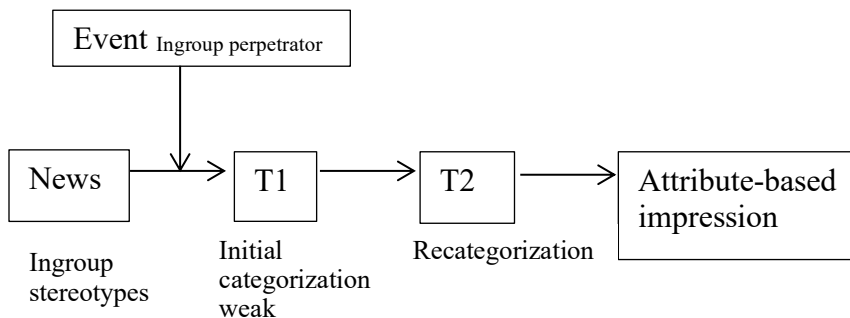


Figure 4. Impression formation of an ingroup perpetrator

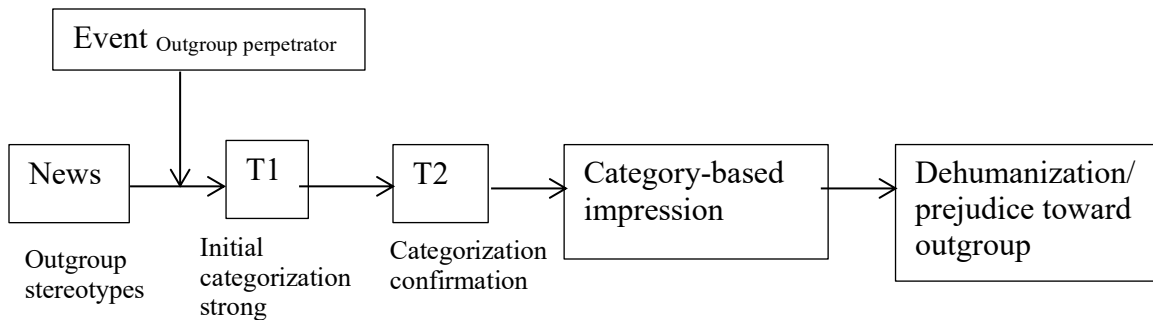


Figure 5. Impression formation of an outgroup perpetrator

In terms of the research in this thesis, the shooter in the Charleston case should get farther on the continuum than the shooters in the San Bernardino case. In the case of the Charleston shooting, the news will talk about Dylann Roof, the shooter, as loosely tied to a categorization at T1, then at T2 talk about him more as an individual. The

Charleston shooter is more likely to be seen as being a member of the ingroup because he is white, and a US citizen. For the San Bernardino shooting, the news will talk about Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik, the shooters, in T1 in categorization terms, and in T2 they will confirm their categorization of the shooters. There will likely be more category-based impressions for the San Bernardino shooters because they fall into the outgroup because they are brown, Muslims, and Malik is not a US citizen. I expect there will be more stereotyping with the San Bernardino shooters than for the Charleston shooter. The San Bernardino shooters will stop sooner along the process and will be more in the categorization section because people are not going to want to look enough into them to make them individuals, so they will be viewed more stereotypic and possibly dehumanized. Whereas, the Charleston shooter will be more individuated as a way possibly distance him from the ingroup.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In this chapter, I discuss how the Charleston and San Bernardino shootings were chosen, how the media sources were chosen, how the articles were picked across the different time points, and how the articles were coded.

Events

This study is focused on the Charleston, South Carolina shooting on June 17, 2015, and the San Bernardino, California shooting on December 2, 2015. These cases were chosen because they are shootings that occur relatively close to one another in time six months apart in 2015. They have a comparable number of casualties, 9 people died in the Charleston shooting and 14 died in the San Bernardino shooting. Both are defined as violent extremism; however, they are considered to be different types of violent extremism (GAO, 2017). Other violent extremist events listed by the GAO (2017) report were not as comparable because of different tactics (e.g., bombs), or different impact on human life (killing 1 or 2 versus 9 or 14).

I examined news coverage of each shooting across the news media at two different time periods. The first time (T1) was the initial coverage the day of the shooting. The second time (T2) was the coverage two days after each shooting. Both shootings happened to have occurred on Wednesdays and so T2 for both were collected at 17:00 local time on the respective Friday.

Media Sources

To get the perspective of a variety of news quality and a broad range of audience viewership, I selected NBC, Fox News, BBC, Breitbart and Mother Jones as the news sources for this project. Pew Research Center released a report on Political Polarization and Media Habits (Mitchell et al., 2014). The report looks at which news sources people across five ideological groups (consistently liberal, mostly liberal, mixed, mostly conservative, and consistently conservative) trust (Mitchell et al., 2014). CNN, ABC, and NBC are the top most trusted sources for people in the middle and for the total sample (Mitchell et al., 2014). Fox News was the most trusted source for consistently conservatives (Mitchell et al., 2014). NPR, BBC, and PBS were most trusted for consistently liberals (Mitchell et al., 2014). Breitbart was more trusted than distrusted by conservatives and Mother Jones was more trusted than distrusted by liberals (Mitchell et al., 2014). They are also distrusted by the opposite sides. Both Breitbart and Mother Jones were lesser known than the other news sources chosen, less than 40 percent of the respondents had heard of them (Mitchell et al., 2014).

BBC was picked as the mainstream left source because it had consistent online news articles that NPR and PBS did not have (Mitchell et al., 2014). NBC was chosen as the central source because it had more time stamps on an internet archive than ABC or CNN. Fox News was picked as the mainstream right source because it was trusted by conservatives and was known to more than 40 percent of those asked (Mitchell et al., 2014). Breitbart and Mother Jones were selected because they had smaller audiences and consistently trusted exclusively by a specific side. Breitbart was trusted by the right and Mother Jones by the left.

For news coverage, I focused on online news articles. Many people gather their news from the internet. The online news sites can be live, have text, sound, pictures, videos and be interactive with people being able to comment (Croteau et al., 2012). Other forms of media lack all of those components (Croteau et al., 2012). In the 2008 election cycle, more than half of the voting age population went online to find information and to share opinions (Croteau et al., 2012). I focused on online print articles that were free to access, which allowed anyone with an internet connection to view the articles. I did not look at online video coverage because the videos on an internet archive are often broken links and some of the media sources do not have videos.

Temporal Distribution

One challenge of online media is that the articles are often updated as new developments arise. Since I am interested in the change of the coverage over time it was important to find articles that were less updated. To get news coverage that had the least chance of being updated as the coverage progressed, I retrieved articles from the Wayback Machine. The Wayback Machine is an archive for the internet that collects articles over time (Arora, Li, Youtie, & Shapira, 2016). The Wayback Machine has time stamps from when it collected the archive of the webpages. The Wayback Machine is limited in what it archives (Leetaru, 2016). It “crawls,” collects the webpages, sporadically across different websites (Leetaru, 2016). It has timed snapshots from when the page was crawled (Leetaru, 2016). However these snapshots are not consistent; some pages have several snapshots for each day and others have few or none (Leetaru, 2016). Another challenge with the Wayback machine is that the time stamps can be redirected to the same article that existed at that time but was updated at a later time. The Wayback

Machine is an extensive archive has over 435 billion webpages archived since 2014 (Arora, Li, Youtie, & Shapira, 2016).

For T1, I gathered articles as close to the time that the event took place as the Wayback Machine would allow. For T2, I gather articles from 2 days after the shooting after 17:00 local time. See Appendix A for the distribution of the timing of articles and Appendix B for the articles' Wayback Machine links. The articles chosen were the front page of the website and were chosen as the first one listed that discussed the shooters or shooting and not commentary on the coverage of the shooting.

Coding

The articles were coded based on words that describe the shooting, the shooters, and what context was mentioned. Initially, I read the articles and listed words that related to some aspect of social categorization and words that described the shooting/shooters. I compiled the initial list of words then searched for those words across the articles. The words chosen are a sample of the total words describing the shooting, shooters, and context mentioned. Words that could be used as either a noun or an adjective such as tragedy/tragic were coded in only one section. Word variations were counted under the same heading, i.e. hate and hateful, tragic and tragedy. Domestic terrorism is coded as separate from regular terrorism, as is foreign-based/inspired terrorism.

The larger categories of shooter, shooting, and context were divided into subcategories for coding. The shooting category was broken down into nouns that describe the shooting, adjectives that describe the shooting, and words indicating motivation. The words to describe the shooting were nouns used for the shooting range from neutral ones like shooting or attack to more charged ones like slaughter, tragedy,

hate crime and terrorism. Adjectives to describe the shooting include senseless, and heartbreaking, among others.

The shooters category was broken down into adjectives for the shooters, words indicating extremist viewpoints, and words relating to origin or group identity. The words for the shooters included adjectives about their personalities or appearance, words illustrating extremist viewpoints such as racist viewpoints or radicalization, and words describing ethnic or social backgrounds and connections to group. The context section was divided into local history, past shootings, extremist ideologies, and discussion of gun violence. I included any historical or political context mentioned in the articles. Additional information that is not directly related to the shooting could be a clue into what associations the media have between the context and the shooter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results first focus on a comparison between the Charleston and San Bernardino shooting. As well as the distribution of words at both T1 and T2. After that there is a comparison between the different media sources. I expected in T1 the media would have established their initial categorizations for the shooters, and in T2 the media would recategorize the Charleston shooter and confirm their initial categorization of the San Bernardino shooters.

Charleston and San Bernardino

The results are organized by comparing both the Charleston shooting and San Bernardino shooting by the coding categories starting with how the shooting was described, then how the shooters were described, and finally, any additional context mentioned.

Nouns to describe the shooting had 110 instances for Charleston and 141 for San Bernardino (Table 1). The frequency was slightly higher for Charleston when adjusted for the total word count. “Massacre” was mostly used to describe the San Bernardino shooting. “Tragedy” was mostly used to describe the Charleston shooting. “Carnage,” “rampage,” and “slaughter” were mostly split between the two shootings. “Opened fire” was mentioned for both shootings but about Charleston 8 times, as opposed to the 3 for San Bernardino. “Mass shooting” was mentioned 3 times for Charleston and 14 for San Bernardino. “Bloodbath” and “atrocious” were only used to describe the San Bernardino shooting.

Table 1. Shooting Nouns Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino

| | C to SB | C T1 to T2 | SB T1 to T2 |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Shooting Nouns | 110 to 141 | 65 to 45 | 79 to 62 |
| Ratio to total word count | .0159 to .0149 | .0202 to .0122 | .0146 to .0154 |
| Attack | 12 to 33 | 6 to 6 | 14 to 19 |
| Shooting | 67 to 69 | 40 to 27 | 44 to 25 |
| Massacre | 1 to 8 | 1 to 0 | 1 to 7 |
| Tragedy | 11 to 2 | 9 to 2 | 2 to 0 |
| Carnage | 1 to 3 | 0 to 1 | 1 to 2 |
| Rampage | 3 to 2 | 0 to 3 | 0 to 2 |
| Slaughter | 2 to 2 | 2 to 0 | 1 to 1 |
| Open fire | 8 to 3 | 4 to 4 | 2 to 1 |
| Mass shooting | 3 to 14 | 3 to 0 | 12 to 2 |
| Gunned down | 2 to 2 | 0 to 2 | 0 to 2 |
| Bloodbath | 0 to 2 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 1 |
| Atrocity | 0 to 1 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 0 |

Comparing from T1 to T2, “attack” was about even across the two time stamps 6 to 6 for Charleston and 14 to 19 for San Bernardino (Table 1). In both cases “shooting” was used with more individual words in T1 than with T2, Charleston 40 to 27 and San Bernardino 44 to 25. However, in SBT2 the words were used with more frequency than in SBT1. “Tragedy” mostly in Charleston T1 (CT1) with nine times. “Massacre” was mostly used in SBT2 seven times. “Mass shooting” was used in T1 for both shootings.

The articles mentioned adjectives to describe the shooting at a higher rate for the Charleston shooting than for the San Bernardino shooting, 12 to 5, respectively (Table 2). “Heartbreaking” was the only adjective to be applied to both shootings. For the Charleston shooting, the adjectives used were “senseless,” “unfathomable,” and “devastating.” “Chilling,” “disturbing,” and “terrible” were used to describe the San Bernardino shooting.

Table 2. Shooting Adjectives Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino

| | C to SB | C T1 to T2 | SB T1 to T2 |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Shooting Adjectives | 12 to 5 | 10 to 2 | 4 to 1 |
| Ratio to total word count | .0017 to .0005 | .0031 to .0005 | .0007 to .0002 |
| Heartbreaking | 2 to 1 | 2 to 0 | 1 to 0 |
| Senseless | 5 to 0 | 4 to 1 | 0 to 0 |
| Unfathomable | 3 to 0 | 3 to 0 | 0 to 0 |
| Devastating | 2 to 0 | 1 to 1 | 0 to 0 |
| Chilling | 0 to 1 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 0 |
| Disturbing | 0 to 1 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 0 |
| Terrible | 0 to 2 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 1 |

Charleston T1 had ten instances of adjectives describing the shooting, whereas San Bernardino (SBT1) had four (Table 2). For T2 there was a drop off for describing both shootings from T1, Charleston T2 (CT2) had two and San Bernardino T2 (SBT2) had one.

In the motivation category, the Charleston shooting motivation comes up 13 times and the San Bernardino shooting 52 times (Table 3). “Hate crime” was described as the motivation for the Charleston shooting 10 times. The Charleston shooting was described as “domestic terrorism” twice. “Mission,” “terrorism,” “workplace violence” and “ISIS/foreign-inspired terrorism” (FT) are only used to describe the San Bernardino shooting. The San Bernardino shooting motivation was described as terrorism 32 times. “ISIS/foreign-inspired terrorism” was mentioned as the motivation for San Bernardino 6 times (note this does not include Malik pledging allegiance to ISIS because that is counted as an indicator of shooter extremism). San Bernardino was described as “domestic terrorism” only once. “Workplace violence” and “mission” were listed as possible motivations six and five times respectively.

Table 3. Shooter Motivation Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino

| | C to SB | C T1 to T2 | SB T1 to T2 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Motivation | 13 to 52 | 10 to 3 | 23 to 29 |
| Ratio to total word count | .0019 to .0055 | .0031 to .0008 | .0042 to .0072 |
| Hate crime | 10 to 2 | 8 to 2 | 2 to 0 |
| Domestic terrorism | 2 to 1 | 1 to 1 | 1 to 0 |
| Racially motivated | 1 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 0 |
| Mission | 0 to 5 | 0 to 0 | 5 to 0 |
| Terrorism | 0 to 32 | 0 to 0 | 10 to 22 |
| Workplace | 0 to 6 | 0 to 0 | 4 to 2 |
| ISIS/FT | 0 to 6 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 5 |

The articles mention motivation for CT1 9 times and for CT2 3 times, and for SB1 23 times and for SB2 29 times (Table 3). At T1 “hate crime” comes up eight times for Charleston and twice for San Bernardino. The number of times “terrorism” and “ISIS/foreign-inspired terrorism” was mentioned in the San Bernardino articles increased between T1 and T2. “Workplace violence” is mentioned as a motivator four times in SBT1 and twice for SBT2.

Adjectives to describe the shooters were about even (Table 4) 23 times for the Charleston shooter and 28 for the San Bernardino shooter and were about even when adjusted for frequency against the total word counts .0033 to .003 respectively. There was no overlap in the adjectives used suggesting that the media felt that the shooters’ behaviors were different. The articles described Dylan Roof, the Charleston “shooter,” “as being dangerous,” a “coward,” “hateful,” “stone-faced,” “vacant stare,” “malice,” “no emotion,” and “evil.” Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik, the San Bernardino shooters, were described as “angry,” “devout,” “mystery,” “having no criminal record,” and “being removed from the community.”

Table 4 Shooter Adjectives Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino

| | C to SB | C T1 to T2 | SB T1 to T2 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Shooter Adjectives | 23 to 28 | 7 to 15 | 6 to 11 |
| Ratio to total word count | .0033 to .003 | .0022 to .0041 | .0011 to .0027 |
| Dangerous | 2 to 0 | 2 to 0 | 0 to 0 |
| Coward | 2 to 0 | 2 to 0 | 0 to 0 |
| Hateful | 7 to 0 | 3 to 4 | 0 to 0 |
| Stone-faced | 3 to 0 | 0 to 3 | 0 to 0 |
| Vacant stare | 1 to 0 | 0 to 1 | 0 to 0 |
| Malice | 1 to 0 | 0 to 1 | 0 to 0 |
| No emotion | 3 to 0 | 0 to 3 | 0 to 0 |
| Evil | 3 to 0 | 0 to 3 | 0 to 0 |
| Angry | 0 to 2 | 0 to 0 | 2 to 0 |
| Devout | 0 to 9 | 0 to 0 | 4 to 5 |
| Mystery | 0 to 4 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 4 |
| No criminal record | 0 to 1 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 1 |
| Removed from the community | 0 to 1 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 1 |

Words that indicate extremism of the shooters came up 8 times for Charleston and 34 times for San Bernardino (Table 5). The news articles described Roof’s extremism as “white supremacist,” “holding to strong racist views,” and “racially inflammatory statement.” The news articles described Farook and Malik’s extremism as “Islamic fanatic,” “jihad,” “radicalization,” “no indication of larger cell or group,” and “pledged allegiance to ISIS.” Farook and Malik were also described as being “heavily armed” and “wearing tactical gear.” Their approach was seen as being very militant. “Radicalization” was talked about the most, 13 times and only in SBT2. SBT2 also discussed Malik pledging allegiance to ISIS nine times. Roof was called “white supremacist” once in Fox News C2, the other mention of white supremacist refers to another shooting that occurred in Kansas City. In both shootings, shooter extremism was brought up more at T2.

Table 5. Shooter Extremism Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino

| | C to SB | C T1 to T2 | SB T1 to T2 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Shooter extremism | 8 to 52 | 2 to 6 | 16 to 36 |
| Ratio to total word count | .0012 to .0055 | .0006 to .0016 | .003 to .009 |
| White supremacist | 2 to 0 | 1 to 1 | 0 to 0 |
| Strong racist views | 3 to 0 | 0 to 3 | 0 to 0 |
| Racially inflammatory statement | 2 to 0 | 0 to 2 | 0 to 0 |
| Islamic fanatic | 0 to 4 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 4 |
| Jihad | 0 to 5 | 0 to 0 | 2 to 3 |
| Radicalization | 0 to 13 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 13 |
| No indication of larger cell | 0 to 3 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 3 |
| Pledged allegiance to ISIS | 0 to 9 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 9 |
| IED Home | 0 to 4 | 0 to 0 | 3 to 1 |
| Military tactics | 0 to 2 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 1 |
| Heavily armed | 0 to 4 | 0 to 0 | 2 to 2 |
| Wearing tactical gear/body armor | 0 to 8 | 0 to 0 | 8 to 0 |

The articles mentioned the origin/group identity category of the shooter 10 times for Charleston and 53 times for San Bernardino (Table 6). White was the only word to indicate origin/group identity for Roof. Origin/group identity was mentioned CT1 9 times to CT2 once and SBT1 12 time to SBT2 33 times. The times that the origin/group identity was discussed were opposite for each shooting. The emphasis for Charleston was at T1 and for San Bernardino at T2. San Bernardino could have more instances because there are two shooters. When the number is averaged for both Farook and Malik, origin/group identity is mentioned 22.5 times for each, which is still greater than the number of times it comes up for Roof.

Table 6. Origin/Group Identity Comparison between Charleston and San Bernardino

| | C to SB | C T1 to T2 | SB T1 to T2 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Origin/group identity | 10 to 45 | 9 to 1 | 12 to 33 |
| Ratio to total word count | .0014 to .0048 | .0027 to .0003 | .0022 to .0082 |
| White | 10 to 0 | 9 to 1 | 0 to 0 |
| Muslim | 0 to 14 | 0 to 0 | 5 to 9 |
| Pakistan | 0 to 16 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 15 |
| Saudi Arabia | 0 to 7 | 0 to 0 | 3 to 4 |
| Farook US Citizen | 0 to 7 | 0 to 0 | 3 to 4 |
| Mother | 0 to 1 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 1 |

The context mentioned in the articles around other shootings or cases of violence was even 7 to 7. The Charleston articles mentioned that the shooting took place two months after the shooting of an unarmed black man by police. The articles also mentioned the school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012, the shooting at a Jewish retirement community in Kansas City, and a shooting at a Sikh temple. All of these were talked about in T1 except the Newtown, Connecticut shooting which was mentioned in T2. The San Bernardino articles also mentioned the shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, as well as a recent shooting at Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood, the Fort Hood shooting, and the Boston Marathon Bombing. The majority of the other cases of extremism came up in SBT1. The Newtown, Connecticut shooting was mentioned in both time stamps. The Boston Marathon Bombing was brought up only in SBT2.

Some of the articles mentioned extremism that was not directly about the Charleston shooting or the San Bernardino shooting. It was background information about either white supremacy or Islamic extremism. This background information came up four times in Charleston compared to once in San Bernardino. The background information included for Charleston was on racial tensions, statistics on mass shooting with white shooters, and information about the history of the KKK. For San Bernardino,

the only additional background information provided was that ISIS usually recruits young girls.

Something unique to the Charleston shooting is that the victims and their families were given the opportunity to speak to Roof at his court hearing. In the Charleston T2 documents, all of them mentioned that the victims had forgiven the shooter. Across the articles, there were 34 instances of the victims or victims' families forgiving or offering forgiveness to Roof. The all of the CT2 articles stated that the victims' families mentioned God, Christ, and mercy when they were speaking to Roof.

Media

This section compares the differences between the individual media sources in how they reported on the shootings. First is a summary of each of the sources, then there is a comparison of the sources. Table 7 includes the breakdown of the frequency of the coded categories for each media source.

The NBC coverage of the Charleston shooting at T1 included motivation for the shooting, adjectives to describe the shooting, words to describe Roof's origin/group identity, and the context of history, and other acts of violence or extremism. Shooter extremism was only mentioned in T2. The San Bernardino articles included adjectives to describe the shooting, and other shooting and the concern of gun violence only in T1. Words describing Farook and Malik's origin/group identity only showed up in T2. Shooter adjectives or contextual history or extremism were not included at any point. Motivation was described twice as many times in T2 than T1. Shooter extremism was listed 12 times in the T2 article, and only once in T1.

Table 7. Media Sources Comparison at T1 and T2

| Ratios T1 to T2 | Shooting Nouns | Shooting Motivation | Shooting Adjectives | Shooter Adjectives | Shooter Extremism | Shooter Origin/ Group ID | Context History | Context Extremism | Context Shootings | Context Gun Violence |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| NBC C | 17 to 6 | 2 to 0 | 4 to 0 | 4 to 3 | 0 to 1 | 1 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 2 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 0 |
| BBC C | 13 to 12 | 2 to 2 | 1 to 2 | 0 to 1 | 0 to 1 | 2 to 0 | 2 to 0 | 0 to 1 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 1 |
| Fox News C | 13 to 20 | 2 to 1 | 3 to 0 | 2 to 9 | 0 to 4 | 1 to 1 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 1 |
| Breitbart C | 11 to 1 | 3 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 2 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 1 | 0 to 0 |
| Mother Jones C | 11 to 6 | 1 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 2 | 1 to 0 | 3 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 2 to 0 | 1 to 0 |
| NBC SB | 17 to 15 | 3 to 6 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 12 | 0 to 7 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 1 to 0 |
| BBC SB | 23 to 19 | 2 to 4 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 1 to 5 | 0 to 5 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 2 to 1 | 1 to 0 |
| Fox News SB | 15 to 9 | 8 to 4 | 2 to 0 | 2 to 11 | 7 to 14 | 4 to 21 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 1 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 0 |
| Breitbart SB | 13 to 14 | 8 to 12 | 1 to 1 | 2 to 0 | 4 to 4 | 7 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 2 to 1 | 0 to 2 |
| Mother Jones SB | 10 to 5 | 2 to 3 | 0 to 0 | 1 to 0 | 3 to 1 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 0 | 0 to 0 |

In the BBC Charleston shooting coverage Roof's origin/group identity, and discussion of other shootings only showed up in T1. Adjectives to describe Roof, shooter extremism, contextual extremism, and discussion of gun violence only show up in T2. Motivation was discussed evenly across the two times. Shooting adjectives were discussed at both T1 and T2. In the San Bernardino shooting coverage, BBC discussed shooter adjectives, and gun violence only in T1. In T2 Malik and Farook's origin/group identity came up. Context shootings, shooter extremism, motivation, and nouns for the shooting came up in both T1 and T2. Motivation and shooter extremism were discussed more in T2.

The Fox News coverage of the Charleston shooting included shooting adjectives and context history only in T1. The T2 article included shooter extremism and context discussion on gun violence. Shooting nouns appeared more often in T2. Motivation is discussed twice in T1 and once in T2. Origin/group identity is discussed once in both the T1 and T2 articles. Shooter adjectives are discussed more in T2 than T1. In the San Bernardino shooting coverage, Fox News discuss shooting adjectives and contextual shootings only in T1. Context extremism was discussed once in T2. Motivation was discussed twice as much in T1. Shooter adjectives were mentioned twice in T1 and 11 times in T2. Shooter extremism came up twice as much in T2. The shooters' origin/group identity came up significantly more in T2 than T1.

In the Breitbart Charleston shooting coverage motivation, shooting adjectives, shooter adjectives, shooter origin/group identity, and contextual history only came up in T1. Motivation was discussed the most at three times, and Roof's origin/group identity was discussed twice. In the San Bernardino shooting coverage shooter adjectives, shooter origin/group identity, and contextual history were brought up only in T1. Motivation was

discussed more in T2. Shooting adjectives were discussed once in both time points, and shooter extremism was discussed evenly with four instances each. Contextual shootings were brought up at both time stamps.

Mother Jones' coverage of the Charleston shooting discussed motivation, shooting adjectives, shooter extremism, shooter origin/group identity, and contextual shootings and gun violence only in T1. Shooter adjectives only came up in T2. In the San Bernardino coverage shooter adjectives and contextual extremism came up in T1. Motivation was discussed more in T2 than T1. Shooter extremism was discussed more in T1 than T2.

For the shooting nouns, the majority of the news sources had more instances of describing the shooting at T1 for both shootings than for T2. Fox News is the only source that mentions more nouns at T2 for both shootings. The adjectives describing the shooting do not occur very often. NBC C1 mentions the most adjectives at four, and Fox News is close behind with three. Only BBC C2 and Breitbart SB2 use any adjectives at a T2. Mother Jones and BBC for San Bernardino do not mention any adjectives for the violence at either time point.

For the Charleston shooting across the news articles motivation was discussed slightly more often in T1. All in T1 mention a motivation twice except Mother Jones which mentions it once. At T2 BBC mentions motivation twice, and Fox News mentions it once. The others do not mention any motivation at T2. This could be because T2 was mostly focused on the victims, or because the motivation was fairly clear to the news sources or that since the shooter was still alive that it would be cleared up soon. For the San Bernardino shooting motivation is discussed more at T2 across all of the new sources. This could be because the motivation was less clear in the shooting and that the

reasons for the shooting become clearer after the shooting. The articles described both shootings as hate crimes and domestic terrorism. Although for San Bernardino this accounts for three instances combined, and hate crime was listed from a quote from Ben Carson that defined hate crime as “you don’t do that to people you love” (Breitbart SB1).

The adjectives describing the shooter are kind of mixed for Charleston. Fox News and NBC mention them fairly often, 11 and 9 times respectively. Breitbart only mentions one adjective at T1. BBC and Mother Jones only mention adjectives at T2. For San Bernardino Fox News uses far more adjectives to describe the shooters 2 times at T1 and 18 at T2. NBC uses adjectives 5 times and only in T2. BBC and Breitbart use adjectives a few times, and Mother Jones only uses one adjective at T1.

Words indicating shooter extremism appear in the Charleston shooting at T1 only in Breitbart and Mother Jones. Shooter extremism at T2 for Charleston appears once for NBC and BBC. Fox News mentions it four times. For San Bernardino shooter extremism comes up in T2 for Fox News and Breitbart. At T2 it comes up seven times for NBC, four times for Fox News, twice for BBC and Breitbart, and once for Mother Jones.

Discussion of origin/group identity for Charleston comes up mostly at T1. Mother Jones mentions origin/group identity the most at three times. BBC and Breitbart both mention it twice. Fox News is the only source to mention it at T2. For San Bernardino, the discussion of origin/group identity is mixed as to when it comes up more often across the news sources. NBC mentions it only at T2. BBC mentions it mostly at T2. Fox News mentions it the most across the two time stamps and has the greatest difference in the number of instances it is mentioned, 6 to 22. Breitbart mentions it mostly at T1. Mother Jones mentions origin/group identity only once at T1.

In the context section, there is contextual history that does not fall into the past shooting category for the Charleston shooting. Mother Jones does not mention it at either time stamp. All the other news sources mention it only at T1. Extremist context category is mentioned in the Charleston case in NBC at T1 and BBC at T2, and in the San Bernardino case by Fox News at T2. The news sources except Fox News mentioned past shootings when talking about the Charleston shooting. Only Breitbart brought up a past shooting at T2. Mother Jones brought up past shootings the most by mentioning it three times. For San Bernardino, all of the news sources except Mother Jones mentioned a past shooting. NBC and Fox News brought up one past shooting at T1. Breitbart and BBC mentioned two past shootings at T1 and 1 at T2. In terms of bringing up gun violence or gun control, BBC and Fox News bring it up once at CT2. Mother Jones brings it up once at CT1. For San Bernardino NBC and BBC bring it up once at T1. Breitbart brings it up twice at T2.

Summary of results

The shootings were talked about in different ways. There was more discussion of the shooting adjectives for Charleston than for San Bernardino, and the discussion was more focused at T1. The attention to the motivations describing the shootings was different. For Charleston, the motivation was talked about at T1 almost exclusively and for San Bernardino, the emphasis was at T2. There was more discussion of the motivation for San Bernardino than for Charleston. The San Bernardino articles focused more on shooter extremism than the Charleston articles, and it was talked about more for each shooting at T2. Some of the Charleston sources only brought up shooter extremism at T2. Shooter origin/group identity was brought up more in the San Bernardino articles than the

Charleston articles. However, the times shooter origin/group identity was discussed were opposite; for Charleston, the focus almost exclusively was at T1, and San Bernardino at T2. The types of context mentioned in the articles were consistent with the type of motivation the media had assigned to the shootings. The context mentioned in relation to the Charleston shooting had to do with shootings of other religious minorities, and the context for San Bernardino mostly focused on other acts of Islamic terrorism.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The discussion focuses on three dimensions of comparison of the shooting cases, a temporal analysis, a media analysis, and a dehumanization comparison. In T1 the initial categorization was established for the shooters in both shootings. Ideological stereotypes shaped the initial categorization for the shooters in T1 and as the facts developed they shaped some of the perceptions in T2. However, in T2 the facts largely confirmed the categorizations.

Charleston

In T1, Roof, then an unknown shooter, was categorized as a white supremacist. In the Charleston shooting, motivation for the shooting seemed to be established in T1. This could be either because his actions were straightforward or because he remained alive after the shooting. In T1 the news spent time talking about the motivation for the shooting as a hate crime, and since all the victims were African American there seemed to be an implied category that the person who would do this would be a white supremacist. In CT2 there is more discussion of Roof being an extremist. The discussion in T2 seems to be category confirmation of him as a white supremacist. In T2 the increased discussion of Roof as an extremist and word choice indicates that he is a white supremacist and holds strong racist beliefs. There are more descriptors of Roof in T2 than T1 as being hateful and emotionless.

I expected Roof to be recategorized from his initial categorization. However, there was not any recategorization in CT2. The news might not have gone to go into additional details at T2 that would indicate recategorization because the focus of the T2

articles became about the victims' families forgiving Roof. It seems like the news was satisfied with the initial categorization of the shooter and Roof confirmed the media's initial categorization as the type of person that would commit this type of shooting. It seems clear to the news that Roof was a white supremacist committing a hate crime so there was no need to recategorize him into a new category because there was no category inconsistent information about Roof.

In the coverage of the Charleston shooting, the context talked about was mostly church history and racial tensions or extremism. The racial extremism brought up in the articles were racial tension in the area, the history of the KKK, and three articles mentioned a recent shooting of an unarmed black man by a white police officer. Two of the other shootings brought up were committed on different religious minorities in their places of worship. Mother Jones CT1 brought up statistics of mass shootings committed by white shooters. The articles were cuing white supremacy by bringing up events that were related to race and white supremacy. These events were discussed exclusively in T1, which helped lay the foundation for the white supremacist categorization. The context indicates that the news sources were making connections to other types of shootings and kinds of extremism that are related to white supremacy.

San Bernardino

In T1 the San Bernardino shooters were initially categorized as terrorists. In T1 coverage for the San Bernardino shooting, there were lots of possible suggestions for what the motivation was. Terrorism, domestic terrorism, and workplace violence were mentioned in T1. By T2 the discussion of motivation dramatically shifted to terrorism and ISIS/foreign-inspired terrorism. This could be a slight recategorization as the

motivation narrowed from many possibilities to a few. However, this seems more in line with category confirmation of the initial category because the additional information and attributes are congruent with the initial category of terrorism. In the Charleston shooting coverage the articles used more adjectives like senseless or devastating, however, that was lacking in the coverage of the San Bernardino shooting. The focus was more on terrorism which could have the same emotional weight as saying the shooting was devastating.

In the coverage on the San Bernardino shooting there was more discussion in T2 about who the shooters were and details about the shooting than in T1 and more discussion of the San Bernardino shooters as extremists in T2. As the investigation into the shooters progressed the media got more information about Farook and Malik. This information was consistent with the categorization of them as terrorists. There were far more words to describe Farook and Malik's origin than Roof's. Discussion on their origin/group identity is discussed more in T2. While the coverage stressed that Farook was born in the United States, they mentioned that he traveled to Saudi Arabia and that Malik was from Pakistan but lived in Saudi Arabia. This focus on the countries is significant because in the United States there is an association of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia with Islamic terrorists.

The articles mentioned that people who knew Farook were surprised by his and his wife's actions. In contrast, when Roof's friend was interviewed, he thought Roof was going to shoot a bunch of people the night prior and the friend took Roof's gun away until he thought that Roof had calmed down (Fox News CT2). NBC reported "relatives have described Farook and Malik as a happy couple who gave no outward sign of being Islamic fanatics. They even registered at Target before their baby daughter was born"

(NBC SBT2). The tone seems to indicate that terrorists do not place their baby registry at Target. These are examples of category inconsistent information that would necessitate additional processing to keep Farook and Malik within the original categorization. However, this information does not seem to make a change in the categorization in the long run. There was frequent use of words to prime terrorist and/or ISIS and lots of discussion of the Muslim, middle eastern, terrorist motivation and connections.

In the context section, the focus was mostly on the Newtown, Connecticut school shooting which was brought up three times. This was because the San Bernardino shooting was the deadliest shooting since 2012. The only discussion of context extremism is that ISIS supporters usually radicalizes young girls. The discussion of the Fort Hood shooting and Boston Marathon bombing at T1 is indicative of the initial categorization of the San Bernardino shooters. In T2 the cover up of terrorism in Benghazi is also a way to connect the shooters with terrorism.

There is an initial categorization of the shooters as being Islamic terrorists in T1 and there is category confirmation happening in T2. The discussion of the baby registry seems to show that even with tensions in the categorization that the categorization still remains because the additional information of Malik pledging allegiance to ISIS strongly confirms the initial categorization.

The two violent extremist events focused on in this thesis are both arguably mass shootings. However, there is no standardized definition of mass shooting (Smart, n.d.). This causes a problem when looking at shootings because “depending on which data source is referenced, there were seven, 65, 332, or 371 mass shootings in the United States in 2015” (Smart, n.d.). The definition of terrorism is more narrowly constructed than that of mass shooting; however, there are differences between the legal definition of

terrorism and the colloquial definition. FBI's definition divides terrorism into two categories:

Domestic terrorism: Perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature.

International terrorism: Perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored) (FBI, 2018).

The FBI's definition is narrower than the way most people would describe terrorism which tends to be a violent act designed to cause fear.

Media

The news sources have audiences of different sizes and with different ideologies. The news articles have some variation to the extent that the focus on the categorizations that they have for the shooters differ, but ultimately they categorize each shooter the same way. NBC focuses more on the motivation of the San Bernardino shooting. Shooter extremism is focused on T2 San Bernardino. Group identity is also focused on SBT2. For the Charleston shooting, there is more of a focus on Roof's adjectives and adjectives for the shooting. There is a focus on context extremism in CT1.

When talking about the San Bernardino shooting, Fox News puts "devout" in quotes twice, which seems to indicate that they doubt that Farook was actually devout. In a hopeful interpretation, it could be because they are saying that since he committed this violence that he is not actually devout. Fox News goes into the most detail about Roof's white supremacist views by describing Roof's Facebook page which includes him wearing patches depicting the flags of apartheid South African and white-ruled Rhodesia (Fox News CT2). Fox News also states that this information from Roof's Facebook page is confirmation of his white supremacist views. Fox News in SBT1 mentions that Farook

had no unusual signs of behavior but recently grew out his beard, which implies that Muslim men who have beards could be extremists since that was the only sign of something different.

Breitbart uses words in quotes when talking about workplace violence as a possible motivation in the San Bernardino shooting (Breitbart SBT2). Breitbart states that the San Bernardino shooting has “hallmarks of the sort of attacks you see in the Middle East” (Breitbart SBT1).

In SBT1 NBC and BBC brought up a recent shooting at a Planned Parenthood. Breitbart was the only one to bring up contextual violence that was related to radical Islamic violent extremism. In SBT1 Breitbart mentioned the Fort Hood shooting, and the Boston Marathon bombing, and in SBT2 they brought up Benghazi as a part of a terrorism coverup. The other context mentioned is by Fox News in SBT2 that there is a trend that ISIS usually radicalize young girls. Mother Jones is the only one to mention the shooting at the Jewish retirement center and the Sikh temple shooting at CT1.

Dehumanization

Words indicating dehumanization across both shootings were mostly focused in the nouns used for the shooting, slaughter, carnage, rampage, and bloodbath. Slaughter may be partially dehumanization, but it is mentioned twice in both the San Bernardino and Charleston shootings. Carnage could be dehumanizing as it was mentioned three times. Slaughter and Carnage both indicate a lack of control which could fall under animalistic dehumanization. There were not the typical terms to cue animalistic dehumanization such as discussion of a lack of culture, amorality, irrationality, or being childlike. There was lots of discussion about how well planned out the attack was and

that does not seem to line up with being childlike or irrational. For San Bernardino, there was also not any discussion of the shooters lacking warmth, emotion or individuality, which would be typical of mechanistic dehumanization.

All of the news sources used these nouns (carnage, slaughter, rampage, bloodbath) to describe the shootings. NBC used these words twice in Charleston C2, and twice across their coverage of the San Bernardino shooting. BBC and Mother Jones used one of these once in both their coverage of Charleston and San Bernardino. Fox News used one of these twice in Charleston and three times in San Bernardino. Breitbart used one in their coverage of San Bernardino. Breitbart is the only source not to use one in its coverage of Charleston.

There is a stronger case for some dehumanization in Charleston shooting. In addition to the lack of control in the shooting. Roof is described as being stone-faced, emotionless, and having a vacant stare when facing the victims' families at his hearing. The news sources described him in this emotionless way. However, the victims' families were humanizing him by forgiving him and asking him to turn to God or Christ. This is not particularly surprising given that the shooting happened during the church's bible study. This outpour of forgiveness may be because the victims and their families were given the opportunity to speak to Roof at his court hearing.

The Charleston shooter also gets some element of animalistic dehumanization by being called pure evil and pure hate a total of nine times. That is stronger than angry which is what the San Bernardino shooters were called. Stating that the shooter was angry is not the same as saying they are pure hate and pure evil. NBC and Fox News talk about Roof as being full of hate at T1 and T2. Breitbart mentions that Roof is hateful at T1 and Mother Jones at T2 says Roof is full of racial hatred. NBC, BBC, Fox News and

Mother Jones all mention Roof's expression during the testimony of the victims' families. All of the new sources mention that the victims' families forgave Roof for his actions. BBC and Mother Jones were the only ones to describe Farook and Malik as angry.

There is some dehumanization in the discussion of the shooters however it is subtle. The dehumanization is mostly through the way the shootings are described as actions that are not controlled (animalistic dehumanization). There is no direct dehumanization of Farook or Malik. There is some mechanistic dehumanization of Roof, however, that is immediately countered with humanizing language from the victims' families.

Roof and Farook and Malik have their initial categorizations confirmed, and they do not move towards more attribute-based impressions. The initial impression of Roof as a white supremacist held up over time as new information confirmed that categorization. I had expected the media to get to the recategorization phase of the continuum when discussing Roof because there would be more motivation to distance him from the ingroup, but he was portrayed in a way that distanced him. The initial categorization of Farook and Malik was that they were terrorists. As more information came out about them this categorization was upheld. I expected that media would confirm the categorization of Farook and Malik because I expected there would be less of a motivation to form an attribute-based impression of them as outgroup members.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Prejudice can form group differentiations that can cause conflicts. When a group of people is being labeled as violent extremists because of the actions of a few members, it can make outgroup members feel that their conflict action against the group is justified. In the continuum of impression formation, once the perceiver is satisfied with their impression of the person then any public response about the person will be an expression of their internal responses (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). If their internal response is not positive, then violent behaviors could occur. Going back to the introduction of this thesis, Strawman was motivated to start killing Muslims after 9/11 and he killed innocent people that were not linked to the terrorists that were the actual cause of the event. After he got to know Bhuiyan, he no longer hated him. This section is not about how to prevent violent extremism, but how to prevent additional conflict from spreading when people are associating violent extremists with a greater population that are not extremists. However, some of the suggestions could work to further reduce violent extremism.

Allport in 1954 formulated the intergroup contact theory to reduce intergroup conflicts (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Allport stated that prejudice reduction should occur when outgroup members meet on equal status, have cooperative interactions, have the potential to become acquaintances, and under circumstances that has the support of authorities (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Two assumptions of SIT that relate to the contact hypothesis are that people's memberships are incorporated into their concepts of self-identity and when groups become salient there will be the tendency for intergroup differentiation and intragroup assimilation that will usually result in an ingroup favoring bias (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Intergroup contact fits into the continuum of impression

formation because as a person gets to know another, they use more individuating impressions rather than category-based ones. Since Allport, the intergroup contact theory has had additional theoretical developments to try to perfect the conditions in which intergroup contact would reduce prejudice (Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

One model for reducing intergroup bias is the Brewer-Miller decategorization model which states that contact situations should be structured to reduce the salience of available social categories and increase the likelihood of more interpersonal model of thinking and behaving (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). It is designed to promote outgroup differentiation, and personification and the original categories should loosen their usefulness in organizing perceptions (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Prejudice should be reduced by less positive evaluations toward the ingroup (Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

Another model is the Gaertner-Dovidio common ingroup identity model which focuses on redrawing existing category boundaries and concentrating on/creating a larger shared identity (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). It requires groups to relinquish their existing identities for superordinate one and that is not always easily achieved (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). It is a dual identity strategy (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Gaertner and Dovidio's argument is that intergroup bias often takes the form of ingroup enhancement rather than outgroup devaluation (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989). If the group boundary salience was lowered and a greater group identity was established, then the former ingroup should treat the former outgroup more positively because the social distance has decreased (Gaertner et al., 1989).

The Hewstone-Brown intergroup contact theory does not want to get rid of group identities but makes salient the group identities to reduce bias through exposure to typical group members (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). It relies on a person making a positive

opinion on a group representative individual and for that positive opinion to translate to the group as a whole (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Friendships can reduce negative affect and augment positive affect (Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

All of these models hope to reduce stereotypes of the outgroup. “Bookkeeping” is one model to do this through a gradual modification of stereotypes by the additive influence of each piece of disconfirming information (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Another way to reduce intergroup prejudice is through “conversion” which is a kind of radical change of the stereotype in response to dramatic disconfirming information but no change in response to minor disconfirming information (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). A third way is through “subtyping” which views stereotypes as hierarchical structures in which discrimination can be created in response to disconfirming information (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Subtyping puts people who do not fit the expectation or the rule into a subcategory (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Studies done with children show the potential of contact experiences to promote not just changes toward a particular outgroup and its associated stereotypic attributes but also to other outgroups along similar dimensions (Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

The groups and the context determine which variation of the contact theory to use to alleviate intergroup prejudice (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). There is not just one method that can be universally applied. All of the theories can be helpful when applied for which one would work best in the given situation. In terms of how to set up appropriate intergroup contact, first, the opportunities for contact need to be measured to sets constraints for intergroup contact (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). The next step is to measure the quality of direct intergroup contact including cross-group friendships (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). It is also worth assessing extended contact that already exists

(Brown & Hewstone, 2005). If there are typical ingroup members that are already friends or have close relationships with a typical outgroup member then extended contact would be effective (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Extended contact gives reasons to be hopeful about its success because it is less dependent than direct contact opportunities for contact especially in segregated communities and one person's outgroup friend has potential to affect the attitudes of many others who are not direct friends of outgroup member (Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

Good quality contact lessens intergroup anxiety which creates more favorable intergroup attitudes (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). The most reliable moderators of reduced intergroup prejudice are awareness of memberships and perceived typicality (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Salience of group memberships creates stronger associations. The salience needs to remain in a special balance to be salient enough to make difference known but not enough to create intergroup anxiety or otherwise exacerbate the tensions (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Brown and Hewstone (2005) recommend applying a range of mediators simultaneously and attempt to both allow for relationships to improve and decrease negativity (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Some mediators are social categorization, stereotyping, empathy, perspective taking and self-disclosure expectations and attribution (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Outcome measures of intergroup positive affect, trust, and forgiveness are all predicted by various kinds of contact either directly or indirectly (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Contact can affect the subtle measure of infra-humanization which is a type of dehumanization (Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

Instead of picking and choosing which of the intergroup contact theories to apply, Pettigrew offered an integration of the three models that was based on a temporal ordering of interventions (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). First, minimize group salience

with the Brewer-Miller model, then deal with subcategory salience with the Hewstone-Brown model, and then build a common ingroup with the Gaertner-Dovidio model. This sequence may be limited in its applicability due to community constraints (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). It does show how the different models could be combined and used together as a way to strengthen the approaches rather than focusing on just one.

Intergroup contact theories and approaches are focused on creating different, more positive impressions of the other group. The approaches are in line with the continuum of impression formation. Intergroup contact encourages perceivers to recategorize their impressions and move towards more attribute-based impressions.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

I looked at how the continuum of impression formation would apply to media depictions of the shooters in the Charleston shooting and the San Bernardino shooting. I thought that over time the Charleston shooter would get farther on the continuum than the San Bernardino shooters because it seemed more likely that Roof would not fit a categorization as easily as Farook or Malik, based on Roof being more closely aligned with the ingroup. I thought that the media would confirm the initial categorization for the San Bernardino shooters.

For both shootings the media mostly stayed within their initial categorization, confirming what they thought initially about the shooters, which was inconsistent with my expectations. For Roof, he was considered to be a white supremacist, and for Farook and Malik, they were considered to be terrorists. For Charleston, the media confirmed their category fairly quickly and did not discuss that much about Roof in T2. For San Bernardino once there was more information about the shooting the initial category was confirmed. There was less dehumanization than expected. There was some dehumanization of Roof that was counteracted with the victims' families' humanizing statements.

There is not a separation of the shooters from the categories that they were originally assigned. The shooters are talked about in different ways because the categories of white supremacist and ISIS-inspired terrorist are different. The media making the frames about who is a white supremacist or terrorist might affect others in the world. Roof is confirmed into the white supremacist category but all the words that make him fit into that category are fairly narrow. For Farook and Malik, they have their

terrorist categorization confirmed as well but the words associated with them are broader and could be applied to others that also fall into those groups. The media's discussion of how surprising it was that Farook and Malik carried out the shooting could actually make it worse for other Muslims because it implies that the terrorists are not always obviously terrorists. Muslims tend to get associated with terrorism more so than an average white person gets associated with far right extremism. If the media is making frames for this then that can cause there to be more intergroup tensions. Intergroup contact theories could help people to change some of the established group boundaries and reduce intergroup conflict and help people move further down the continuum of impression formation to more individuating processes.

A limitation of this research is that the scope is not very large. I looked at only two cases of violent extremism in a given year and at the cases from two time points, and in only one type of media. The whole scope of all the media could paint a different picture about how the discussion of the shooters changes over time. Another limiting factor is that the continuum of impression formation was applied to news organizations rather than to individuals. The extremists are viewed negatively in both shootings, however, there is not the same type of spillover of negative impressions of white supremacists onto other white people as there is for Islamic extremists onto other Muslims. Additional research is needed to look at how to reduce the extent that non-violent people are associated with violent people from a shared identity.

APPENDIX A

ARTICLE INFORMATION

The Charleston shooting occurred just after 21:00 Eastern Time on 17 June 2015, corresponding to about 1:00 GMT on 18 June 2015. The San Bernardino shooting finished around 15:30 Pacific Time on 2 December 2015, corresponding to 22:30 GMT. For T1, I gathered articles as close to the time that the event took place as the Wayback Machine would allow. For T2, I gather articles from 2 days after the shooting after 17:00 local time. See Table 8 and Table 9 for the distribution of the timing of articles.

Table 8. Charleston Articles Time Distribution

| | T1 21:00 ET 6/17/15 (1GMT 6/18/15) | | T2 17:00 ET 6/19/15 (21 GMT 6/19/15) | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| NBC | 3:00 GMT | +2 hours | 21 | +0 hours |
| BBC | 6:01 GMT | +5 hours | 21:17 | +0:17 hours |
| Fox News | 6:43 GMT | +5:43 hours | 22:51 GMT | +1:51 hours |
| Breitbart | 9:18 GMT | +8 hours | 20:46 | -0:14 hours |
| Mother Jones | 11:28 GMT | +10 hours | 2:21 6/20 | +5:21 hours |

Table 9. San Bernardino Articles Time Distribution

| | T1: 15:30 PT 12/2/15 (22:30 GMT 12/2/15) | | T2: 17:00 PT 12/4/15 (00 GMT 12/4/15) | |
|--------------|--|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| NBC | 00:1 GMT 12/3 | +1:31 hours | 0 | +0 hours |
| BBC | 2:47 GMT 12/3 | +4:17 hours | 00:36 | +0:36 hours |
| Fox News | 3:26 GMT 12/3 | +4:56 hours | 0:35 | +0:35 hours |
| Breitbart | 17:20 GMT 12/3 | +19 hours | 1:44 | +1:44 hours |
| Mother Jones | 12:27 GMT 12/3 | +13:57 hours | 5:03 | +5:03 hours |

Breitbart and Mother Jones for Charleston T2 (CT2) had articles that were listed first on their home pages, but those articles were talking about other media coverage of the shooting rather than talking about the shooting or the shooters. The Breitbart article was talking about CNN's coverage of the shooting and the Mother Jones article was talking about how someone in the NRA was blaming the church's pastor for the shooting because the pastor did not allow guns in the church. Since this paper is focused on the

discussion of the shooters in the media, those articles were replaced with others that were also on the front page just not the first article listed. Mother Jones CT1 article is from the *New York Times* coverage, which I did not realize until after the research.

For Breitbart for San Bernardino T1 (SBT1), the article was live updates over 19 hours of coverage. The Breitbart article starts earlier than the others covering the shooting as it was happening whereas the others are timestamped after the shooting. The article also continued on for longer after the other articles. For coding Breitbart SBT1 I only coded a section of the article that would put it in the same time scope as the other articles for SBT1.

The articles ranged from 194 words to 1625 words (Table 10). The articles averaged 817 words each. The longest was Fox News C2 with 1625 words and the shortest was Mother Jones SB2 with 194 words. The longest San Bernardino article was Fox News SB1 with 1545 words. The shortest Charleston article was Mother Jones C1 with 287 words. The total word count of all the Charleston articles was 6900 words. The total word count for CT1 articles was 3216 and for CT2 3684. The total word count of all the San Bernardino articles was 9440 words. The total for SBT1 was 5422 and for SBT2 4018.

Table 10. Article Word Count

| | CT1 | CT2 | SBT1 | SBT2 |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| NBC | 1089 | 638 | 1019 | 845 |
| BBC | 624 | 842 | 835 | 764 |
| Fox News | 634 | 1625 | 1545 | 1237 |
| Breitbart | 582 | 195 | 1428 | 978 |
| Mother Jones | 287 | 384 | 595 | 194 |

APPENDIX B

CITATIONS FOR CODED MEDIA ARTICLES

NBC

- (CT1) Bruton, B., Calabrese, E., Johnson, A., and Cumming, J. (2015, 18 June). Nine killed at historic Emanuel church in Charleston, South Carolina. *NBC*.
<https://web.archive.org/http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/charleston-church-shooting/nine-killed-historic-emanuel-church-charleston-south-carolina-n377436>
- (CT2) Fieldstadt, E. (2015, June 19). Charleston church shooting: Families of victims address Dylann Roof at bond hearing. *NBC*.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20150619204848/http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/charleston-church-shooting/hate-wont-win-kin-victims-address-church-shooter-dylann-roof-n378641>
- (SBT1) Siemaszko, C., Williams, P., Johnson, A., and Federico-O’Murchu, S. (2015, December 2). At least 14 dead, one suspect in custody in California shooting. *NBC*.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20151203000006/http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/san-bernardino-shooting/authorities-respond-report-shooting-san-bernardino-california-n472976>
- (SBT2) Williams, P., Winter, T., and Siemaszko, C. (2015, December 5). Tashfeen Malik, mother in San Bernardino massacre, pledge allegiance to ISIS leader: Sources. *NBC*.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20151205021226/http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/san-bernardino-shooting/tashfeen-malik-mother-san-bernardino-massacre-pledged-allegiance-isis-leader-n474246>

BBC

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