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Trayvon Martin and Election 2012 Social Media Messaging: An Analysis of Framing, Rhetoric, and Media Types in Online Messages by Civil Rights Organizations

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TRAYVON MARTIN AND ELECTION 2012 SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING:
AN ANALYSIS OF FRAMING, RHETORIC, AND MEDIA TYPES IN ONLINE
MESSAGES BY CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

by

Riva Renee Brown

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2013

ABSTRACT

TRAYVON MARTIN AND ELECTION 2012 SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING: AN ANALYSIS OF FRAMING, RHETORIC, AND MEDIA TYPES IN ONLINE MESSAGES BY CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

by Riva Renee Brown

August 2013

This content analysis study explored framing, rhetoric, and media types used by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Urban League, National Action Network, and ColorOfChange.org in website and social media messages posted during the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012. It also examined the mainstream print news media coverage these civil rights organizations generated.

On February 26, 2012, George Zimmerman, a 28 year old White and Hispanic male, fatally shot Martin, a 17 year old Black male, in Florida. After authorities did not charge Zimmerman with the teenager's murder, these organizations drafted petitions and staged rallies and marches to demand justice. During Election 2012, the organizations addressed voter suppression and voting rights issues such as voter identification, anti-early voting, and felony disenfranchisement laws. Chi-square and likelihood ratio results showed a significant difference in the collective action and news frames each organization used in both cases. Qualitative analysis suggested that the organizations preferred rhetorical strategies and tactics that encouraged supporters to unite against perceived enemies. Overall, the results suggested that the organizations failed to use multimedia effectively and did not do enough to secure complimentary news media

coverage and encourage their supporters and others to engage in online and offline activism.

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A Dissertation
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALEC	American Legislative Exchange Council
COC	ColorOfChange.org
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAN	National Action Network
NUL	National Urban League

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The advent of social media has created more avenues for advocacy and activist groups, such as civil rights organizations, to disseminate messages that engage their allies online to encourage them to effect social and political change. These messages can be framed in ways that bring attention to important issues that could have a detrimental impact on the supporters of those organizations. These messages also can outline specific actions to undertake that ensure that the issues are addressed tactfully, thoughtfully and thoroughly. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs allow these organizations to communicate their messages directly to their publics across platforms in an uncontrolled environment. Those social networking sites also allow the organizations to interact with one another to allow their messages to reach larger audiences, particularly when they are concentrating on the same or similar issues. By effectively using these sites, these organizations no longer have to rely on the news media, which has had control over whether messages in press releases and official statements get published or aired.

This study aimed to address how four civil rights organizations used social media and other online messages to accomplish the aforementioned goals. It employed quantitative and qualitative content analysis using framing theory and rhetorical strategies and tactics to examine issues that occurred during two major events in 2012: the fight for justice after Trayvon Martin's death and the focus on voting and voter suppression leading up to Election 2012. The organizations involved in this study were the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Urban League (NUL), National Action Network (NAN), and ColorOfChange.org (COC).

In the Trayvon Martin case, when George Zimmerman, a 28 year old Hispanic and White male, fatally shot Trayvon Martin, a 17 year old Black male, in February 2012 in Florida, the killing became the number one news story in the nation the following month (“Trayvon Martin killing,” 2012). Additionally, thousands of people signed online petitions and participated in marches and rallies throughout the country to help ensure that Zimmerman faced charges (Alcindor, 2012). Their actions shed light on issues such as racial profiling and the Florida stand-your-ground law, which allows individuals to use deadly force when they fear death or immense bodily harm (Alcindor, 2012; Editorial Desk, 2012). During Election 2012, voting and voter suppression became hot-button topics in the months leading up to Election Day 2012, when the aforementioned organizations initiated media campaigns related to issues including voter identification laws, allowing disenfranchised felons to vote, and restoring early voting hours.

This study focused on the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012 for at least three reasons. First, two issues in the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012 intersected. The first intersecting issue was that the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a group the civil rights organizations targeted in their online messages, played a pivotal role in pushing both stand-your-ground and voter identification laws, which were key issues in the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012 respectively (Editorial Desk, 2012). The organizations used their messages and related campaigns to address ALEC’s involvement in both of these laws. The second intersecting issue was that some civil rights organizations attempted to use the Trayvon Martin case as a catalyst to encourage more Blacks to register to vote (Kunerth, 2012). Second, the aftermath of the Florida teenager’s fatal shooting replaced the Election 2012 presidential race as the top story in

the nation in the first quarter of 2012 (“Trayvon Martin killing,” 2012). Third, all four of the organizations placed a great deal of attention on reaching out to their members and supporters to address key issues in each case. For instance, they created campaigns, petitions and pledges; they organized marches, rallies, and town hall meetings; and they engaged in other online and offline efforts to educate and inform their followers.

Purpose and Significance of Study

This study had three purposes. First, it examined the use of framing and rhetorical strategies and tactics in messages designed to inform and encourage online and offline collective action within the first two months of the Trayvon Martin case and last two months leading up to Election Day 2012. Second, it explored how the organizations used the Internet, particularly their official websites and social media accounts, to circulate those messages via Facebook status updates, Twitter tweets, press releases, official statements, and blog posts. Third, it investigated whether those messages contributed to mainstream media coverage in the Trayvon Martin case and up to Election 2012 by analyzing newspaper articles that referenced those four organizations and the two case studies. This research was conducted to add to the body of knowledge about civil rights organizations and their collective action efforts and messages in an online environment.

There are at least three reasons why this study was significant and could contribute to the body of knowledge in mass communications. Firstly, most of scholarly research about the NAACP and NUL, and their activism and communications strategies and techniques, has been from a historical perspective, whereas no academic studies have examined NAN and COC, as they are relatively new civil rights organizations. Secondly, the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC primarily target issues and causes of importance to

Blacks, and research shows that Blacks use Twitter at higher rates than other ethnic groups (Duggan & Brenner, 2013; Smith & Brenner, 2012). Thirdly, this study will examine how the four organizations – three founded before the Internet was commercialized, the other founded solely to use the Internet – use the same tools to bring about social and political change.

The practical and scholarly relevance of this study was threefold. First of all, this topic was practical because it can help organizations determine whether and how framing and using rhetorical strategies and tactics in online messages can increase mainstream media coverage and encourage engagement in online and offline activism to create social and political change. Acquiring this knowledge could then help organizations use social media and their websites more strategically to carry out their agendas and reach their intended audiences. Second of all, this topic added a scholarly dimension to existing research about the Trayvon Martin case. For example, the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and the Pew Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism have conducted research on the news interest and news coverage of the case and themes that have emerged in the case in the mainstream media, blogs, and Twitter ("Blacks' views of law enforcement," 2012). However, no research has focused on multiple social media platforms used by civil rights organizations that were actively engaged in seeking justice through online and offline efforts. Third of all, this topic addressed a gap in scholarly literature regarding the online efforts of some civil rights organizations that historically have used offline efforts to mobilize the Black community. Most case-specific and organization-specific scholarly research regarding online efforts has focused on groups

such as MoveOn.org, the Sierra Club, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and Greenpeace (Eaton, 2010; Reber & Berger, 2005).

Organization Background

The NAACP, founded in 1909 by a multi-racial and multi-religious group, is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots-based civil rights organization (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], 2009-2013). Its mission is "to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination" (NAACP, 2009-2013, n.p.). The issues on the NAACP's agenda are civic engagement, climate justice, economic opportunity, education, federal advocacy, health, justice, litigation, and media diversity. Historically, the NAACP carefully cultivated its media relations strategies at the national and local levels, framing its messages in a manner that resulted in raising awareness among Blacks and Whites and increasing membership, thereby making it the largest and richest civil rights organization in the country in the early 1960s (Straughan, 2004). In its early days, in addition to press releases, the NAACP primarily relied on *The Crisis* magazine, an annual report, special topics reports, and speeches to disseminate its messages (Straughan, 2004).

The National Urban League (NUL), founded in 1910, is a civil rights organization that grew out of a grassroots movement associated with the Black migration from the South to the North (National Urban League, 2013). Its mission is "to enable African Americans to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights" (National Urban League, 2013, n.p.). NUL's issues are empowerment related to education and

youth, economics, health and quality of life, civic engagement and leadership, civil rights, and racial justice.

The National Action Network (NAN), founded in 1991 by television and radio talk show host Reverend Al Sharpton, is a civil rights organization that “works within the spirit and tradition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” (National Action Network, 2011, n.p.). Its key initiatives are social justice, criminal justice, decency, education, anti-violence, and voter protection.

ColorOfChange.org (COC) was founded in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina to strengthen the political voice of Blacks. It uses the Internet “to empower our members - Black Americans and our allies - to make government more responsive to the concerns of Black Americans and to bring about positive political and social change for everyone” (ColorOfChange.org, 2005-2013, n.p.). Issues on its social and political agenda are criminal justice, economic justice, education, Gulf Coast, human rights, media accountability, net neutrality, political accountability, right wing racism, and voting rights.

Trayvon Martin Case Background

The following information provides some background into the Trayvon Martin case by focusing on some key events that took place between February 26, 2012, and April 11, 2012. On a rainy evening on February 26 in Sanford, Florida, Trayvon Martin was walking from a convenience store to the home of his father’s fiancée (“Timeline of events,” 2012). Martin got into an altercation with George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer (“Trayvon Martin shooting,” 2012). Martin was wearing a hoodie and carrying a bag of Skittles, a can of Arizona Iced Tea, and some change. Zimmerman told

police he shot and killed Martin in self-defense; therefore, police did not file charges against Zimmerman and he was released (“Timeline of events,” 2012; “Trayvon Martin shooting,” 2012). On March 8, 2012, Martin’s parents called a press conference and asked citizens to sign an online petition calling for Zimmerman’s prosecution. The case was turned over to prosecutors and five days later, police released 911 calls. On March 19, 2012, the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice announced that they planned to investigate the killing, and the Florida State Attorney announced a grand jury investigation.

On March 21, 2012, the same day hundreds of people attended a *Million Hoodie March* in New York City, the Sanford City Council voted *no confidence* in Police Chief Bill Lee; the next day he “temporarily” stepped down (Delinski, 2012d). March 23, 2012 includes three significant events in the Trayvon Martin case. One, President Barack Obama made public comments on the case, adding, “You know, if I had a son, he’d look like Trayvon” (“The Trayvon Martin case,” 2012, n.p.). Two, Geraldo Rivera of Fox News suggested that the “hoodie is as much responsible for Trayvon Martin’s death as George Zimmerman was” (“Geraldo Rivera,” 2012, n.p.); he apologized a week later. Third, thousands of people attended a *Million Hoodie March* in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The next day, on March 24, 2012, the New Black Panthers offered a \$10,000 reward to capture Zimmerman “alive, not dead or harmed” (“The Trayvon Martin case,” 2012, n.p.). On March 28, 2012, the hoodie continued to make news when U.S. Representative Bobby Rush, a Democrat from Illinois, was escorted off the House floor for violating the chamber’s no-hat policy. By April 3, 2012, 2.2 million people had signed an online petition demanding Zimmerman’s prosecution (“The Trayvon Martin

case,” 2012). On April 10, 2012, Zimmerman’s attorneys, Craig Sonner and Hal Uhrig, announced that they would no longer represent him because he stopped communicating with them. The next day, Zimmerman turned himself into police after Florida Special Prosecutor Angela Corey announced that she would charge him with second-degree murder (“The Trayvon Martin case,” 2012).

In addition to shedding a spotlight on racial profiling and stand-your-ground laws, the Trayvon Martin case also highlighted issues such as how police departments treat Blacks, how the mainstream media covers Blacks, and the status of race relations in America (“Blacks’ view of law enforcement,” 2012). The Trayvon Martin case was the public’s top news story in the nation between March 22-25, 2012, according to the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. Blacks were more than twice as likely as Whites to rank this as their top news story (50% to 20%) (“Trayvon Martin killing,” 2012).

In terms of news interest and news coverage, more people followed the case than the 2012 elections and the economy. The Pew Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism also found that the Trayvon Martin case became the number one story in the nation after March 17, filling 19% of the news hole studied and eclipsing coverage of the presidential election, making it the first story of the year to garner more attention than the presidential elections in any week (“Trayvon Martin killing,” 2012).

Between February 26, 2012, the day Trayvon Martin was fatally shot, and April 11, 2012, the day George Zimmerman was arrested and charged with Martin’s murder, thousands of people across the country signed electronic petitions and letters, and participated in rallies and marches, to demand justice. Martin’s parents, Sybrina Fulton

and Tracy Martin, brought the killing to the national spotlight by calling a press conference and encouraging concerned citizens to sign a Change.org petition demanding that prosecutors charge Zimmerman with murder. Shortly thereafter, representatives from the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC became actively involved in organizing and participating in some of these protests. In addition to seeking justice, some of the organizations also used the case to call attention to racial profiling and the controversial Castle doctrine, or stand-your-ground law, which they believe played a role in Trayvon Martin's death. In Florida, the statute allows people to use deadly force when there is a "presumption of fear of death or great bodily harm" (2011 Florida Statutes: Chapter 776, 2011).

Election 2012 Background

Before Election Day 2012, the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC launched campaigns related to voting. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed discriminatory practices that kept Blacks and other people of color from casting a ballot; the NAACP played a key role in getting the Act passed (O'Brien, 2011). Voter suppression is defined as anything that keeps people eligible to vote from doing so (Freeman, Fields, & Rodriguez, 2009). Some voter suppression tactics include intimidation, disrupting communications via phone jamming and physical sabotage; disinformation; challenging voter eligibility through voter identification laws, absentee voting and voter purges (Freeman et al., 2009); and felony disenfranchisement.

The organizations wanted to ensure that the voting turnout was as high for Election Day 2012 as it was for Election Day 2008 among Blacks, particularly young ones. In 2008, for example, 64.75% of Blacks voted on Election Day, compared to 60%

in 2004 and even lower numbers in 2000 and 1996, 56.8% and 53% respectively, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Furthermore, Blacks had the highest turnout rate among 18- to 24-year-olds, 55%, an 8% increase from 2004 (“Voter Turnout Increases,” 2009).

All of the organizations launched voting-related campaigns to inform the public about their voting rights and educate them about efforts to suppress their voice in the voting booth. COC launched the I Vote in Color campaign and related efforts to restore early voting hours, end voter purge, remove billboards designed as scare tactics, and petition for weekend voting. The organization also conducted Twitter town hall meeting and parties, sponsored voter Twibbons, and wrote a blog series on voting (ColorOfChange.org, 2005-2013).

NUL launched the Occupy the Vote ad campaign featuring celebrities, artists, and activists to educate voters and eliminate voter suppression (National Urban League, 2013). NAN launched a voter engagement tour, where officials traveled to Florida, Pennsylvania, Texas, South Carolina, and Ohio to spread their message. The NAACP’s voting-related campaigns focused on restoring the vote of disenfranchised felons, voter ID laws in South Carolina, and early voting laws in Ohio.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Individuals and organizations involved in advocacy and activism have been relying on the Internet in general, and social media in particular, to get their supporters more engaged in bringing about social and political change. Before the Internet, organizations and individuals historically used publications, radio, television, and film to mobilize their supporters (Lim & Kann, 2008). Social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook are a part of the strategies used to get individuals and groups involved in online and offline collective action (Harlow, 2012). Ladhani (2011) argued that social media are powerful tools activists can use to share information, advocate free speech, and organize online. “When evaluated as a tool for change rather than the tool that will change the world, the power and possibility of social media far exceed the tools of generations past” (Ladhani, 2011, p. 57). Amin (2010) expressed similar sentiments in stating that social networking sites “are becoming unlikely leaders of political power” around the world (p. 65).

Twitter is one social media site that has been credited for its role in encouraging offline activism efforts across the globe in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Moldova, and Iran. For example, in 2009, actions in Moldova that included protests against the country’s Communist government were dubbed the “Twitter Revolution” (Gladwell, 2010, p. 42). However, some critics disputed whether Twitter or any other social media site truly impacts social and political change. Some critics said online activism is for the “faint of heart,” and referred to it as “slacktivism” and “clicktivism” (Gladwell, 2010, Morozov, 2009; White, 2010). For instance, Gladwell (2010) noted that the NAACP

organized the first sit-ins in the late 1950s that laid the groundwork for future protests. In 1960, after four Black North Carolina college students were denied service at a Woolworth lunch counter, a sit-in grew to 27 students the next day and eventually 70,000 across the South (Gladwell, 2010). “These events in the early sixties became a civil-rights war that engulfed the South for the rest of the decade—and it happened without e-mail, texting, Facebook, or Twitter” (Gladwell, 2010, p. 42). In reference to protests that occurred in 2009 during the Iranian presidential election, which also were dubbed “the Twitter Revolution,” Morozov (2009) used the term “slacktivism” to describe what he called “feel-good but useless Internet activism” (p. 13). Similarly, White (2010) used the term “clicktivism” to refer to Internet organizing such as distributing online petitions to spark social change (para. 2). White (2010) stated that such online activism discourages drastic action and will not result in transformation. “Clicktivists dilute their messages for mass appeal and make calls to actions that are easy, insignificant and impotent. Their sole campaign objective is to inflate participation percentages, not to overthrow the status quo. In the end, social change is marketed like a brand of toilet paper” (White, 2010, para. 2).

Despite the negative aspects of online activism that Gladwell (2010), Morozov (2009), and White (2010) pointed out, some scholars have found positive aspects of this form of collective action. For example, in a qualitative and quantitative meta-analysis of 38 studies with 166 effects, Boulianne (2009) found that the effects of Internet use on political and civic engagement are positive, but it is unclear how substantial these effects are. Similarly, Christensen (2011) found that even skeptics found at least a weak link between online efforts and offline political participation. Christensen (2011) further asserted that at its worst, online collective actions are harmless fun; however, at their

best, “they may help raise awareness about political issues and even mobilize citizens to take other forms of action outside the virtual world” (p. 7).

Collective Action

As it relates to mobilizing citizens for political and social change, collective action is a broad concept that can include a group or an individual whose actions are intended to be a part of a collective outcome (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002). Collective action is undertaken for a purpose “such as the advancement of a particular ideology or idea, or the political struggle with another group” (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002, pp. 290-291). These actions can be considered persuasive or confrontational. Persuasive collective action includes letter writing, lobbying, and petitioning, while confrontational collective actions include demonstrations, blockades, or sabotage (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002).

Some scholars have divided collective action into offline and online. Sayed (2011) contended that offline collective action includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

“(a) Joined or left a group about politics; (b) Started a social or political topic for discussion; (c) Posted links to news stories relating to a political or social cause; (d) Posted links to videos relating to a political or social cause; (e) Created or invited others to participate in an event related to a political or social cause; (f) Signed an e-mail or web petition; and (g) Forwarded a political e-mail or link to another person.” (p. 284)

Sayed (2011) further contended that online collective action includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

“(a) Expressed political opinion through mainstream media (written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine or called a live radio or TV show to express a political opinion); (b) Volunteered for a campaign or other political cause; (c) Organized or participated in organizing a political event; (d) Attended political meetings or speeches; (e) Participated in demonstrations or protests; (f) Displayed a political button, a sign or sticker; (g) Voted in election; and (h) Tried to influence how others would vote.” (p. 284)

Framing

Some scholars have used framing theory to explore how activist, advocacy, and social movement organizations frame their messages to encourage online and offline collective action. Civil rights organizations are included in one or all of the aforementioned types of organizations. Scholars have defined frames in various ways. Goffman (1974) defined frames this way: “I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events -- at least social ones -- and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify” (pp. 10-11). Entman (1993) asserted that to frame is “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). Entman (1993) also asserted that frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. McAdam (1996) defined framing as “the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (p. 6).

Nisbet (2009) wrote that unframed content does not exist, and all communicators use frames, whether consciously or unconsciously. “Frames are interpretive storylines that set a specific train of thought in motion, communicating why an issue might be a problem, who or what might be responsible for it, and what should be done about it” (Nisbet, 2009, p. 15). Examples include collective action frames and news frames.

As it relates to collective action frames, Benford and Snow (2000) were among the first scholars to define collective action frames and divide them into three categories relating to social movement organizations: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational. The authors maintained that collective action frames were constructed to help social movement supporters “negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 615).

With regard to the three categories of collective action frames, Hallahan (1999) defined a diagnostic frame as identifying issues that need to be addressed, a prognostic frame as proposing a solution to what needs to be done, and a motivational frame as a call to action to address the issue. Karagiannis (2009) noted that prognostic frames often include injustice frames, while diagnostic frames provide a utopian vision rather than a concrete plan, and motivational frames encourage participation and produce incentives for action. “Thus potential supporters of collective action must anticipate that their involvement and association with a SMO will help resolve the problem. When motivational frames become widely shared, the chances of collective action increase substantially” (Karagiannis, 2009, p. 375).

Collective action frames were applied to activism in a study about Hizballah, a group of Shia Muslims formed in 1982 to oppose Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon (Karagiannis, 2009). First, Hizballah used the diagnostic frame to interpret “Lebanon’s misfortunes as the result of Israeli occupation and the sectarian political system” (Karagiannis, 2009, p. 370). Next, Hizballah used a prognostic frame by proposing the construction of a new Islamic Republic. Finally, Hizballah used motivational frames as emotional rhetoric by invoking Shia narratives and religious symbolism to garner support (Karagiannis, 2009). “Although the framing approach alone does not explain every dimension of Hizballah’s popularity, it does provide a useful tool in understanding how the group has managed to transmit messages to selected audiences” (Karagiannis, 2009, p. 380).

Collective action frames -- diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational – also were used to analyze audience messages in a study about an online Guatemalan justice movement on Facebook that moved offline (Harlow, 2012). Results from in-depth interviews and content analysis of Facebook comments showed that 13% were diagnostic, 22% were prognostic, and 38% were motivational (Harlow, 2012).

While Harlow (2012) used frames to analyze social media messages on Facebook, Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) used frames to analyze newspaper and television stories. Specifically, the authors used five news frames to analyze the content of more than 2,500 newspaper stories and more than 1,500 television stories: conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and responsibility. An and Gower (2009) also used those news frames to analyze 247 news stories in the following newspapers: *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. Similarly, Muralidharan, Rasmussen,

Patterson, and Shin (2011) used the same news frames to analyze more than 4,000 Facebook posts and more than 6,600 Twitter tweets related to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

First, conflict news frames focus on problems between institutions, groups, and individuals, such as during elections (Semetko & Valkenberg, 2000). Second, human-interest frames apply a human face or emotion to a problem, issue, or event to keep the audience interested. Third, economic consequences frames focus on the how countries, regions, institutions, groups, and individuals will be affected economically. Fourth, morality frames place matters “in the contest of religious tenets or moral prescriptions” (Semetko & Valkenberg, 2000, p. 96). Fifth, responsibility frames attribute responsibility for a cause or solution to an individual, government, or group.

Tone

In discussing positive and negative framing, Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990) found that when a subject is highly involved in an issue, messages were more persuasive, subjects viewed them more favorably, and they were more willing to comply with the intentions when they were framed in a negative manner. Conversely, when a subject had low involvement in an issue, he or she had a more favorable opinion of an issue when it was framed positively. Furthermore, Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990) found that “more positive thoughts were generated when message framing was positive than when it was negative, and more negative thoughts were evoked when message framing was negative than when it was positive” (pp. 365-366). Whereas Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990) explored only positive and negative framing, other scholars, such as Muralidharan et al., (2011), studied positive, negative, and neutral tones in a

content analysis of Facebook and Twitter posts in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti. Regarding Twitter, Bruni, Francalanci, and Giacomazzi (2012) asserted the following: “Negative tweets have been shown to have a higher probability to be retweeted ...” (p. 287).

With regard to news stories, Dunaway (2013) and Druckman and Parkin (2005) examined positive, negative, and neutral tones in news stories regarding political campaigns. With regard to blogs, Bichard (2006) explored positive, negative, and neutral tones in analyzing the frames in blogs posted during a two-month period before an election.

Rhetoric

Rhetorical strategy and tactics can be used to frame social, political, and other issues in the online messages and encourage intended audiences to become actively engaged in affecting change. With regard to the rhetoric advocacy and similar organizations use on their websites, Sehmel (2002) pointed out that in a qualitative analysis of a Texas advocacy organization’s website, 27% of the content encouraged engagement. Therefore, Sehmel (2002) concluded that more research must be done on whether advocacy and other organizations achieve their goal of using rhetoric to frame online messages designed to encourage visitors to become politically active. Few studies have applied these rhetorical strategies and tactics to online messages. Sommerfeldt (2011) used identification in an analysis of email action alerts activist organizations used to facilitate collective action. Similarly, Eaton (2010) identified vilification of opponents as one of the rhetorical strategies an activist organization used in its action alert emails.

Three rhetorical strategies and tactics will be explored in this study: identification, protest-framing theory, and vilification. First, Burke's rhetorical strategy of identification has three categories: sympathy, antithesis, and unawareness (Burke, 1973). Second, protest-framing theory uses three rhetorical tactics: injustice, identity, and agency framing (Ward & Ostrom, 2006). Third, the rhetorical strategy of vilification (Vanderford, 1989) can be personal or categorical (Eaton, 2010).

With regard to identification, citing Burke, Sommerfeldt (2011) explained that it "is the rhetorical means by which people come to recognize others as sharing values and opinions. Organizations make use of rhetorical identifications to 'help' their publics realize that they share interests, values, and opinions with the organization" (p. 88). Burke (1973) further explained that identification helps to offset, or confront, division. "If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of a man's very essence" (Burke, 1969, p. 22). The rhetorical strategy of identification is divided into three categories: identification by sympathy, identification by antithesis, and identification by unawareness (Burke, 1973).

In terms of identification by sympathy, Burke (1973) wrote, "There is its use merely as a way to establish rapport with an audience by the stressing of sympathies held in common. This comes quite closest to downright persuasion" (p. 268). Examples include a baby-kissing politician and a traveler being greeted by a friendly stranger who is from his hometown or is in his line of business (Burke, 1973). Cheney (1983) described identification by sympathy as the common ground technique, "where the rhetor equates or links himself or herself with others in an overt manner" (p. 148). In an

organizational setting, Cheney (1983) stated that this technique asserted, “We are similar; we are all of the same substance” (p. 153).

With respect to identification by antithesis, it is described as “the most urgent form of congregation by separation. Here is union by some opposition shared in common” (Burke, 1973, p. 268). An example, according to the author, is racism. Cheney (1983) interpreted this as being “urged to ‘unite’ against a common ‘enemy,’ usually some threat from the environment” (p. 153). An example of the enemy is the federal government. “Identification with the collective membership of the organization is suggested not only as desirable (i.e., as the natural product of sharing values and goals) but also as *necessary* to oppose threats from outsiders” (Cheney, 1983, p. 154).

With respect to identification by unawareness, Kent and Taylor (2010), citing Burke, defined identification by unawareness as “the kind of implicit identification people feel as a result of being part of an organization, group, cause, or activity, and the implicit otherness/enmity people feel toward those who are a part of groups, causes, or activities, that compete with their organization's cultural views” (p. 58). Cheney (1983) interpreted identification by unawareness as “the assumed ‘we’”, and “they” is a symbol for an outsider (p. 153). In terms of “we,” Cheney (1983) explained that a common bond is taken for granted and there is no firm definition of the relationship. “The assumed ‘we’ is both a subtle and powerful identification strategy because it often goes unnoticed” (Cheney, 1983, p. 154).

In his content analysis of 111 e-mail action alerts of MoveOn.org, the Christian Coalition (CC) and the American Family Association (AFA), Sommerfeldt (2011) concluded that antithesis was the most common identification strategy, followed by

sympathy and unawareness. In terms of antithesis, Sommerfeldt (2011) asserted, “Statements of antithesis identified an enemy and proceeded to delineate a specific course of action to be taken against such an enemy” (p. 88). The author also found that sympathetic rhetorical statements “communicated the organization(s) shares beliefs with the reader, and not[es] that the organization is fighting for the defense of these beliefs” (Sommerfeldt, 2011, p. 88). Further, the author noted that statements expressing sympathy also were used to “galvanize member morale through highlighting organizational issues of concern or accomplishments” (Sommerfeldt, 2011, p. 88).

With regard to protest-framing theory, Ward and Ostrom (2006) wrote that it consists of the interlocking rhetorical tactics of injustice, identity, and agency subframes, which are used “to mobilize the public to act against an injustice” (p. 221).

Protest frames differ from regular frames because they “focus on the beliefs conveyed by one group to another” (Ward & Ostrom, 2006, p. 221). Citing Gamson (1992), the authors stated that “ ‘protest’ frames have been defined as sets of related beliefs that an individual or collective presents to others to influence their interpretation of the individual’s or collective’s grievances” (p. 221). These frames address three issues, or subframes: injustice, agency, and identity (Ward & Ostrom, 2006).

Injustice subframes seek to identify the problem. “To provoke public outrage, protesters are usually careful to specify the acts or conditions they regard as wrong. They then argue that these acts or conditions are unjust because they violate a social, political, or religious standard of morality,” (Ward & Ostrom, 2006, p. 221). Identity subframes identify who is responsible and often target leaders of groups or institutions, according to the authors. “Protesters often stereotype those they identify as responsible for an injustice

as not just mistaken or wrong but evil. Negative stereotypes help increase the audience's anger toward and intention to act against the target of the protest" (Ward & Ostrom, 2006, p. 221). With respect to agency subframes, the authors noted that some people may feel powerless against large organizations they are protesting against. "Protesters encourage individuals to realize their common identity and the potential power of collective action" (Ward & Ostrom, 2006, p. 221).

With respect to the rhetorical strategy of vilification, Vanderford (1989) asserted that it is spread throughout social movement rhetoric, appeals to committed activists and discredits adversaries. "Rather than differentiating opponents as good people with a difference of opinion, vilification delegitimizes them through characterizations of intentions, actions, purposes, and identities" (Vanderford, 1989, p. 166). The author further asserted that vilification has four forms and functions: (1) "vilification formulates a specific adversarial force"; (2) "vilification casts opponents in an exclusively negative light"; (3) "vilification attributes diabolical motives to foes"; and (4) "vilification magnifies the opponents' power" (Vanderford, 1989, pp. 166-167).

Eaton (2010) identified vilification of opponents as one of the rhetorical strategies MoveOn.org used in its action alert emails, thereby creating an "us versus them" dynamic. Eaton (2010) divided vilification of opponents into two types, personal vilification and categorical vilification. In personal vilification, an individual is characterized as evil, greedy, threatening, immoral or dangerous (Eaton, 2010). "Personal vilification ultimately helped MoveOn build a sense of community by rhetorically placing members in opposition to a cast of powerful and malevolent actors" (Eaton, 2010, p. 178). Categorical vilification targets an abstract group as a single-minded bloc, such as

Republicans (Eaton, 2010). “When combined with personal vilification, categorical vilification allowed MoveOn to claim the moral high ground and helped members clarify their own ideological positions by giving them an enemy against which to react” (Eaton, 2010, p. 179).

Media Types

Media types such as photos, videos, graphics, hashtags, and hyperlinks, which all were used in this study, are devices that can be used to help organizations frame their messages to facilitate online and offline collective action. These messages can be disseminated through Facebook posts and Twitter tweets, which can include hyperlinks to press releases, blog posts, official statements, and miscellaneous public relations material. In a study analyzing framing devices on environmental and activist organization websites, Zoch, Collins, Sisco, and Supa (2008) identified visual images as one of six framing devices. Zoch et al. (2008) defined visual images as photographs that have not been substantially modified, as well as videos, drawing/animation and animated text. For instance, videos must include moving real images, while drawing/animation must include the use of computer graphics (Zoch et al., 2008). Results showed that visual images were used in 14.6% of the activist organizations’ websites, making it the least used of the six framing device and the most surprising finding (Zoch et al., 2008).

Kwok and Yu (2013) also found a low use of visual images such as photos and videos in their analysis of Facebook posts in their study about restaurant business-to-consumer communications. For instance, in the 982 messages they analyzed based on photos, videos, hyperlinks, and text, about 5.5% contain videos (n=54) and nearly 29% contain photos (n=281) (Kwok & Yu, 2013). Notwithstanding, the authors found that

Facebook posts with photos and short statuses received more likes and comments than other posts (Kwok & Yu, 2013). Bruni et al. (2012) seemed to support this finding in the suggestion that organizations can get their messages more widely distributed across the Twittersphere if they incorporate photos and videos into their tweets. In a study of approximately two million tweets posted in July 2011, the researchers found support for their hypothesis that posts with hyperlinks to the above multimedia content garner more retweets than posts without such a link (Bruni et al., 2012).

Zoch et al. (2008) concluded that the activist organizations are failing to effectively use framing devices in general, and visual images in particular, at least on their websites.

Given that this is the one mass medium that not only allows activist groups to inexpensively disseminate their messages to a potentially unlimited audience, but also to achieve this dissemination while bypassing the filter of more traditional media, the failure to employ the full range of message framing devices is all the more troubling. (Zoch et al., 2008, p. 357)

Although some research has suggested that some organizations were not using visual images effectively, other research has suggested that they may be using at least one social media mechanism to their benefit. As it relates to hashtags, Bruns and Stieglitz (2013) noted that they help Twitter users and other website visitors without Twitter accounts to “follow real-time feeds of all message containing the hashtag” (p. 2). The authors also noted that hashtags “aid Twitter research by making communicative exchanges comparatively easy to track” (Bruns & Stieglitz, 2013, p. 2). Some quantitative content analysis studies involving Twitter include hashtags as a media type.

First, in an examination of 1,450 tweets using the #worldseries hashtag, Blaszkowski, Burch, Frederick, Clavio, and Walsh (2012) noted that hashtag use is increasing, as more corporations, organizations, and other entities are incorporating hashtags into their Twitter tweets to help promote their brands. Nonprofit organizations, including those that advocate civil rights, are among the entities using hashtags in their tweets. Second, in their study analyzing how organizations use Twitter to engage stakeholders in 140 characters or less, Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton (2012) found that 30% of 4,655 tweets used by 73 of the nation's largest nonprofit organizations used one or more hashtags. Nonetheless, 11 of these nonprofits never used hashtags, while 10 of them used them more than 40 times (Lovejoy et al., 2012). Regarding the use of Twitter hashtags for protests and other collective action, Segerberg and Bennett (2011) asserted that "a Twitter hashtag is just one of many digital media mechanisms operating to bring publics together to act in concerted or less organized ways" (p. 212).

Another one of those mechanisms that can benefit groups such as civil rights organizations is the hyperlink. Pilny and Shumate (2011) implied that hyperlinks can publicly influence social change offline. The authors conducted research on hyperlinks used on 181 nongovernmental organization (NGO) websites; their findings suggested that hyperlinks were an extension of offline collective action (Pilny & Shumate, 2011). In a quantitative content analysis study that included hyperlinks, Harlow (2012) analyzed the frequency of various types of hyperlinks used in Facebook comments. Harlow (2012) explored whether those hyperlinks connected to news sites with mainstream or non-mainstream news articles; social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter; or petition, blogs, and other sites (Harlow, 2012). Results showed that 50% of the hyperlinks

connected to news articles and 26% went to social media sites (Harlow, 2012). Additionally, in a previously noted study related to Facebook and hyperlinks, Kwok and Yu (2013) found that out of nearly 1,000 Facebook messages, more than 31% included hyperlinks; however, another study related to Twitter found more than double that amount. Lovejoy et al. (2012) found that 68% (n=3,170) tweets contained hyperlinks, while only one organization never used hyperlinks. In another related study, Waters, Burnett, Lamm, and Lucas (2009) analyzed the content of Facebook profiles of 275 legally incorporated nonprofit organizations to study how they use the social networking site to advance their programs and mission. Waters et al. (2009) found that most did not use hyperlinks to provide campaign summaries or post press releases to publicize their causes.

Many advocacy organizations use press releases to communicate their messages about social and political issues to the media. However, with the advent of technology, organizations can bypass the news media gate-keeping process by posting press releases on their websites, as well as via hyperlinks on their Facebook and Twitter accounts. As a result, these organizations can disseminate their messages to larger audiences without relying on the media to do so. Additionally, key messages in blog posts on an organization's website primarily meant for target audiences are being picked up by the news media and distributed to even larger audiences.

As it relates to press releases and the news media, Perkins (2005) used qualitative framing analysis to study NAACP messages during the 2000 presidential election. The author then compared those messages to nearly 400 stories published in six mainstream newspapers – two national and four local in Florida cities with the largest African

American populations -- after the election. The units of analysis included 10 press releases and 388 news articles, including 188 about race and 200 about the election in general. The analysis shows the frames the press releases created were advocacy; Black voter disenfranchisement; “unfair, illegal, immoral and undemocratic” voting practices; unresponsive government, and a “divisive” administration (Perkins, 2005, p. 68). The author found that NAACP officials were rarely quoted in the stories, and newspapers did not focus on minority voter concerns. However, the author acknowledges as a limitation that she is unclear whether the newspapers received and/or used the NAACP’s press releases. Perkins (2005) concludes:

The publications in this study devoted less news space to the frames that the NAACP advanced and to minority voting issues than to other problems. In so doing, the mainstream media seemed to ignore the NAACP’s significant, disturbing message that affected all citizens: Black voters had been disenfranchised. (p. 69)

As it relates to blogs, in an effort to determine how blogs are used to spread the word and raise awareness about important political and social issues, McKenna (2007) pointed out that the bloggers studied “harnessed the Internet to champion their cause, to network with others, to influence political elites, to inform the public, and, perhaps, to make real change” (p. 210).

McKenna (2007) found that these bloggers participate in six activities, one of which is framing arguments (p. 209). As it relates to the aforementioned activity, the author noted, “They learn how to word their arguments to gain the most support of the public ... They quickly learn what words and ideas resonate with the public and what

falls flat” (McKenna, 2007, p. 220). As a result, the bloggers received mainstream media coverage, an important step in impacting public policy (McKenna, 2007). The author noted that if the issue were just discussed in the blogosphere but not the news media, change likely would not occur (McKenna, 2007).

With regard to blogs and the news media, Farrell and Drezner (2007) argued that blogs help frame political debates and help people better understand current events. Blogs also affect news media reporting through the frames bloggers choose (Farrell & Drezner, 2007). “Just as the media can provide a collective interpretive frame for politicians, blogs can create a menu of interpretive frames for the media to appropriate” (Farrell & Drezner, 2007, p. 22).

CHAPTER III

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the aforementioned literature review, the following hypotheses and research questions were developed for the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012.

H1: There will be a significant difference in the type of collective action frame used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

The rationale for this hypothesis was based on three studies. First, Benford and Snow (2000) divided collective action into three categories: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational. Second, Hallahan (1999) defined those three categories. Third, Harlow (2012) found that motivational, or a call to action to address a problem, was the dominant collective action frame, followed by diagnostic and prognostic, in an analysis of Facebook posts. Chi-square or likelihood ratio testing was used to test Hypothesis 1.

H2: There will be a significant difference in the type of news frame used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

RQ1: What is the type of news frame used by regional and national newspapers in their news stories referencing the involvement of the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC?

The rationale was based on studies by Semetko and Valkenberg (2000), An and Gower (2009), and Muralidharan et al. (2011). First, Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) found that attribution of responsibility was the most common type of news frame in newspaper and television stories, followed by conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality. An and Gower (2009) made similar findings that reflected

this order: attribution of responsibility, economic, conflict, human interest, and morality. Finally, Muralidharan et al. (2011) found that attribution of responsibility was the dominant news frame on Twitter, while morality was dominant on Facebook. Broadcast news stories were not included in this study because the relevant literature primarily referenced newspaper stories. Hypothesis 2 used chi-square or likelihood ratio testing, while Research Question 1 used frequencies.

H3: There will be a significant difference in the type of tone used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

RQ2: What is the type of tone used by regional and national newspapers in their news stories referencing the involvement of the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC?

The rationale was based on three studies. First, Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990) found that more positive thoughts were generated when a message was framed positively. Second, Muralidharan et al., (2011) found that nonprofit organizations used more positive emotions, while news media outlets used more negative ones. Third, Bichard (2006) found that blog posts made prior to an election used significantly more neutral tones, followed by negative and positive. Hypothesis 3 used chi-square or likelihood ratio testing, and Research Question 2 used frequencies.

RQ3: What rhetorical strategies and tactics do the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC use in their press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials?

The rationale for this research question was based on five studies. The first and second studies were by Burke (1973) and Cheney (1983), who broke down the identification rhetorical strategy into three categories: sympathy, antithesis, and

unawareness. The third study was by Sommerfeldt (2011), who found that antithesis was the most common identification strategy in email action alerts. In the fourth study, Ward and Ostrom (2006) broke down the protest-framing theory rhetorical tactics as injustice, identity, and agency. In the fifth study, Eaton (2010) used vilification to analyze email action alerts as personal or categorical. Research Question 3 was qualitative.

RQ4: How often do the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials about the case reference joint efforts between one another?

RQ4₁: How often do regional and national newspaper articles mentioning the NAACP, NUL, NAN, or COC and the case reference joint efforts between one another?

The rationale for Research Question 4 and Research Question 4₁ was based on the author's close reading of all of the units of analysis in this study. Research Question 4 and Research Question 4₁ were qualitative.

RQ5: Is there a significant difference in how often the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC refer to offline or online collective action in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts?

The rationale for this research question was based on a study by Sayed (2011), who found that activists who participate in online collective action were most likely to be engaged offline. Chi-square or likelihood ratio testing was used to answer Research Question 5.

RQ6: What are the primary media types the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC use in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts about the case?

The rationale for this research question was based on studies by Zoch et al. (2008), who found that visual images, including photos, videos, and graphics, were the least used framing device in a study of activist organization websites. It also was based on the work of Kwok and Yu (2013), Blaszkowski et al. (2012), Bruni et al. (2012), and Lovejoy et al. (2012), who conducted research on either hyperlinks, hashtags, or both. Research Question 6 used frequencies.

RQ7: To which websites do the hyperlinks in the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts of each organization primarily connect?

The rationale for this research question was based on Harlow (2012), who found that hyperlinks used in Facebook comments went to news articles followed by social media sites. It also was based on the work of Pilny and Shumate (2011), who suggested that hyperlinks were an extension of offline collective action. Research Question 7 used frequencies.

RQ8: Did any NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC messages posted in the Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials about the case contribute to any mainstream media coverage in national or regional newspapers?

The rationale for Research Question 8 was based on the researcher's in-depth analysis of all of the samples used in this study. This research question was qualitative.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

To test the hypotheses and answer the research questions, the researcher conducted quantitative content analysis on the Facebook posts and Twitter tweets of the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC related to the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012. In addition, the researcher conducted qualitative content analysis on press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials related to the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC and the aforementioned cases. Finally, newspaper articles were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Krippendorff (2013) defined content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (p. 24).

The individual Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, press releases, official statements, blog posts, miscellaneous public relations materials, and newspaper articles served as units of analysis in this study, which employed a nonprobability purposive sampling technique for some samples. A combined total of 1,334 samples were analyzed in this study for the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012, including 87.1 % (n=1,162) quantitative and 2.9% (n=172) qualitative; newspaper articles are included in the qualitative count.

Trayvon Martin Case

Sampling Frame

The time period was February 26, 2012, the day Trayvon Martin was fatally shot, through April 11, 2012, the day George Zimmerman was arrested for his murder. This time period was significant because most online and offline collective action regarding

this case took place then, as thousands of people across the country became actively engaged in demanding that police arrest Zimmerman and charge him with Martin's murder.

Samples

The press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials came directly from the official websites of each organization. The Facebook posts and Twitter tweets came directly from the certified accounts of each organization bearing the organizations' logos and linking to their official websites. Additionally, the samples include tweets from the organizations' leaders, staff members and related websites, if those tweets appeared on the Twitter feeds of the organizations' certified accounts.

The newspaper articles came from a search of Lexis Nexis Academic, ProQuest Newsstand, or the archives of the newspapers' official websites. The names or acronyms of the organizations, the names of their leaders, and the name *Trayvon Martin* were considered key words. The three national newspapers used in this study, the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*, rank among the top 10 newspapers in the nation with the largest circulation (Alliance for Audited Media [AAM], 2013), focus on politics and public policy, and have a reputation for being a key source for decision makers. This study also included two regional newspapers, *The Sanford Herald* and the *Orlando Sentinel*. First, *The Sanford Herald* is located in Sanford, Florida, the city where the fatal shooting occurred. A search of the archives on *The Sanford Herald's* official website located the newspaper articles used in this study because they were not available on LexisNexis Academic or ProQuest Newsstand. Second, the *Orlando Sentinel* is

located in Orlando, Florida; Sanford is a suburb of Orlando. In addition, the *Orlando Sentinel* is a Tier One newspaper and is considered one of the top major metropolitan dailies in Florida (AAM, 2013). A search of ProQuest Newsstand located the articles because they were not available via LexisNexis Academic.

For the Trayvon Martin case, this study analyzed a combined total of 348 samples that included Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, press releases, official statements, blog posts, miscellaneous public relations materials, and newspaper articles. The breakdown included 74.4% (n=259) quantitative and 25.6% (n=89) qualitative samples.

Two coders analyzed a total of 259 quantitative samples pertaining solely to the Trayvon Martin case. With regard to Twitter, the organizations posted 706 Twitter tweets during the sampling frame. Of that number, the coders analyzed 194 tweets related to the Trayvon Martin case after redundant, unrelated and miscellaneous ones were deleted. With regard to Facebook, the organizations made 147 posts during the sampling frame. Of that total, the coders examined 65 Facebook posts after deleting ones that did not pertain to the Trayvon Martin case. Table 1 on the following page provides a breakdown by organization.

The Twitter tweets and Facebook posts included at least one of the following key words: Trayvon Martin, George Zimmerman, Sanford, Florida, stand your ground, shoot first, and kill at will laws. The tweets also included any of the following Twitter hashtags: #TrayvonMartin, #Trayvon, #Justice4Trayvon, #JusticeforTrayvon, #MillionHoodies, #ALEC, #NRA, #stopALECNRA4Trayvon, #standyourgroundlaws and #tweetupfortrayvon. These key words and hashtags were selected after examining all of

the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts in the sampling frame and recognizing commonalities among tweets and posts related to the Trayvon Martin case.

Table 1

Trayvon Martin Case Quantitative Units of Analysis

Organization	Twitter tweets	Facebook posts
NAACP	47	20
NUL	41	14
NAN	15	11
COC	91	20
Total	194	65

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

A total of 89 qualitative samples were coded that specifically related to the Trayvon Martin case. With respect to the samples on the organizations' websites that related only to the aforementioned case, there were seven press releases, 12 official statements, 11 blog posts, and one miscellaneous public relations material. These samples reference Trayvon Martin as key words. Table 2 on the following page further illustrates these units of analysis.

Table 2

Trayvon Martin Case Qualitative Units of Analysis

Organization	Press releases	Official statements	Blog posts	Misc. PR pieces
NAACP	3	3	0	0
NUL	4	0	0	1
NAN	0	2	0	0
COC	0	7	11	0
Total	7	12	11	1

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

With respect to samples in regional and national newspapers, 58 newspaper articles were included in this study. The newspaper articles include Trayvon Martin as a key word along with at least one of the following: Trayvon Martin, NAACP, Ben Jealous, National Urban League, Marc Morial, National Action Network, Reverend Al Sharpton, ColorOfChange.org, and Rashad Robinson. Table 3 on the following page breaks down the newspaper articles used by regional and national.

Table 3

Trayvon Martin Case Newspaper Articles

Newspapers	Articles
National	26
Regional	32
Total	58

Election 2012

Sampling Frame

The time period was from September 7, 2012, the day after the Democratic National Convention, to November 6, 2012, which was Election Day. The time period was significant because both primary presidential candidates had been officially nominated, and potential voters knew the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates for whom they could cast their ballots.

Samples

The press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials came directly from the official websites of each organization. The Facebook posts and Twitter tweets came directly from the certified accounts of each organization bearing the organizations' logos and linking to their official websites. Additionally, this study included in the sample tweets from the organizations' leaders, staff members and related sites if those tweets appeared on the Twitter pages of the organizations' certified Twitter accounts.

The newspaper articles came from a search of LexisNexis Academic, ProQuest Newsstand, or the archives of the newspapers' official websites. The names or acronyms of the organizations, the names of their leaders, and the word *vote* were considered key words.

The national newspapers were the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. The regional newspapers were the *Columbus Dispatch* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The *Columbus Dispatch* is located in Columbus, the capital city of Ohio, where state officials, either elected or appointed, make most decisions that impact voters and others. For instance, COC launched a campaign to encourage Secretary of State Jon Husted to restore weekend early voting hours, and other civil rights organizations also enacted voting-related efforts in Ohio. This study used the archives on the newspaper's official website to search for articles because the newspaper was not available on LexisNexis Academic or ProQuest Newsstand. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* is one of the top 10 largest newspapers in the country (AAM, 2013) and the largest newspaper in Pennsylvania, where some of the organizations focused efforts to block the state's voter ID law. ProQuest Newsstand was used in the search because the newspaper was not available via LexisNexis Academic.

For Election 2012, this study analyzed a combined total of 986 samples, including 91.6% (n=903) quantitative and 8.4% (n=83) qualitative. The qualitative samples also included nine qualitative samples that also referenced the Trayvon Martin case. A total of 903 quantitative samples were coded pertaining solely to voting issues in Election 2012. Table 4 on the following page describes the samples by organization and units of analysis. With regard to Twitter, the organizations posted 2,038 Twitter tweets during the

sampling frame. Of that number, 802 tweets related to Election 2012 were coded after redundant, unrelated and miscellaneous ones were deleted. With regard to Facebook, the organizations made 154 posts during the sampling frame. Of that total, 101 Facebook posts were coded after the deletion of those that did not pertain to voting issues encountered during Election 2012.

Table 4

Election 2012 Quantitative Units of Analysis

Organization	Twitter tweets	Facebook posts
NAACP	267	42
NUL	284	24
NAN	84	9
COC	167	28
Total	802	101

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

The Twitter tweets and Facebook posts contained at least one of the following key words: vote, voter, voting, voter, election, polls, and ballots. The Twitter tweets also included any of the following hashtags because they directly related to the key issues the organizations raised regarding voting: #BETvote, #GOTV, #ivotebecause, #blackvote, #thisismyvote, #youthvote, #voterid, #restorethevotes, #stayinline, #unityvote, #worthit, #election2012, #electionday, #vote2012. #voteready, #operationlemonade and #occupythevote and #onevotematters and #debate.

A total of 82 samples were coded qualitatively related to voting issues in Election 2012, Table 5 below illustrates these samples by organization and unit of analysis. These samples include 16 press releases, 10 official statements, 36 blog posts, and nine miscellaneous public relations materials. These units all have voting, vote, voter, or election as key words, along with the names of the organization or its leader.

Table 5

Election 2012 Qualitative Units of Analysis

Organizations	Press releases	Official statements	Blog posts	Misc. PR pieces
NAACP	3	2	4	0
NUL	5	0	0	9 ³
NAN	2	0	0	0
COC	6 ¹	8 ²	32	0
Total	17	11	36	12

Notes. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org. ¹=number includes 4 coded as both; ²=number includes 1 coded as both; ³=number includes 3 coded as both.

As it relates to newspaper articles, 11 were included in this study. In addition to vote, voting or election as a key word, the newspaper articles also included the following key words: NAACP, Ben Jealous, National Urban League, Marc Morial, National Action Network, Reverend Al Sharpton, ColorOfChange.org, and Rashad Robinson. Table 6 on the following page includes a breakdown.

Table 6

Election 2012 Newspaper Articles

Newspapers	Articles
National	5
Regional	6
Total	11

Reliability

Screen shots were taken of the organizations' official Twitter and Facebook pages during the sampling frame and saved in PDF format. Press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials were saved as PDFs from the organizations' official websites.

The researcher and two other coders were involved in the quantitative portion of this study. The first coder was an undergraduate social science major who was paid \$60. The second coder holds a Ph.D. in mass communication; this coder did not receive compensation. For the Trayvon Martin case, the researcher and the first coder participated in at least 10 hours of training over a two-day period. They also conducted a pre-test, identified and corrected areas of disagreement, and revised some variable operational definitions. Intercoder reliability was conducted using Cohen's Kappa for an overall rating of 86.22%, exceeding the acceptable level of 80%. The first coder analyzed 75% of the sample, while the researcher analyzed the remaining 25%. For Election 2012, the researcher and a second coder conducted a pre-test and held a meeting to identify

areas of disagreement. Cohen's Kappa was 87%. The second coder analyzed 10% of the sample, while the researcher analyzed the remaining 90% of all of the data. The first and second coder used Microsoft Excel spreadsheets as coding sheets. The researcher uploaded their data directly into SPSS Statistics 21 for Mac to compile and analyze all of the statistics used in this study.

Intercoder reliability was not conducted on the qualitative portion of this story. The researcher was the sole coder.

Coding Categories

To test the first hypothesis, collective action frames were coded as diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational as identified in Benford and Snow (2000). For the second hypothesis and first research question, news frames were coded as conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and responsibility based on Semetko and Valkenberg (2000). The third hypothesis and the second research question related to tone were coded as positive, negative, or neutral.

The third research question was divided into three parts. First, the rhetorical strategy of identification was coded as sympathy, antithesis, and unawareness based on Burke (1973) and Cheney (1983). Second, the rhetorical tactic of protest-framing theory was coded as injustice, identity, and agency as illustrated in Ward and Ostrom (2006). Third, the rhetorical strategy of vilification was coded as personal or categorical based on the work of Eaton (2010). Coding was done based on a close reading of the press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials.

To answer the fourth set of research questions, each sample was thoroughly read to identify any references to leaders of each organization appearing together to participate

in events such as rallies, marches, and town hall meetings. To address the fifth research question, the Facebook posts and Twitter tweets were coded as offline, online, both, or neither. To answer the sixth research question, the samples were coded either yes or no based on whether they included a photo, video, graphic, hyperlink, hashtag, or all of them. To address the seventh research question, each hyperlink included in the Facebook post or Twitter tweet was clicked on and coded either yes or no based on whether it connected to the organization's own site, a news site, a social media site, or another organization's site. To answer the final research question, first, each newspaper article was closely read to see if it used quotes or cited as a source Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials. Second, each of the aforementioned samples the organizations created was closely read to verify whether the quote or citation was accurate.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

The hypotheses and research questions referenced in the following results were denoted by (a) for the Trayvon Martin case (H_a and R_a) and (b) for Election 2012 (H_b and R_b).

Trayvon Martin Case

The Trayvon Martin case provided opportunities for the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC to encourage their members and supporters to engage in collective action. Therefore, the first hypothesis examined differences in the type of collective action frames the organizations used to present their messages on Twitter and Facebook.

H_{1b} , H_{2b} , H_3 , RQ_{1b} , and RQ_{2b} were analyzed quantitatively.

H_{1a} : There will be a significant difference in the type of collective action frame used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

In the Trayvon Martin case, because at least one cell had a count of less than five, a chi-square test could not be performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the collective action frame and the organization. As a result, a likelihood ratio test was calculated as an alternative, revealing a significant difference ($\chi^2(6) = 29.09$, $p < .001$, two-tailed) and thereby supporting H_{1a} . The organizations were the independent variables, while the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts were the dependent variables. The variables were all nominal. Overall, the organizations were most likely to use the diagnostic collective action frame (47.9%, $n=124$) followed by motivational (39.8%, $n=103$) and prognostic (12.4%, $n=32$) frames. NUL, NAN, and COC all were

most likely to use the diagnostic frame (50.9%, n=28; 61.5%, n=16, 45.9%, n=51), while the NAACP was most likely to use the motivational frame (52.2%, n=35). Table 7 below lists a full comparison.

Table 7

Trayvon Martin Collective Action Frame by Organization

	Diagnostic	Prognostic	Motivational
NAACP	29 (43.3%)	3 (4.5%)	35 (52.2%)
NUL	28 (50.9%)	1 (1.8%)	26 (47.3%)
NAN	16 (61.5%)	2 (7.7%)	8 (30.8%)
COC	51 (45.9%)	26 (23.4%)	34 (30.6%)

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

The organizations used diagnostic frames when they referred to specific issues that needed to be addressed, such as racial profiling, the so-called stand-your-ground laws and groups that back such legislation, such as the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and the National Rifle Association (NRA). For example, an NUL tweet stated, “The tragedy of #TrayvonMartin has shed light on the regressive and destructive agenda of ALEC, says @MARCMORIAL #stopALECNRA4TRAYVON.” The organizations relied on motivational frames when they encouraged their Twitter followers to stand for justice, share their stories online, attend rallies and marches, and support Trayvon Martin’s family. The NAACP used a motivational frame when it tweeted, “Join Chairman @roslynbrock, Pres. @BenJealous & the NAACP in Sanford this Sat. for a

march & rally for #TrayvonMartin.” The organizations used prognostic frames when they referred to ways to end violence and sever ties with groups that support the Castle Doctrine, which they described as the stand-your-ground, kill-at-will or shoot-first law. For example, the COC tweeted this: “BREAKING: CoC members and allies are calling on State Farm, Johnson & Johnson and McDonald’s to stop funding ALEC.”

In the Trayvon Martin case, a likelihood ratio test also revealed a significant difference between the collective action frame and Twitter tweets and Facebook posts ($\chi^2(2) = 20.64, p < .001$, two-tailed). Twitter tweets most likely used the diagnostic collective action frame (53.1%, n=103), while Facebook posts primarily used the motivational frame (63.1%, n=41). Table 8 below illustrates the differences in the collective action frames.

Table 8

Trayvon Martin Case Collective Action Frame by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

	Diagnostic	Prognostic	Motivational
Twitter tweet	103 (53.1%)	29 (14.9%)	62 (32.0%)
Facebook post	21 (32.3%)	3 (4.6%)	41 (63.1%)

An example of a Facebook post that used a motivational frame came from the NAACP: “A week ago we asked you to share your thoughts and prayers for Trayvon Martin, or the Trayvon in your life. Read the words supporters across the country used to remember Trayvon, then share with your friends and family.”

The Trayvon Martin case also provided opportunities for the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC to use news frames to strengthen the messages their members and allies read on Twitter and Facebook. The second hypothesis addressed the five types of news frames the organizations used via social media, as well as the news frames newspapers used in covering the involvement of the four civil rights organizations in the Trayvon Martin case.

H2_a: There will be a significant difference in the type of news frame used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

Because some cells contained zero data in the Trayvon Martin case, a chi-square test was not performed to compare the organizations with the news frame. The alternative likelihood ratio test revealed a significant difference between the news frame and the organization ($\chi^2(6) = 26.53, p < .001$, two-tailed); therefore, H2_a was supported.

Collectively, the organizations most likely used conflict (44.8%, n=116) followed by the human interest (29.7%, n=77) and responsibility (25.5%, n=66) news frames. None of the organizations used the morality or economic consequences news frames in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts. Individually, NUL and COC primarily used the conflict news frame (50.9%, n=28; 52.3%, n=58); however, the NAACP and NAN primarily used the human-interest frame (43.3%, n=29; 53.8%, n=14). Table 9 on the following page lists a full comparison of news frame by organization.

Table 9

Trayvon Martin Case News Frame by Organization

Organization	Conflict	Human Interest	Economic Consequences	Morality	Responsibility
NAACP	20 (29.9%)	29 (43.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (26.9%)
NUL	28 (50.9%)	15 (27.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (21.8%)
NAN	10 (38.5%)	14 (53.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.7%)
COC	58 (52.3%)	19 (17.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	34 (30.6%)

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

An example of a conflict frame the NUL used in a tweet read, “Protest ‘Kill at Will’ Laws that Are Killing Innocent People and Protecting Vigilantes.” A tweet with a human-interest frame the NAACP used stated, “Today marks one month since #Trayvon was killed. At 7:30 PM EST-Trayvon’s time of death-please make this your avatar.” This tweet also engaged the public to honor Martin’s memory to keep them interested in the case. A tweet using a responsibility frame on NAN’s Twitter feed from Reverend Al Sharpton’s @PoliticsNation read, “FL Special Prosecutor Corey has decided not to use a Grand Jury in the #Trayvon shooting. What does it mean?...” This is an example of the responsibility frame because Angela Corey was responsible for helping to resolve the issue of bringing Trayvon Martin’s killer to justice.

In the Trayvon Martin case, because some cells contained zero data, a chi-square test was not performed to compare the Twitter tweets with the Facebook posts. The

alternative likelihood ratio test reflected a significant difference ($\chi^2 (2) = 33.38, p < .001$, two-tailed). Twitter tweets used the conflict news frame (54.6%, n=106), while Facebook posts primarily used the human-interest news frame (44.7%, n=31). Table 10 below illustrates the differences.

Table 10

Trayvon Martin Case News Frame by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

Organization	Conflict	Human Interest	Economic Consequences	Morality	Responsibility
Twitter tweet	106 (54.6 %)	46 (23.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	42 (21.6%)
Facebook post	10 (15.4%)	31 (47.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	24 (36.9%)

An example of a NAN Facebook post that used a human-interest frame mentioned that Reverend Al Sharpton would give keynote remarks at a national rally for justice along with special guest host Michael Baisden, a nationally syndicated radio show at the time. Additionally, the post mentioned that the parents of Trayvon Martin, attorney Benjamin Crump, and lawyers for Martin's family, would be in attendance.

RQ1_a: What is the type of news frame used by regional and national newspapers in their news stories referencing the involvement of the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC?

Of the 58 regional and national newspaper articles analyzed in the Trayvon Martin case, overall they primarily employed a conflict news frame (43.1%, n=25), followed by human interest (32.8%, n=19), responsibility (17.2%, n=10), economic

consequences (5.2%, n=3), and morality, (1.7%, n=1). Table 11 below provides a breakdown of the newspaper articles by regional and national and news frame.

Table 11

Trayvon Martin Case News Frame by Newspaper Article

News Frame	Regional	National
Conflict	11 (44.0%)	14 (56.0%)
Human Interest	12 (60.0%)	8 (40.0%)
Economic Consequences	3 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Morality	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Responsibility	6 (60.0%)	4 (40.0%)

In terms of conflict in a regional newspaper article, *The Sanford Herald* focused on the belief of local residents that Trayvon Martin “serves as another example of a police department that does little investigation into the death of a black man” (Delinski, 2012b, n.p.). The article paraphrased Seminole County NAACP Branch President Turner Clayton saying the community was demanding that the U.S. Department of Justice take over the local police department and that Police Chief Bill Lee resign. The community also was demanding the arrest of Zimmerman, who Lee asserted acted in self-defense. Clayton said, “Even though the evidence speaks for itself, we fail to see why the Sanford Police Department can’t hear what is being spoken” (Delinski, 2012b, n.p.).

With respect to the conflict frame in a national newspaper article, a *USA TODAY* article focused on a video police released that some viewers said contradicted George

Zimmerman's account of shooting and killing Trayvon Martin "after the teenager punched him in the nose, pushed him to the ground and slammed his head against the pavement" (Leger & Eversley, 2012, p. 3A). According to the article, "Shots of Zimmerman's head and face reveal no obvious cuts or gashes, but at one point, a police officer inspects the back of his head" (Leger & Eversley, 2012, p. 3A). Citing Current TV, the article contended that NUL President Marc Morial stated that the police video "impeaches the story that George Zimmerman is floating that somehow he was injured" (Leger & Eversley, 2012, p. 3A).

In terms of human interest, some newspaper reporters wrote personality profiles of key players in the Trayvon Martin case. For example, with respect to regional newspapers, the *Orlando Sentinel* featured Sanford, Florida, Mayor Jeff Triplett, Sanford City Manager Norton Bonaparte Jr., Zimmerman's lawyer Craig Sonner, and attorney Benjamin Crump, who represents Trayvon Martin's parents. The *Orlando Sentinel* also singled out NAN's president in a profile: "Sharpton has become the latest and most-high profile voice to emerge in the case after a slew of community activists, pastors and legislators came forward decrying the police investigation" (Hernández, 2012, n.p.).

With respect to the human-interest frame in a national newspaper article, a *New York Times* piece focused on President Barack Obama's personal statement about the Trayvon Martin case, "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon," (Calmes & Cooper, 2012, p. 1A) and quoted NAN's Sharpton praising the aforementioned and following Obama comments:

"I can only imagine what these parents are going through. And when I think about this boy, I think about my own kids," Mr. Obama said. "Every parent in

America,” he added, “should be able to understand why it is absolutely imperative that we investigate every aspect of this and that everybody pulls together -- federal, state and local -- to figure out exactly how this tragedy happened.”

(Calmes & Cooper, 2012, p. 1A)

In terms of the responsibility frame in a regional newspaper article, an *Orlando Sentinel* piece discussed the commitment of NAACP, NUL, and Sanford, Florida, officials to take responsibility for ensuring that justice was served in the case. The article mentioned that Sanford Mayor Jeff Triplett “pledged a full review of the investigation, even if he has to pay for it himself” (Prieto, 2012, n.p.) during a meeting at the Allen Chapel AME Church.

With respect to a national newspaper article with a responsibility frame, *The Washington Post* reported on a teach-in at Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., that explored the responsibility of the media, law enforcement, and the justice system related to the Trayvon Martin case (Williams, 2012). A panel at the teach-in included NAACP President Benjamin Jealous. The article mentioned that during the event, news broke that was directly related to attributing responsibility for a solution to an individual in law enforcement: “...a special prosecutor in Florida had declined to take the Zimmerman investigation before a grand jury” (Williams, 2012, p. 5B).

With respect to the economic consequences frame, a few regional newspaper articles from the *Orlando Sentinel* focused on economic sanctions and business boycotts that NAN’s Reverend Al Sharpton reportedly suggested on March 30, 2012, but later disputed. NAACP President Benjamin Jealous said civil rights leaders had not discussed a boycott in Sanford, Florida, or Seminole County, Florida, and Sharpton never called for

one. However, Sharpton attempted to clarify the issue by stating that he was not talking about a boycotting businesses in Sanford; instead, he was referring to boycotting businesses financing the stand-your-ground-law campaign (Halboedeker, 2012). Jealous noted that neither the NAACP nor NAN had planned an announcement about boycotting business that supported the law (Halboedeker, 2012).

The four civil rights organizations and the newspapers analyzed in this study could write their online messages and craft their articles in such a tone that could stir a particular emotion. The third hypothesis addressed tone.

H3_a: There will be a significant difference in the type of tone used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

For the Trayvon Martin case, a chi-square test was not used because at least one cell had a count less than five. The alternative likelihood ratio test revealed no significant difference between the tone and the organization ($\chi^2(6) = 13.09, p=.04$, two-tailed); therefore, H3_a was not supported. Collectively, the organizations most likely used a neutral tone (62.9%, n=163) followed by positive then negative (22.4%, n=58, 14.7%, n=38). When analyzed individually, the organizations used a neutral followed by positive and negative tone. Table 12 on the following page lists a full comparison of tone by organization.

An example of a tweet with a positive tone posted on the NAACP's Twitter feed came from @roslynbrock: "I applaud the special prosecutor for seeking justice in the #TrayvonMartin case. Now we must remain vigilant that justice will prevail." The COC posted an example of a tweet with a negative tone that proclaimed, "If racial profiling and

tolerance and ignorance is the gunpowder then alec and its series of laws is the match!
 @rashadrobinson.” NAN posted a neutral tweet that read, “STATEMENT FROM
 @thereval REGARDING THE PROSECUTORS DECISION TO SKIP THE GRAND
 JURY IN THE TRAYVON MARTIN CASE...”

Table 12

Trayvon Martin Case Tone by Organization

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
NAACP	12 (17.9%)	5 (7.5%)	50 (74.6%)
NUL	16 (29.1%)	11 (20.0%)	28 (50.9%)
NAN	6 (23.1%)	1 (3.8%)	19 (73.1%)
COC	24 (21.6%)	21 (18.9%)	66 (59.5%)

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

In the Trayvon Martin case, both Twitter tweets and Facebook posts most likely used a neutral tone (63.9%, n=124; 60.0%, n=39). Table 13 on the following page provides a description.

NUL posted an example of a Facebook post with a neutral tone that read, “Marc Morial discussing the Trayvon martin case on CNN’s ‘Starting Point with Soledad O’Brien’ this morning.”

Table 13

Trayvon Martin Case Tone by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Twitter tweet	36 (18.6%)	34 (17.5%)	124 (63.9%)
Facebook post	22 (33.8%)	4 (6.2%)	39 (60.0%)

RQ2_a: What is the type of tone used by regional and national newspapers in their news stories referencing the involvement of the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC?

In the Trayvon Martin case, the combined regional and national newspaper articles primarily used a neutral tone (49.2%, n=29), followed by negative (30.5%, n=18) then positive (20.3%, n=12). When analyzed individually, regional and national newspapers also used neutral, negative, and positive tones in the same order. Table 14 below further illustrates the order by newspaper type.

Table 14

Trayvon Martin Case Tone by Newspaper Type

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Regional Newspaper	7 (21.2%)	10 (30.3%)	16 (48.5%)
National Newspaper	5 (19.2%)	8 (30.8%)	13 (50.0%)

With regard to neutral tone and regional newspaper articles, *The Sanford Herald* wrote five sentences/paragraphs with the basic who, what, where, when, and why and no

direct quotes from any officials from the four civil rights organizations in this study; however, it mentioned Reverend Al Sharpton of NAN and the NAACP's Benjamin Jealous and included NUL's Marc Morial in a photo along with two other nationally known civil rights leaders.

In terms of a neutral tone in a national newspaper article, a *New York Times* article discussed how accused murderer George Zimmerman attended a meeting that explained that neighborhood watch members should not use guns. It also summarized issues such as the police chief stepping aside, the Sanford, Florida, City Commission's no-confidence vote, the pending grand jury review, and the Department of Justice opening an investigation. It concluded with information about Reverend Al Sharpton leading a rally at a Sanford, Florida, lakefront park and introducing Trayvon Martin's mother.

With regard to negative tone and regional newspaper articles, a *Sanford Herald* piece mentioned details from eight 911 calls from the evening of February 26, 2012, when George Zimmerman fatally shot Trayvon Martin. The article also mentioned an NAACP town hall meeting and a NAN rally. Some of the quotes from Zimmerman's 911 call with a negative tone follow:

“Hey we've had some break-ins in my neighborhood and there's a real suspicious guy,” he told the operator. “This guy looks like he's up to no good or on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking about.” As Zimmerman saw Martin walking in a different direction he states, “These [explicit], they always get away.” (Delinski, 2012a, n.p.)

In terms of a negative tone in a national newspaper article, the *USA TODAY*

pointed out that Sanford Police Chief Bill Lee made the decision to temporarily step aside because of “mounting criticism and pressure” to arrest and charge Zimmerman for killing Martin (Alcindor & Copeland, 2012, p. 3A). The newspaper quoted Lee stating the following:

“It is apparent that my role in this matter is overshadowing the process,” Lee said at a news conference, adding that he felt he should remove himself from his post “in the hopes of restoring some semblance of calm to the city, which has been in turmoil for several weeks.” (Alcindor & Copeland, 2012, 3A)

The article also carried out the negative tone with partial direct quotes from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous and NAN President Reverend Al Sharpton. Jealous said Lee “needs to step down, not just step aside” (Alcindor & Copeland, 2012, 3A), Sharpton said, “Zimmerman should have been arrested that night” (Alcindor & Copeland, 2012, 3A).

With regard to positive tone and regional newspaper articles, the *Orlando Sentinel* portrayed George Zimmerman’s lawyer Craig Sonner as an upstanding member of his community who believed that he would not have any problem proving Zimmerman’s innocence using the stand-your-ground law. The article mentioned Reverend Al Sharpton and the NAACP president traveling to Sanford, Florida, for rallies and marches, but it primarily praised Sonner, as expressed in the following statements from one of his former colleagues:

“He’s a great guy. He’s a man of impeccable character. He’s dependable, very reliable, very ethical,” said Andrew Storie, who worked alongside Sonner when both were assistant state attorneys in Seminole County from 2003-05. Storie now

has an office in the same building as Sonner. “He’s not a publicity-seeker,” Storie said. “He would be the antithesis of that. ... He’s not seeking self-glorification.” (Stutzman, 2012, n.p.)

In terms of a positive tone in a national newspaper article, a *Washington Post* piece evoked that tone in detailing how Eric H. Holder, Jr., the first Black to serve as U.S. Attorney General, “has become the voice of the president on controversial racial issues, reaching out to black communities, pushing an aggressive civil rights agenda and stepping in when Obama cannot, or should not” (Thompson & Horwitz, 2012, p. A15). The article painted Holder in a positive light for launching an investigation into the Trayvon Martin case and paraphrased NAACP President Benjamin Jealous saying “he is satisfied with Holder’s role and the administration’s response, although he would like to hear from Obama directly” (Thompson & Horwitz, 2012, p. 15A). It must be noted that Obama eventually responded (Calmes & Cooper, 2012).

RQ3 and RQ4 below were analyzed qualitatively.

RQ3_a: What rhetorical strategies and tactics do the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC use in their press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials?

As it relates the rhetorical strategy of identification (Burke, 1973), the press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials in the Trayvon Martin case seemed to show more examples of antithesis, followed by sympathy and unawareness. This finding supported Sommerfeldt (2011), who studied MoveOn.org e-mail action alerts. With respect to antithesis, the organizations used examples to portray as the enemy organizations such as the American Legislative

Exchange Council (ALEC) and the National Rifle Association (NRA), individuals such as the police chief and special prosecutor, and concepts such as racism. For example, COC Executive Director Rashad Robinson stated:

Today we redouble our efforts against the American Legislative Exchange Council, not just to mobilize against them but to mobilize against the corporations [that allow them to exist] with a clear and simple message that ColorOfChange has continued to put out. You cannot come for Black folks money by day and then take away our vote or support laws that take away our lives by night. (ColorOfChange.org Campaign Staff, 2012)

While the COC opposed an organization, the NUL opposed the same concept that Burke (1973) used to illustrate antithesis, racism. A quote in a press release read, “This case has lead the community to confront racism as a real and prevalent problem” (Candori, 2012). The NAACP echoed a similar sentiment, implying racism in a press release quoting Brendien Mitchell, President of the Florida NAACP Youth & College Council: “We must bring an end to the attitudes and policies that allow an innocent Black teenage boy to be chased, shot and killed and the killer to remain free” (“NAACP Leaders Call for Justice,” 2012, n.p.).

With respect to sympathy, the organizations sought common ground with their supporters by indicating similarities such as being Black, being parents or simply being an American. NUL President and CEO Marc Morial used sympathy in miscellaneous public relations material, his personal column in an online newsletter, about the so-called kill-at-will laws blocking justice in the Trayvon Martin case: “This is not the kind of America we or our children deserve in the 21st century” (Morial, 2012a, n.p.). The COC

also used the child/children theme to elicit sympathy from its readers in a blog post that included eight quotes from its members. One reader comment read, “My heart breaks for a country that sees children walking as a threat. Please find justice and closure for this family, and for all of us who know and love a child. – Angelique M., Somerville, MA” (ColorOfChange.org Campaign Staff, 2012).

With respect to unawareness, which often can be confused with sympathy, (Burke, 1973), the NAACP used two examples. In the first instance, an official statement from President and CEO Benjamin Jealous said, “Our community deserves better” in response to Sanford Police Chief Bill Lee’s decision to step aside instead of step down. In the second instance, an NAACP official statement on the charges filed against George Zimmerman read, “As we have seen, the system does not always work perfectly. But we have shown that when we stand together as a nation, we can compel it to work” (“Statement by the NAACP,” 2012, n.p.).

As it relates to the rhetorical tactic of protest-framing theory, injustice and agency frames seemed more prevalent than identity frames. With respect to injustice frames, which identify the problem, the organizations appeared to use it to identify issues such as racial profiling, the legal system, and corporations that support stand-your-ground laws. In a COC press release about the organization launching a campaign to urge the Department of Justice to arrest Zimmerman and investigate the Sanford Police Department, the COC identified a problem as the SPD’s “history of failing to hold perpetrators accountable for violent acts against Black victims” (“Civil Rights Group Launches Campaign,” 2012, n.p.). While the COC identified the history of a Florida law enforcement agency as the problem in its use of the injustice frame, the NUL identified

the impact of so-called kill-at-will laws. The aforementioned personal column stated that such laws are “moving the country back to the lawless days of the Wild West when it was common practice to ‘Shoot First and Ask Questions Later’ ” (Morial, 2012a, n.p.).

With respect to the agency frame, which seeks to show people that they possess the power to oppose an injustice, the organizations used this to encourage them to engage in online and offline activism. For instance, the COC used an agency frame in an official statement when it mentioned that McDonald’s decision to end its membership in ALEC after getting calls from COC members and supporters “is a testament to the power that we have as consumers” (“ColorOfChange Applauds McDonald’s Decision,” 2012, n.p.). While the COC acknowledged the activism efforts of its allies, the NAACP asked theirs to take a different route, according to this official statement: “Over the last two weeks, tens and thousands of people around the country have signed the NAACP petition that asks the special prosecutor to handle Trayvon’s case with passion and an eye for justice” (“NAACP Reacts to Decision,” 2012, n.p.).

With respect to the identity frame, which points out who is responsible for the injustice, the organizations singled out the Sanford Police Department in general and Sanford Police Chief Bill Lee in particular. For example, a NAN official statement noted that Trayvon Martin’s family was “blatantly misled by local police” (Sharpton, 2012) after Zimmerman killed him. In addition, an NAACP official statement from Benjamin Jealous held Lee responsible for failing to arrest Zimmerman. Jealous asserted, “Any chief who would so allow his officers to so mishandle a situation like this has no place in law enforcement. At the end of this investigation it will be clear that his temporary removal should be made permanent” (“NAACP Cautiously Pleased,” 2012, n.p.).

As it relates to the rhetorical strategies of personal vilification and categorical vilification, the organizations appeared to use an approximately equal number. With regard to personal vilification, which portrays the perceived enemy as evil or dangerous, the COC characterized George Zimmerman as an “overzealous aggressor” (“ColorOfChange.org Responds to News,” 2012, n.p.) in an aforementioned official statement, while an NAACP press release described him as a “vigilante” and “the perpetrator of this heinous crime” (“NAACP Commends DOJ,” 2012, n.p.). Additionally, the COC depicted Fox News commentator Geraldo Rivera as a “reckless and irresponsible” person because of his claims that “the hoodie is as much responsible for Trayvon Martin’s death as George Zimmerman was” (“ColorOfChange.org Responds to Geraldo,” 2012, n.p.). With regard to categorical vilification, which referred to an abstract group, COC consistently labeled ALEC as “right-wing” (ColorOfChange Applauds McDonald’s, 2012, n.p.).

RQ4_a: How often do the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials about the case reference joint efforts between one another?

As it relates to press releases in the Trayvon Martin case, two of them mentioned joint efforts between three of the four civil rights organizations involved in this study. First, a COC press release described the NAACP and the National Urban League as being a part of a “diverse coalition of advocacy organizations, activists, and national leaders” planning to “protest the American Legislative Exchange Council’s (ALEC) paid promotion of deadly ‘Kill at Will’ legislation written by the National Rifle Association (NRA)” (“Prominent National Organizations Urge ALEC,” 2012, n.p.). Second, the NUL

issued a press release on the same topic on the same day that referenced the NAACP and COC.

As it relates to Facebook and Twitter, none of the organizations referenced joint efforts between one other. The closest reference came in this COC Twitter tweet mentioning NUL: “We will not rest, we will not forget, until justice is achieved for Trayvon Martin” -Marc Morial of @NatUrbanLeague #stopALECNRA4Trayvon. No official statements, blog posts, or miscellaneous public relations material reference joint efforts.

RQ4_{1a}: How often do regional and national newspaper articles mentioning the NAACP, NUL, NAN, or COC and the case reference joint efforts between one another?

In the Trayvon Martin case, overall, there were few references to the organizations working together. Of the 58 regional and national newspaper articles, one national and six regional ones mentioned the organizations appearing together to stand for justice in the Trayvon Martin case. In terms of regional newspaper articles, first, an *Orlando Sentinel* piece mentioned that NAACP and NUL leaders were among the nearly 400 people who went to Allen Chapel AME Church in Sanford, Florida, to hear Evangelist Jamal Bryant speak. Second, the *Orlando Sentinel* published a piece regarding a Sanford City Commission meeting where NAN’s Reverend Al Sharpton and NUL’s Marc Morial joined Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr. of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, Trayvon Martin’s parents, and elected officials in making remarks, but the commission took no action. According to the article:

The Rev. Al Sharpton delivered a petition he said had 2 million signatures on it demanding Zimmerman’s arrest. Sharpton told Sanford leaders that the city is

poised to be saddled with a reputation for trampling the civil rights of black people if it did not take action. “You are risking going down as the Birmingham and Selma of the 21st century,” Sharpton said at the Sanford Civic Center, which was packed with nearly 500 people. Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League, called not just for Zimmerman's arrest, but for the repeal of Florida’s “stand your ground” law and for the city to clean up its Police Department. (Jacobson, Weiner, & Kunerth, 2012, n.p.)

Third, a *Sanford Herald* piece mentioned a rally held exactly one month after Trayvon Martin’s death at Fort Mellon Park in Sanford, Florida. Sharpton and Morial served as guest speakers when organizers moved the event to the Sanford Civic Center. The article includes a photo of Morial locking arms with Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr. and Evangelist Jamal Bryant of Empowerment Temple AME Church in Baltimore, Maryland, in a march to the park. An article published two days later included a longer version of the event. Fourth, a previously mentioned *Sanford Herald* article about a march and rally stated that the NAACP, including President and CEO Benjamin Jealous, Board of Directors Chairman Roslyn Brock, and the President of the Florida State NAACP, would lead the march (Delinski, 2012e). Sharpton and Jackson were expected to attend. Fifth, two days later, a short *Sanford Herald* piece pictured Jackson, Brock, Sharpton and Jealous holding a banner reading “JUSTICE FOR TRAYVON” (Delinski, 2012c). Lastly, an aforementioned *Sanford Herald* piece mentioned a news conference where Jealous and spoke to clarify reports of a boycott (Halboedeker, 2012).

In terms of national newspaper articles, a *Washington Post* mentioned that Brock and Sharpton as well as “other civil rights leaders, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson,

spoke during a two-hour rally after the half-mile march” (The Associated Press, 2012). Sharpton and Brock were quoted in the article based on remarks they made at the event.

RQ5, RQ6 and RQ7 below were analyzed quantitatively.

RQ5_a: Is there a significant difference in how often the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC refer to offline or online collective action in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts?

In the Trayvon Martin case, a chi-square test was not used because some of the cells had a count of less than five. The alternative likelihood ratio test revealed a significant difference in action type and the organization ($\chi^2(9) = 52.69, p < .001$, two-tailed); therefore, RQ5_a was supported. Overall, the organizations advocated online action (55.6%, n=144) followed by no action, offline action or both (22.8%, n=59; 11.2%, n=29, 10.4%, n=27). Individually, the NAACP, NUL, and COC were most likely to advocate online action (64.2%, n=43; 54.5%, n=30; 60.4%, n=67), while NAN was most likely to advocate offline action (30.8%, n=8). Table 15 below describes the differences.

Table 15

Trayvon Martin Case Action Type by Organization

	Online	Offline	Both	No action
NAACP	43 (64.2%)	5 (7.5%)	6 (9.0%)	13 (9.4%)
NUL	30 (54.5%)	12 (21.8%)	9 (16.4%)	4 (7.3%)
NAN	4 (15.4%)	9 (34.6%)	5 (19.2%)	8 (30.8%)
COC	67 (60.4%)	3 (2.7%)	7 (6.3%)	34 (30.6%)

Online action referred to activities such as signing online petitions, submitting photos and stories online, and tweeting using a certain hashtag. A tweet referring to online action from COC read, “CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: show your solidarity with the movement to get #Justice4Trayvon w/ your photos and stories wearetrayvon.colorofchange.org.”

Offline action referred to activities such as attending rallies, marches and public meetings. A tweet referring to offline action from NUL read, “Stand with NUL. Put an end to laws that put TRAYVON and others at Risk. RALLY 3/29 noon....”

In the Trayvon Martin case, a likelihood ratio test also revealed a significant difference in the action type and Twitter tweets and Facebook posts ($\chi^2(3) = 46.37$, $p < .001$, two-tailed). Twitter tweets most likely advocated online action (49.4%, $n=66$), while Facebook posts most likely advocated offline action (30.8%, $n=20$). Table 16 below provides a description.

Table 16

Trayvon Martin Case Action Type by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

	Online	Offline	Both	No action
Twitter tweet	128 (66.0%)	9 (4.6%)	16 (8.2%)	41 (21.1%)
Facebook post	16 (24.6%)	20 (30.8%)	11 (16.9%)	18 (27.7%)

A post on the NAACP’s Facebook page provided an example of an offline action: “More than 400 people attended a townhall hosted by the Seminole County NAACP in Sanford, Florida yesterday to discuss the Trayvon Martin shooting.

Several hundred more who couldn't fit stood outside holding signs and chanting "I Am Trayvon Martin", while inside President Benjamin Todd Jealous called for the resignation of the Sanford police chief..."

RQ6_a: What are the primary media types the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC use in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts about the case?

In the Trayvon Martin case, results show that collectively, the four organizations primarily used videos (27.4%, n=71) followed by photos (18.9%, n=49) and graphics (12.0%, n=31). Individually, the NAACP and NAN were more likely to use photos (25.4%, n=17; 15.4%, n=4), while NUL and COC were more likely to use videos (43.6%, n=24; 28.8%, n=32). As it relates to hashtags, the NAACP and COC were most likely to use them (59.7%, n=40; 57.7%, n=64). The number of hyperlinks was not included in this analysis; instead, they are mentioned in the following research question. Table 17 below provides a detailed explanation of media type by organization.

Table 17

Trayvon Martin Case Media Type by Organization

Organization	Photo	Graphic	Video	Hashtag
NAACP	17 (25.4%)	3 (4.5%)	14 (20.9%)	40 (59.7%)
NUL	13 (23.6%)	11 (20.0%)	24 (43.6%)	10 (18.2%)
NAN	4 (15.4%)	1 (3.8%)	1 (3.8%)	6 (23.1%)
COC	15 (13.5%)	16 (14.4%)	32 (28.8%)	64 (57.7%)

Note. The numbers do not add up to 100% because the percentages were calculated based on the media types coded as yes.

With regard to photos, the NAACP tweeted links to Facebook photo albums to illustrate its offline activism efforts. For example, a post read, “I posted 61 photos on Facebook in the album ‘NAACP Rally for Trayvon Martin’...” In addition, a tweet read, “I posted 3 photos on Facebook in the album ‘Hoodies UP: Justice for Trayvon’...”

With regard to videos, the NUL tweeted links to videos featuring Marc Morial’s television interviews about the Trayvon Martin case on CNN’s “Starting Point with Soledad O’Brien” and MSNBC’s “Andrea Mitchell Reports.” Next, the NAACP posted a video featuring a video of President Benjamin Jealous appearing on NBC’s “Meet the Press” to discuss the case. Finally, COC posted and tweeted several links to a video hip-hop activist Jasiri X made about Trayvon Martin.

In the Trayvon Martin case, the combined Twitter tweets and Facebook posts were more likely to use video (27.4%, n=71) while graphics were the least likely to be used (12.0%, n=31). With respect to Twitter tweets, videos were the most used media type (32.0%, n=62); however, with regard to Facebook posts, photos were used most often (44.6%, n=29). As it relates to hashtags, more than half of all Twitter tweets contained them (61.9%, n=120). Table 18 below provides a breakdown of media type by Twitter tweet and Facebook post.

Table 18

Trayvon Martin Case Media Type by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

Organization	Photo	Graphic	Video	Hashtag
Twitter tweet	20 (10.3%)	27 (13.9%)	62 (32.0%)	120 (61.9%)
Facebook post	29 (44.6%)	4 (6.2%)	9 (13.8%)	0 (0.0%)

With regard to Facebook photos, the NAACP posted a Facebook cover photo on with a post that read, “Show your friends and family you stand for justice by making this your cover photo today. Click ‘Share’ to help spread the word.” The cover photo read, “THIS PERSON (with an arrow pointing down toward a Facebook profile picture), THINKS THIS PERSON (with an arrow pointing up and diagonally toward a photo of an overweight George Zimmerman) SHOULD BE ARRESTED FOR KILLING AN ARMED TEENAGER (with an arrow pointing toward a photo of a young Trayvon Martin).

The NAACP also made at least three posts showing NAACP leaders, employees, and members wearing hoodies in solidarity with the movement for justice in the case. For example, a post read, “Do they look suspicious?” and featured a photo of a serious-looking President Benjamin Jealous holding a can of Arizona Iced Tea, and Board of Directors Chairman Roslyn Brock holding a bag of Skittles, while standing in front of a waist-high replica of the NAACP’s official logo.

With regard to graphics, COC posted links to different versions of fliers and graphics for supporters to “download, share and print” for their windows or for use when attending local events. Additionally, NUL posted a graphic on Facebook that changed the letters A-L-E-C, an acronym for the American Legislative Exchange Council, to stand for Advancing Legislation that Exonerates Criminals. The letters A-L-E-C appeared in red while the rest of the words were white on a dark background.

RQ7_a: To which websites do the hyperlinks in the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts of each organization primarily connect?

In the Trayvon Martin case, all of the organizations were most likely to include hyperlinks to their official websites (33.2%, n=86) followed by news sites (11.6%, n=30), social media Facebook and Twitter sites (10.4%, n=27), another organization's website (5.4%, n=14), and a petition (2.7%, n=7). First, the COC was most likely to provide hyperlinks to its own website (56.8%, n=63), while the NAACP and NAN were least likely to link to petitions (0.0%, n=0). The NUL and NAN provided an equal number of hyperlinks to their own websites and social media sites (18.2%, n=10; 15.4%, n=4). Table 19 below provides a breakdown of hyperlink types by organization.

Table 19

Trayvon Martin Case Hyperlink Types by Organization

Organization	News	Org	Other Org	Social Media	Petition
NAACP	11 (16.4%)	9 (13.4%)	1 (1.5%)	11 (16.4%)	0 (0.0%)
NUL	6 (10.9%)	10 (18.2%)	2 (3.6%)	10 (18.2%)	6 (10.9%)
NAN	2 (7.7%)	4 (15.4%)	1 (3.8%)	4 (15.4%)	0 (0.0%)
COC	11 (9.9%)	63 (56.8%)	10 (9.0%)	2 (1.8%)	1 (0.9%)

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

The COC often linked back to a special web page it created specifically for the Trayvon Martin case, <http://weartrayvon.colorofchange.org>. In terms of links to other organizations' websites, the COC tweeted links to <http://action.firedoglake.com/page/speakout/dailies> to encourage their supporters to write

a letter to the editor of their local newspapers to help tell Trayvon Martin’s story, while NUL tweeted links to the Center for Media and Democracy, which worked to expose the American Legislative Exchange Council’s role in stand-your-ground legislation.

In terms of links to news sites, other than the ones previously mentioned – CNN, MSNBC, and NBC – other news sites included The Associated Press, *The Huffington Post*, *The Orlando Sentinel*, *The Washington Post*, *The Miami Herald*, and *BET News*.

In this case, the combined Twitter tweets and Facebook posts most likely included hyperlinks to the organization’s official website (33.2%, n=86) followed by news sites (11.6%, n=30), social media sites (10.4%, n=27), other organizations’ websites (5.4%, n=14), and online petitions (2.7%, n=7). This ranking also was the case for Twitter tweets; however, Facebook posts included hyperlinks to news sites rather than social media sites as the second most likely location for hyperlinks. Table 20 below lists a breakdown of hyperlink types by Facebook posts and Twitter tweets.

Table 20

Trayvon Martin Case Hyperlink Types by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

Organization	News	Org	Other Org	Social Media	Petition
Twitter tweets	17 (8.8%)	63 (32.5%)	11 (5.7%)	25 (12.9%)	6 (3.1%)
Facebook posts	13 (20.0%)	23 (33.2%)	3 (4.6%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (1.5%)

Note. The numbers do not add up to 100% because the percentages were calculated based on the amount coded as yes.

RQ8 was analyzed qualitatively.

RQ8_a: Did any NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC messages posted in the Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials about the case contribute to any mainstream media coverage in national or regional newspapers?

Overall, three articles in national newspapers and two articles in regional newspapers used quotes from or cited the organizations' Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, and official statements. None referenced blog posts or miscellaneous public relations materials.

With regard to the NAACP, a *USA Today* article used excerpts and a paraphrase from a preceding official statement. The *USA Today* portion read:

NAACP President Ben Jealous called the charge “an important first step toward bringing justice for Trayvon and his family” and said racial profiling of young black men was at the heart of the case. “We anticipate and expect a thorough federal investigation of the Sanford Police Department and their role in exacerbating this tragedy,” he said. (Alcindor, Bello, & Welch, 2012, p. 1A)

The paraphrased portion about racial profiling came from this portion of President Benjamin Jealous' statement:

Trayvon's case moved the nation because it underscored the twin tragedies that affect so many of our young people: Trayvon was profiled because of his race—looked upon as a threat rather than the loving son he was. And then, once he became a victim, he was neglected by the very police department tasked with protecting our communities and families. As a nation, we've got to address the

issues of racial profiling and the valuation of black men's lives by law enforcement. ("Statement by the NAACP on Charges Filed," 2012, n.p.)

With regard to NAN, two references appeared in newspapers used in this study. The first one in *The Sanford Herald* cited Reverend Al Sharpton's Facebook and Twitter pages as the source of information about a rally at the First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Sanford, Florida (Delinski, 2012a). Sharpton's tweets regarding the Trayvon Martin case often appeared on NAN's official Twitter feed and Facebook pages. The second one in the *Orlando Sentinel* cited NAN's Twitter and Facebook pages as sources of information about Sharpton's plans to hold a rally in Sanford, Florida (Hernández, 2012). The same article also used quotes that come directly from a March 12, 2012, official statement from NAN's official website:

"National Action Network and I have called for a complete and thorough investigation into the killing of 17-year-old Florida teenager Trayvon Martin," Sharpton said in an earlier statement. "The fact that a young unarmed man could be killed by a neighborhood watch captain while his family was blatantly misled by local police as to the background of the shooter is disturbing." (Hernández, 2012, n.p.)

With regard to COC, Executive Director Rashad Robinson was quoted in a regional and a national newspaper article regarding the Trayvon Martin case. First, an *Orlando Sentinel* article used a quote from a COC official statement:

Executive Director Rashad Robinson said his black-empowerment group is part of a nationwide movement to focus attention on the injustice taking place in Sanford. "We know that our raised voices won't bring their child back, but we're

committed to this growing effort to change the culture that allows such a tragedy to happen,” said Robinson in a written statement. (Kunerth & Prieto, 2012, n.p.)

Second, a *USA Today* article discussed the social media aspect of the Trayvon Martin case that the organizations in this study pushed on their Facebook and Twitter pages, including posting photos on Facebook of themselves wearing hoodies. According to the article, “Word of the Trayvon Martin case has gone viral as social media users, including many black Americans, publicize rallies and urge contacts to sign petitions” (Eversley, 2012a, p. 3A). The article included the following reference to COC:

Social media have evolved as an outlet for people who feel ignored, said Rashad Robinson, executive director of ColorOfChange.org, a New York-based organization that plans events focused on issues involving black Americans.

“We’re hearing stories of mothers telling of their fear for their children in the criminal justice system,” Robinson said. “We’re hearing from fathers telling us about ‘the talk’ that they have with their young sons or nephews” about carrying themselves passively so they can avoid trouble with police.”

(Eversley, 2012a, p. 3A)

None of the regional or national newspaper articles included in this study appeared to use information from NUL’s online presence.

Election 2012

The following results are based on an analysis of Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, press releases, official statements, blog posts, miscellaneous public relations materials, and newspaper articles related to Election 2012 and the four civil rights organizations in this study. H1_b, H2_b, H3, RQ1_b, and RQ2_b were analyzed quantitatively.

H1_b: There will be a significant difference in the type of collective action frame used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

For Election 2012, a chi-square test was not used because some cells had a count below five. The alternative likelihood ratio test revealed a significant difference in the type of collective action frame and the organization ($\chi^2(6) = 65.10, p < .001$, two-tailed). Overall, the organizations were most likely to use the motivational collective action frame (55.8%, n=504) followed by diagnostic (40.2%, n=363) and prognostic (4.0%, n=36) frames. This also was the case for the individual organizations. Table 21 below explains the breakdown by collective action frame for each civil rights organization.

Table 21

Election 2012 Collective Action Frame by Organization

Organization	Diagnostic	Prognostic	Motivational
NAACP	102 (33.0%)	25 (8.1%)	182 (58.9%)
NUL	151 (49.0%)	2 (0.6%)	155 (50.3%)
NAN	16 (17.6%)	6 (6.6%)	69 (75.8%)
COC	94 (48.2%)	3 (1.5%)	98 (50.3%)

The organizations used motivational collective action frames to encourage their supporters to register to vote, vote early, stay in line to vote, call or tweet if they experienced problems at the polls, and encourage others to register to vote and cast their ballots on Election Day. For example, NAN's Washington, D.C., bureau chief Janaye Ingram used the motivational frame in a tweet posted on NAN's Twitter feed that read,

“Get down to your polling place now! Even if there’s a line, if you’re there before it closes, you will be able to VOTE.” The tweet also provided a link for followers to look up their polling place.

The organizations used diagnostic collective action frames in Twitter tweets and Facebook posts that mentioned issues that needed to be addressed such as voter ID laws, voter intimidation tactics on Election Day, and billboards that attempted to suppress the votes of Blacks and Hispanics, young adults, and the elderly. For example, NUL tweeted, “Pa. delayed enforcement of its voter ID law, but check out the status of voter ID laws in other states ... #occupythevote.”

The organizations used prognostic frames when they mentioned removing voter suppression/intimidation billboards in swing states that specifically targeted Black and Hispanic voters, restoring early and weekend voting in Ohio, and contacting the appropriate person to register to vote and report voting problems. For instance, the COC posted a tweet that referred to its petition: “45,000+ have signed, help us get to 65,000: Tell @ClearChannel to remove billboards designed to intimidate voters.” The tweet also included a link to the petition.

Because one cell contained zero data, a likelihood ratio test was performed as an alternative to chi-square to compare Twitter tweets with Facebook posts. The likelihood ratio test revealed no significant difference at the .001 level ($\chi^2 (2) = 11.95, p=.003$, two-tailed). Although significance was found between the organization and the type of collective action frame, $H1_b$ is not supported. Both Twitter tweets and Facebook posts most likely used the motivational frame (48.4%, $n=437$; 66.3%, $n=67$) followed by

diagnostic and prognostic. Table 22 below provides a breakdown of the collective action frame by Twitter tweet and Facebook post.

Table 22

Election 2012 Collective Action Frame by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

Organization	Diagnostic	Prognostic	Motivational
Twitter tweet	329 (41.0%)	36 (4.5%)	437 (54.5%)
Facebook post	34 (33.7%)	0 (0.0%)	67 (66.3%)

In terms of a Facebook post with a motivational frame, NUL posted the following:

DID YOU OCCUPY THE VOTE? Tag us in your election photos on FB! Follow & tag us on Instagram @naturbanleague. Check out Joseph Puryear in New York City. “LIKE” if you ‘Exercised your right to vote’. If you can, do. If you can’t, find out how to do so. It’s Your RIGHT!!”

The post also included a photo of a young man making the Black Power fist with his right hand and holding a sign that said, “Exercise your right to VOTE” in his left hand.

H_{2b}: There will be a significant difference in the type of news frame used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

Because some cells contained zero data for Election 2012, a chi-square test was not performed. The alternative likelihood ratio test revealed a significant difference

between the news frame and the organization ($\chi^2(12) = 118.16, p < .001$, two-tailed).

Overall, the organizations most likely used human interest (32.3%, n=292) followed by responsibility (31.2%, n=282), conflict (27.0%, n=244), economic consequences (8.9%, n=80), and morality (0.6%, n=5) news frames. Individually, the NAACP and NUL primarily used human-interest news frames (39.5%, n=122; 30.8%, n=95), while NAN and COC primarily used responsibility frames (60.4%, n=55; 35.9%, n=70). Table 23 below further illustrates the breakdown comparing the organization and the news frame.

Table 23

Election 2012 News Frame by Organization

Organization	Conflict	Human Interest	Economic Consequences	Morality	Responsibility
NAACP	84 (27.2%)	122 (39.5%)	14 (4.5%)	2 (0.6%)	87 (28.2%)
NUL	80 (26.0%)	95 (30.8%)	61 (19.8%)	2 (0.6%)	70 (22.7%)
NAN	12 (13.2%)	24 (26.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	55 (60.4%)
COC	68 (34.9%)	51 (26.2%)	5 (2.6%)	1 (0.5%)	70 (35.9%)

With respect to conflict news frames, the organizations posted links about efforts to keep people of color from casting their ballots. For example, a COC post read, “Ohio’s Secretary of State wants to limit access to the polls! Call @JonHusted now to demand weekend early voting...” The tweet also included a link to a COC web page with contact information.

With respect to human-interest news frames, the NAACP encouraged its supporters to post tweets using the #IVoteBecause hashtag to apply a human face and

emotion to those who cast their ballots on Election Day. A tweet on the NAACP's Twitter feed via @jamiahadams read, "#IVoteBecause my grandmother taught black voters the preamble so they could register and vote during poll tax days." In addition, @jamiahadams posted another tweet that read, "#IVoteBecause at the age of 9, I convinced my parents to begin voting again, after they had become disenchanting."

With respect to responsibility news frames, NAN's Twitter feed included this tweet from @Janaye_Ingram: "We worked across the country to #protectthevote and make sure people were #voteready!..." With respect to economic consequences, the NUL had the greatest number of posts with this news frame. NUL posted several of those tweets during a Twitter town hall meeting to discuss a presidential debate. One post read, "Cut taxes by \$5 trillion, hike military spending by \$2 trillion, can we eliminate enough deductions to pay for that? #debate #occupythevote."

In Election 2012, because one cell contained zero data, a chi-square test was not performed. The alternative likelihood ratio test also revealed a significant difference in the type of news frame and Twitter tweets and Facebook posts ($\chi^2(4) = 36.58, p < .001$, two-tailed). Twitter tweets most likely used the human-interest news frame (32.5%, $n=261$), while Facebook posts primarily used the responsibility news frame (31.2%, $n=282$). Table 24 on the following page illustrates the differences.

The NAACP used the responsibility news frame in a Facebook post that mentioned NAACP Board of Directors Chairman Roslyn Brock traveling back to her hometown in Ft. Pierce, Florida, to assist in *GOTV Election Weekend*.

Table 24

Election 2012 News Frame by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

Organization	Conflict	Human Interest	Economic Consequences	Morality	Responsibility
Twitter tweet	231 (28.8%)	261 (32.5%)	78 (9.7%)	5 (0.6%)	227 (28.3%)
Facebook post	13 (12.9%)	31 (30.7%)	2 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	55 (54.5%)

RQ1_b: What is the type of news frame used by regional and national newspapers in their news stories referencing the involvement of the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC?

Of the 11 regional and national newspaper articles analyzed in Election 2012, they primarily employed a responsibility news frame (72.7%, n=8), followed by human interest (18.2%, n=2) and economic consequences (9.1%, n=1). None of the articles included conflict or morality in their news frames. Table 25 on the following page provides a breakdown of the regional and national newspaper articles by news frame.

In terms of using the responsibility news frame in a regional newspaper article, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* discussed a court hearing where a Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice questioned whether the state was following the voter ID law requirements; the state's chief deputy attorney general agreed that the state was not (Warner, 2012). The article also that NAACP President Benjamin Jealous and leaders of other organizations had staged a rally before the hearing to speak out against the law, which Jealous denounced "as a bid by Republicans to steal the presidential election" (Warner, 2012).

Table 25

Election 2012 News Frame by Newspaper Article

News Frame	Regional	National
Conflict	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Human Interest	0 (0.0%)	2 (100.0%)
Economic Consequences	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Morality	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Responsibility	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)

As it relates to using the responsibility frame in a national newspaper article, the *USA Today* explained how the state is responsible for solving the issue of providing photos IDs at the polls for everyone who needed them before Election Day (Eversley, 2012b). The article, which further explained that the Pennsylvania state chapter NAACP was a plaintiff in the lawsuit to block the voter ID law, mentioned the national NAACP president:

NAACP President Ben Jealous said the ruling was a victory. He cited June comments by House Majority Leader Mike Turzai, a Republican, that the voter ID law would help Mitt Romney get elected president. “This frustrates the plan of people like Rep. Turzai,” Jealous said. (Eversley, 2012b, p. 5A)

As it relates to the human-interest frame, *The Washington Post*, a national newspaper, used it by focusing on two Virginia U.S. Senate candidates, Democrat Timothy M. Kaine and Republican George Allen, speaking at the Virginia NAACP’s

annual convention (Haines, 2012). The piece also focused on how Kaine's history with Black voters would help him on Election Day. "With African Americans making up 20 percent of the population and electorate in the commonwealth - its largest minority voting group - the black vote will factor significantly into the Nov. 6 election, including the tight race between Kaine and Allen" (Haines, 2012, p. 4B).

H3_b: There will be a significant difference in the type of tone used by the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts.

For Election 2012, a chi-square test was not used because one cell contained zero data. Alternative likelihood ratio testing revealed a significant difference in the tone and the organization ($\chi^2(6) = 110.86, p < .001$, two-tailed). Overall, the organizations most likely used a neutral tone (68.2%, n=616) followed by positive then negative (19.7%, n=178; 12.1%, n=109). Individually, the organizations all used a neutral tone; however, the differences came with the tone that followed. The NUL and COC employed negative tones (10.1%, n=31; 23.1%, n=45) followed by positive ones, while the NAACP and NAN used positive tones (34.6%, n=107; 6.6%, n=6) followed by negative ones. Table 26 on the following page lists a full comparison of tone by organization.

An example of a COC tweet with a negative tone read, " 'Romney wants poll watchers to deceive voters in key states' ... #WatchTheRace." The tweet contains a link to a COC blog post to further discuss the issue. An example of a NAN tweet with a positive tone read, "Virginia & Florida!!! Hang in there!! Keep standing on those lines. Your vote counts!! #vote #worthIT."

Table 26

Election 2012 Tone by Organization

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
NAACP	107 (34.6%)	30 (9.7%)	172 (55.7%)
NUL	28 (9.1%)	31 (10.1%)	249 (80.8%)
NAN	6 (6.6%)	3 (3.3%)	82 (90.1%)
COC	37 (19.0%)	45 (23.1%)	113 (57.9%)

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

For Election 2012, likelihood ratio testing also revealed a significant difference between the tone and the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts ($\chi^2 (2) 29.09$, $p < .001$, two-tailed). Both Twitter tweets and Facebook posts were most likely to use a neutral tone (63.2%, $n=571$; 44.6%, $n=45$). Table 27 below provides a description.

Table 27

Election 2012 Tone by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Twitter tweet	139 (17.3%)	92 (11.5%)	571 (71.2%)
Facebook post	39 (38.6%)	17 (16.8%)	45 (44.6%)

The NAACP employed a neutral tone in its Twitter tweet that read, “Here are the opening and closing hours for polls across the nation. There may still be time to vote in your state...” with a link to the aforementioned information. A Facebook post from NUL with a neutral tone read, “The election is tomorrow! Be prepared. Know your polling place and make sure you have the right ID!” The post also includes a hyperlink to a polling place locator.

RQ2_b: What is the type of tone used by regional and national newspapers in their news stories referencing the involvement of the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC?

In Election 2012, the regional and national newspapers combined primarily used a neutral tone (54.5%, n=6), followed by negative (27.3%, n=3) then positive (18.2%, n=2). When analyzed individually, regional and national newspapers also used the neutral, negative, positive tone order. Table 28 below further illustrates the order by newspaper type.

Table 28

Election 2012 Tone by Newspaper Type

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Regional Newspaper	0 (0.0%)	3 (50.0%)	3 (50.0%)
National Newspaper	2 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)

In terms of a neutral tone, *The Columbus Dispatch*, a regional newspaper, used it in an article by presenting statistics showing that one out of five registered Ohio voters was not eligible to cast a ballot; however, registered voters exceeded the voting age

population in two counties (Rowland, 2012). The article quoted an NAACP senior vice president who stated that efforts to purge voter registration roles because of the aforementioned issue would “disproportionately affects African-Americans” (Rowland, 2012, p. 8A).

In terms of positive tone, the *New York Times*, a national newspaper, used it in a piece focusing on NUL’s Occupy the Vote campaign that featured celebrities including NAN’s Reverend Al Sharpton. The article quoted NUL President and CEO Marc Morial saying the organization decided “we have to do something” (Elliott, 2012, n.p.).

In terms of a negative tone, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* discussed the NAACP and other civil rights groups requesting that the Organization of Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Europe may be coming to Philadelphia to monitor Election Day (Worden & Warner, 2012). The move angered Republicans, who wanted the state to bar the group and others wanting “to exercise fraudulent or corrupt influence” at polling places (Worden & Warner, 2012, n.p.).

RQ3 and RQ4 were analyzed qualitatively.

RQ3_b: What rhetorical strategies and tactics do the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC use in their press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials?

As it relates the rhetorical strategy of identification (Burke, 1973), the press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials in Election 2012, the use of the antithesis frame dominated the others.

With respect to antithesis and the NAACP, in an official statement about the organization commending the Pennsylvania court ruling while preparing for elections,

NAACP President Benjamin Jealous used antithesis in a quote that asserted "...the Pennsylvania NAACP will take this battle from the courts to the legislature. We are confident that this state will not tolerate voter suppression" ("NAACP Commends Pennsylvania Court Ruling," 2012, n.p.). While only one branch of the NAACP shared opposition in this matter, the COC did not limit itself in the number of people to oppose the perceived enemy, the Tea Party Victory Fund. In a blog post, the organization featured a video with a post that read as follows:

The most effective way to defeat the influence of race-baiting is to do it together. ColorOfChange.org is dedicated to empowering the over 800,000 members of our organization, as well as our friends and family members to do exactly that. ... we are coming together to call out bigotry when we see it. Together, we are standing up against this rhetoric and ensuring that the media covers these stories and their impact on our communities. (Mathias, 2012, n.p.)

As it relates to the rhetorical tactic of protest-framing theory, injustice and agency frames appeared to dominate the messages. With respect to injustice frames, which identify the problem, a COC official statement from Executive Director Rashad Robinson calling for the removal of voter suppression billboards popping up in swing states included a clear example of COC singling out responsible parties:

Black folks will not be intimidated this election season. We demand that Clear Channel and Bain Capital stop allowing their media platforms to be used by nameless and faceless individuals and institutions seeking to send us back to the days when fear and intimidation were part of the common voting experience for many Black Americans. ("ColorOfChange Calls for the Removal," 2012, n.p.)

Another example of identity the COC in an official statement detailed who was responsible for voting fiascos that could affect Black voters:

It is shameful that Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted has wasted the time and money of the state's taxpayers in his persistent, failed attempts to legalize barriers to voting Husted has been engaged in a politically-motivated attempt to keep certain Ohioans from the polls, and we applaud the Supreme Court for stopping him in his tracks.

(“ColorOfChange.org Applauds SCOTUS’ Rejection,” 2012, n.p.)

With respect to injustice, the organizations identified problems such as voter suppression. In a NAN press release about National Voter Registration Day and a voter engagement and protection community forum, the organization used injustice by stating, “Voter ID laws are nothing more than Voter Denied laws...” (“Congressman Clyburn to Recognize,” 2012, n.p.). In addition to focusing on voter ID laws, NAN focused on another effort to keep voters from casting their ballots. In a press release about Souls to the Polls weekend, or Operation Lemonade, NAN gave two examples of injustice. The first referred to “requirements and penalties for third-party organizations that register new voters”; those organizations included the League of Women Voters and black Greek-letter organizations (“Florida Clergy, Activists,” 2012, n.p.). The second was included in this quote: “We have been handed lemons through a reduced early voting period. Our community will make *Lemonade* out of this tactic to deter voters by mobilizing and voting early...” (“Florida Clergy, Activists,” 2012, n.p.). The NUL used other similar examples of injustice frames, which answered what the problem was. In a NUL press release about the aforementioned Occupy the Vote ad campaign, examples of the

injustice frame referenced “discriminatory new voting restrictions” and “voter suppression schemes” (Candori, 2012c, n.p.) that President and CEO Marc Morial described as “a thinly-veiled attempt to drive down turnout among people of color, senior citizens and students” (Candori, 2012d, n.p.).

With respect to agency, which helps the public realize its power to affect change, the NAACP incorporated it in an official statement about the U.S. Supreme Court upholding voting rights and the NAACP applauding this high court’s decision to continue early voting in Ohio. A quote from President Benjamin Jealous read, “We will continue to fight until all attempts to suppress voter participation are turned back” (“SCOTUS Upholds Voting Rights,” 2012, n.p.). Additionally, in a COC press release about the organization flooding Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted’s office with calls demanding weekend voting during early voting periods, the organization wrote, “We need to keep up the public pressure on Husted and keep shining a light on his voter suppression tactics” (“ColorOfChange Floods Ohio,” 2012, n.p.).

Furthermore, in a press release about the NAACP turning out an historic 1.2 million voters by Election Day and registering a record 432,000 voters, the organization used agency in quotes by Jealous: “Our predecessors sacrificed their time, bodies, and lives to end discriminatory barriers to voting. It is now our responsibility to see this critical right exercised by all across the country” (“NAACP to Turn Out,” 2012, n.p.). Agency also was evident in a quote by Marvin Randolph, NAACP Senior Vice President for campaigns: “But our job will not be finished until the last call is made, the last door is knocked, the last ride to the polls is provided, and every polling place is closed” (“NAACP to Turn Out,” 2012, n.p.).

As it relates to the rhetorical strategies of personal vilification and categorical vilification, the organizations appeared to use more examples of the former. With respect to personal vilification, a COC official statement about the organization applauding a federal appeals court's decision to uphold final three days of early voting vilified Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted: "It's a shame that Mr. Husted is playing partisan politics by putting barriers to the polls" ("ColorOfChange Applauds Federal Appeals Court," 2012, n.p.). The COC also seemed to use personal vilification by posting photos that single out select people who they consider threatening and dangerous to voters, particularly people of color. First, Republican Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney was targeted in a blog post titled, "Romney wants poll watchers to deceive voters in key states" (Gamal, 2012b, n.p.). Then, an earlier blog post seemingly attacked businessman and television personality Donald Trump's ultimatum demanding that President Barack Obama release his college transcripts and passport application records in exchange for a charitable donation of \$5 million to the organization of Obama's choosing. The COC blog post referred to it as "race-baiting campaign against the president" (Castenell, 2012, n.p.).

With respect to categorical vilification, the COC used several instances of the term "right wing." First, it mentioned "right-wing, exclusionary, partisan interests" (Gamal, 2012a, n.p.) in an official statement about a Pennsylvania court blocking selective voter ID laws in the presidential election. Second, it spoke about a "massive right wing effort to suppress the votes of African Americans, Latinos and other people of color for political gain" ("Clear Channel Outdoor Agrees," 2012, n.p.) in an official statement about Clear Channel Outdoor agreeing to remove voter suppression billboards

in Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Third, in an official statement about COC calling for the removal of voter suppression billboards popping up in swing states, the organization singled out a “coordinated right-wing attack on the voting rights of people of color” (ColorOfChange.org Campaign Staff, 2012c, n.p.).

RQ4_a: How often do the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials about the case reference joint efforts between one another?

With regard to the NAACP, the organization does not mention any of the other civil rights organizations in this study in its press releases, official statements, or blogs regarding Election 2012. The organization did not have any miscellaneous public relations materials. With regard to the NAACP’s Facebook and Twitter pages, the NAACP retweeted a post from NAN’s public relations regarding NAACP Board of Directors Chairman Roslyn Brock and NAN National Executive Director Tamika Mallory preparing “2 Lead FL GOTV Effort.” The NAACP did not post anything about NAN, NUL, or COC on its Facebook page.

With regard to NUL, the organization mentioned NAN’s president several times – in two press releases and three miscellaneous public relations materials: To Be Equal #44 and two OPENING ReMARC’s, the latter three written by President and CEO Marc Morial. All but one of the items referred to Reverend Al Sharpton’s role in the Occupy the Vote ad campaign. NUL does not specifically mention NAN in any of the items. NUL did not have any official statements or blogs related to Election 2012 on its official website. An OPENING ReMARC’s quoted NAN’s Sharpton:

You have heard it many times over the last 12 months, as we have successfully fought to strike down or weaken voter suppression. In the words of my friend Reverend Al Sharpton, “Our vote is soaked in the blood of martyrs; the blood of Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner, soaked in the blood of four little girls in Birmingham, Alabama. This vote is sacred to us.” (Morial, 2012b, n.p.)

With regard to NAN, the organization mentioned NUL and NAACP in a press release and media advisory. First, a NAN media advisory regarding the organization’s Voter Engagement Tour in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, mentioned that the president of the Philadelphia Urban League would participate in a rally and worship service. Second, another NAN media advisory regarding a press event mentioned that Tamika Mallory, NAN’s National Executive Director, and Roslyn Brock, Chairman of the NAACP Board of Directors, as well as NAACP and NAN members from across St. Lucie, Florida, and Ft. Pierce, Florida, would “walk the streets of Florida to help ensure voters are educated, activated and prepared to cast their ballots on Election Day” (“National Action Network Executive Director,” 2012, n.p.). As it relates to NAN’s Facebook page, the organization did not post anything about the other organizations; however, on its Twitter page, NAN Washington, D.C., Bureau Chief Janaye Ingram posted a link to an Instagram photo of Mallory and Brock praying before beginning get-out-the-vote efforts in Florida and visiting Brock’s old neighborhood two days before Election Day. NAN did not post any official statements or blogs regarding Election 2012 on its web site.

With regard to the COC, the organization mentioned NUL in a blog post, the NAACP and two other activists groups that are not the focus of this study. As it relates to the COC’s blogs, one post specifically discussed NUL’s report titled, “The Hidden Swing

Voters: Impact of African Americans in 2012” that analyzed the Black vote in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections. The blog post also quoted NUL President and CEO Marc Morial, who referred to the report as a “clarion call to reawaken the hidden swing voters in the state of Black America...once is enough” (ColorOfChange.org Campaign Staff, 2012c, n.p.). As it relates to the COC’s press releases and official statements, none mention any of the civil rights organizations involved in this. As it relates to the COC’s Twitter account, two tweets ask the NAACP to join in the COC’s presidential debate Twitter party and watch for remarks regarding issue affecting Black America. As it relates to the COC’s Facebook page, none of the posts mention the other three organizations in this study.

RQ4_{b1}: How often do regional and national newspaper articles mentioning the NAACP, NUL, NAN, or COC and the case reference joint efforts between one another?

In Election 2012, of the 11 regional and national newspaper articles, a *New York Times* article discussed the National Urban League’s Occupy the Vote advertising campaign, which featured Reverend Al Sharpton (Elliott, 2012).

RQ5, RQ6 and RQ7 below were analyzed quantitatively.

RQ5_b: Is there a significant difference in how often the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC refer to offline or online collective action in their Twitter tweets compared with their Facebook posts?

For Election 2012, a chi-square test revealed a significant difference in dominant action type and the organization ($\chi^2 (9) = 81.99, p < .001$, two-tailed). Overall, the organizations advocated online action, offline action or both (50.8%, n=459) compared to no action (49.2%, n=444) Individually, NUL was most likely not to advocate any action

in its Facebook posts and Twitter tweets (54.5%, n=168). COC had the highest percentage (33.3%, n=65) of online action, while NAN had the highest percentage for offline action (33.0%, n=30) and NUL had the highest percentage for both (14.9%, n=46). Table 29 below breaks down the differences.

Table 29

Election 2012 Case Action Type by Organization

	Online	Offline	Both	No action
NAACP	65 (21.0%)	68 (22.0%)	22 (7.1%)	154 (49.8%)
NUL	81 (26.3%)	13 (4.2%)	46 (14.9%)	168 (54.5%)
NAN	20 (22.0%)	30 (33.0%)	10 (11.0%)	31 (34.1%)
COC	65 (33.3%)	19 (9.7%)	20 (10.3%)	91 (46.7%)

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

In terms of online action, COC encouraged supporters to upload its “I vote in color” Twibbon to their Facebook profiles, cover image, and Twitter avatar. COC also urged supporters to pledge to vote.

In terms of offline action, organizations constantly urged voters to register to vote, take advantage of weekend and early voting, and stay in line to vote. In terms of actions both online and offline, the organizations urged supporters to let the appropriate officials know if they experienced any voting irregularities at the polls by tweeting, texting, or calling.

For Election 2012, a chi-square test also revealed a significant difference in the action type and Twitter tweets and Facebook posts ($\chi^2 (3) = 45.053, p < .001$, two-tailed). Twitter tweets most likely advocated no action (52.4%, n=420), while Facebook posts most likely advocated online action (51.5%, n=52). Table 30 below provides a description.

Table 30

Election 2012 Action Type by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

	Online	Offline	Both	Neither
Twitter tweet	179 (22.3%)	117 (14.6%)	86 (10.7%)	420 (52.4%)
Facebook post	52 (51.5%)	13 (12.9%)	12 (11.9%)	24 (23.8%)

RQ6_b: What are the primary media types the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC use in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts about the case?

In Election 2012, collectively, photos (12.7%, n=115) were the most used media type followed by graphics (10.9%, n=98) and videos (8.4%, n=76). With respect to the individual organizations, however, the NAACP was more likely to use graphics as the primary media type (16.5%, n=51). As it relates to hashtags, the NUL was most likely to use them (84.7%, n=261), while the COC was least likely to use them (53.3%, n=104). The number of hyperlinks was not included in this analysis; instead, they were mentioned in the following research question. Table 31 on the following page provides a description of the media types and hashtags by organization.

Table 31

Election 2012 Media Type by Organization

Organization	Photo	Graphic	Video	Hashtag
NAACP	47 (15.2%)	51 (16.5%)	19 (6.1%)	195 (63.1%)
NUL	20 (6.5%)	19 (6.2%)	30 (9.7%)	261 (84.7%)
NAN	11 (12.1%)	2 (2.2%)	3 (3.3%)	58 (63.7%)
COC	37 (19.0%)	26 (13.3%)	24 (12.3%)	104 (53.3%)

Note. NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; NUL=National Urban League; NAN=National Action Network; COC=ColorOfChange.org

With respect to photos, the organizations posted images on Facebook and Twitter of people canvassing neighborhoods and calling or holding signs urging others to register and vote, leaders speaking during voter education/awareness/engagement tours, and voters standing in long lines waiting to cast their ballots. For example, NUL posted an image of a woman holding a handwritten sign reading, “I VOTE because/1 vote can be the deciding vote.” Her face was visible from the eyes up.

With respect to graphics, the NAACP posted graphics showing the number of people it registered to vote, a map showing the times polls close, the number of people participating in early voting, information about who to contact regarding voting irregularities, reasons to vote, information about people denied the right to vote after being released from prison, and voting martyrs. One graphic read, “We have registered more than 432,000 people/And as a result the NAACP will engage 1,202,000 voters.”

In Election 2012, combined Facebook and Twitter posts were more likely to have photos (12.7%, n=115) followed by graphics (10.9%, n=98), and videos (8.4%, n=76). With respect to Twitter, however, tweets were more likely to use photos and least likely to use graphics (10.3%, n=83; 7.2%, n=58), while Facebook posts were most likely to include graphics and least likely to use videos (39.6%, n=40; 31.7%, n=32). As it relates to hashtags, approximately three-fourths of all Twitter tweets contained them (75.2%, n=603), while less than a fourth of Facebook posts contained them (14.9%, n=15). Table 32 below further explains the breakdown of media types and hashtags by Twitter tweets and Facebook posts.

Table 32

Election 2012 Media Type by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

Organization	Photo	Graphic	Video	Hashtag
Twitter tweet	83 (10.3%)	58 (7.2%)	68 (8.5%)	603 (75.2%)
Facebook post	32 (31.7%)	40 (39.6%)	8 (7.9%)	15 (14.9%)

With respect to videos, the COC pushed @VideotheVote to encourage voters to document polling irregularities. One such video featured an Ohio voter who went to her regular polling location only to discover that there was no record of her (Gamal, 2012c). Another video featured a clip of a speech from First Lady Michelle Obama who stated, “This is the march of our time -- marching door to door registering people to vote, marching everyone you know to the polls every single election. See, this is the sit-in of our day” (Bugara, 2012, n.p.).

Also, the NAACP posted a video featuring members of the organization's Youth & College Division to encourage young adults to register to vote (NAACP Connect, 2012). The name of the video, "Courage Will Not Skip this Generation," was from a quote by NAACP Board of Directors Chairman Roslyn Brock. In the video Arianna Noble, a National Youth Board member, asked, "What are you doing? Get off Twitter, get off Facebook and get off Instagram. Because the same amount of time it will take you to send that tweet is the same amount of time it will take you to register to vote" (NAACP Connect, 2012). A graphic reading THIS IS MY VOTE was featured prominently on the left side of the screen (NAACP Connect, 2012).

RQ7_b: To what websites do the hyperlinks in the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts of each organization primarily connect?

In Election 2012, collectively, the organizations were most likely to include hyperlinks to their official websites (26.5%, n=239) followed by social media sites (11.7%, n=106), another organization's website (5.4%, n=49), and a petition (0.7%, n=6). Table 33 on the following page provides a breakdown of hyperlink types by organization. The COC was most likely to include hyperlinks to its own website (54.9%, n=107), while NAN was least likely to do so.

Table 33

Election 2012 Hyperlink Types by Organization

Organization	News	Org.	Other Org.	Social Media	Petition
NAACP	36 (11.7%)	40 (12.9%)	5 (1.6%)	57 (18.4%)	2 (0.6%)
NUL	37 (12.0%)	84 (27.3%)	20 (6.5%)	20 (6.5%)	1 (0.3%)
NAN	12 (13.2%)	8 (8.8%)	19 (20.9%)	10 (11.0%)	0 (0.0%)
COC	21 (10.8%)	107 (54.9%)	5 (2.6%)	19 (9.7%)	3 (1.5%)

With regard to hyperlinks to their own websites, first, the NAACP included links to RestoreTheVotes.org, its felon disenfranchisement campaign to raise awareness about allowing the formerly incarcerated to regain their voting rights. Then, NUL provided links to its OccupyTheVote12.org ad campaign. Next, COC offered links to its Election Day blog, <http://www.colorofchange.org/blog/2012/nov/6/>, as well as its <http://vote.colorofchange.org> page, which helped readers prepare to vote. Supporters could take a voting pledge and download a voter resource guide. They also received information about how to register to vote, what to do if they were already registered, and what to do if they do not know if they need to register.

With regard to hyperlinks to news sites, the organizations provided links to sites including, but not limited to, BET, CNN, United Press International, *The Huffington Post*, *Boston Globe* and *The Patriot-News* pennlive.com website. For example, a NAN public relations representative tweeted a link to the *Connecticut Post* newspaper with an article quoting Sharpton speaking in Bridgeport, Connecticut. With regard to hyperlinks to other

organizations' websites, the NAACP, for example, provided a link to <http://electionawareness.appspot.com>, which was a part of OurVoteLive.org, a site organizes problems and inquiries related to elections. It also linked to <http://ballotpedia.org/>, which lists the opening and closing times of polls in all 50 states. With regard to hyperlinks to social media, in addition to Facebook and Twitter, the organizations occasionally posted links to their Instagram accounts on their feeds.

In Election 2012, the combined Twitter tweets and Facebook posts primarily included hyperlinks to the organization's official website (26.5%, n=239) followed by social media sites and news sites (11.7%, n=106), other organizations' websites (5.4%, n=49), and online petitions (0.7%, n=6). In terms of Twitter, after linking to the organization's official website, the tweets primarily linked to a social media sites (12.6%, n=101); whereas with Facebook, the posts primarily linked to news sites (8.9%, n=9) after the organization's own site. Table 34 on the following page breaks down hyperlink types by Facebook posts and Twitter tweets.

Table 34

Election 2012 Hyperlink Types by Twitter Tweet and Facebook Post

Organization	News	Org.	Other Org.	Social Media	Petition
Twitter tweets	97 (12.1%)	199 (24.8%)	44 (5.5%)	101 (12.6%)	5 (0.6%)
Facebook posts	9 (8.9%)	40 (39.6%)	5 (5.0%)	5 (5.0%)	1 (1.0%)

RQ8 was analyzed qualitatively.

RQ8_b: Did any NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC messages posted in the Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, and blog posts about the case contribute to any mainstream media coverage in national or regional newspapers?

The NUL appears to be the only organization in this study that had any of the aforementioned items appear in regional and national newspapers during the sampling frame. An NUL press release regarding its Occupy the Vote ad campaign appeared on its website the day before National Voter Registration Day on September 25, 2012. Three days earlier, the *New York Times* ran an article about the campaign (Elliott, 2012). It was unclear whether the media may have received this release before it was made public on NUL's website.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Trayvon Martin Case

The first hypothesis examined the difference in the collective action frame by organization and social media type. Of the four civil rights organizations in this study, the NAACP was more likely to use the motivational frame, which supported Harlow (2012). This suggested that the organization relied on methods it has used throughout its history: rallying support through meetings and speeches (O'Brien, 2011). The other organizations, however, were more likely to use the diagnostic frame. The primary use of this frame, which identified issues that need to be addressed, suggested that NUL, NAN, and COC focused the majority of their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts on increasing awareness about issues such as the impact of racial profiling, particularly on young Black males, and the overarching agenda of the groups behind writing and promoting legislation for the so-called stand-your-ground laws, of which many of the organizations' supporters may not have been aware. The COC and NUL in particular published several pieces about the roles ALEC and the NRA played in getting major corporations such as McDonald's to stop funding ALEC. The COC referred to this as the "cause behind the cause." Using the diagnostic approach suggested that the organizations chose to use the Trayvon Martin case as a catalyst to focus on the impact of the aforementioned big-picture issues with a potential long-term impact on a significant number of people. This approach perhaps was more beneficial than the motivational approach that focused on honoring the memory of one person by attending marches and rallies and posting hoodie photos; these efforts appeared to have a short-term impact. Furthermore, because the

mainstream news media had already focused a great deal of attention on the aforementioned activism efforts, relying primarily on the diagnostic frame seemed more appropriate because of its ability to educate and inform.

The second hypothesis and the first research question addressed the news frames the organizations used in their Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. These questions also addressed the news frames used by national and regional newspapers that covered the organizations' involvement in the Trayvon Martin case. Of the five types of news frames, nearly half of the Facebook posts and Twitter tweets incorporated a conflict news frame. The organizations' primary use of this frame, particularly by the COC and NUL, contradicted findings by Muralidharan et al. (2011), who found that attribution of responsibility was the dominant news frame on Twitter, while morality was dominant on Facebook. The nature of this case, however, suggested that the conflict frame was appropriate because of the caustic nature of the Trayvon Martin case and the level of acrimony with individuals and institutions involved in the case. Individuals included the accused murderer, the police chief and the special prosecutor; institutions included ALEC and NRA, along with their corporate backers and the police department. As it relates to the human-interest frame, NAN and the NAACP primarily used it, in part, to promote the roles of their leaders in their pursuit of justice, perhaps because of the name recognition and notoriety of Reverend Al Sharpton, who also works as an MSNBC commentator. Shifting a human-interest focus to Trayvon Martin's family or other Black families whose loved ones were victims of racial profiling or stand-your-ground laws would have helped to underscore the urgency of the aforementioned big-picture issues. Given that results show that the Facebook posts primarily had a human-interest frame, perhaps

incorporating more photos of the previously mentioned families would have further illustrated the oft-repeated *We Are Trayvon* mantra.

With regard to news frames used in regional and national newspaper articles related to the Trayvon Martin case, these news media primarily employed a conflict news frame. Because conflict was a factor that made an issue or event newsworthy and may have increased interest among readers, the use of this news frame seemed expected in a case fraught with conflicts ranging from petitions to protests. However, the regional newspapers' primary use of a human-interest news frame more than half of the time suggested that their proximity to events and ability to report from the scene in the case may have allowed them to apply a human face and incorporate more human emotion into their news reports than national newspapers, which sometimes wrote reports based on phone interviews. These findings contradict Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) and An and Gower (2009), who found that responsibility was the dominant frame in news stories in their studies. The findings in this study may contradict the ones above because of the small sample size of less than 100 news stories, whereas the other two studies used about 1,500 and nearly 250 respectively. Furthermore, another reason for the contradiction may be that the study by Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) was conducted in Europe. Nonetheless, a stronger reliance on the responsibility news frame by the news media would have offered the newspapers an opportunity to do more in-depth reporting and more thoroughly address the underlying issues or racial profiling and the law George Zimmerman used as a defense.

The third hypothesis and second research question explored the tone the organizations used in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, as well as the tone

regional and national newspapers used in their articles citing the organization's involvement in the Trayvon Martin case. With respect to the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, all four of the organizations used a neutral tone more than half of the time. This finding supported Bichard (2006). With respect to the articles, both regional and national newspapers used a neutral tone approximately half of the time. The news media's and the civil rights organizations' primary use of the conflict news frame, as previously mentioned, may have suggested that they also would have primarily relied upon a negative tone. Because they did not do so suggested that perhaps the newspapers and the organizations were cognizant of the fact that the Trayvon Martin case had already generated strong emotions in unprecedented proportions, and they did not want to exacerbate the situation by further stirring an already hostile and potentially volatile public. Furthermore, as it relates to the news media, the use of a neutral tone in the newspaper articles suggested an effort to avoid sensationalism and embrace objectivity in their reporting.

The third research question addressed the rhetorical strategies and tactics the organizations used in their press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials. As it relates to the primary use of antithesis in the use of the rhetorical strategy of identification (Burke, 1973), this finding supported Sommerfeldt (2011), who studied MoveOn.org action alerts. The use of antithesis, which refers to uniting against a perceived enemy, suggested that the organizations used rhetorical strategies in their press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials that were similar to their use of the conflict frame in their Facebook posts and Twitter tweets; therefore, their use of antithesis was

expected. Additionally, regarding the use of the sympathy, which was not as prevalent as the aforementioned rhetorical strategy, this equates to the use of the human-interest frame in the previously mentioned social media networking sites used in this study. Sympathy relates to using language that attempts to capitalize on how people are alike. This was similar to the goal of the human-interest frame in that this frame applied a human face to help establish a personal connection. As it relates to the primary use of the injustice subframe in the rhetorical tactic of protest-framing theory, this finding supported Ward and Ostrom (2006), who used both qualitative and quantitative analysis in a study of customer-related complaint websites. The predominant use of the injustice subframe suggested that the organizations used a rhetorical tactic similar to the use of the diagnostic frame that was predominant in social media; therefore, this finding also was expected. The diagnostic frame is akin to the injustice subframe in that the former identifies an issue that the organization and its supporters can address through their activism, while the latter seeks to identify a problem to rile supporters. Comparatively, the use of the agency subframe in the press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials relates to the use of the motivational frame on Twitter and Facebook. Whereas the agency subframe helps the public discern their power to accomplish political and social change, the motivational frame commands them to act on that power. As it relates to the rhetorical strategy of vilification, the reliance on personal vilification more so than categorical vilification can be tied back to the use of the responsibility news frame; however, personal vilification appears to incorporate a more negative tone than the responsibility frame. For example, personal vilification uses language that appears to attack the person deemed blameworthy for causing an issue or

event, whereas the responsibility news frame addresses either those who caused the problem or is working to solve the problem, which may not necessarily be the same person. The minimal use of both types of vilification, particularly the use of categorical by only one of the four civil rights organizations, relates back to the primary use of a neutral tone on Facebook and Twitter. It also suggested that the organizations did not want to use rhetoric that could exacerbate the contentiousness nature of the already controversial case, especially in statements that could appear in the mainstream media and perhaps cause their non-supporters and supporters alike to view them negatively.

The fourth set of research questions addressed how often the organizations referenced joint efforts between one another in their Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials. This question was included in an effort to analyze whether the organizations presented a united front or operated individually in organizing events and addressing the racial profiling and legal issues related to the Trayvon Martin case. Projecting a united front in public suggested more cooperation in getting their various publics to take action. Results suggested that three of the four organizations – COC, NUL, and NAN -- strategically planned a public relations effort beyond showing up to speak at marches, rallies, and public meetings. Two press releases, one from the COC, the other from the NUL, discuss a plan to hold a rally and deliver a letter to ALEC in Washington, D.C., to protest its promotion of so-called kill-at-will laws, also known as stand-your-ground and shoot-first laws. The lack of a press release from the NAACP about its involvement suggested a missed public relations opportunity for the nation's oldest civil rights organization to increase awareness about and publicize its involvement with the ALEC

issue. Posting a press release on its website about this event may have been important for two reasons. First, of all the civil rights organizations in the country, particularly those that focus on issues of importance to the Black community, the NAACP may be the one that the news media would most likely seek out for quotes and context about the Trayvon Martin case because of its name recognition. Second, the NAACP's members and supporters may be from a different demographic group than NUL and COC, and they may not have known about the rally if they did not get the information directly from the NAACP. Next, the lack of involvement from NAN suggested another missed opportunity to put the ALEC issue before yet another demographic group that may not otherwise have been exposed to it. Furthermore, because NAN's President, Reverend Al Sharpton, hosts *PoliticsNation*, a television show on MSNBC and two syndicated radio shows, *Keepin' It Real* and *Hour of Power*, the civil rights organizations seemed to have missed an opportunity to capitalize on readily available media coverage to further publicize the joint efforts of the civil rights organizations that could have enhanced their brand. Regarding demographic groups, a thorough review of the organizations' websites and messages suggested that the NAACP and NAN appealed to more grassroots individuals, while NUL and COC appealed to a more educated, elite audience. This may help explain why NUL and COC focused on big-picture issues related to ALEC, while the NAACP and NAN did not. Finally, the lack of any Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, official statements, blog posts, or miscellaneous public relations material about this joint effort suggested that the civil rights organizations may need to consider developing a public relations or social media strategy to ensure that they better publicize their efforts

across all media platforms, whether or not they mention joint efforts involving their sister organizations.

Regarding the regional and national newspapers reporting joint efforts between the four civil rights organizations, seven newspaper articles mention the organizations appearing together at rallies, marches, a public meeting, and a news conference in Sanford, Florida, during the time period in which the Trayvon Martin case dominated headlines and newscasts. It must be noted, however, that no article regarding the rally at ALEC's headquarters in Washington, D.C., appeared in the sample used in this study. It also must be noted that it is unclear whether newspapers in the District of Columbia area, particularly *The Washington Post*, received a news release about the event or had reporters available to cover the rally. Nonetheless, covering the event could have given *The Washington Post* an opportunity to localize a national story playing out in a different part of the country that had manifested itself in the newspaper's coverage area.

The fifth research question examined whether there is a difference in how often the organizations refer to offline or online collective action in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, if at all. With the exception of NAN, all of the organizations predominantly referred to online collective action more than half of the time. The finding related to NAN suggested that the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts reflected Sharpton's highly publicized past and present involvement in offline activism such as protests, rallies, and marches. The NAACP also is perhaps best known for its offline activism efforts, so the finding that nearly two-thirds of its social media posts refer to online activism efforts suggested that the organization may be revamping its image to appeal to a younger generation of potential civil rights activists who are actively

engaged in online activities. This point also can be applied to NUL, which was founded around the same time as the NAACP. Furthermore, although results show the NAACP had the highest percentage of references to online activism, the COC had the largest number, which reflects back to the reason why the organization was founded: to encourage Blacks to engage in online activism. For example, in this case the COC created an online letter addressed to the U.S. Justice Department for its supporters to sign. However, the findings that approximately a third of the COC's Twitter tweets and Facebook posts did not advocate any action suggested that the organization could consider being more strategic in crafting social media messages that inform its supporters while encouraging them to become actively involved in the causes and issues it pushes.

The sixth research question inquired about the primary media types the organizations use in their Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. With regard to hashtags, more than half of the Twitter tweets about the Trayvon Martin case used hashtags and none of the Facebook posts did so. Because hashtags in the social networking environment originated for use on Twitter, it stands to reason that no Facebook posts would include them. The findings related to the Twitter hashtags far exceeded those in Lovejoy et al. (2012); however, it must be noted that those researchers studied the tweets of 73 organizations, whereas this study used only four. Although a large number of the tweets contained hashtags, using a select few of them in more, if not all, of the tweets could have enhanced their brand and served as a publicity tool to increase awareness about the organization in general and its activism efforts in particular. For example, using more hashtags could have allowed Twitter users searching for information about the Trayvon Martin case, who may not have been familiar with these organizations, to

perhaps learn more about them. With regard to visual images, the organizations were more likely to use videos over photos and graphics, in that order. Collectively, less than half of all the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts about the Trayvon Martin contained visual images. These findings supported Zoch et al. (2008) and Kwok and Yu (2013). However, it must be noted that more than half of these social media elements for the COC and NUL contained photos, videos, and graphics.

Incorporating more videos than photos was another method the organizations could use to distribute their messages beyond the written word as well as make them more salient. It is worth pointing out, however, that the organizations did not create some of the videos; instead, they included links from news media that interviewed their leaders. It also is important to note that some Twitter tweets and Facebook posts contained multiple photos in albums; therefore, the total amount of photos used would significantly outnumber the videos. Nonetheless, these findings suggested two key points. First, given the number of marches, rallies, and public meetings in which the four organizations were involved, the findings suggested that the organizations could have dedicated more manpower toward shooting photos and videos of each event to properly document their activism efforts and tell their own stories from their own perspective. Doing so could have given the organizations more control over their image, enhance their visibility, increase message saliency, and lessen reliance on the news media to disseminate their messages. Second, the findings suggested that the organizations perhaps could have included more photos, especially in Facebook posts, because the proliferation of smart phones and other technology makes it easier to quickly and inexpensively shoot, edit, and upload professional quality photos more readily than videos. Second, the findings

suggested that the organizations could consider doing more to incorporate even more photos and videos into their social media sites, especially with the popularity of smart phones being used to watch short videos on sites such as YouTube and now Instagram, the latter of which is primarily used to view photos that can be posted directly to Facebook and Twitter. More people than ever before are watching videos on their mobile devices via sites such as YouTube, particularly people of color (Moore, 2011). Non-Whites, including Blacks and Hispanics, who are the primary target audience for the civil rights organizations in this study, use video-sharing sites more than Whites at a rate of 79% to 69% (Moore, 2011). Additionally, Twitter is especially appealing to Blacks, and Instagram is especially appealing to Blacks and Hispanics (Duggan & Brenner, 2013).

The seventh research question inquired about the websites in which the hyperlinks in the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts primarily connect. Overall, more than half of the organizations included hyperlinks in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, but individually, COC and NUL were the only organizations to do so. This finding seemed to support Lovejoy et al. (2012). Of those hyperlinks, having the majority of them link back to related information on the organizations' official websites suggested several things: 1) their Twitter followers and Facebook friends could get more in-depth information about the Trayvon Martin case and more opportunities to engage in online and offline action; 2) they would get more exposure to more aspects of the organizations' social and political agendas beyond the Trayvon Martin case; and 3) if they were not already members, they might be persuaded to join or contribute financially. Beyond linking back to their own websites, the findings that they link back to news sites and other social media sites respectively supported similar findings from Harlow (2012).

The eighth research question explored whether any of the samples from the organizations analyzed in this study contributed to mainstream media coverage in the regional and national newspapers, particularly the press releases. Although NAN had significantly fewer Facebook posts and Twitter tweets, no press releases and two official statements, the organization and its leader seemed to get the most amount of publicity in the regional and national newspapers. One regional newspaper used one of Reverend Al Sharpton's official statements and cited the social media pages as sources of information about a rally; his personal tweets often were retweeted on NAN's Twitter feed, and links to his personal Facebook posts often were shared on NAN's Facebook timeline. Interestingly, the Facebook posts about events often, if not always, included a full press release rather than a brief summary with a hyperlink to the full release, as the other organizations did. While suggested that the organizations keep their Facebook posts briefs because it perhaps helps to increase readership, it must be noted that NAN received significantly more comments and likes on its Facebook posts than the other organizations, although this study does not research that area.

Election 2012

The first hypothesis examined the difference in the collective action frame by organization and social media type. The dominant use of the motivational collective action frame in more than half of the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts supported Harlow (2012). Motivational appeared to be the most appropriate frame for Election 2012 compared to the others because the main point was to motivate people to take action at the ballot box. This use of this dominant frame suggested that the organizations embraced the importance of their role in encouraging their members and supporters in general, and

Blacks in particular to register to vote and cast their ballots during Election 2012. Historically, the NAACP has played a significant part in get-out-the-vote efforts in the Black community (O'Brien, 2011; Straughn, 2004) through offline efforts such as going door-to-door canvassing neighborhoods. This finding suggested that maybe the organizations' leaders realized that offline efforts were not enough in this era, and they needed to couple them with online efforts, perhaps to appeal to young adults who may not fully understand the struggle Blacks went through to secure the right to vote. This may be why many Twitter tweets and Facebook posts seemed to speak to the importance of voting from a historical perspective. For example, the COC's Facebook page depicted an image of a Black man and Black woman who appeared to be standing in line to vote. A young boy was facing them. The image read, "They did their part. Now do yours." This COC tweet further echoed that sentiment: "People fought and bled so that we could vote. We're here to help you keep fighting." Finally, the findings also suggested that the organizations capitalized on the power of the Internet to reach would-be voters, a lesson they perhaps learned from the strong online presence that helped propel Barack Obama to become the country's first Black president.

The second hypothesis and related research question addressed the news frames the organizations used in their Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. These questions also address the news frames used by national and regional newspapers that covered the organizations' involvement in Election 2012 efforts. With regard to the Facebook and Twitter posts, it was interesting to note the preferred use of the human-interest news frame by the two oldest civil rights organizations in this study, the NAACP and NUL, compared to the preferred use of the responsibility frame by the two youngest, NAN and

COC. The NAACP's use of the human-interest frame to apply a human face or emotion to a problem was primarily played out in its use of the #ivotebecause hashtag on Twitter and its #restorethevotes campaign, which featured images of well-known Blacks who could not cast a ballot because of their criminal convictions. Some of the celebrities included actor Charles Dutton, who served time for "manslaughter, illegal possession of a firearm and acting as the ringleader of a prison riot" (King, 1991, n.p.), and Judge Greg Mathis, a former gang member who was incarcerated on drug and gun charges (Mathis & Walker, 2002). To urge voter registration, the NUL also launched a campaign featuring celebrities, which was an often-used, effective advertising appeal. The use of the human-interest frame suggested that the organizations believed appealing to people's emotions using well-known faces could bolster its get-out-the-vote efforts more so than the leaders of the organizations, or people who had struggled to help Blacks earn the right to vote, in encouraging them to do so. However, shifting the focus to the responsibility frame as the other two organizations did could have helped to educate the public about efforts to suppress the Black vote so they could consider taking action against those responsible for such offenses. The COC did this through launching a campaign to let the public know what organizations and corporations were responsible for voter ID laws, billboards with misinformation and other tactics designed to keep Blacks from casting ballots. The primary use of the responsibility frame on Facebook suggested that the organizations could offer a more in-depth explanation of these issues because they were not limited to 140 characters, as they would have been on Twitter. The COC and NAN's dominant use of the responsibility frame supported the findings in Muralidharan et al. (2011). With regard to the regional and national newspaper articles, the primary use of the

responsibility frame supported the findings of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and An and Gower (2009). Many of the newspaper articles attributed responsibility related to voter ID law issues to Republican lawmakers.

The third hypothesis and related research question explored the tone the organizations used in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, as well as the tone regional and national newspapers used in their articles citing the organization's involvement in Election 2012. The organizations and the newspapers all relied primarily on the neutral tone. This suggested that they attempted to take an objective, even-keeled approach in their messages and reports, as they did in the Trayvon Martin case.

The third research question addressed the rhetorical strategies and tactics the organizations used in their press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations materials. As previously mentioned, the rhetorical strategy of identification includes antithesis, sympathy, and unawareness. Next, the rhetorical tactic of protest-framing theory includes injustice, identity, and agency. Finally, the rhetorical strategy of vilification includes personal and categorical vilification. It is important to note that antithesis, which relates to uniting against a common enemy, seemed akin to agency, which helps people realize that they possess the power to bring about political and social change. It also is significant to point out that identity appeared analogous to personal vilification. Whereas identity pinpoints responsible parties for their pernicious behavior, similarly, personal vilification categorizes individuals as threatening, immoral, or worse.

The predominant use of antithesis suggested that the organization sought unity, primarily among members of its own organization and state branches, against several

perceived enemies, including ALEC, Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted, some Republicans, and the Tea Party Victory Fund. The COC was one organization that consistently noted the tens of thousands of members of the organization -- or the several thousand members who opposed a particular person, cause or issue -- perhaps to suggest to the opposition as well as would-be allies that there is strength in numbers. Using antithesis in this way could result in the perceived enemy backing down, or possible supporters joining forces with the organization. On another note related to the COC, the organization appeared to use a rhetorical strategy to show that it was “standing up against this rhetoric” (Mathias, 2012, n.p.) tinged with racism and bigotry. Regarding the primary use of the rhetorical tactics of injustice and agency, these subframes further defined the problems, the people and the institutions that the organizations needed to stand up against. Their use ties back into the use of antithesis and suggested that the organizations had to clearly define who or what was the perceived enemy before they could encourage their members and supporters to take collective action against them. Regarding the use of personal and categorical vilification, the organizations often referred to individuals affiliated with the Republican Party, such as Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney, Donald Trump and *right-wing groups*. Although the organizations do not publicly endorse a political candidate, their use of vilification suggested that they were encouraging their backers to cast their ballots for Democrats in general and President Barack Obama in particular.

The fourth set of research questions addressed how often the organizations referenced joint efforts between one another in their Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, press releases, official statements, blog posts, and miscellaneous public relations

materials. The findings suggested several missed opportunities to publicize their efforts to work together. First, NAN made a misstep by neglecting to publicize Reverend Al Sharpton's role in NUL's Occupy the Vote campaign. Although Sharpton appeared to be representing himself personally as a media personality rather than professionally as the president of NAN, the organization still could have let its members know about his involvement in the ad campaign through a Facebook post and Twitter tweet that included Sharpton's image on a poster. To further emphasize the point that Sharpton seemingly represented himself rather than his organization, a newspaper article about this campaign described him as one of the "celebrities" and "stars" of the campaign (Elliott, 2012) but did not describe him as a civil rights activist or as president of the National Action Network. Second, the NAACP overlooked an opportunity to illustrate the importance of neighborhood canvassing when Roslyn Brock, Chairman of the NAACP Board of Directors, joined NAN National Executive Director Tamika Mallory going door-to-door in a Florida neighborhood. The NAACP could have considered posting photos on its Facebook page because NAN had already sent out a media advisory about the event. Third, perhaps the organizations could have considered coordinating their Twitter presidential debate parties to increase participation and include more voices. NUL and COC each had parties, and the COC asked the NAACP to join theirs. Doing so perhaps could have added to its existing get-out-the-vote messages and could have presented a more united front among nationally known civil rights organizations. Overall, the results suggested that the organizations could consider revisiting its public relations strategies to ensure that their messages are consistently posted across all platforms.

The fifth research question examined whether there was a difference in how often the organizations refer to offline or online collective action in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, if at all. On one hand, the finding that nearly half of the Facebook posts and Twitter tweets did not advocate any action suggested that the organizations could be more cognizant about incorporating calls to action in their online messages. Asking the readers to do something in each tweet or posts could give them a greater sense of buy-in with the mission and agenda of each organization. On the other hand, this finding also suggested that the organizations crafted messages that were more information-based rather than action-based. For example, some of the organizations posted general voter information such as what times polling places open and close, voter registration deadlines, and voter ID and registration requirements in various states. The NAACP, for instance, posted informational links to its Battleground Poll. One tweet with a hyperlink to poll results read, "...Nat'l Jobs Program Essential to Winning the African American Vote. 60% Say Top Issue..." Finally, the no-action finding suggested that the organizations could consider rewording their tweets so it would not appear so blatantly obvious that they were constantly repeating the same message. For example, nearly half of the tweets the COC posted about this topic had to be deleted from the final sample used in this study because they were redundant.

The sixth research question inquired about the primary media types the organizations use in their Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. With regard to hashtags, the findings showed that at least three quarters of the Twitter tweets used them. As previously mentioned, the NAACP used the #ivotebecause and #restorethevotes hashtags to underscore the point that one vote counts and to illuminate the issue of felony

disenfranchisement. The NUL used the most hashtags of any of the organizations by consistently incorporating the #occupythevote hashtag to promote its ad campaign. The use of aforementioned hashtags suggested that the organizations wanted to ensure that their tweets were properly categorized to show up in a search for people who did not follow them on Twitter. It also suggested that the organizations sought to increase their visibility on Twitter by perhaps becoming a trending topic. The organizations used a handful of hashtags in their Facebook posts; hashtags are primarily used on Twitter; the use of hashtags on Facebook suggested that the organizations perhaps had their accounts set up to automatically post their tweets to their Facebook page; however, the organizations perhaps could appear more social media savvy if they crafted different messages for each platform on which they post their messages. With regard to visual images, it is worth noting that the NAACP primarily used graphics. While it was expected that most organizations would use photos on their social media sites because it was easy and inexpensive to do so, as previously pointed out, it is worth noting that the NAACP used more graphics than photos, and NUL used more videos than photos. This was not surprising, considering the fact that Benjamin Jealous, born in 1973, is the NAACP's youngest national leader. This is important to emphasize because it suggested that the NAACP committed itself to taking extra strides to keeping its members informed by combining words and images to make their messages more compelling. A similar sentiment can be applied to the use of video to tell more compelling stories.

The seventh research question inquired about the websites in which the hyperlinks in the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts primarily connect. The findings that the majority of the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts was expected because so many of the

organizations had dedicated web pages with information about their voting-relating campaigns as previously mentioned in the results. This suggested that the organizations were keenly aware of the importance of providing registered and would-be voters access to pertinent information to educate them about their rights and other issues in which they may not have been aware, such as felon disenfranchisement. However, the COC could have considered providing more links to petitions, especially considering the fact that the organization had two -- one to encourage Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted to restore early voting, the other to force Clear Channel to remove voter suppression billboards in Black and Hispanic communities.

The eighth research question explored whether any of the samples from the organizations analyzed in this study contributed to mainstream media coverage in the regional and national newspapers, particularly the press releases. The extreme lack of newspaper articles suggested that the organizations might need to revisit their media relations efforts to ensure that their press releases are picked up in relevant mainstream newspapers. This finding also suggested that the NAACP's May 21, 2012, press conference where it released a resolution supporting marriage equality, or same-sex marriage, overshadowed all of its voting-related public relations efforts, as well as the efforts of the other organizations in this study. The NAACP's announcement came nearly two weeks after President Barack Obama announced his support for same-sex couples to get married. Most of the articles examined for this study with the appropriate key words had to be eliminated because they discussed the NAACP's decision, although the sampling frame was four to six months later. This also suggested that the news media chose to focus on issues such as gay marriage being on the ballot in four states (Semuels,

2012) in the aftermath of Obama's and the NAACP's history-making announcements. It further suggested that, because of the conflict and long-term impact involved in this issue, the mainstream media believed that same-sex marriage was more newsworthy to cover than the NAACP's campaign to raise awareness about felon disenfranchisement, as well as the efforts of the other organizations to encourage voter registration, fight voter ID laws, and restore weekend voting.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study primarily explored how the NAACP, NUL, NAN, and COC used frames, rhetoric and media types in their online messages related to the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012 to facilitate collective action and generate positive news media coverage. The findings in each case revealed some key differences in the frames, media types, mainstream news media coverage, and references to online and offline activism. The findings further revealed some key similarities in tone and rhetorical strategies and tactics.

Regarding collective action frames, these civil rights organizations chose diagnostic as the dominant frame in the Trayvon Martin case and motivational as the dominant frame in Election 2012. The organizations perhaps opted for different frames because of the nature of each case. On one hand, disseminating key messages in the initial phase of the Trayvon Martin case was a one-time occurrence that perhaps required using a frame that helped to identify issues that needed to be addressed to both educate and inform audiences about their importance. Additionally, with the large degree of news media coverage about ways people across the country had gotten involved, the organizations may have thought a motivational frame was unnecessary. On the other hand, Election 2012 was a part of a recurring effort that did not necessarily require using frames to identify issues. This may have been the case because their audiences perhaps already were familiar with the issues because they frequently encountered them during elections. The leaders of these civil rights organizations, as well as others involved in writing and distributing messages for similar advocacy and activist groups, can learn

from these examples that it may be best to use collective action frames that best fit the case rather than using a one-frame-fits-all approach in their public relations efforts.

Regarding news frames, the organizations opted for more conflict frames in the Trayvon Martin case and more human-interest frames in Election 2012. As previously pointed out, the nature of each case likely resulted in the organizations framing their messages differently. Given the high degree of controversy involved in the Trayvon Martin case that the organizations and their allies actively confronted, using the conflict news frame was not surprising. While Election 2012 had its own share of contention, the organizations' primary focus on persuading people to go to the polls seemed to outweigh addressing disputes through online messages. Additionally, their primary use of the motivational collective action frame during Election 2012 suggested that the organizations would favor a human-interest news frame because both types of frames seem to directly tie in to each other. Some points that can be discerned from these examples are that organizations could select appropriate news frames on a situational basis, and they could make an effort to ensure interconnectivity if multiple frames are used.

Regarding media types, specifically photos, videos, and graphics, percentage-wise the organizations used videos the most in the Trayvon Martin case and the least in Election 2012. This perhaps was the case because the organizations garnered considerably more media coverage during the beginning of the Trayvon Martin case than they did toward the end of Election 2012. As a result, they posted hyperlinks to television news stories that featured interviews with the leaders of the organizations. They also posted hyperlinks to videos others created to honor Martin's memory. Overall, the

organizations could have done a better job incorporating multimedia elements throughout their Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. Additionally, they could have at least considered adding photos to their press releases and official statements, which only contained words. One lesson that can be learned from this experience is that these organizations could consider using technology to update traditional means of public relations communication such as press releases and official statements. Some media savvy organizations are doing this by using social media press releases to make their content more engaging. According to Todd Defren, principal of SHIFT Communications, the company that created the first social media news release in 2006, 100 years after the first press release was created, “the traditional press release format can no longer be considered a stand-alone tactic” (Knowles, 2006, p. 22). According to Penn (2012), the social media press release should at least contain these seven elements: 1) buttons to share to sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, and Google Plus; 2) mobile- and Twitter-friendly headlines less than 55 characters; 3) YouTube videos; 4) shareable audio compatible with mobile devices; 5) a photo gallery set on a site such as Flickr; 6) social comments section using apps such as Disqus; and 7) selected contact information that could include a Twitter handle. Posting social media press releases on their websites and hyperlinks to them on their social media sites could aid these organizations in generating more mainstream news media coverage and attracting more technologically astute audiences, particularly younger adults who may not be members or supporters.

Regarding mainstream news media coverage in regional and national newspapers in this study, reporters cited or quoted a handful of NAACP, NAN, and COC social media, press releases and official statements as sources of information in the Trayvon

Martin case. Unfortunately, that was not the case with Election 2012. NUL was the only organization that appeared to have a press release cited; however, the newspaper article was published before the corresponding press release was posted on its website. Getting news media coverage in the Trayvon Martin case perhaps was easier because Black leaders of civil rights organizations often serve as primary sources, and should expect to be quoted, during high-profile, racially charged cases. To the contrary, securing news media coverage during Election 2012 proved more difficult, likely because other hot-button issues, such as the previously mentioned publicly declared positions on same-sex marriage, obscured coverage of voter ID laws and other voting-related topics. This may have been the case because the former issue was breaking news, while the latter issue was old news. These examples underscore the importance of the organizations not relying on the mainstream news media to get their messages out. They also emphasize the significance of using tools such as the aforementioned social media news releases to tell their own stories across platforms using multimedia elements.

Regarding references to online or offline activism versus no activism in their Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, most of the organizations advocated online in the Trayvon Martin case; however, they registered the highest percentages for no action during Election 2012. While this finding was not necessarily surprising in the former case, it was somewhat surprising in the latter case because of the use of the motivational collective action frame that urges individuals to take action. As previously pointed out in the discussion involving Election 2012, this finding suggested that the organizations perhaps crafted their messages to educate and inform rather than to inspire. What can be

ascertained from these examples is that all messages, no matter how small, could incorporate a call to action.

While the organizations differed on using collective action and news frames, media types, and references to online and offline activism in their messages related to the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012, they all predominantly used the same neutral tone in their Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. As already mentioned, the organizations likely chose this tone to avoid further sensationalizing sensitive issues, particularly in the Trayvon Martin case. It must be pointed out, however, that sometimes using positive or negative tones can help make messages more impactful. For instance, as stated in the literature review, people who are highly involved in an issue are more willing to comply with requests when they are framed negatively (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990). This suggested that messages distributed in the Trayvon Martin case could have resulted in more online or offline activism if they had a negative tone. Furthermore, as also asserted in the literature review, when people have a low level of involvement in an issue, positive framing may pique their interests (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990). This suggested that messages disseminated during Election 2012 could have persuaded more people to register to vote and cast their ballots if they had a positive tone. Public relations writers for civil rights organizations and other entities can learn from these instances that taking the middle road by remaining neutral may not be the best method when crafting messages designed to spur collective action.

As it relates to rhetorical strategies and tactics, the organizations appeared to favor those that galvanized their allies to identify a problem and who was responsible for it, unite against those individuals or groups, and realize their power to act together to

resolve the problem. These rhetorical choices seemed consistent with persuading people to take collective action that could bring about social and political change. This suggested that rhetorical choices should complement the collective action frames, news frames, and tone of the messages to make them more effective.

Finally, as it relates to social media, one last practical suggestion would have been for the organizations to have considered ensuring that all Twitter tweets come from their official Twitter accounts. Similarly, they could have considered making sure most of their Facebook posts were original statuses. Regarding the number of tweets on official Twitter accounts, Trayvon Martin case results showed 68% on the organizations' feeds, while Election 2012 results showed 82.7%. The remaining tweets came from the organizations' leaders, staff members, or a site related to the organization. These results suggested that each organization perhaps could strengthen its brand and give their messages more impact by addressing their audiences with only one voice – the organization's voice -- because organizations generally have more credibility than individuals. Regarding the type of Twitter tweets and Facebook posts the organizations used, results showed they created 83.2% in Election 2012 case and 86.5% in the Trayvon Martin case. The remainders were retweets and modified tweets on Twitter and shared hyperlinks and photos on Facebook. Posting more Facebook statuses they authored could make the organizations' appear more authoritative and make their audiences pay more attention to their messages.

In summary, strategically incorporating the appropriate frames, tone, and rhetoric in their messages on a situational basis, as well as using more multimedia elements in all their messages, could help the organizations generate more mainstream media coverage,

encourage more individuals to engage in online and offline activism, and ensure that they fulfill their mission and accomplish their agenda.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations; the first one was regarding sample sizes. Some of them include the small sample sizes of the Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, particularly in the Trayvon Martin case, and samples of some organizations that were not comparable to the sample sizes of other organizations, particularly NAN. Also, the sample of Facebook posts was relatively small compared to the Twitter tweets. Overall, these social media elements greatly outnumbered the number of regional and national newspaper articles, blog posts, press releases, official statements, and miscellaneous public relations materials used in this study. The second limitation was the lack of knowledge about how and whether press releases and official statements were distributed to the news media used in this study, as well as whether the organizations followed strategies and tactics outlined in their social media and media relations plans, if they have them. It also was unclear whether they planned their content and number of Twitter tweets and Facebook posts before they appeared online. Conducting in-depth interviews with the public relations representatives of these organizations, as well as the editors and reporters who covered the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012, could aid in addressing these limitations and provide direction for future research. The third limitation was the lack of analysis of videos the organizations created and posted on their YouTube pages, as well as the lack of analysis of videos of television news stories that covered the organizations' efforts in the above cases. Finally, this study was limited to only four civil rights organizations and only two cases that occurred in 2012 within a short time period.

Future research could explore audience response, specifically whether they engaged in online or offline activism because of the messages the organizations posted online. This could be accomplished via surveys or focus groups. Secondly, future research could explore the number of likes and comments on Facebook posts regarding the Trayvon Martin case and Election 2012, especially the depth of the comments, to determine whether the commenters indicated their intentions to support the organizations by participating in online and offline activism. On a similar note, future research also could explore whether and how often the messages on Twitter got retweeted or favorited, as well as whether the Twitter followers added their own comments to the tweet before distributing it to their own followers. Thirdly, future research could determine how many of the Facebook friends and Twitter followers of the organizations actually signed petitions, registered to vote or attended marches, meetings, and rallies compared to members of the organizations. Finally, future research could expand on the number of civil rights organizations and compare whether, for example, the frames, rhetoric, and media types used at the beginning of the Trayvon Martin case changed toward the end of the case. Overall, future research could be used to provide civil rights organizations with a practical approach to help ensure that their messages can influence others to play an active role in effecting political and social change.

APPENDIX A

CODEBOOK

Introduction

This content analysis study assesses the types of frames, actions, media types, emotions/tones, issues, and rhetorical strategies and tactics used by four civil rights organizations in their online content related to the Trayvon Martin case and voting/voter suppression issues in Election 2012. The organizations are the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Urban League (NUL), National Action Network (NAN) and ColorOfChange.org (COC). Their online content being analyzed is Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, press releases, official statements, and blog posts.

This content analysis study also assesses the frames and emotions/tones used by select national and regional/local newspapers that mentioned those organizations in news articles covering the Trayvon Martin case and voting/voter suppression issues in Election 2012.

With regard to the Trayvon Martin case, the content being analyzed appeared online from February 26, 2012, the day Trayvon Martin was killed, to April 11, 2012, the day his alleged killer, George Zimmerman, initially was jailed. With regard to voting/voter suppression issues in Election 2012, the content was published from September 7, 2012, the day after the Democratic National Convention, to Nov. 6, 2012, which was Election Day.

PROCEDURE: The following steps should be taken in the content analysis coding described below (numbers stand for variables): all relevant Twitter tweets and

Facebook posts should be read thoroughly to identify whether they are related to the following: (1) Trayvon Martin or George Zimmerman, or the “shoot first” or “kill at will” law; (2) voting/voter suppression, Election 2012, or the presidential debates.

Two separate Microsoft Excel code sheets will be used for this study, one for the Trayvon Martin case, and the other for the voting-voter suppression case. Below are two codebooks to analyze the Facebook posts and Twitter tweets in each case.

Trayvon Martin Case

DATE

Enter the month and day each sample was posted or published; use two digits for each.

- For example. March 6, 2013 would be coded as 0306

ORGANIZATION NAME

Enter the number for the civil rights organization:

- 1=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- 2=National Urban League (NUL)
- 3=National Action Network (NAN)
- 4=ColorOfChange.org (COC)

ORGANIZATION CONTENT PROVIDER

Enter the number for the individual or organization posting the content:

- 0=Facebook
- 1=organization verified Twitter account (with the organization’s official logo)
- 2=organization leaders (executive director/president):
 - NAACP: Ben Jealous
 - NUL: Marc Morial
 - NAN: the Rev. Al Sharpton
 - COC: Rashad Robinson
- 3=other organization staffers
 - NAACP: Roslyn Brock
 - NUL: Chanelle Hardy, Selena Sizemore, Lamman Rucker, Vaughn Anthony
 - NAN: Janaye Ingram, Tamika Mallory, Rachel Noerdlinger, Dominique Sharpton
 - COC: not applicable
- 4=organization related site
 - NAACP: NAACP Image Awards, NAACP Connect
 - NUL: not applicable
 - NAN: Politics Nation
 - COC: not applicable

SAMPLE TYPE**Enter the number for the sample type:**

1=Twitter tweet. Made by the national chapter of the NAACP, NUL, NAN or COC, the executive director/president, organization staffer or related organization posted on its verified Twitter account at www.twitter.com.

2=Facebook post. Status updates and shared links made by the national chapter of the NAACP, NUL, NAN or COC under its verified Facebook account at www.facebook.com

POST/TWEET TYPE

The post type refers to whether the organization or related person/entity created the Twitter tweet or Facebook post, or whether it posted/shared information from another source.

Enter the number for the post type:

0=created tweet/post

1=retweet (indicated by RT, Twitter only)

2=modified tweet (indicated by MT, Twitter only)

3=shared link (indicated by [ORG NAME] shared a link; Facebook only)

4=shared photo (indicated by [ORG NAME] shared a photo; Facebook only)

MEDIA TYPE

The media type refers to whether there are extra multimedia elements that accompany the text. Indicate whether a post has any of these elements. Please click on all hyperlinks in the Twitter tweet or Facebook post to help determine the media type.

Enter 0 for no and 1 for yes for each of the following media types:

Photo (an image taken with a camera that has not been substantially modified to include words or a graphic element)

Video (body of tweet says video; click on hyperlink to verify)

Graphic (an image that includes pictures or illustrations with words, numbers or symbols)

Hyperlink

Hyperlink to news items (articles or videos appearing on the official websites of newspapers, magazines, television networks or stations, and radio networks or stations)

Hyperlink to organization's own site (naacp.org, nul.iamempowered.com, nationalactionnetwork.net, colorofchange.org), including blog and press room

Hyperlink to other organization site

Hyperlink to social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Lockerz, Flickr, Tumblr, Storify, Instagram, Google Hangout, etc.)

Hyperlink to e-petition

Hashtags (at least one of the following)

- **Trayvon Martin:** #TrayvonMartin, #Trayvon, #Justice4Trayvon, #JusticeforTrayvon, #MillionHoodies, #ALEC, #NRA, #stopALECNRA4Trayvon, #standyourgroundlaws and #tweetupfortrayvon.

TONE OF POST**Enter the number for the dominant tone:**

1=Positive (shows good feelings such as pride, love and enthusiasm; pro-Trayvon Martin, pro-justice, pro-voting etc.)

2=Negative (shows bad feelings such as hatred, anger or disgust; anti-George Zimmerman, anti-racial profiling, anti-ALEC, etc.)

3=Neutral (neither positive or negative)

DOMINANT ACTION TYPE

Online collection action refers to an activity that can be done from a computer or mobile device.

Offline collection action refers to an activity that often requires being physically present.

Enter the number for the type of collective action:

1=Online.

Any of the following activities are considered online collective action: “(a) Joined or left a group about politics; (b) Started a social or political topic for discussion; (c) Posted links to news stories relating to a political or social cause; (d) Posted links to videos relating to a political or social cause; (e) Created or invited others to participate in an event related to a political or social cause; (f) Signed an e-mail or web petition; and (g) Forwarded a political e-mail or link to another person”); (h) Texting, tweeting or calling

2=Offline.

- Any of the following activities are considered offline collective action: (“(a) Expressed political opinion through mainstream media (written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine or called a live radio or TV show to express a political opinion); (b) Volunteered for a campaign or other political cause; (c) Organized or participated in organizing a political event; (d) Attended political meetings or speeches; (e) Participated in demonstrations or protests; (f) Displayed a political button, a sign or sticker; (g) Voted in election; and (h) Tried to influence how others would vote”

3=Both online and offline.

4=Neither.

ACTION TYPES

Action type refers to what the organization wants the follower to do after reading the Twitter tweet or Facebook post, what the organization is depicted as doing, or what the tweet/post shows the organization engaged in, i.e. call to action

Enter 0 for no and 1 for yes for each of the following action types:

Write/call elected official

Write/call/appear in/watch/listen to/view media (newspaper, television, radio)

Sign petition or influence others to sign

Participate in vigil, rally, march, protest or demonstration

Attend public political meeting, legal hearing or speech

Volunteer for a cause

Wear/post photo of/change avatar to hoodie

Participate in Million Hoodie event
Texting, tweeting, calling or sharing (Facebook)

DOMINANT COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAME

Collective action frames refer to tasks that tell what must be done and what must be achieved in mobilizing people to act.

Enter the number of the dominant collective action frame:

- 1=Diagnostic (identify issues that need to be addressed)
- 2=Prognostic (propose a solution to what needs to be done)
- 3=Motivational (call to action to address the issue)

DOMINANT NEWS FRAME

News frames refer to tools the media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret and evaluate information.

Enter the number of the dominant news frame:

- 1=Conflict (focus on problems between institutions, groups and individuals, such as during elections; shows someone is against a person, organization or action)
- 2=Human interest (apply a human face or emotion to a problem, issue or event to keep the audience interested; mentions person(s) by name)
- 3=Economic consequences (focus on the how countries, regions, institutions, groups and individuals will be affected; any mention of money, funding or finances)
- 4=Morality (places matters “in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions”; uses words right, wrong, good and evil)
- 5=Responsibility (attribute responsibility for a cause or solution to an individual, government or group; who caused the problem; who can/must/is working to solve the problem)

DOMINANT ISSUE

Enter the number for the dominant issue:

- 1=Racial profiling
- 2=Castle Doctrine/stand your ground/kill at will law/ALEC
- 3=Both
- 4=Other

Election 2012 Case

DATE

Enter the month and day each sample was posted or published; use two digits for each.

- For example. March 6, 2013 would be coded as 0306

ORGANIZATION NAME

Enter the number for the civil rights organization:

- 1=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- 2=National Urban League (NUL)
- 3=National Action Network (NAN)

4=ColorOfChange.org (COC)

6. ORGANIZATION CONTENT PROVIDER

Enter the number for the individual or organization posting the content:

0=Facebook

1=organization verified Twitter account (with the organization's official logo)

2=organization leaders (executive director/president):

- NAACP: Ben Jealous
- NUL: Marc Morial
- NAN: the Rev. Al Sharpton
- COC: Rashad Robinson

3=other organization staffers

- NAACP: Roslyn Brock
- NUL: Chanelle Hardy, Selena Sizemore, Lamman Rucker, Vaughn Anthony
- NAN: Janaye Ingram, Tamika Mallory, Rachel Noerdlinger, Dominique Sharpton
- COC: not applicable

4=organization related site

- NAACP: NAACP Image Awards, NAACP Connect
- NUL: not applicable
- NAN: Politics Nation
- COC: not applicable

SAMPLE TYPE

Enter the number for the sample type:

1=Twitter tweet. Made by the national chapter of the NAACP, NUL, NAN or COC, the executive director/president, organization staffer or related organization posted on its verified Twitter account at www.twitter.com.

2=Facebook post. Status updates and shared links made by the national chapter of the NAACP, NUL, NAN or COC under its verified Facebook account at www.facebook.com

POST/TWEET TYPE

The post type refers to whether the organization or related person/entity created the Twitter tweet or Facebook post, or whether it posted/shared information from another source.

Enter the number for the post type:

0=created tweet/post

1=retweet (indicated by RT, Twitter only)

2=modified tweet (indicated by MT, Twitter only)

3=shared link (indicated by [ORG NAME] shared a link; Facebook only)

4=shared photo (indicated by [ORG NAME] shared a photo; Facebook only)

MEDIA TYPE

The media type refers to whether there are extra multimedia elements that accompany the text. Indicate whether a post has any of these elements. Please click on all hyperlinks in the Twitter tweet or Facebook post to help determine the media type.

Enter 0 for no and 1 for yes for each of the following media types:

Photo (an image taken with a camera that has not been substantially modified to include words or a graphic element)

Video

Graphic (an image that includes pictures or illustrations with words, numbers or symbols)

Hyperlink

Hyperlink to news items (articles or videos appearing on the official websites of newspapers, magazines, television networks or stations, and radio networks or stations)

Hyperlink to organization's own site (naacp.org, nul.iamempowered.com, nationalactionnetwork.net, colorofchange.org), including blog and press room

Hyperlink to other organization site

Hyperlink to social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Lockerz, Flickr, Tumblr, Storify, Instagram, Google Hangout, etc.)

Hyperlink to e-petition

Hashtags (at least one of the following)

- **Voting/Voter Suppression:** #BETvote, #GOTV, #ivotebecause, #blackvote, #thisismyvote, #youthvote, #voterid, #restorethevotes, #stayinline, #unityvote, #worthit, #election2012, #electionday, #vote2012. #voteready, #operationlemonade, #occupythevote, #onevotematters, #debate, #rush2reg, #askurbanleague

STONE OF POST**Enter the number for the dominant emotion/stone:**

1=Positive (shows good feelings such as pride, love and enthusiasm; pro-voting, pro-justice, pro-voting, etc.)

2=Negative (shows bad feelings such as hatred, anger or disgust; anti-ALEC, anti-Husted, anti-elected official, anti-business, etc.)

3=Neutral (neither positive or negative)

DOMINANT ACTION TYPE

Online collection action refers to an activity that can be done from a computer or mobile device.

Offline collection action refers to an activity that often requires being physically present.

Enter the number for the type of collective action:

1=Online.

Any of the following activities are considered online collective action: "(a) Joined or left a group about politics; (b) Started a social or political topic for discussion; (c) Posted links to news stories relating to a political or social cause; (d) Posted links to videos relating to a political or social cause; (e) Created or invited others to participate in an event related to a political or social cause; (f) Signed an e-mail or web petition; and (g) Forwarded a political e-mail or link to another person"; (h) Texting, tweeting or calling

2=Offline.

- Any of the following activities are considered offline collective action: "(a) Expressed political opinion through mainstream media (written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine or called a live radio or TV show to express a political

opinion); (b) Volunteered for a campaign or other political cause; (c) Organized or participated in organizing a political event; (d) Attended political meetings or speeches; (e) Participated in demonstrations or protests; (f) Displayed a political button, a sign or sticker; (g) Voted in election; and (h) Tried to influence how others would vote”

3=Both online and offline.

4=Neither.

ACTION TYPES

Action type refers to what the organization wants the follower to do after reading the Twitter tweet or Facebook post, what the organization is depicted as doing, or what the tweet/post shows the organization engaged in, i.e. call to action

Enter 0 for no and 1 for yes for each of the following action types:

Display political button, sign or sticker, avatar or Twibbon

Vote in the general election

Register to vote in the general election/voter education

Participate in a town hall meeting or debate party

Use #ivotebecause hashtag

Write/call elected official

Write/call/appear in/read/watch/listen to media (newspaper, television, radio)

Sign petition or influence others to sign

Participate in vigil, rally, march, protest or demonstration

Attend public political meeting, legal hearing or speech

Texting, tweeting, calling, sharing (Facebook)

DOMINANT COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAME

Collective action frames refer to tasks that tell what must be done and what must be achieved in mobilizing people to act.

Enter the number of the dominant collective action frame:

1=Diagnostic (identify issues that need to be addressed)

2=Prognostic (propose a solution to what needs to be done)

3=Motivational (call to action to address the issue)

DOMINANT NEWS FRAME

News frames refer to tools the media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret and evaluate information.

Enter the number of the dominant news frame:

1=Conflict (focus on problems between institutions, groups and individuals, such as during elections; shows someone is against a person, organization or action)

2=Human interest (apply a human face or emotion to a problem, issue or event to keep the audience interested; mentions person(s) by name)

3=Economic consequences (focus on the how countries, regions, institutions, groups and individuals will be affected; any mention of money, funding or finances)

4=Morality (places matters “in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions”; uses words right, wrong, good and evil, prayer, spirituality)

5=Responsibility (attribute responsibility for a cause or solution to an individual, government or group; who caused the problem; who can/must/is working to solve the problem; who's accountable)

DOMINANT ISSUE

Enter the number for the dominant issue mentioned in the sample:

1=voter intimidation/poll problems

2=voter ID laws

3=absentee/weekend/early voting

4=voter registration/education

5=felony disenfranchisement

6=presidential debate

7=ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council)

8=other

APPENDIX B

CODESHEET

Date: _____

Organization:

- 1=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- 2=National Urban League (NUL)
- 3=National Action Network (NAN)
- 4=ColorOfChange.org (COC)

Organization content provider:

0=Facebook

1=organization verified Twitter account (with the organization's official logo)

2=organization leaders (executive director/president):

- NAACP: Ben Jealous
- NUL: Marc Morial
- NAN: Reverend Al Sharpton
- COC: Rashad Robinson

3=other organization staffers

- NAACP: Roslyn Brock
- NUL: Chanelle Hardy, Selena Sizemore, Lamman Rucker, Vaughn Anthony
- NAN: Janaye Ingram, Tamika Mallory, Rachel Noerdlinger, Dominique Sharpton
- COC: not applicable

4=organization related site

- NAACP: NAACP Image Awards, NAACP Connect
- NUL: not applicable
- NAN: Politics Nation
- COC: not applicable

Sample type:

1=Twitter tweet

2=Facebook post

Post/tweet type:

0=created tweet/post

1=retweet (indicated by RT, Twitter only)

2=modified tweet (indicated by MT, Twitter only)

3=shared link (indicated by [ORG NAME] shared a link; Facebook only)

4=shared photo (indicated by [ORG NAME] shared a photo; Facebook only)

Media type:

Enter 0 for no and 1 for yes for each of the following media types:

Photo

Video

Graphic
 Hyperlink
 Hyperlink to news items
 Hyperlink to organization's own site
 Hyperlink to other organization site
 Hyperlink to social media
 Hyperlink to e-petition
 Hashtags

Tone of post:

1=Positive

2=Negative

3=Neutral

Dominant action type:

1=Online

2=Offline

3=Both online and offline.

4=neither

Action types (Trayvon Martin case only):

Enter 0 for no and 1 for yes for each of the following action types:

Write/call elected official

Write/call/appear in/watch/listen to/view media (newspaper, television, radio)

Sign petition or influence others to sign

Participate in vigil, rally, march, protest or demonstration

Attend public political meeting, legal hearing or speech

Volunteer for a cause

Wear/post photo of/change avatar to hoodie

Participate in Million Hoodie event

Texting, tweeting, calling or sharing (Facebook)

Action types (Election 2012 only):

Enter 0 for no and 1 for yes for each of the following action types:

Display political button, sign or sticker, avatar or Twibbon

Vote in the general election

Register to vote in the general election/voter education

Participate in a town hall meeting or debate party

Use #ivotebecause hashtag

Write/call elected official

Write/call/appear in/read/watch/listen to media (newspaper, television, radio)

Sign petition or influence others to sign

Participate in vigil, rally, march, protest or demonstration

Attend public political meeting, legal hearing or speech

Texting, tweeting, calling, sharing (Facebook)

Dominant collective action frame:

- 1=Diagnostic (identify issues that need to be addressed)
- 2=Prognostic (propose a solution to what needs to be done)
- 3=Motivational (call to action to address the issue)

Dominant news frame:

- 1=Conflict (focus on problems between institutions, groups and individuals, such as during elections; shows someone is against a person, organization or action)
- 2=Human interest (apply a human face or emotion to a problem, issue or event to keep the audience interested; mentions person(s) by name)
- 3=Economic consequences (focus on the how countries, regions, institutions, groups and individuals will be affected; any mention of money, funding or finances)
- 4=Morality (places matters “in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions”); uses words right, wrong, good and evil)
- 5=Responsibility (attribute responsibility for a cause or solution to an individual, government or group; who caused the problem; who can/must/is working to solve the problem)

Dominant issue (Trayvon Martin case only):

- 1=Racial profiling
- 2=Castle Doctrine/stand your ground/kill at will law/ALEC
- 3=Both
- 4=Other

Dominant issue (Election 2012 only):

- 1=voter intimidation/poll problems
- 2=voter ID laws
- 3=absentee/weekend/early voting
- 4=voter registration/education
- 5=felony disenfranchisement
- 6=presidential debate
- 7=ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council)
- 8=other

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