JOURNALISTS' FRAMING OF TERRORIST ATTACKS AND AUDIENCE REACTION: A

LONGITUDINAL CASE STUDY OF THE BOSTON GLOBE

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this ***disquisition*** complies with North Dakota

State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to elaborate on the presentation of news about the Boston Marathon bombing on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page and people's reaction to it. A social crisis such as this invites people's attention to online news sources for seeking details. Reports presented by journalists can encourage, elicit fear, strengthen communities, and/or foster cooperation. As much as journalists try to be objective in their reporting, the ways in which they frame a story can influence audiences' responses. The primary objective of this study was to understand how news frames align with audience response.

The analyses of news posts and audience comments were guided by theoretical frameworks of *Framing* and the *Six-Segment Strategy Wheel*. Content and interpretive analyses were performed to identify and explain the primary themes in *The Boston Globe's* news texts and images, and the responses of their audience. Data related to the Marathon bombing were collected from *The Boston Globe's* Facebook posts and comments, dated April 15, 2013–April 30, 2014. The study employed a constructionist approach, arguing that reality is created through interactions on social platforms. Content analysis was done by applying traditional news frames: economic, human interest, responsibility, morality, and conflict, as well as Taylor's SSSW. Interpretive analysis was carried by interpreting the findings through a societal context.

This study demonstrated that framing a terrorist attack through a criminal justice model as opposed to a war-based model had milder implications for punitive action. In addition, journalist's identification of a suspect as a terrorist did not seem to mitigate the justice view of the case. More importantly, social identification of the suspects played a salient whole in perceptions of guilt and penalty.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to dreamers who move across the world to become international students and earn a doctoral degree with the hopes of expanding their knowledge, outlook, and experiences in life – especially those students who suddenly find themselves becoming ethnic minorities in new lands. Do not hold yourselves to the same timelines that others do; take the time you need to learn, but never give up. Enrich your life and experiences on your own terms, and time will be inconsequential. This work is also dedicated to multi-passionate overachievers who are misunderstood and have been written off as underachievers. Let the world see all the amazing versions of you and keep reinventing yourself as many times as you need to. Life is better when it is lived audaciously, one little bold step at a time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SSSW .... Six-Segment Strategy Wheel

SNS .... Social Networking Sites

September 11 .... September 11, 2001 attack on World Trade Center

SPJ... Society of Professional Journalists

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This dissertation examines audience reaction to news about the Boston Marathon bombing on a local newspaper's Facebook page throughout the year following the incident. The research specifically addresses frames and strategies in the news posts and comments. The progression in responses from the initial shock, disbelief, and fear to pain, anger, and finally recovery gets uncovered in the study. The importance and major goals of this study include extending the research about how news framing of terrorism is done through (1) providing insight for how news frames align with audience response on social media, and (2) shedding light on the information needs of audiences when a social crisis like terrorism occurs. Understanding these issues will help improve the ways that journalists present information during and after a crisis to serve their audience and community more effectively.

Rationale

A terrorist attack typically evokes a reaction of shock and leaves an aftermath of loss and destruction. The way individuals communicate after incidents of violence in the society differs from their routine communication; it involves expression of fear, hostility, and anger, but sympathy and hope are also shared in tandem by the public. Routine life is disrupted by uncertainty as news media scramble to find answers. Following the fateful Boston Marathon bombing, parts of the city were immediately shut down. The federal, state, and local law enforcement could not be sure if there would be more attacks. To make matters worse, the perpetrators went unidentified and were still at large. Nevertheless, the attackers were eventually identified and caught. According to Crelinsten (2002), acts of violence, such as terrorism, are in themselves a form of communication that typically interacts with other social forms of

1

communication (e.g., news, government messages, etc.), in which the terrorist(s) is the message sender, and the public (or victims) is the receiver.

Communication is inherently constructive. It involves a process of producing and reproducing shared meaning (Miller, 2005). To understand the communicative nature of terrorism, it is important to understand the shared meaning that emerges from the process. This study does so by analyzing the audience responses to news about the bombing to explain how people handle the situation post a devastating event. In other words, this study is an examination of the message content and the receiver's reactions regarding the Boston Marathon bombing. Although the intention of the message sender—in this case, the terrorists—is a critical component of the communication process, it has not been included here, as it is not needed to achieve the objectives of this study. Moreover, motivation of terrorists has already been explored extensively by scholars (Abrahms, 2008; Cottee & Hayward, 2011; Gunning & Jackson, 2011; Rottenberger & Muller, 2015).

Scholars have extensively explored the motives behind terrorist attacks, specifically those with a religious agenda (Gunning & Jackson, 2011). Such studies inform what we understand as the types of terrorism. For instance, terrorism can be classified as local or international (Lizardo & Bergesen, 2003). Another body of studies has examined the effects that news reports about terrorism can have on perceptions of Muslims Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011); for example, Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) state that counterterrorism measures are increasingly alienating Muslims around the globe due to stigmatizing language that frames the religion and inhumane practice as synonymous.

The perspective of denizens whose community faced a terror attack has not been well explored. Thus, understanding how victims react, seek information, make sense, mourn, cope,

and recover, by studying their responses would expand the knowledge base of their information needs and how to help them after a crisis. The goal of this study is to begin to fill the lacuna in research regarding how people react and respond online to a terrorist attack, particularly as it relates to the information they have received about the attack. The specific objectives of this study are: (1) to examine how *The Boston Globe* presented information about the marathon bombing on Facebook; and (2) to explore how audiences responded to the news over the course of a year.

Online social networking sites such as Facebook are valuable data sources of news posts and audience comments. After the Boston Marathon bombing of 2013, many Bostonians sought information online from *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page. They also shared their views about the bombing in response to the news posts. Audience responses form the basis for understanding how they perceived the news, felt about the incident and the attackers, and talked about themselves and their community. Utilizing Facebook as a source of data collection, we come to understand the discourse constructed by *The Boston Globe* and its audience about the marathon bombing.

Constructionism posits those individual constructions, such as reactions and responses, are personal, variable, and get refined through interaction with other social factors such as news media (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, the online interaction between journalist, as they report news, and audiences help us understand the construction of meaning surrounding the marathon bombing and its implications. Interpretive analysis, a typical methodology used to apply constructionist approach to research was applied in this study to compliment the quantitative analysis.

All the comments and posts accessible on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page on the day of the attack until one year later were collected and analyzed. The news text and pictures were included as well. Two theoretical frameworks were utilized in the analyses. The first framework was frame analysis (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) and then Taylor's (1999) Six-Segment Strategy Wheel (SSSW) which was applied through content analysis and interpretive analysis. Content and interpretive analysis were used to examine the data based on four categories: view of terrorism, description of attackers, news frame, and SSSW.

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. The introductory chapter presents the goal of the study, the methods chosen for analysis, a background of news on Facebook, and the significance of the study. The second chapter is dedicated to literature review, which explicates various concepts relevant to the study, such as terrorism and media effect. Chapter three includes theoretical framework discussions. The fourth chapter explains the methodology, wherein the data, rationale, and procedures are explained. The fifth chapter present the quantitative results and chapter six, the findings from the interpretive analysis. Chapter seven contains a discussion of the findings, contextualizing them within the literature. Finally, chapter eight presents the conclusion of the study, and features implications and limitations.

Background

The war on terror escalated after September 11 and has continued to intensify over the years (Azpíroz, 2013). The mass media plays a major role in how people understand and interpret news about terrorism (Adams, 2018). A platform more influential than traditional media is the digital media, particularly social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook (Hermida & Hernández-Santaolalla, 2020). Thus, news organizations such as *The Boston Globe* have moved online to take advantage of opportunities in the online environment (Braun & Gillespie, 2011).

Consequently, SNS have now become a hotbed for political news and conversations (Hampton, Shin, & Lu, 2017).

Social networking sites

One of the most popular SNS Facebook, encourages multiple, synchronous, asynchronous, and immediate user engagement. The distribution and reception of news on SNS follow slightly different rules than traditional media, as SNS allow public dialogue about news events (Braun & Gillespie, 2011). News audiences on Facebook can select the sources they want to receive news from and express themselves immediately via the comment section. Facebook offers the opportunity to view news about terrorism and gauge audiences' responses.

Recently, SNS have become the primary avenues for audiences to receive local, national, and international news (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015). People spend a large amount of time on SNS. Facebook, for example, is a staple daily or weekly activity in the lives of people across generational groups (Mackova & Turkova, 2019). It has been one of the most used digital platforms for over ten years now and still holds a prominent role in the digital sphere (Mackova & Turkova, 2019). According to a Pew study, by 2012, 54% of adults living in the U.S. started using Facebook; this number soon rose to 69%, of which the majority go on the webpage at least once a day (Pew Research Center, 2019). In addition, Pew Research Center stated that about four in every ten U.S. adults use Facebook for receiving and following news.

Concern over terrorism has increased in the U.S. since September 11 (Woods, 2011). This audience concern has led to changes in attitude and behavior within political, social, and relational spheres. Many researchers have attributed the behavioral outcomes to media framing of terror news (Woods, 2011). Terrorism is generally viewed as a one-dimensional threat involving a clear enemy who is not "us" (Woods, 2011). Certain specific ways of framing news

on terrorism show a greater influence on news audiences above others. Woods (2011) presented an interesting discussion on how framing affected people's perceptions of danger, and in which ways. He experimented using contrasting frames and found that greater danger was perceived when the frames presented radical groups when compared with local or nuclear threats (Woods, 2011).

Monika Bickert, Head of Global Policy Management at Facebook, stated that the company is actively conducting research on how to deliver counter-terrorism messages that can be utilized by the company's partners all over the world (Corbin, 2017). Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said that artificial intelligence tools are being increasingly used to curb terrorist communication on Facebook (Magdirila, 2019).

Communication as strategic

According to Kellerman (1992), all communication is strategic, but communication by itself is not strategic. In a journalistic context, this implies that all news is strategic in that it achieves a goal in the end even if the journalist is not being strategic. As much as journalists try to be objective in their reporting, the ways in which they frame a story can direct audiences' responses. In line with the same argument, all comments on SNS such as *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page are strategic. Choices are made about what to post online as a reaction to a news report. Communication of any kind is usually done to satisfy needs of security, esteem, actualization, etc. (Kellerman, 1992).

News consumers who leave feedback do so strategically. Just like journalist decide what to post at the expense of something else, audiences are also making decisions when they comment on Facebook. In the quest to understand how journalists frame terrorism on SNS and audience responses, it is important to understand the strategies used to present their messages.

Understanding audience perspectives and the strategies used when they respond in times of crisis will enable journalists to present news in ways that support the people they serve. No one expected the Boston bombing. When it happened, journalists tried to keep people updated and people flocked to *The Boston Globe*'s Facebook page to react to the events.

Crelinsten (2002) rightly argues that terrorism is a form of communication, as any communication process involves not only a sender and a message but also a receiver and feedback (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2013). For instance, in case of the Boston Marathon bombing of 2013, Bostonians were the receivers, and their reactions were the feedback. According to Lee and Tandoc (2017), audience feedback on SNS affect news production, dissemination, and user's exposure to news; Moreover, audience feedback is influential because they highlight some aspects of news over others, thereby influencing other readers' evaluation of a news report.

The Boston Globe

The Boston Globe is the source selected for data collection for this project because it is the most widely read newspaper in Boston, the location of the bombing, and it reported religiously after the attack happened. *The Boston Globe's* Facebook news page served as a sample of a large audience-base directly or indirectly affected by the attack. *The Boston Globe* was founded in the latter half of the 19th century as a daily newspaper; however, currently it as acquired a controversial reputation for itself. In 2003, for example, *The Boston Globe* received the *Pulitzer Prize* for its coverage of illicit sexual behavior among certain priests. However, in 2013, *The Boston Globe* was accused of expressing "misogynistic and homophobic bias" (Marcel, 2013, p. 289) in the same coverage for which it won the award. As much as *The Boston Globe* has been recognized for remarkable feats in journalism (e.g., GLAAD Media Award for

Outstanding Newspaper, 2005, 2013; Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting, 2014), it has also received criticism (see Boylan, 1972; Miller & Ross, 2004; Marcel, 2013). *The Boston Globe* has a following of over 500,000 people on their Facebook news page, with hundreds of shares of news posts weekly. Regardless of the controversy that surrounds *The Boston Globe*, it is indisputably a source that many turn to for news on various subjects, including terrorism. Similarly, they were a primary source of information for the Boston community when the Marathon bombing happened.

Visual communication

Images are an essential part of social media (Adami & Jewitt, 2016). When the Marathon bombing occurred, a remarkable number of photographs taken at the scene circulated on SNS (Hupp, 2013). The images narrated a devastating story such that even one who was not there could feel the magnitude of destruction. News organizations used photographs to bring the people as close to the incident as possible. *The Boston Globe* featured pictures of the aftermath of the attack, the suspects, mourning and remembrance of victims, as well as celebrations of recovery and victory.

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Significance of the Study

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The Boston Marathon bombing is the largest local religious terrorist attack in terms of magnitude of damage in the U.S. since September 11, which was religious terrorism but not regional. It is also the largest attack since the advent of SNS. Just like post September 11, many are still dealing with the aftermath of loss and injury that came with the event.

On April 15th, 2013, a total of 26,839 participants were on the tracks to reach the finish line of the Boston Marathon when two bombs exploded 12 seconds apart, close to the finish line. The following day, President Obama declared the attack on the marathon as an act of terrorism.

Three people were killed, and over 200 people were severely injured. The bombers were identified as two brothers from Cambridge, Massachusetts, who had immigrated to the U.S. One died, and the other was arrested. Three college students suspected to have assisted the brothers were arrested as well (Roberts, 2013).

Terrorism is the strategic and illegal use of violence to attempt to achieve goals of political, ethnic, or religious nature and poses serious threats to the society owing to the resultant destruction of lives and property, as well as the uncertainty and fear that it creates among targeted people (Mou-Danha, 2019). Terrorism is not the problem of any single nation or region but a global one. Every continent has been affected by terrorist activity in varying capacity. An important question thus arises: In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, how do people respond and make sense of the incident?

The Marathon is a significant event for many Americans. It is also the world's oldest annual marathon (Mortensen, 2015). People travel from different parts of the world to participate in the event. Compared to other marathons, the Boston Marathon participants face tougher requirements to get a number in order to run, but this has helped the event to earn the respect and prestige it has today (Mortensen, 2015). The first Boston Marathon was held in April 1897. Since 2003, the marathon has not had less than 20,000 participants, with close to 500,000 others cheering them on. The Marathon bombing of 2013 was a devastating event that caused loss of lives, serious injuries, and destruction of property (Roberts, 2017).

After a crisis, members of a community turn to local media sources for information (Anthony & Sellnow, 2011; Matsaganis & Seo, 2014). Consequently, local news sources play a role in how their communities interpret crisis and following events. Perceptions of threat cause stress and affect mental health of people (Matsaganis & Seo, 2014). In the aftermath of a crisis,

people seek information that will help them gain a sense of safety, order, and control (Anthony & Sellnow, 2011). They access Facebook to get news, exchange information, seek comfort, as well as offer it to others (Zhao & Zhan, 2019). Understanding people's response after a crisis and the news they consume is important so as to analyze public's concern and adapt messages to cater to their dynamic needs (Anthony & Sellnow, 2011).

Consensus exist among scholars that the framing of news influencing people (see Woods, 2011; Epkins, 2012; Iyer, 2014). The way terrorism is framed affects not only the viewer's understanding of the events but also their behavior. Iyer (2014) found that emphasizing certain features over others in a report affected the levels of generosity and hostility among participants. Entman (2004) claims that a few elite media organizations dictate the trends that journalists in other organizations follow. This indicates that the content in local news outlets is not very different from their national counterparts. However, in a study of 400 journalists, over half of them stated that they exercised freedom and autonomy over the stories and angles in which they reported (Beam, Weaver, & Brownlee, 2009). Nevertheless, when it comes to terrorism, similarities have been found in the frames used by journalists (Epkins, 2012). To fully understand how people, respond, it is crucial to also understand the information they consume.

The next chapter contains the literature review, which covers the dynamic relationship among terrorism, news media, and audiences. The chapter begins with an explication of the concept of terrorism. To provide a context for the timeline of data collected for this study, the lifecycle of news has been explained. The chapter then addresses the theoretical framework of the study involving two models and guides the analyses presented in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition and Types of Terrorism

Terrorism has various types and components. Out of these, religious terrorism is currently perceived as the most dangerous form of terrorism in the western world (Grinyaev, 2003). This is in part because religious terrorism is framed as a persistent war threat by modern mass media (Biernatzki, 2001). The Boston Marathon bombing of 2013, like Al-Qaeda's attack of September 11, is an example of religious terrorism (Kern, Just, & Norris, 2003).

Joanne McGlown, Assistant Professor of Justice and Safety at Eastern Kentucky University identified four other types of terrorism: 1. State-sponsored (acts by state or government against its people), 2. Dissent terrorism (by people against their government), 3. Terrorists and the Left and Right (terrorist groups with solely political ideology), and 4. Criminal terrorism (used to aid in crime and ill-gotten profit) ("Terrorism and Disaster Management", 2004).

The definition of terrorism is laden with several meanings depending on cultural context. The same can be said about who is identified as a terrorist and who is not. Terrorism involves intimidation, threat, and violence directed toward civilian lives and/or property for political goals (Kern et al., 2003). The earliest use of the concept of terrorism was in 1795 to describe governance through intimidation. The term has been since extended to individuals and groups who use violent intimidation to achieve their goals (Kern et al., 2003). Terrorism used to be perceived as the quest of desperate extremists seeking to change the world through violence. Today, with over 500 structured terrorist organizations around the world, exercising manipulative, psychological pressure, and information warfare, the goals of terrorists obviously go beyond destruction of lives and property (Grinyaev, 2003).

The term 'terrorism' is open to multiple meanings. Any rebel group, violent activists, freedom fighter or guerilla can be labeled as a terrorist, just as any nation with a dictatorial or authoritarian regime can be labelled as a terrorist nation (Grinyaev, 2003). The label is clearly subjective but powerful, and when used, it creates a given social construction of reality (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). A generally accepted understanding of terrorism among scholars is the use of violent destruction against civilian lives and property to achieve political ends (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003).

More importantly, terrorism should be defined based on techniques (intimidation and threat or use of violence), targets (civilian population), and goals (spreading anxiety, destroying targets, pressuring authority, mobilizing support, and gaining power and legitimacy) used to achieve their goals. These exclude violent crimes for personal gain, such as assault, robbery, and murder (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003).

Terrorism in the News

Terrorism has consistently been found to dominate media reports compared with other incidents (Woods, 2011). The Boston Marathon bombing of April 15, 2013 was no exception. The heavy allotment of attention to terrorism in news leads to increasing and sustained worry about national security and personal danger (Iyer, 2014). Terrorism is prominent in media, and anyone who consumes mass or social media is exposed to text and messages about terrorism often (Iyer, 2014). Walter Lippman said that people depend on media reports to understand events that they cannot directly observe (Papacharissi, & de Fatima, 2008).

When the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon happened in 2001, mass media organizations all over the world contested ways to frame the events. Thus, an important question arose amidst the chaos: In atmospheres of political conflict, how well does reporting

12

uphold the existing journalistic standards? The incident of September 11 marked a critical cultural shift in Americans' understanding of issues of national security (Kern et al., 2003). Growing concerns about the same trickled into policy changes in areas such as border control, gun laws, airport security, and medicine reserves, among others (Kern et al., 2003).

Mass media rely heavily on policy when reporting news. After President G. W. Bush blamed Iraq for September 11, media outlets ran with that frame of responsibility (Powell, 2011). Media creates and distributes ideologies, and these ideologies come about through frames used in reporting news; in fact, framing could simply be understood as the way stories are told (Powell, 2011). The reported ideologies post September 11 supported the invasion of Iraq, marking the beginning of the use of the United States-versus-Muslim narrative, and hostility towards Islam and fear of terrorism has grown ever since (Powell, 2011).

In Altheide's (2004) study, terms used by mass media and in popular culture after September 11 to depict fear, victimization, and patriotism led to the construction of a symbolic enemy (Islamists) and a symbolic war (war on terrorism). Powell (2011) found in her study that when terrorism occurred on U.S. soil, the culprit was initially assumed to be a Muslim, and media on several accounts affiliated such attacks with al-Qaeda before the truth even came out (Powell, 2011).

Reports about terrorism can have significant effects on people's level of anxiety (Slone, 2000). Debates exist among media scholars about whether frames used in reporting terrorism are lending legitimacy to terrorist groups, therefore aiding them, and whether reporters are over-dependent on government officials, thereby getting manipulated for policy (Kern et al., 2003). Some scholars claim that media reports help terrorist intentions. The way terrorism is typically reported is not new - terrorism is strategic, and terrorists turn to the available channels of

transmission for their cause (Papacharissi & de Fatima, 2008). The Shia Islam sect in the Middle Ages used word of mouth to enact terror upon Muslims (Wilkinson, 1997). Today, it is the social media that serves as their channel.

The relationship between news media and terrorism is not symbiotic (Wilkinson, 1997). According to Wilkinson, terror is the motive of terrorists but not the motive of the media. A major motive of media organizations is to inform. The question then is, how can information be reported without exerting terror or causing confusion? The mass media ought to devise effective measures of restraint and self-regulation (Wilkinson, 1997). However, media censorship is a complicated topic to tackle in modern democratic societies owing to the notions of freedom of speech.

Events happening around the world are presented to people through systematic formats of news organizations within their country (Altheide, 1987). Thus, bias within news could misinform the populace. Terrorism is an event that has garnered more media attention than any other crisis in the last two decades. The September 11 attack drew not only the Americans' attention but also the worlds. The reports that followed in the media emphasized the consequent suffering, shock, and loss (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). When reporting news about terrorism as with other issues, journalists depend on existing cultural frames and ideological references within a society (Altheide, 1987).

Acts of terrorism occur within contexts that are culturally defined by leaders of a nation and the media (Altheide, 1987; Powell, 2011). Political symbols are rarely neutral, but the media's legitimization of those symbols construct ongoing reality. Political messages about terrorism are intended for two primary audiences: the terrorists who carried out the attacks and political rivals (Altheide, 1987). Media reports should address resolutions and not just conflict;

they should include the multiple sides and players involved in their news reports rather than just two sides (hero vs villain) and perform investigation.

Life Cycle of News

Just like biological organisms, news reports go through life cycles (Chen, Chen, Sun, & Chen, 2003). One way in which news life cycle can be detected on social media is the amount of coverage a story receives during a given period (Chen et al., 2003). Online news life cycle can be monitored through social media audience engagement (Castillo, El-Haddad, Pfeffer, & Stempeck, 2014). Castillo et al. (2014) found that news life cycles on social media can be predicted by monitoring the traffic received by a story in the first 10–20 minutes.

A salient feature of news reports on any media is their chronological timeline (Bell, 1995). When a crisis occurs, there is an increased need for information (Lowrey, 2004). During the initial phases of an event, public demand for information exceeds the available information (van der Meer, & Verhoeven, 2013). Coincidentally, the same study showed that this over-reliance on information provided through news during that period adds a new attribute to framing.

Reporting Terrorism: Language Use and Media Effects

Discussion of political issues such as terrorism in media encourage audiences to pick a side (Matsaganis & Payne, 2005). Morin (2016) conducted a study of the semiotic and semantic choices used in framing terrorism. He reported that when a perpetrator was perceived to have foreign background or was a Muslim, even if he was a U.S. citizen, his ethnic and religious background was emphasized. These perceptions extend beyond the events or the people involved, and the locations of the situation being perceived as safe or dangerous. Media coverage

15

of any crisis affects the perceived level of risk and triviality associated with the event (Kapuściński, & Richards, 2016).

Terrorism tends to dominate media reports as compared with other crisis-related reports. About 78% of respondents in a Pew Research study reported that they followed the September 11 incident in news even till mid-October that year. The overall media consumption had increased following the event (Greenberg, 2002; Iyer, 2014). When a crisis occurs, people seek information from perceived credible sources. The way events are framed influences audiences. One study showed that women felt more threatened by terrorism than men, and more women than men indicated that they had made changes in their personal lives as a result of terrorist attacks (Iyer, 2014). Another study found that residents of big cities took terrorist threats more seriously and felt threatened (Greenberg, 2002).

Regarding the effects of news about terrorism, a study by Greenberg (2002) showed that 31% of people said that the media coverage of September 11 was making them feel bad, the same amount of people said it made them feel better, and 27% said the media had no effect on them; a significant number of respondents said that the media helped them cope with the crisis. The study also showed that people aged 18–34 years were more concerned than people aged 34 years and older. When an event occurs, various elite news sources present reports that impact people in different ways. The more obtrusive (in proximity) an event is, the stronger the effect media frames have because of a greater reliance on media (Kapuściński, & Richards, 2016).

Crelinsten (2002) presents two approaches to countering terrorism: a criminal justice model and an internal war model. The criminal justice model treats terrorism as a crime that should be tried in a criminal court and persecuted by law. The police hold authority over the arrest. The war model is war and is thereby governed by the rules of war. Military force is

typically employed a war model. According to Crelinsten (2002), war-based counter-insurgence strategies include state of emergency, use of military troops, Martial law, and search and destroy missions. Justice strategies for tackling terrorism include imprisonment, exemplary sentences, political prosecutions and trials, special rules of evidence (e.g. protection for informants), and police deviance.

Pictures in the News

In a study about visual agenda-setting, Fahmy, Cho, Wanta, and Song (2006) found that people remembered the details even two months after a terror attack from photographs. One image in the study caused great concern to the participants and was recalled a few months later. The image showed a Palestinian man firing his gun in the air, with children dancing around him. People are greatly impacted by images of terrorist activity, especially when people looking like Muslims are involved (Fahmy et al., 2006). Powell (2011, p. 90) found in her study that foreign terrorist attacks were perceived to involve Muslim/Arab/Islam coordinated groups conniving to act against a "Christian America." These perceptions have been built over time from images in popular media outlets.

Pictures have messages and are thus a form of communication. According to Lester (2013), displaying pictures in the news is a form of visual communication. Moreover, he says that people see with their eyes and with contexts available in their minds; therefore, seeing a picture is a combination of how much the *see-er* knows and feels in any given moment. He further adds that emotional and intellectual elements of pictures are contextualized by culture. Journalists fall back on cultural contexts to talk about events in a compelling way, as pictures in the news can overcome two-dimensional restraints and tell tales in captivating ways.

According to Iyer (2014), pictures enhance people's emotional responses to news. His study showed that viewing pictures of victims led to greater appreciation of victim's suffering and elicited sympathy; similarly, pictures of terrorists increased feelings of fear and perception of terrorists as very dangerous. Pictures attempt to recreate reality for the viewers (Powell, 2015). Visual effects have been studied extensively and experimentally. Researchers report that meanings are comprehended faster through pictures than text. In addition, other factors that play moderating a role are preexisting knowledge and judgement (Iyer, 2014). Emotional appeal is a common, powerful frame for pictures (Powell, 2015). She also found that when pictures and texts are presented together, the context of the text dominates interpretation. However, pictures influence behavioral intention regardless of the text (Iyer, 2014; Powell, 2015).

Many aspects of visual framing of events are yet to be studied. For instance, studies about news pictures on social media are few, despite them being a critical piece for research on media framing (Robinson, 2002). Some pictures shed light on suffering of the people and emphasize the obligation for the government to step in, and on the other hand, there are brute pictures showing death among the inhabitants of an invaded territory.

Framing of pictures in general is not new and has been examined by social psychologists since the 1970s (Powell, 2015). Simple pictures have been found to be more compelling than complex pictures, although complex text have been found to be more compelling than simple text in changing opinion since pictures require heuristic, inferential processing to form an opinion, whereas text requires systematic, analytical processing (Powell, 2015). Pictures in the news have the ability to overcome two-dimensional restraints and tell tales in captivating ways. pictures enhance people's emotional responses to news (Iyer, 2014).

Another interesting consideration in the study of media pictures is their relation to the text used alongside. van der Molen (2001) offers four categories for coding relationships between pictures and texts from the same report. Although he used this framework for television pictures and texts in children's shows, it is an interesting framework for analyzing social media news reports as well. The relationships between texts and pictures mentioned by him include the following: 1. talking head, which is used when the picture is of someone in the news; 2. divergent code, which is used when the pictures are starkly different from the text or not directly related; 3. indirect code, which is used if the visual–textual relationship is only partial; and 4. direct code, which is used when the text and pictures are directly related.

Social Construction and Terrorism

Media constitutes an important part of the modern society (Biernatzki, 2001). According to Michel Foucault, objects and practices within a culture come about because of discourse (Hobbs, 2008). In other words, no cultural element exists outside of discourse. Social media serves as a tool for mediated discourse and thus shapes the society. People follow news feeds on Facebook to get news, exchange information, seek comfort, as well as offer it to others (Zhao & Zhan, 2019). According to Adoni and Mane (1984), in research on communication, understanding the place of media in the construction of reality is done in two ways: 1. by looking at the social construction of reality as a media effect and 2. as an integral part of the relationship between culture and society; these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive., and taking one without the other into account offers an incomplete picture of news media and society.

Violence is a form of communication, which interrelates with other political and social forms of communication (Crelinsten, 2002). According to Biernatzki (2001), the term 'terrorism' is a social construct. He further claims that journalists rarely pay attention to defining terrorism

19

in the news they report and instead depend heavily on definitions handed down by government officials. He further adds that terrorism is a heavily biased word that when given to an individual, group, or nation makes it difficult for such entity to be perceived in a neutral manner. Failing to report terrorist activity is not the answer as a well-informed public enhances public safety.

The creation of reality is a social process because it happens through interaction. Humans are both the creators and the products of their reality. Adoni and Mane (1984) identified three types of reality that come up during the social construction process. First is the objective reality that arises in the external experiences of people in the form of facts of an objective world. This is the idea of things being as they are, with no need for justification. Second is the symbolic reality, which are means used to interpret and express objective reality. Media content falls into this category. The crucial feature of symbolic reality is that content creators can choose from a host of symbolic interpretations, the ones that best constitute the objective reality being expressed. Third is the subjective reality, which are the products of objective reality and symbolic realities. It is an internalized process that lies in individuals' consciousness. Subjective realities fuel individuals' thought processes and actions, which ultimately leads to objective realities and symbolic realities (Adoni and Mane, 1984).

After the September 11 attacks, certain words such as "terrorism," "safety," and "security" took on new meanings for the Americans (Ryan, 2004). The meaning of terrorism was crafted. The event fueled changes in behavior, policy, marketing strategies, and ways of discussing terrorism. A clear "war on terrorism" discourse emerged (Altheide, 2004). Terrorism was framed as the biggest evil to be feared and main opposition to good. More significantly, the commonality of the victims was emphasized rather than the motives behind the attacks. This elucidates how fear plays a major role in the construction of terrorism (Altheide, 2004).

The construction of reality undergoes a cyclical process centered around how individuals perceive and experience reality, tied with their social actions and responses that in turn create the reality that is experienced. The media is not only a link or interference but also facilitator of the construction of reality (Adoni & Mane, 1984). People's dependence on media for information is determined by their direct and indirect experiences with given phenomenon, and media portrayals may be more influential than direct experience (Adoni & Mane, 1984).

Communication is an intersubjective meditation performed through signs. Framing and signs are the agents of thoughts and society (Craig & Muller, 2007). Signs and other components of language get meaning and serve as a medium for common understanding between individuals. Language as a metadiscourse concept involves sign, meaning, cognition, code, medium, and discourse (Craig, & Muller, 2007), and metadiscourse is a semiotic idea. John Locke (1932–1704) described communication as the problem of sharing of ideas through signs (Craig & Muller, 2007). Saussure saw language as an autonomous object and a sign as a two-sided entity consisting of the signifier—sound, picture—and the signified—what it represents (Craig & Muller, 2007).

There is no natural, symbiotic relationship between signified and signifier; the relationship is arbitrary and depends on social conventions. In other words, no natural connection exists between words and what they mean. Interactions between individuals and society are mediated by signs (Craig & Muller, 2007). Structuralists believe that meaning is generated through systems of signs. According to Barthes, a photograph is a message without a code (Craig & Muller, 2007). Thus, news texts and pictures are put together to tell a story (Filak, 2014).

In the field of political communication, researching news scrutinizes one or more of three broad questions: 1. How do news media frame news? 2. How do politicians and other groups

influence what the media says? 3. How do news audiences construct meanings out of news with preexisting cognitive frames? Thus, frame analysis embodies a constructionist approach (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, two theoretical frameworks upon which this study is based, are discussed. The first theory - media framing, is not new in the study of news, media, and society (Baran & Davis, 2012; Borah, 2011; Chong & Druckman, 2007) but the second framework, SSSW is typically applied in advertising research (Crawford, 2014; Taylor, 1999). There are numerous theories of communication but no common consensus on a group of theories that constitute communication theory. This is because theories of communication originated from a vast array of other established fields – and are fragmented (Craig & Muller, 2007). Continuous disciplinary dialogue among researchers through furthering traditionally used theories, and testing new ones ensures that a field of study keeps growing (Craig & Muller, 2007; Entman, 1993). By applying the frameworks of media framing and SSSW, this study enriches the field of media studies research.

Media framing is a theory about the way journalist choose to tell a story (McQuial, 2010). To understand the ways that journalist at *The Boston Globe* reported the bombing, it is important to distinguish the frames they applied in reporting the news. As an extension of the theory and to meet the goals of study, frame analysis was also applied in understanding how audiences responded. SSSW is a model that explains people's purchasing decisions based on their needs and wants (Taylor, 1999). In this study, it helped to explain the strategies journalists and news consumers selected in discussing the bombing.

Media Framing

When the first American newspaper, *Publik Occurences Both Forreign and Domestick*, came out in 1690, the perception about news was that God made the news and journalists gave exact reports about it (Boorstin, 1992). The perception of journalists being objective reporters of

exact fact lingered for decades. Another wave of beliefs about news media followed - journalists

started being viewed as skilled people who were able to craft newsworthy pieces even out of the

most mundane events. The implication was that many news reports turned out to be essentially

'pseudo-events' (false news) given life through journalistic choices and believed by the public

(Boorstin, 1992). The perception about news then evolved to it being what journalists and editors

decide to report about events that occurred (Boorstin, 1992). Journalists have the power to do

this by making a choice about news frames, where frames are packages of information that

consist of a central idea.

Framing is the way journalists impart news reports a desired and planned value by

connecting them to other incidences and ideas (McQuail, 2010). Vreese (2005, p.51) describes

framing as the way "a communication source presents and defines an issue." It is nearly

impossible to present information in a logical, coherent, and comprehensible manner without

relatable context or framing. Goffman (1974) is credited with identifying the concept of framing

and its benefit to organizing and presenting information. Without framing, reportages would be

mere isolated items of fact. Consequently, with framing comes unintended bias since information

is inevitably presented with "built-in-frames that suit the purpose of the source" (McQuail, 2010,

p. 380).

Terrorist events are understood through news frames (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). News

frames are ways of structuring that journalists apply to their reports in order contextualize

stories. Reports of events caused by an outsider, which affect a nation or community, are called

one-sided news. This is not necessarily a negative label. In one-sided stories, for example in the

case of September 11, similar frames are generally used by government officials, the public, as

well as journalists (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). For two-sided stories, such as religious or

political debates among subgroups of a country, the frames used by media and affiliates differ. In this case, the news media serving each subgroup would reinforce the divisions. This framework also applies to the broader international news scene (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003).

The popular news frames are referred to as generic or traditional frames and are considered to transcend themes because they can be applied to all kinds of news text (Valenzuela, Piña, & Ramírez, 2017). These frames are called traditional because they have been reported or applied in earlier studies about news frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

The five traditional frames are conflict, economic, human interest, morality, and responsibility. According to Valenzuela et al. (2017), conflict frames emphasize conflict between two parties; human interest frame brings an emotional side to any issue; morality frame provides a cultural context for the news text—the context may involve highlighting what people value as good and evil or take a religious angle. Economic frames emphasize financial implications following an event. Responsibility frame points out who is causing or solving a problem (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

According to Valenzuela et al. (2017), conflict and economic frames increase the perceived seriousness of a situation; moreover, the economic frame has been reported to be a less used frame in news on social media because it involves intellectual language and statistics, whereas news on social media is more sensational. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) reported that the nature of a news channel, whether serious or sensationalist, influenced the type of news frames that are used. More serious news outlets predominantly used responsibility and conflict frames, while entertainment-leaning news outlets predominantly used human interest frames.

As evident from the name, the Boston Marathon bombing was a serious event. However, Facebook is a sensational channel. Based on the findings of studies addressed in the previous

paragraph, human interest would be the predominant frame for reporting the bombing because of the nature of the outlet. One of the goals of this study is to identify and explain the frames used to report news about the marathon bombing. In addition to exploring how the news was presented, the researcher also intended to understand the strategies taken by journalists at *The Boston Globe* to report the terrorist attack, as well as the approaches chosen by audiences in reacting to the reports. Taylor's (1999) Six-Segment Strategy Wheel model is a useful framework for understanding consumer needs and purchase decisions, it appears to also be a promising framework for understanding news reporting and audience responses. The next section discusses the strategy wheel and its application in this study.

Strategic Communication and Six-Segment Strategy Wheel (SSSW)

Strategic communication refers to the purposeful use of communication to fulfill a mission (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007). According to Kellerman (2002), all deliberate communication is strategic. Gastil (2005, p. 164) describes deliberation as carefully reflecting "on a matter weighing the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions to a problem." Commenters on social networking sites employ a host of strategies when responding to a news post. One of the goals of this study is to interpret the commenting decisions of audiences on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page.

Taylor's (1999) SSSW was created as a model for advertisers to understand the decision-making strategies of audiences. This model is used extensively by scholars and professionals in advertising research (see Crawford, Daniel, Yakubova, & Peiris, 2020). In this study, the model has been used to interpret audiences' responses. Its application in this dissertation proves that it is a useful model for classifying audience-response approaches to terrorism news on social

26

media. The wheel (Fig. 1) comprises six segments, which can be grouped into two based on communication.
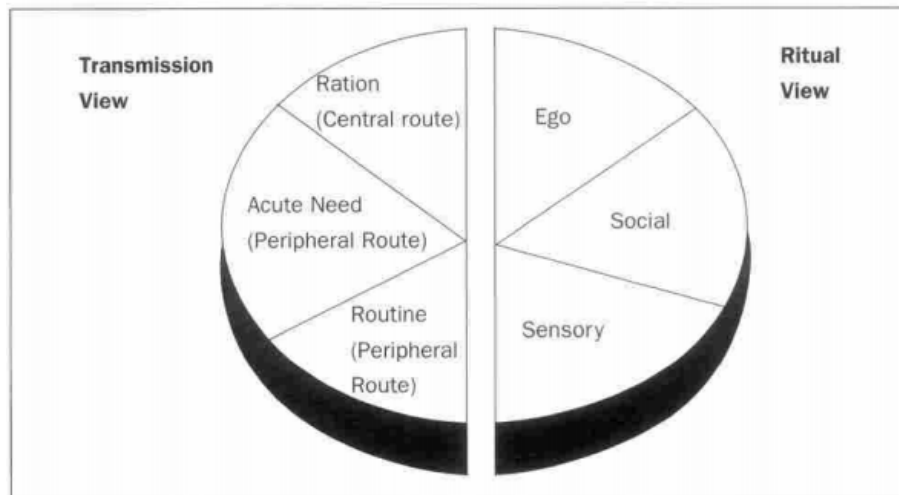
Figure 1. Taylor's Six-Segment Strategy Wheel

The semicircle on the left side of the figure contains three decision-making approaches that involve delivery of information. The semicircle on the right contains a group of three decision-making approaches that employ a ritual view of information. Transmission here has to do with facts, while ritual is about emotional appeal.

The three segments of the transmission view include the following: 1. Rational: Taylor (1999) explains this as the assumption that people are deliberative and logical. People who question what they are reading on social media or express a need for more information can be said to be responding rationally, according to this mode; 2. Acute need: This need comes up when purchase decisions are made based on time and information constraints. In this study, acute need has been contextualized as responses that express a sense of emergency and decisions taken due to the perceived emergency. Responses can be acute when they express a need to hurt or kill in revenge; 3. Routine: These are responses that appear to be routine reactions and are delivered

with seemingly less deliberation. Response can be routine when they contain phrases or words such as "RIP," "wow," and "crazy world."

The segments that fall under the ritual view of the model include the following: 1. Ego: Taylor (1999) explains ego as decisions that are emotionally important to a person and allow him/her to make statements about themselves. As a response, ego can be a part of the healing process, where people express things, as they need to share, to feel better; 2. Social: Responses are social when people make a statement about others rather than about themselves; 3. Sensory: In Taylor's model, sensory needs are those that are positively appealing to the senses. For this study, a reverse interpretation for sensory responses has been presented. As a response, expressions of both positively and negatively appealing emotions are presented as sensory responses. The SSSW model will be used to answer the research questions.

Research Questions

This dissertation assesses audience member's responses after a local crisis and reactions to news reports about the event. When a crisis occurs, people turn to news reports more often than they usually would (Maeda, 2000). The way news is reported will affect how people react. News reports can influence people's feelings of safety, security, fear, hope, and urgency. Journalists typically worry about the news worthiness (i.e., novelty and appeal) of news than about the effects of the news on audiences. Understanding how people responded to news on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook news page within a year of the marathon bombing will help us better understand the influence of news. The research questions that inform this study are summarized as follows:

RQ 1: How did journalists present news about the marathon bombing on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page?

(a) Which sub-variables in the categories of view of terrorism, description of attackers, news frame, and SSSW had the highest frequency in *The Boston Globe's* posts?

(b) How was view of terrorism, description of attackers, news frame, and SSSW portrayed in *The Boston Globe's* posts?

RQ 2: How did the commenters react to the news about the Boston Marathon bombing?

(a) Are the prevalent frequencies in *The Boston Globe's* posts for the categories of view of terrorism, description of attackers, news frame, and SSSW like the frequencies in audience's comments?

(b) How was view of terrorism, description of attackers, news frame, and SSSW portrayed in audience's comments?

This chapter presented a discussion of two frameworks – media framing and SSSW, that guided the research design and understanding of the findings in this study. Framing is an inevitable process carried out by journalists as they write news reports (McQuial, 2010). Evaluating frames in a news story not only helps with categorizing the information for better interpretation, but also provides a basis for identifying similar frames in audience' responses. The SSSW as a research framework compliments media framing. Taylor's (1999) SSSW posits that, consumer's decisions are made strategically. Information is strategic when communication is used purposefully (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007). Media framing and SSSW are applied to understand how journalists present news about terrorism and how audience respond. Chapter four describes the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 4: METHOD

This study utilized a mixed-method longitudinal design. Content and interpretive analysis were applied to examine the data. The research design fits the ontological perspective of constructionism paradigm (McCoy, 2017). Constructionism deals with how information and cognition is distributed socially rather than stored in the mind (Mogashoa, 2014). The constructionist perspective in communication research is housed within the sociocultural tradition of communication, thus involving social issues like a terrorist attack and how it is framed.

Research on the sociocultural traditions tackle issues such as how communication produces, maintains, and changes social formations, how individuals relate to larger-scale social processes, and how social events affect communication. This position's ontological perspective proposes that reality is relative, meaning it is socially and experientially constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). After the marathon bombing authorities, journalists, and audiences followed and discussed the events that occurred. The attack occurred in a community in Boston during a cherished annual event. The attack's impact affected many Bostonians directly or indirectly – while some were injured or lost loved ones, others dealt with the fear, shock, and uncertainty that followed the event. Many people turned to *The Boston Globe* for information about the incident and responded to news reports.

To answer the research questions and better understand audience response to news reports of terrorism on *The Boston Globe* Facebook page, the dissertation utilized content analysis and interpretive analysis. This chapter discusses the sample, the procedures carried out to analyze the data, and the measures of analysis. To conduct the content analysis, the research employed pre-established codes to analyze the data. The study used descriptive statistics to

30

calculate and report the frequency of codes. Qualitative interpretive analysis added depth to the codes and emergent themes.

Sample and Unit of Analysis

At the time of the bombing in 2013, many Bostonians flocked to *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page in search of updates. The Boston Marathon bombing was the biggest terrorist attack in the U.S. since the advent and popularity of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. T*he Boston Globe* is an American newspaper founded in Boston, Massachusetts. The newspaper serves the city of Boston, which is the location of the 2013 Marathon bombing. Like other major newspapers in the U.S. and around the world, *The Boston Globe* can be accessed on its Facebook which has over 500,000 followers. The sample consisted of two primary units of analysis, including Facebook news posts and Facebook comments from *The Boston Globe's* page. Pictures in the posts were also coded as a unit. The date collected from Facebook is accessible to the public.

Facebook is a reasonable choice for data collection for several reasons. It affords researchers an avenue to easily collect news and audience responses in the same place. One advantage of using Facebook for data collection is that data, in the form of search results, can be filtered by date, time, topic, and location on news accounts. Facebook is an American-owned online social networking service that was founded in 2004 by four Harvard University students. By 2012, Facebook became the largest social networking site in the world. In the same year, 54% of adults living in the U.S. used Facebook daily, according to a Pew study (Pew Research Center, 2019). The study also showed that the number rose to 69% in 2019, of which the majority access the webpage at least once a day. In addition, the study stated that about four in every 10 U.S. adults use Facebook for accessing news.

31

The Boston Globe news posts and comments

The data collection process began by searching Facebook using the keywords, "Boston Globe" and then selecting the official newspaper page. The results on the 'filter results' panel that appears on the left-hand side of the search were configured to show only posts from *The Boston Globe*. All kinds of posts dated between the months of April 2013 to April 2014 were collected, regardless of location. The data was collected and stored month by month on a Google Doc. The data collected included 68 news texts, 44 pictures, and 2,035 comments. All the data was stored and analyzed in Google Spreadsheets.

Relevant comments (containing full sentences rather than emojis) associated with each post were collected. Facebook has a filter that conveniently selects relevant comments. Tigwell and Flatla (2016) argue that choosing only relevant comments as data, reduce misunderstanding that may arise in the analysis. In addition to selecting relevant comments, only the first 50 comments were selected with each post to carry out the content and interpretive analysis. The reason for limiting the number of comments was to create a standardized way to code the comments across the one-year time frame.

This approach (of selecting a specific number of comments for consistency) is widely accepted (see Crawford, Daniel, Yakubova, & Peiris, 2020). Data collection on social media can be an endless loop of information. Modifying the number of items collected for analysis, for the sake of strengthening understanding of a phenomenon, is a fast-growing technique with social networking sites. As the opportunities for utilizing Facebook as an insightful data resource continues to grow, so does the need to adapt traditionally used methods (Franz, Marsh, Chen, & Teo, 2019).

Posts were collected and analyzed to answer the first research question about how *the Boston Globe's* journalists framed the news. Comments provided data for answering the second research question that asks how people respond to news after a crisis. A rationale for using comments is that they are the direct, unfiltered reactions of people and therefore help us understand how people respond to news during a time of crisis. Comments on a single post ranged drastically from 6 to 934. Up to 50 comments

This study analyzed posts and comments about the tragic Boston Marathon bombing of 2013 from the Facebook page of *The Boston Globe.* When the attack in Boston occurred, and in the months following the event, The Globe's journalists consistently reported the event on Facebook. Many people responded to the reports. There are hundreds of comments about the bombing especially in the month of April 2013 when it took place and April 2014, a year after the attack. A total 68 news posts, with 44 containing images and 24 with no images (see Table 1).

Table 1

Frequency of Dataset by Month

Month	No. of news posts	No. of pictures	No. of comments
Apr 2013	30	18	934
May 2013	11	4	297
Jun 2013	1	1	7
Jul 2013	2	2	100
Aug 2013	2	2	8
Sep 2013	2	2	50
Oct 2013	1	1	46
Nov 2013	1	1	6
Jan 2014	1	0	48
Feb 2014	1	0	49
Apr 2014	16	13	490
Total	68	44	2035

Procedure

Content analysis

The researcher provided each coder with a coding sheet (APPENDIX) that explained each code's inclusion and exclusion criteria. Three coders including the researcher participated in the process. All coders met and reviewed the definitions of each code and clarified ambiguity. During this meeting, the researcher explained how the data would be coded. The researcher was particularly careful to explain how to determine which codes were dominant using the established coding categories. First, coders identified the theme of each post and each comment and recoded them in descriptive words or phrases. Second, they determined how each unit of data was presented using the categories in the coding sheet (see APPENDIX) and recorded their analyses numerically in a spreadsheet.

34

In the category of news frame for instance, when the primary focus of the report was discord between two or more people/groups, the coders were instructed to assign the conflict code. In the SSSW category, when the post or comment presented information in a way that bolstered the people of Boston, it was coded as ego whereas when the data was about the communal impact of the incident, it was coded as social. For example, a post that states "Boston has suffered a great loss" falls under social strategy and a comment that reads, "those terrorists picked the wrong city to mess with" utilizes ego strategy. In the next section, all the coding categories are discussed in greater detail.

After all coders reviewed the definitions and practiced coding in a meeting, each coder was assigned 30 random posts and 50 random comments to code on their own. Using a random number generator, the researcher collected the first 30 numbers lower than 68 (the number of posts) and the first 50 numbers lower than 2035 (number of comments) to determine which number of post or comment in the full data spreadsheet to assign to coders in order to test reliability of coding. Fleiss Kappa was run to calculate inter-coder reliability.

The research used Fliess Kappa to calculate inter-coder reliability because it is useful for evaluating interrater reliability when there are three coders and the variables are categorical. The results of the reliability tests are as follows. The strength of agreement among coders for the posts was very good. In the first categories, views of terrorism K = .78, description of attackers K = .88, news frame K = .88, and strategy wheel K = .83. The strength of agreement among coders for comments was also very good: views of terrorism K = .74, description of attackers K = .86, news frame K = .72, and strategy wheel K = 74. Inter-coder reliability was high, so the data was distributed among all coders. The data was coded post by post and comment by

comment and recorded in a spreadsheet. After coding was completed, the numerical spreadsheet was transferred to SPSS were descriptive statistics and chi-squares were computed.

Coding categories

The data was analyzed using four coding categories with multiple code options (see APPENDIX). The first coding category in the coding sheet is view of terrorism. Crelinsten (2002) identified two ways of portraying terrorism: a criminal justice model and an internal war model. The criminal justice model treats terrorism as a crime that should be tried in a criminal court and persecuted by law, whereas in the war model, military force is typically brought in. The codes in this category were adapted from Crelinsten's model. When a post or comment framed the attack as a criminal case, it was coded as one. When the war frame was used, it was coded as two. There was also a numerical value of three when multiple views of terrorism were presented. When there were no identifiable views, a numerical value of four was used.

The second category in the coding sheet is the description of attackers. This category explored how journalists and the audience described the attackers. Some scholars argue that factors such as nationality, ethnicity, and religion influence whether a person is framed as a terrorist or rebel (Grinyaev, 2003; Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). This study could reveal whether journalists and commenters describe the attackers in the same way. Three descriptors of disruptive behavior were applied: (1) terrorist, (2) rebel and (3) activist. If the attackers were framed as terrorists in a post or comment, coders inputted one in the spreadsheet and so on.

The third category is news frame. In media studies research, news reports are examined using five news frames. These frames include (1) conflict, (2) human interest, (3) morality, (4) economic and (5) responsibility (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). These categories are reported to be valuable in interpreting news reports. Conflict emphasizes a clash between two or more

opposing sides; human interest brings a human face or emotions to a report; economic frames highlight economic consequences; morality presents an issue within the context of religious or moral prescriptions; and responsibility assigns blame.

The final category in the coding sheet is strategy, operationalized with Taylor's (1999) Six-Segment Strategy Wheel. The SSSW is a model designed to explain consumer decision-making approaches and can help interpret audiences' responses. Based on Taylor's model, the six approaches for making decisions identified are rational, acute need, routine, ego, social, and sensory. Because journalism focuses on objectivity, strategies in reporting news focus on creating audience appeal. However, this research is in accordance with Kellerman (1992) who states that all communication is inherently strategic in nature. Even news that is expected to be objective can only be reported through one frame or another. Posts that presented hard facts predominantly were coded as (1) rational. Posts containing a call to action e.g., informing Bostonians of the lockdown in some parts of the city and asking residents to stay indoors during the search for the second culprit was coded as (2) acute need. Posts that gave periodic updates and reminders were coded as (3) routine. Posts that bolstered the Boston community in anyway was coded as (4) ego. Posts about the communal impact of the attack were coded as (5) social, and posts that used emotional appeal was coded as (6) sensory.

When commenters questioned the news report or expressed a need for more information, it was coded as (1) rational; comments that expressed a sense of emergency or changes made to daily life because of the attack were coded as (2) acute need; responses that appeared to be routine reactions and done with seemingly less deliberation, including one-word comments were coded as (3) routine. When commenters made statements about stances that are important to them or about their personal beliefs (e.g., political views) it was coded as ego (4). When

commenters made statements about others rather than themselves the comments were coded as

(5) social. Finally, expressions of both positive and negative emotions, as well as sharing gory

details from the catastrophic event were coded as (6) sensory. The full coding sheet can be found

in APPENDIX.

Interpretive analysis

In addition to numerically coding each post and comment in the dataset, coders were

asked to fill out a column explaining how the codes were used with words, phrases, or sentences.

This qualitative column featured explanations such as "victim runs again", "honoring victims

and dead", "priest consoles" etc. These descriptors were interpreted within the context of the

original data and the dominant items in each category (e.g., justice-based, responsibility frame,

ego strategy).

Interpretive analysis is an important qualitative approach for explaining the results of the

frequencies and is essential in constructionist research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructionists

argue that humans are self-interpreting beings who act with some understanding of what they are

doing (Craig & Muller, 2007). Therefore, any human phenomenon can be understood by

observing and interpreting people's responses. Interpretive inquiries broaden and "deepen our

understanding of social life by interpreting the specific meanings that are shared" in any social

situations (Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 57). The research used an interpretive analysis to the

collected data by observing and comparing the codes, notes, and original dataset. The

interpretations are based on my personal lens of understanding the data.

To answer research questions 1b - how was view of terrorism, description of attackers,

news frame, and SSSW portrayed in *The Boston Globe's* posts, and 2b - How was view of

terrorism, description of attackers, news frame, and SSSW portrayed in *The Boston Globe's*

posts? - it was necessary to not only identify which frames were most frequently used, but to understand how the frames were used and their implications. The next two chapters present the findings from the analyses.

CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine how journalists frame news during a crisis and how audiences respond. The previous chapter explained the methodology and rationale of the content and interpretive analyses. Chapter four contains a discussion of the sample, the procedures, the coding categories, and the interpretive analysis. This chapter reports the results from the analyses by first presenting the descriptive statistics for the quantitative research questions 1(a) and 2(a), followed by of the interpretive findings for the qualitative research questions 1(b) and 2(b).

Research Question One

The first research question asked, how was news about the Boston bombing presented by journalists on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page? A content analysis was employed to answer this first question.. Then, the research explored the following questions, (a) How was the act of terrorism portrayed in the news reports? (b) How were the perpetrators identified? (c) How were the news reports framed? (d) What were the dominant strategies used in reporting the news? The results of this analysis are presented in this section.

How was the act of terrorism portrayed in the posts?

Portrayal of terrorism was coded into four categories (justice, war, multiple, no identifiable frame). Coders read post by post and assigned one of four coding categories to each post. The pie chart below shows the proportions of each category in the dataset. A total of 63.2% (N = 43) of the 68 news posts were coded as not having an identifiable view of terrorism by the coders. However, for the posts that specified a news frame, the justice view was dominant. About 36.8% (N = 25) of posts presented the attack from a justice perspective while only one post mentioned war.
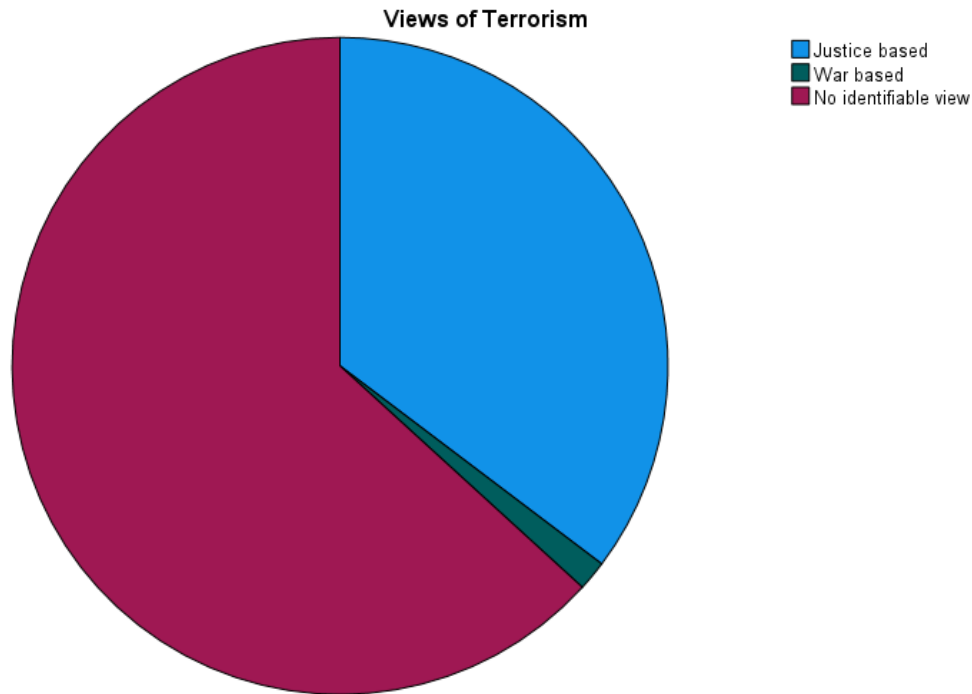
Views of Terrorism

Legend:
- Justice based
- War based
- No identifiable view

Figure 2. Views of Terrorism

How were the perpetrators identified?

The second area examined the description of the attackers. The pre-established codes used to answer the question included the following descriptors: terrorist, rebel, activist, multiple and none. Almost half of the posts examined did not give the coders any indication of how the attackers were identified 48.5% (N = 33). However, from the remaining 51.5% of the posts, it was clear that journalists framed the perpetrators as terrorists 44.1% (N = 30). Two posts framed the attackers as rebels 2.9% (N = 2) and 4.4% (N = 3) identified the attackers as both rebels and terrorists.
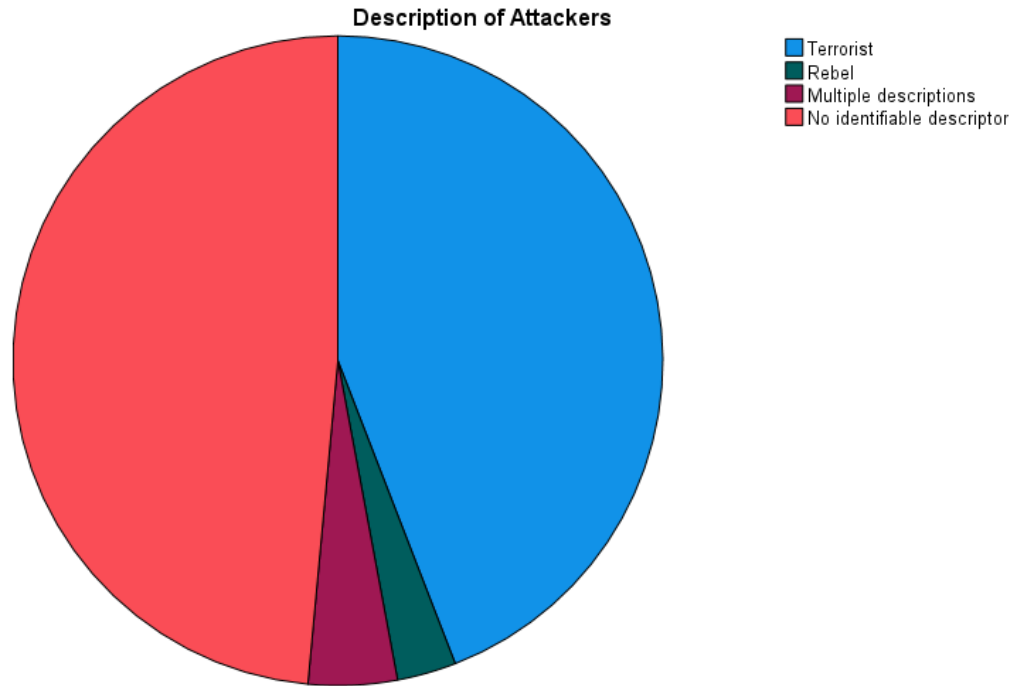
Description of Attackers

Legend:
- Terrorist
- Rebel
- Multiple descriptions
- No identifiable descriptor

Figure 3. Description of Attackers

How were the news reports framed?

The categories for news frame included economic, morality, human interest, conflict, and responsibility. The result of the content analysis showed that human interest was the dominant frame in the posts 61.8% (N = 42), followed by morality 17.6% (N = 12), responsibility 14.7% (10), economic 2.9% (N = 2) and only two posts, reporting the police hunt for the second suspect, framed the event as conflict 2.9% (N = 2). The proportions are presented in the pie chart below.
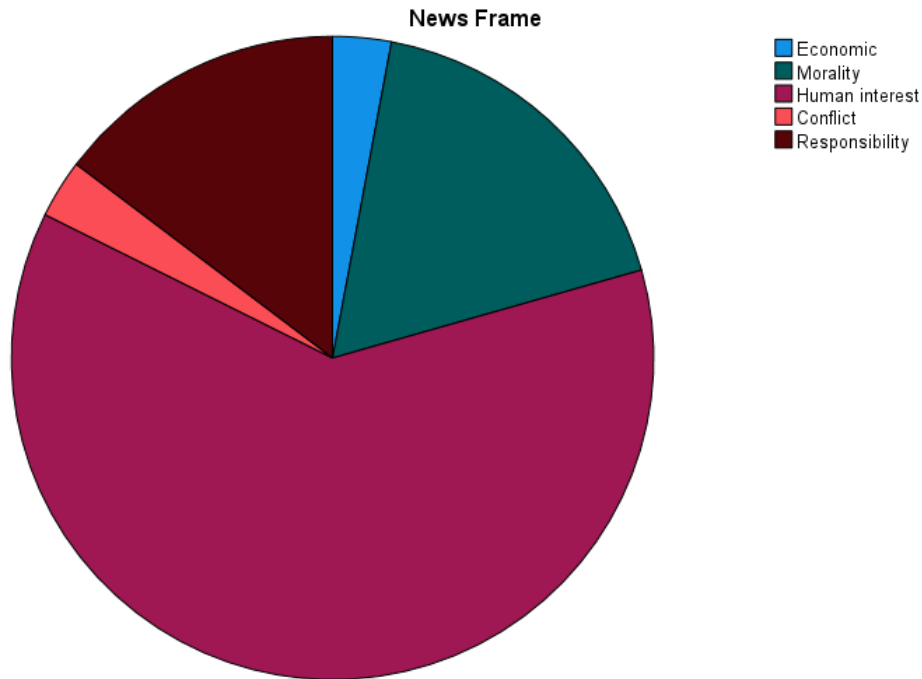
Figure 4. News Frames

What were the dominant strategies used in reporting the news?

The final measure used to analyze the news reports was Taylor's SSSW. The SSSW included a total of six categories, rational, acute need, routine, ego, social, and sensory. The results of the content analysis showed that social 26.5% (N = 18), sensory 25% (N = 17), and rational 22.1% (N = 15) were the dominant approaches used in reporting the news about the Boston Marathon bombing. Less dominant approaches included routine 13.2% (N = 9), acute need 7.4% (N = 5), and ego 5.9% (N = 4).
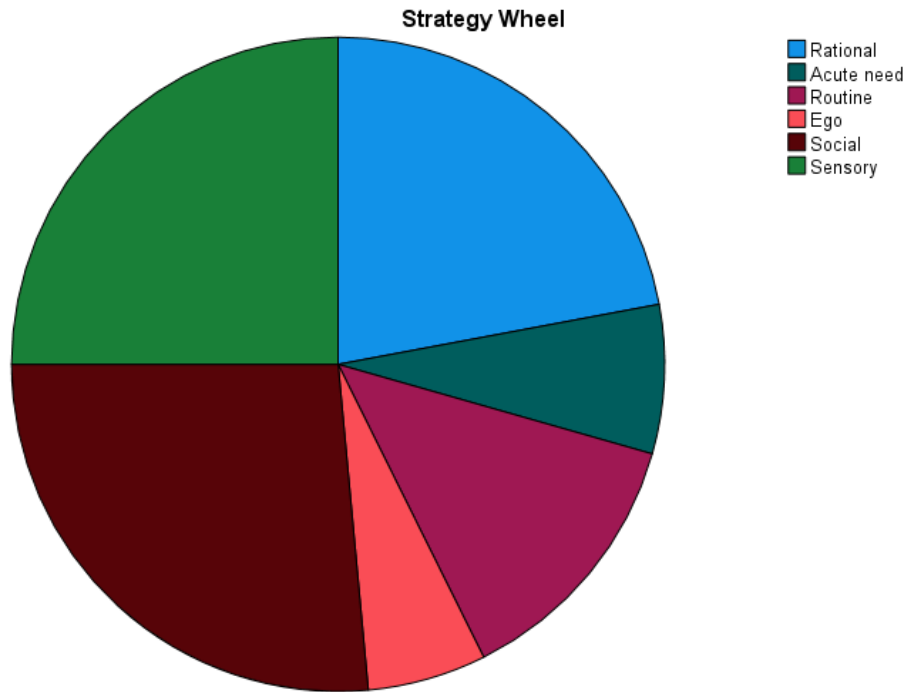
Figure 5. Strategy Wheel

With the first research question, the primary focus was understanding how the news about the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 was reported on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page. Utilizing a framework for understanding and analyzing news posts facilitated a better assessment of commenters' responses to the posts. The second research question explored the association between news posts and audience comments.

Research Question Two

The second research question asked, how did the commenters react to the news about the Boston Marathon bombing? The objective that is explored is uncovering whether commenters and journalists discussed the attack in a similar fashion. The study specifically examined the use of justice and war frames when referring to the bombing. Then the research explored how journalists and commenters described the attackers and whether they used similar news frames. Finally, the question of whether journalists and commenters applied the same strategies in

talking about the event was examined. The results of attempting to answer these questions are presented below.

Views of terrorism

Descriptive statistics were computed to analyze the association between journalist and audience views of terrorism. Not all the news posts or comments analyzed mentioned or alluded to the view of terrorism (i.e., justice-based, or war-based). About 63.2% (N = 43) of the 68 news posts were coded as not having an identifiable view of terrorism. However, from the 36.8% (N = 25) of posts that presented a view of terrorism, it was clear to see that justice was the dominant view. Out of all the posts, 35.3% (N = 24) reported the attack through a justice-based view and 1.5% (N = 1) reported the attack through a war-based perspective.

Like the findings about the news posts, majority of commenters did not indicate their view of terrorism in responding to the event; specifically, 94.8% (N = 1930). Out of the remaining 5.2% (N = 105) who presented their view of the attack in their comment, 3.9% (N = 80) used a justice perspective while only 1.2% (N = 25) talked about war. Both journalists and their audience viewed the attack as a criminal offense rather than a declaration of war.
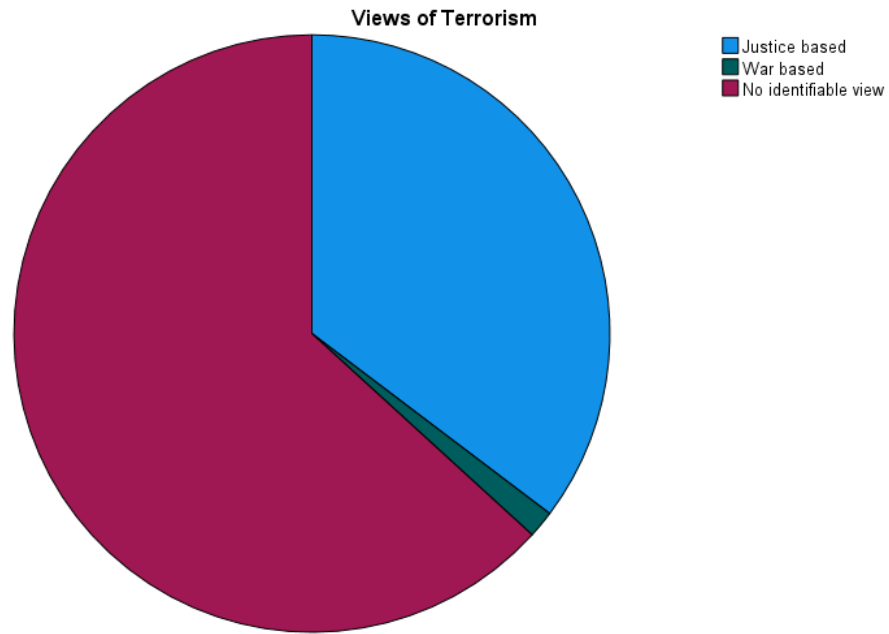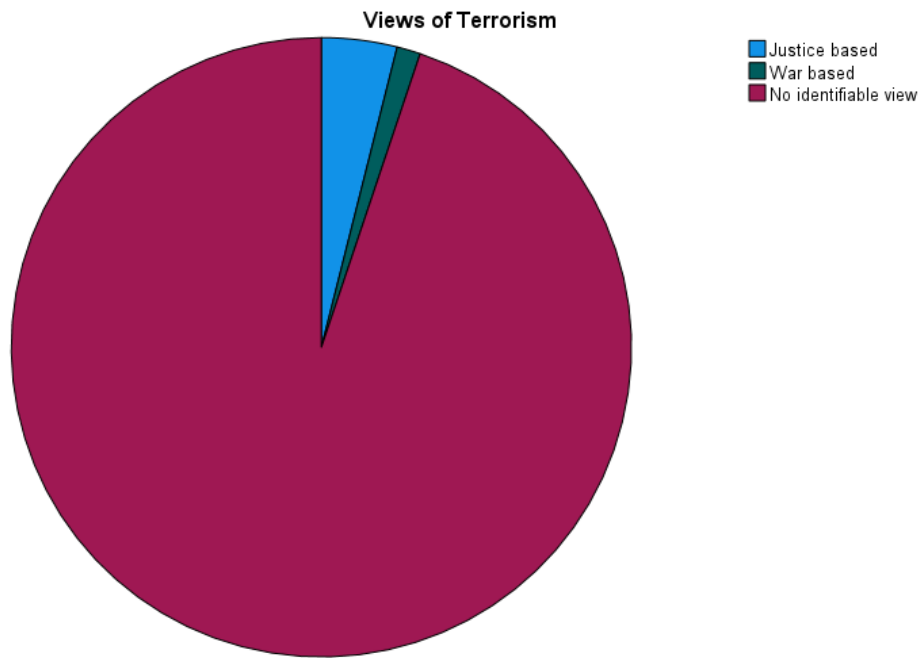
Figure 6. Views of Terrorism in Posts

Figure 7. Views of Terrorism in Comments

Description of attackers

The second category examined was the description of attackers. The codes for this

category included: terrorist, rebel, and activist. About 44.1% (N = 30) of the posts identified the

attackers as terrorists, 2.9% (N = 2) identified the attackers as rebels, 4.4% (N = 3) identified the attackers as both rebels and terrorists, and 48.5% (N = 33) of posts had no description of the attackers.

In the comments, 6% (N = 122) described the attackers as terrorists while 94% (N = 1912) did not mention how they viewed the attackers. Both journalists and their audience primarily viewed the attackers as terrorists.
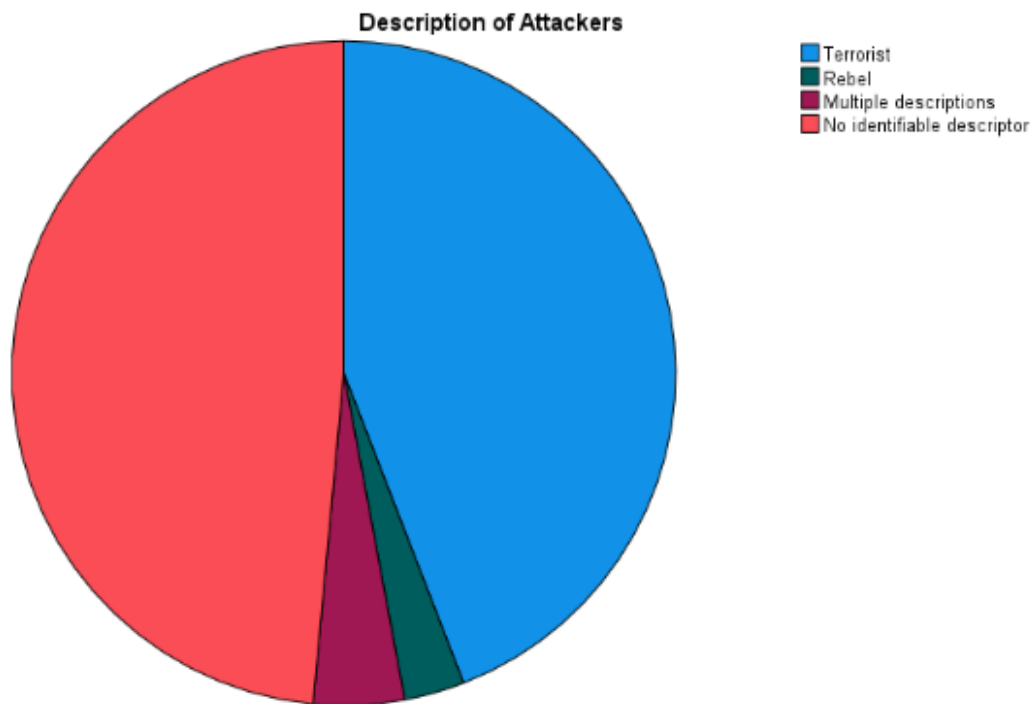

Figure 8. Description of Attackers in Posts

Description of Attackers

Legend:
- Terrorist
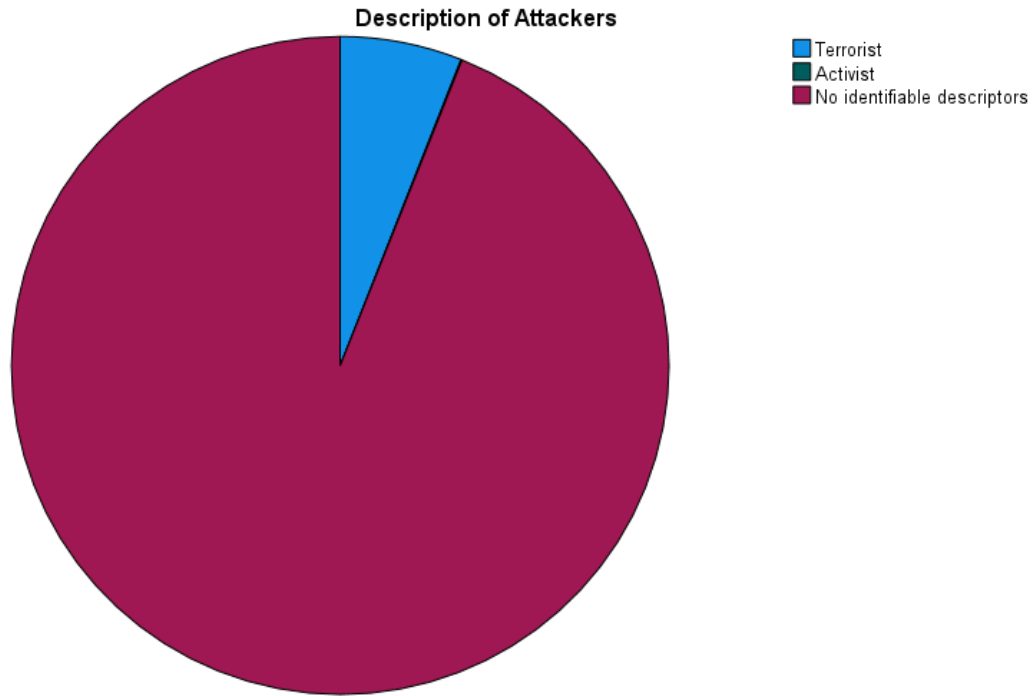- Activist
- No identifiable descriptors

Figure 9. Description of Attackers in Comments

Because of the absence of the pre-established codes in a large portion of the data, no additional statistical analysis was conducted with the variables, views of terrorism and description of attackers.

News frames

The category of news frame contained five classifications. They include, economic, morality, human interest, conflict, and responsibility frames. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between news frames in the posts and comments. News frames in posts and comments were not significant related, X^2 (25, N = 2035) = 20.8, $p > .05$.

When descriptive statistics were computed for news frames in the posts (N = 68), the results were as follows: human interest 61.8% (N = 42), morality 17.6% (N = 12), responsibility 14.7% (10), economic 2.9% (N = 2) and conflict 2.9% (N = 2).

In the comments (N = 2035), morality was the highest frame presented 48.7% (N = 991) followed by human interest 30.3% (N = 596), responsibility 17.4% (353), conflict 4.3% (N = 87) and economic 0.4% (N = 8).
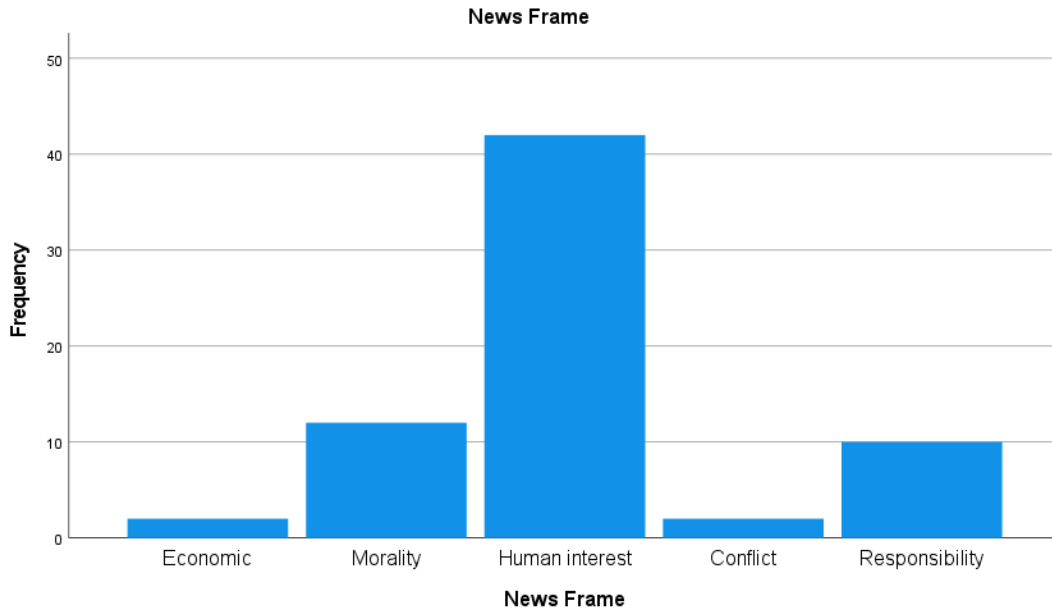

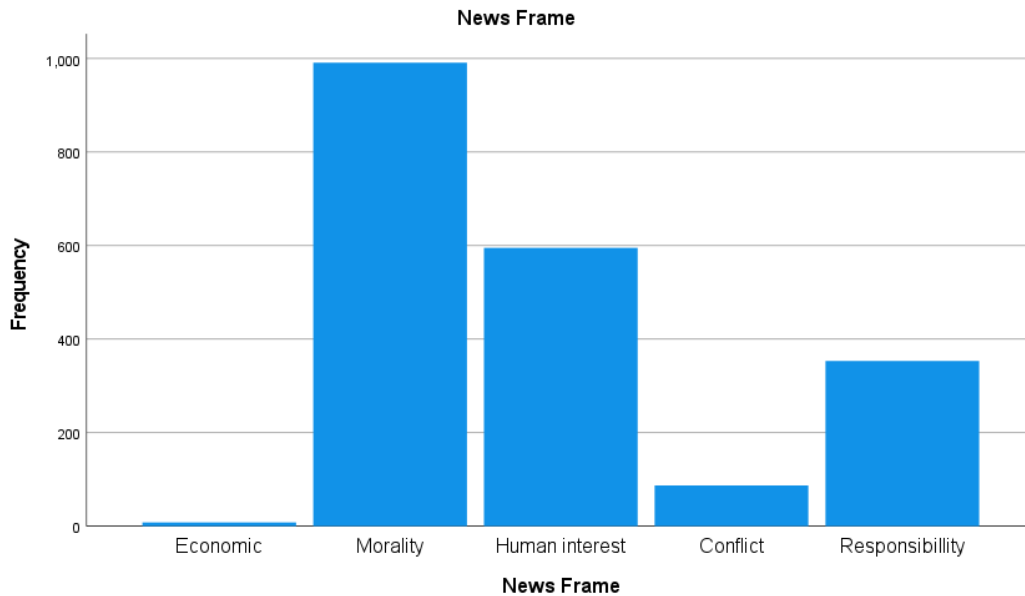*Figure 10.* News Frame in Posts

Figure 11. News Frame in Comments

Next, the research explored how the frames in the comments compared to the frames in the pictures (rather than the whole post). Pictures are compelling, so one might assume that the frames in the comments would match those in the pictures featured in the posts. However, that was not the case. Of all the pictures analyzed (N = 44), 96.3% (N = 42) used human interest frame, 2.3% (N = 1) used responsibility and 2.3% (N = 1) used morality.
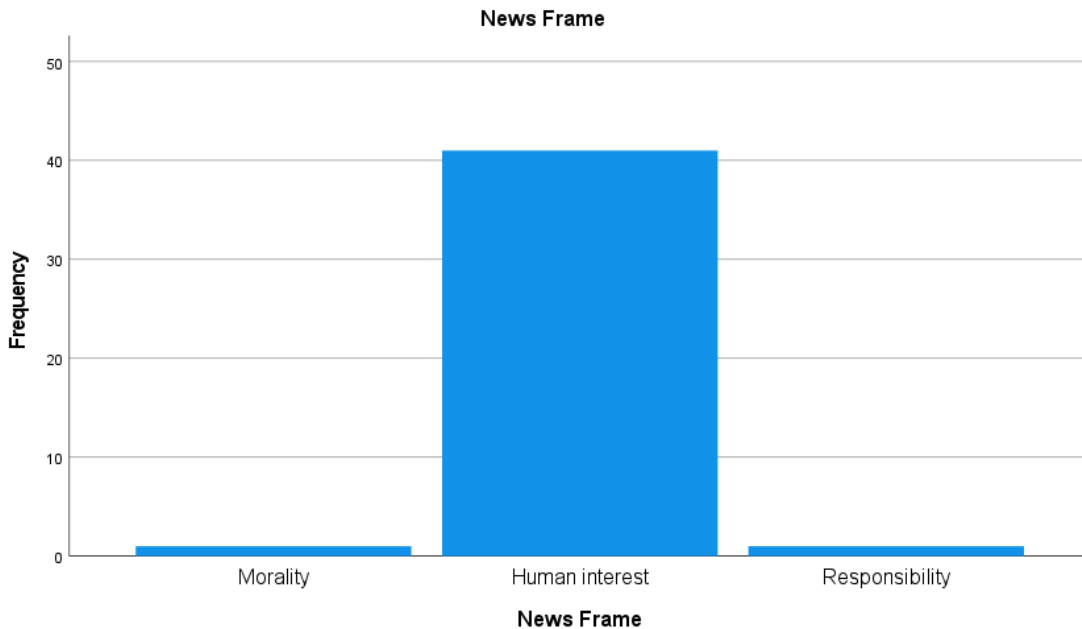
Figure 12. News Frame in Pictures

Strategy wheel

The segments of the SSSW included, rational, acute need, routine, ego, social and sensory. Chi-square was performed to examine the relation between SSSW approach in the posts and comments. The relation between the variables was significant, X^2 (30, N = 2035) = 80.01, p = .00. Journalists and audiences used similar strategies to talk about the event.

From all the posts analyzed (N = 68), about 26.5% (N = 18) used a social approach to present news, 25% (N = 17) used a sensory approach, 22.1% (N = 15) used rational, 13.2% (N = 9) used routine, 7.4% (N = 5) used acute need, and 5.9% (N = 4) used ego. In the comments,

40.3% (N = 801) of them were coded as having a social approach, 31.8% (N = 646) used routine, 22.8% (N = 463) used sensory, 2.1% (N = 43) used ego, 2.1% (N = 43) used acute need, and 1.9% (N = 39) used a rational approach.
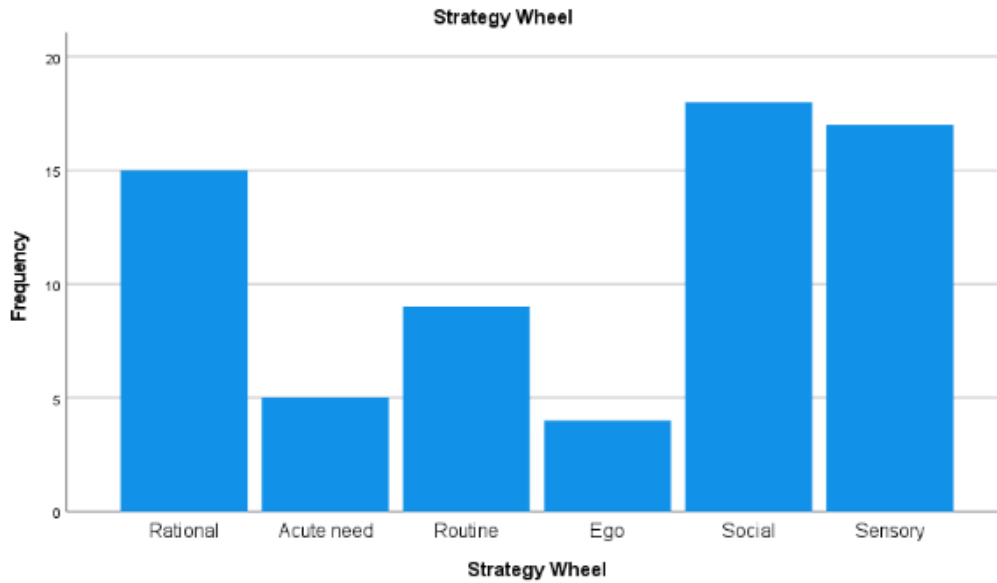
Figure 13. SSSW in Posts
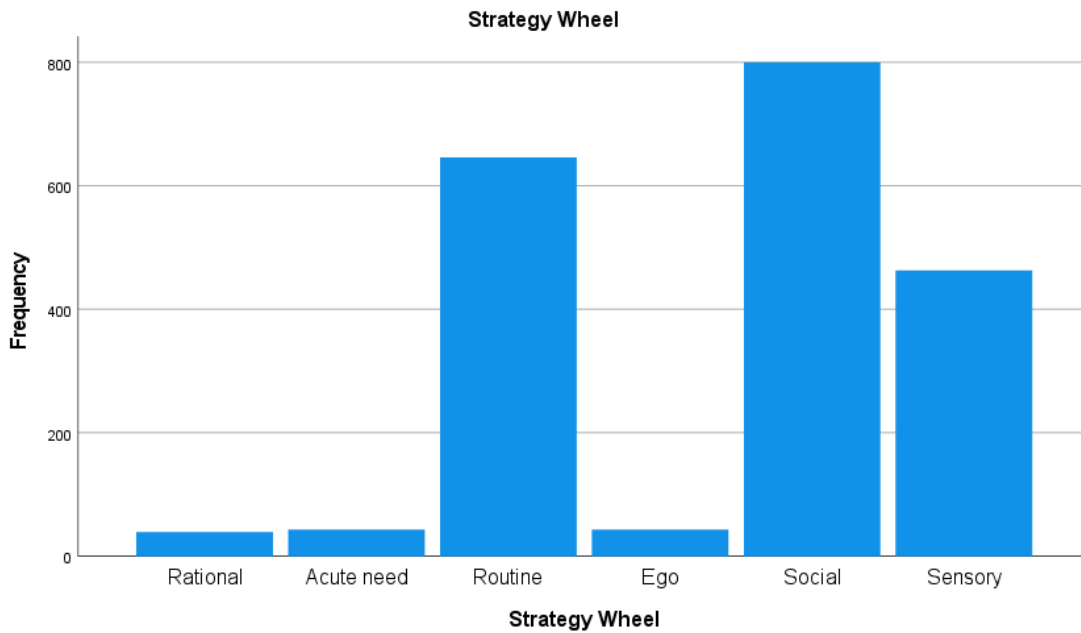
Figure 14. SSSW in Comments

In the pictures (N = 44), 70.8% (N = 31) of all images were sensory, 9.3% (N = 4) used ego, 7% (N = 3) used routine, 7% (N = 3) were social, 4.7% (N = 2) used acute need, and 2.3% (N = 1) used a rational approach.
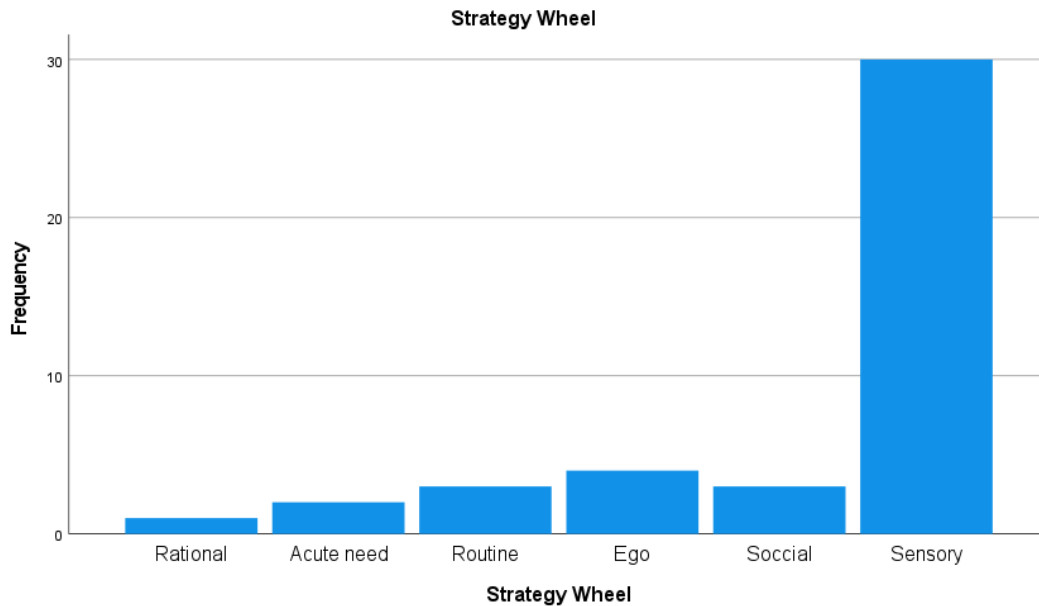
Figure 15. SSSW in Pictures

Monthly Comparison of News Posts and Comments

The findings for research question two presented above this section reports the general association between all news texts, pictures, and comments. Given the variation in frequency of news coverage and topical issue by months over the one-year period of data collection, it is important to also consider the association between posts and comments in the phases in which they were published. Therefore, the findings below give a phase-by-phase comparison of news post and comments beginning from April 2013 to April 2014. Bar charts are included to strengthen the comparison.

April 2013

In April 2013 there was a total of 30 posts and 934 comments. While analyzing the news frame applied in each post, we found that 56.7% (N = 17) of them used human interest, 20% (N

= 6) used morality, 16.7% (N = 5) used responsibility, 3.3% (N = 1) used conflict, and 3.3% (N =

1) used economic frame. In the comments, morality was the dominant frame 53% (N = 495),

followed by human interest 29.2% (N = 273), then responsibility 13.4% (N = 125), conflict 4.3%

(N = 40), and economic 0.1% (N = 1).
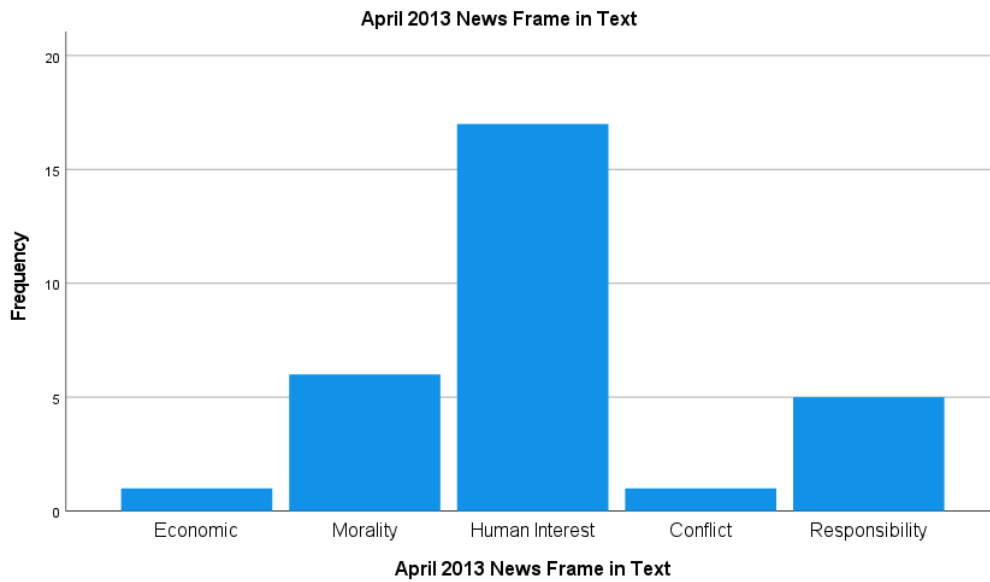
Figure 16. News Frame in Posts
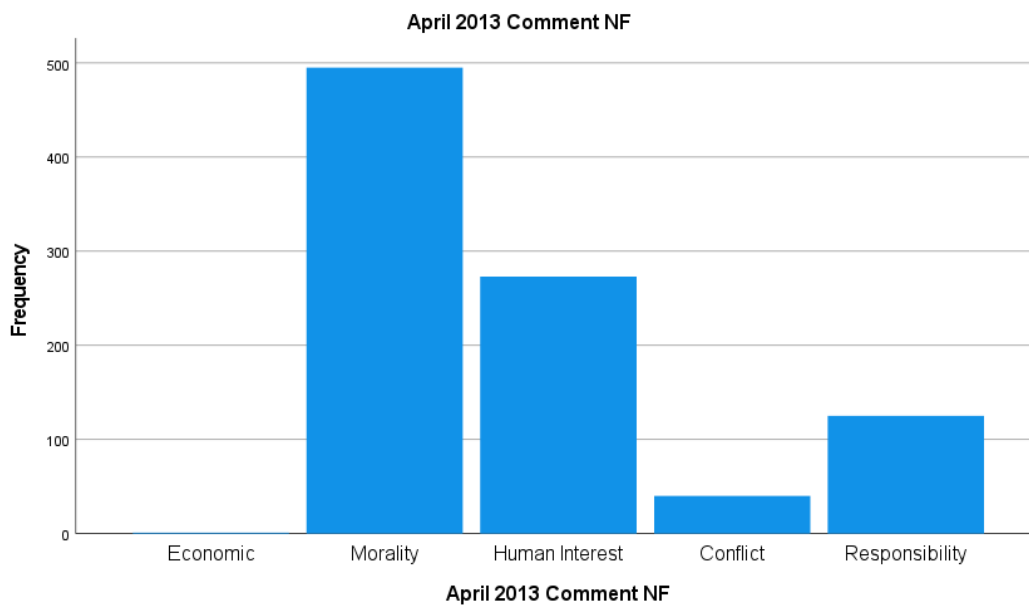
Figure 17. News Frame in Comments

The frequencies of the SSSW items in posts and comments in the month of April 2013 were as follows. Some posts had rational 33.3% (N = 10), others used social 20% (N = 6), acute need 16.7 (N = 5), routine 13.3 (N = 4), sensory 10% (N = 3), and ego 6.7% (N = 2) strategies. In the comments, routine was the dominant approach 35.9% (N = 335), followed by social 31.5% (N = 294), then sensory 22.5% (N = 210), acute need 3.6% (N = 34), ego 3.5% (N = 33), and rational 3% (N = 28).
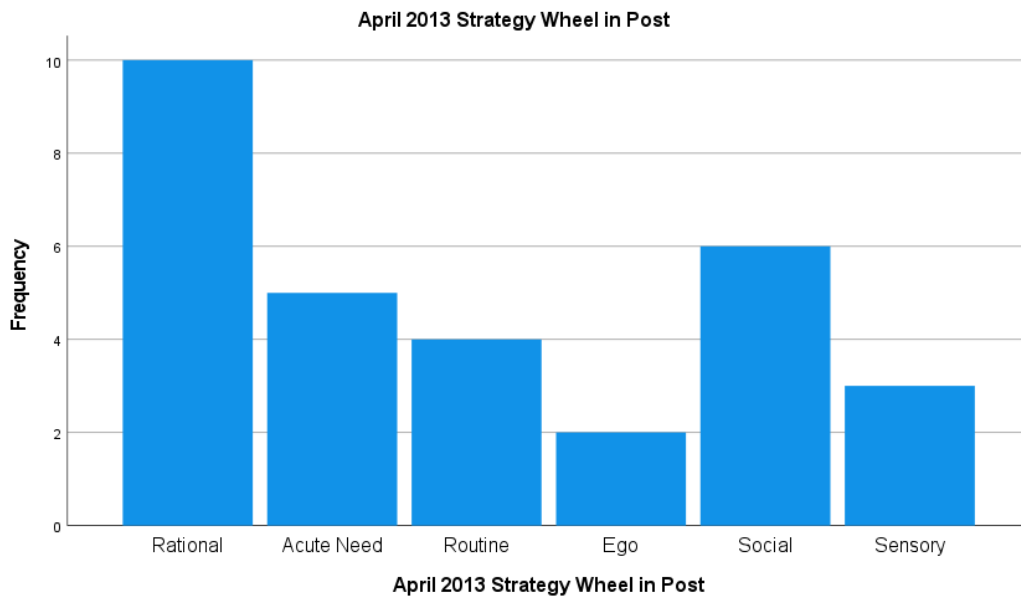
Figure 18. SSSW in Posts

April 2013 Comment SSSW
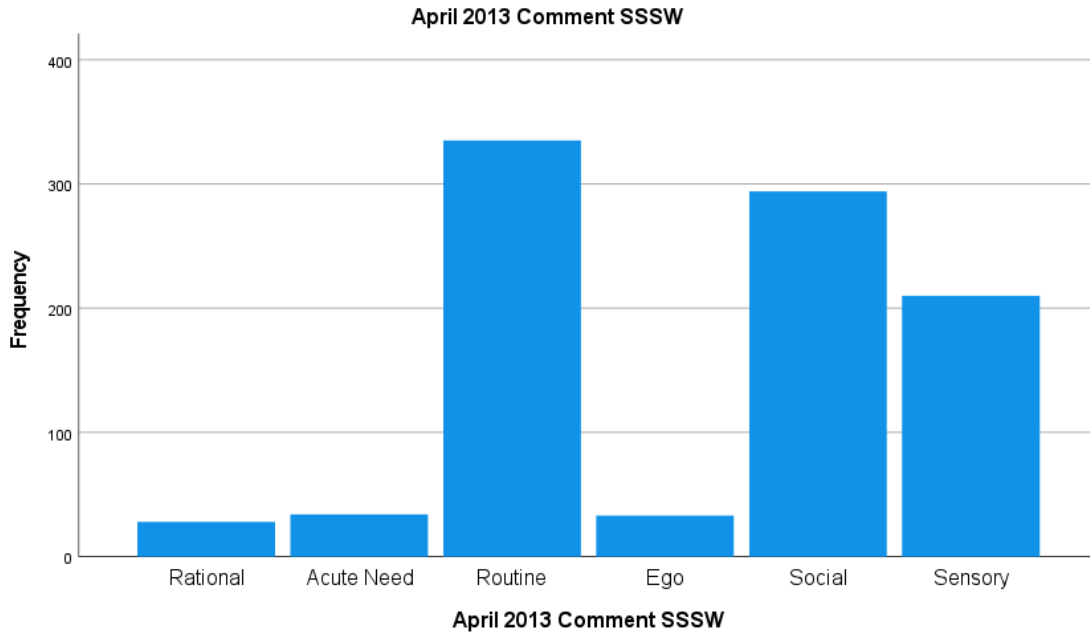
Figure 19. SSSW in Comments

May 2013

In May 2013 there were a total of 11 posts and 297 comments. In the category of news frame applied in the posts, the dominant frame was found to be human interest 45.5% (N = 5), followed by responsibility 36.4% (N = 4), then economic and morality which both had the same percentage 9.1% (N = 1). In the comments the most prevalent frame was morality 33.8% (N = 100). Like the posts, human interest 27.7% (N = 83) and responsibility 36.1% (N = 107) were high, then economic 2% (N = 6) and conflict 0.3% (N = 1) followed.
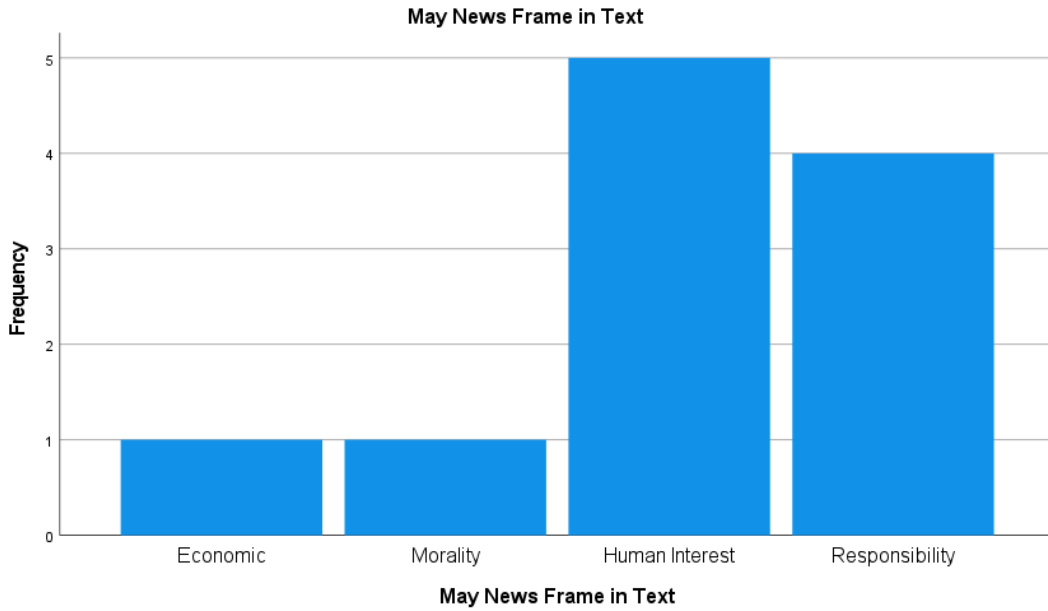
Figure 20. News Frame in Posts
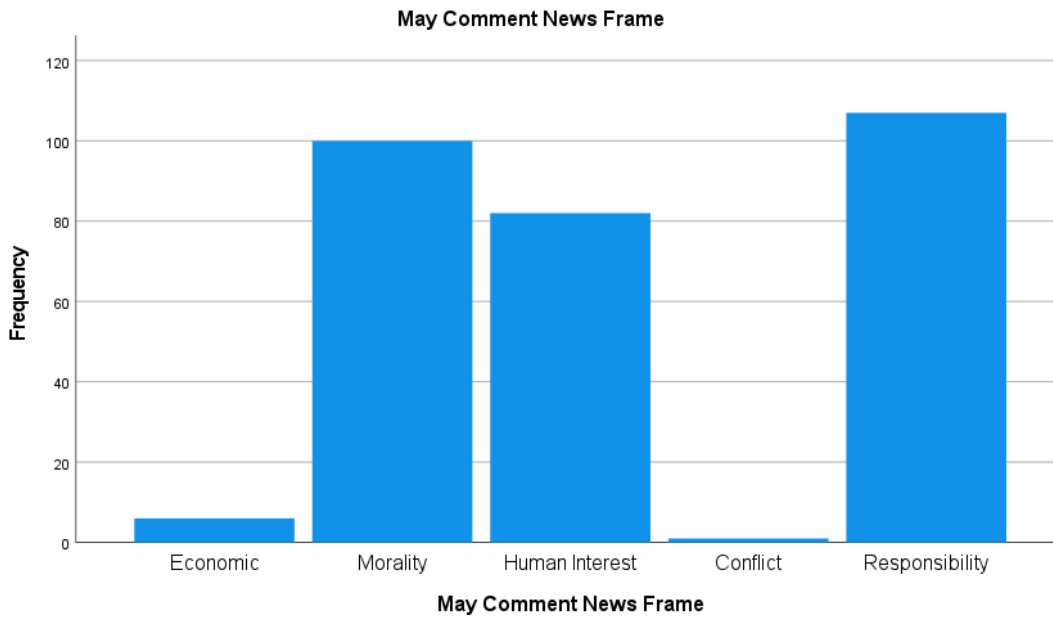
Figure 21. News Frame in Comments

After examining SSSW approaches in the posts we found that 45.5% (N = 5) were social, 36.4% (N = 4) were rational, 9.1% (N = 1) used routine, and 9.1% (N = 1) used ego. Among the comments, the dominant approach was social 58.4% (N = 176), followed by 20.5% (N = 61),

then sensory 11.7% (N = 35), rational 3% (N = 9), acute and ego which each had a percentage of 2.7% (N = 8).
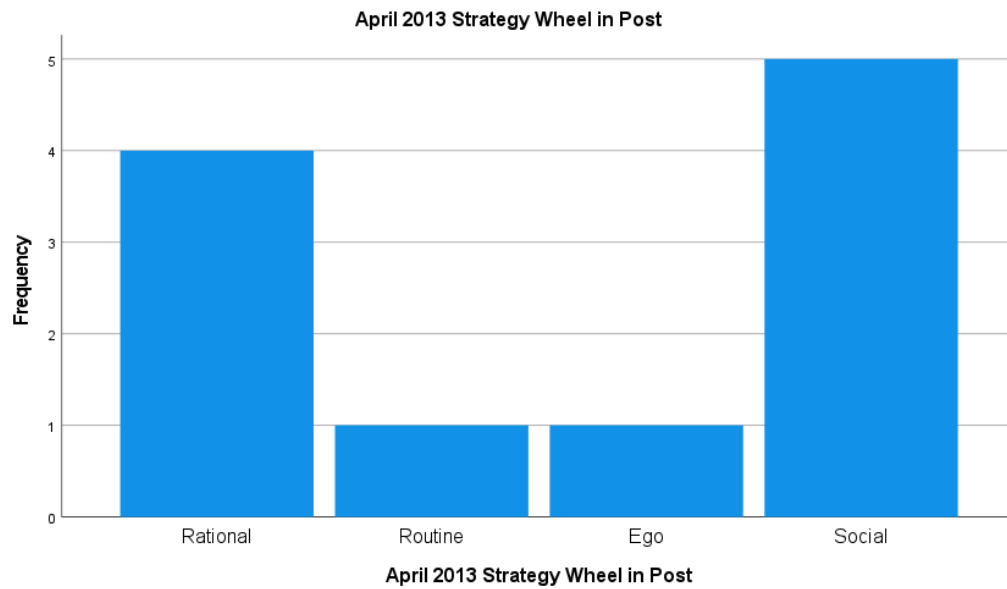
Figure 22. SSSW in Posts
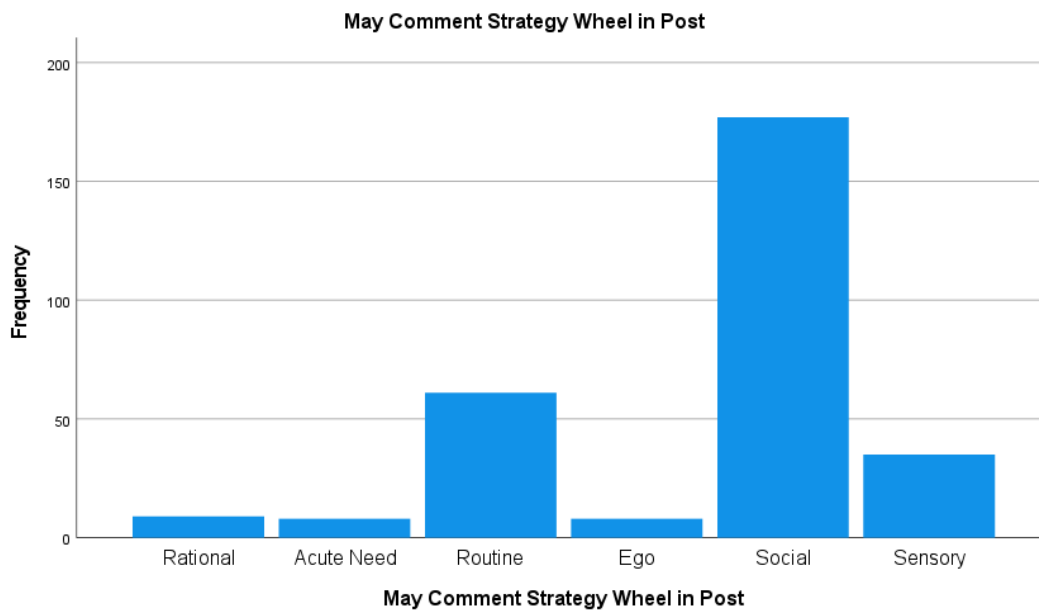
Figure 23. SSSW in Comments

June to August 2013

The months of June to August had a combined total of 5 posts and 115 comments. The posts were predominantly coded as human interest 80% (N = 4). One post used responsibility frame 20% (N = 1). In the comments conflict was the prevalent frame 35.1% (N = 41), followed by morality 29.8% (N =34), responsibility and human interest had the same percentage of 17.5% (N = 20).

Figure 24. SSSW in Posts

June-August Comment News Frame
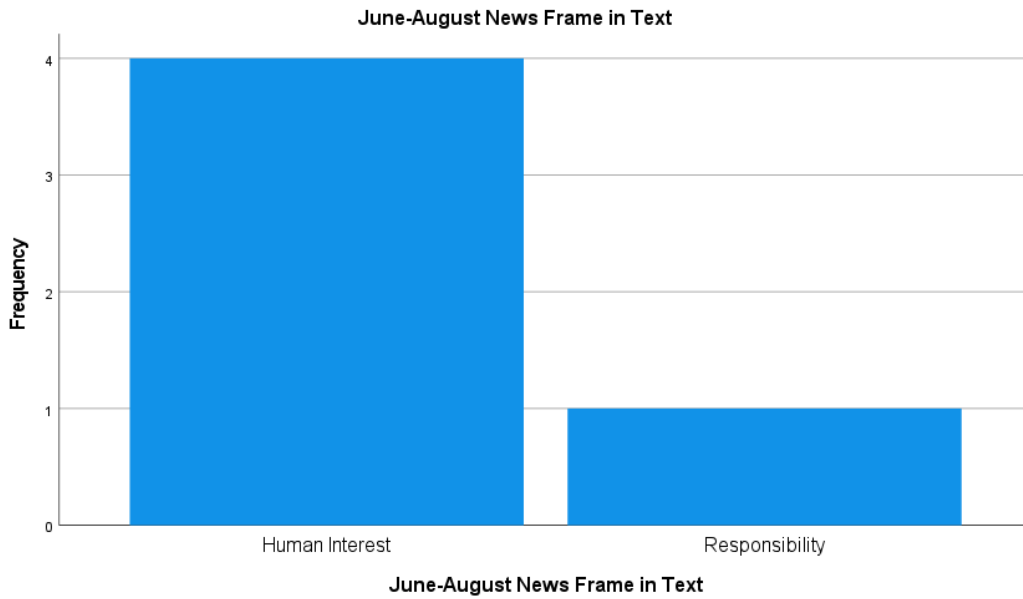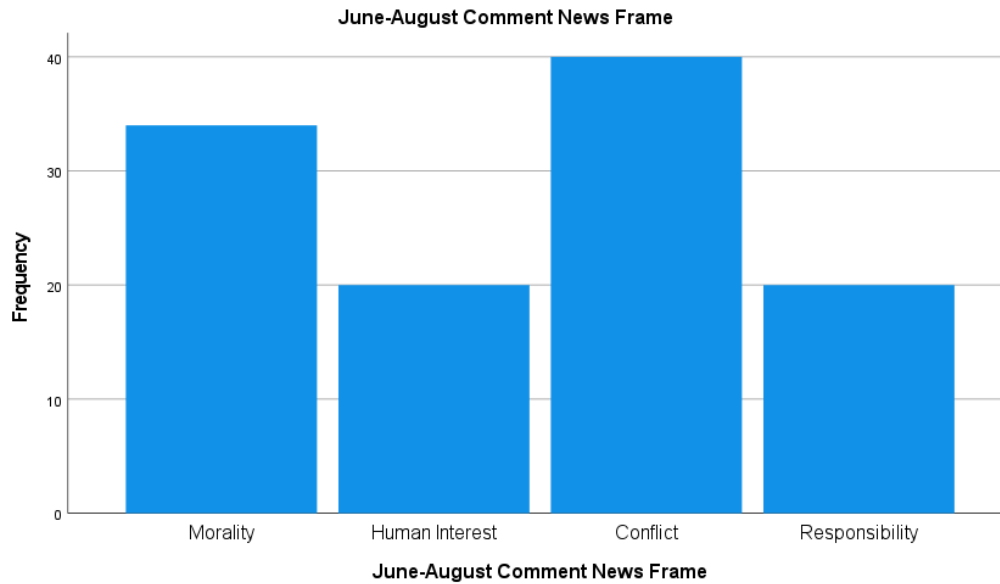
Figure 25. SSSW in Comments

The frequencies of the SSSW strategies in posts and comments were as follows. In the posts 42.6% (N = 49) were social. Sensory and routine had the same percentage of 27.8% (N = 32) each and rational and ego were each 0.9% (N = 1). In the comments, the dominant SSSW approach was social 42.6% (N = 49), followed by routine and sensory having the same percentage of 27.8% (N = 32), and ego and rational with the same percentage of 0.9% (N = 1).
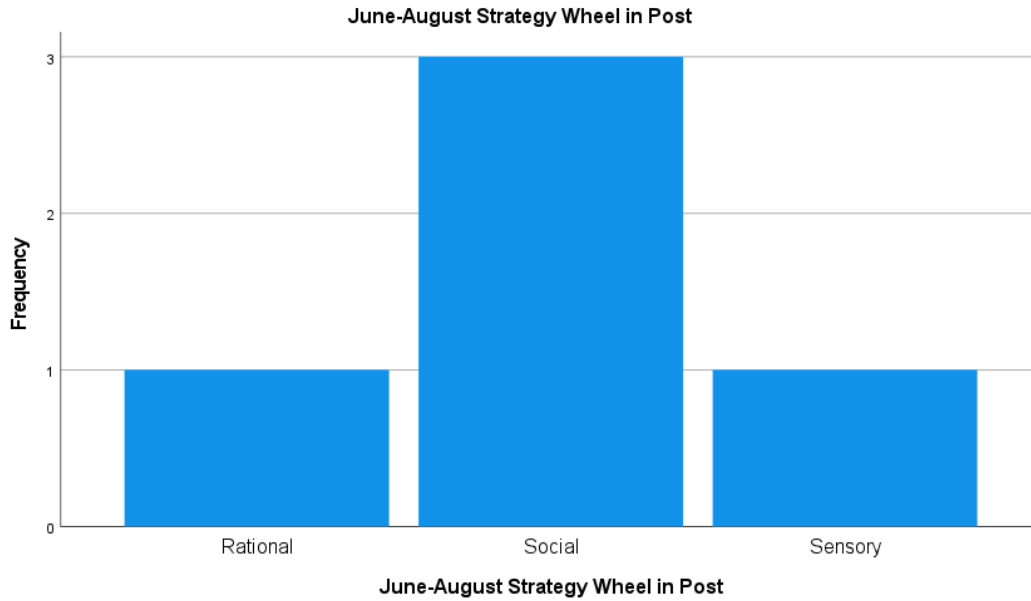
Figure 26. SSSW in Posts
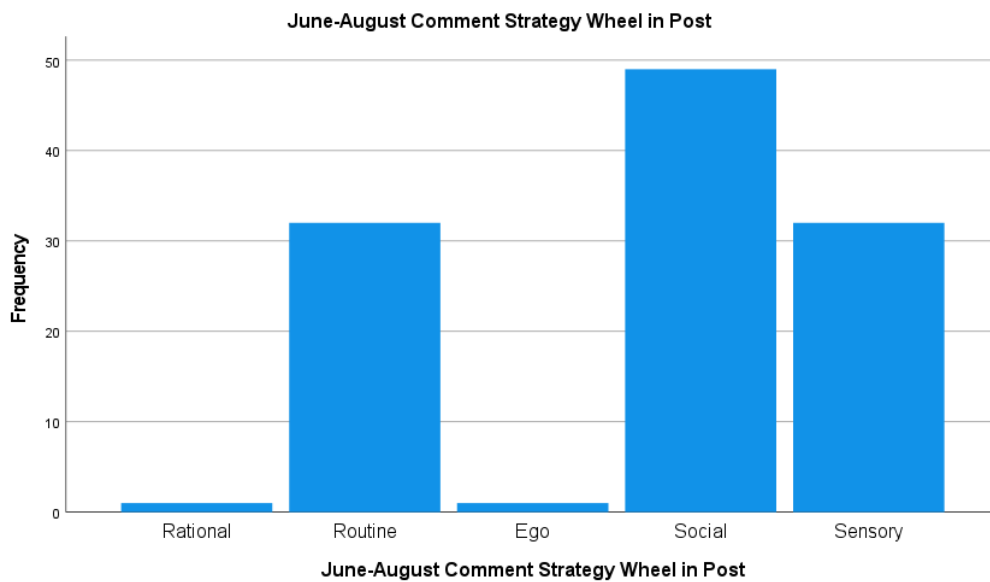
Figure 27. SSSW in Comments

September to October 2013

September to October had a combined total of only 3 news posts and 96 comments. The

posts were framed predominantly using human interest 66.7% (N = 2) and responsibility 33.3%

(N = 1). In the comments the prevalent frame was morality 51% (N = 49), followed by human interest 33.3% (N = 32), and responsibility 15.5% (N = 15).
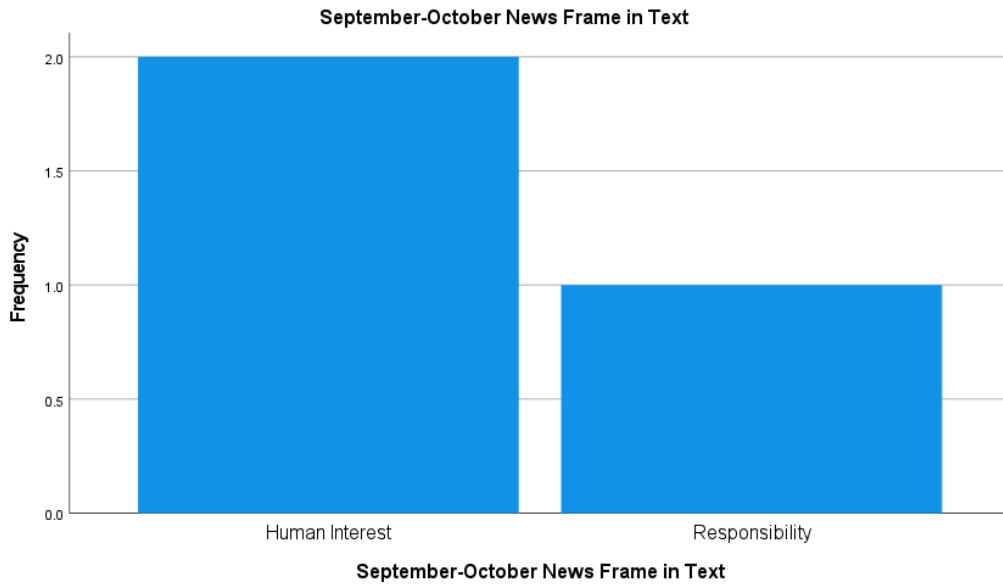
Figure 28. News Frame in Posts
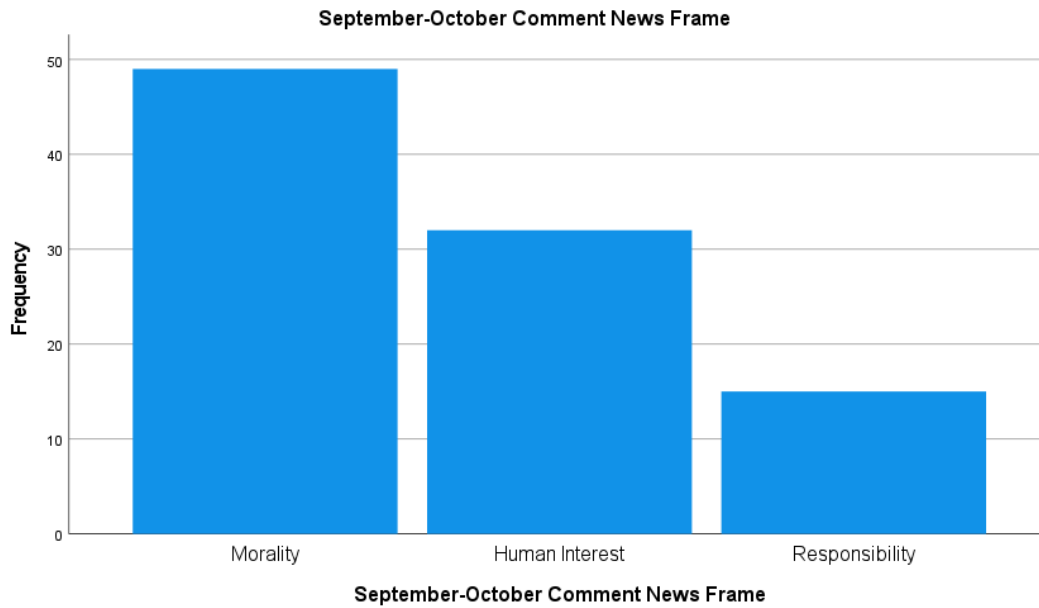
Figure 29. News Frame in Comments

Three SSSW approaches were taken in presenting the 3 news posts between September and October. The approaches were rational 33.3% (N = 1), social 33.3% (N = 1), and sensory 33.3% (N = 1). Among the comments 39.6% (N = 38) took a social approach, 33.3% (N = 32) took a routine approach, and 27.1% (N = 26) took a sensory approach to commenting.

Figure 30. SSSW in Posts
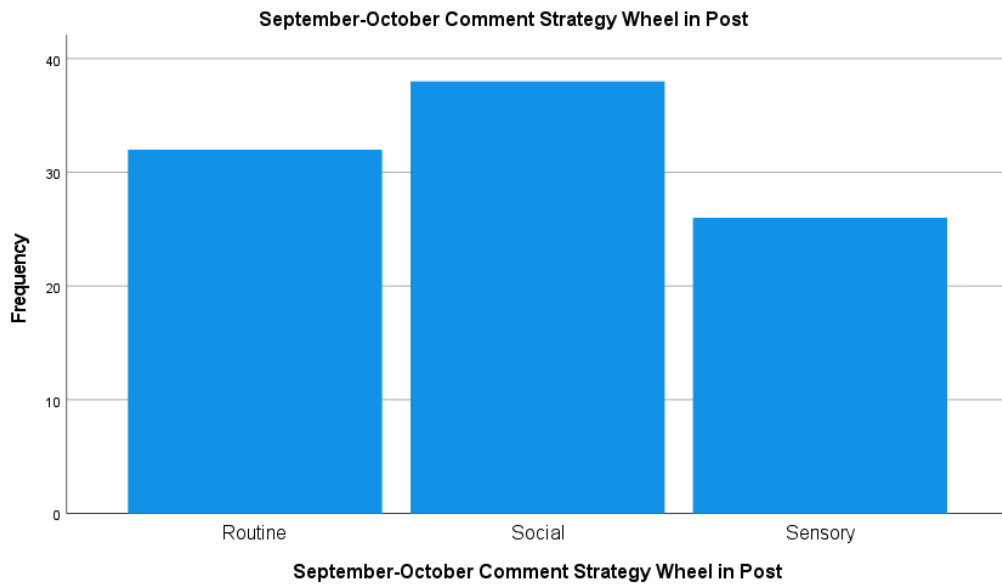
Figure 31. SSSW in Comments

November 2013 to February 2014

November to February had a combined total of only 3 posts and 103 comments. All three posts were coded as human interest 100% (N = 3). In the comments the dominant frame was morality 53.4% (N = 55), followed by human interest 31.1% (N = 32), then responsibility 14.6% (N = 15), and conflict 1% (N = 1).
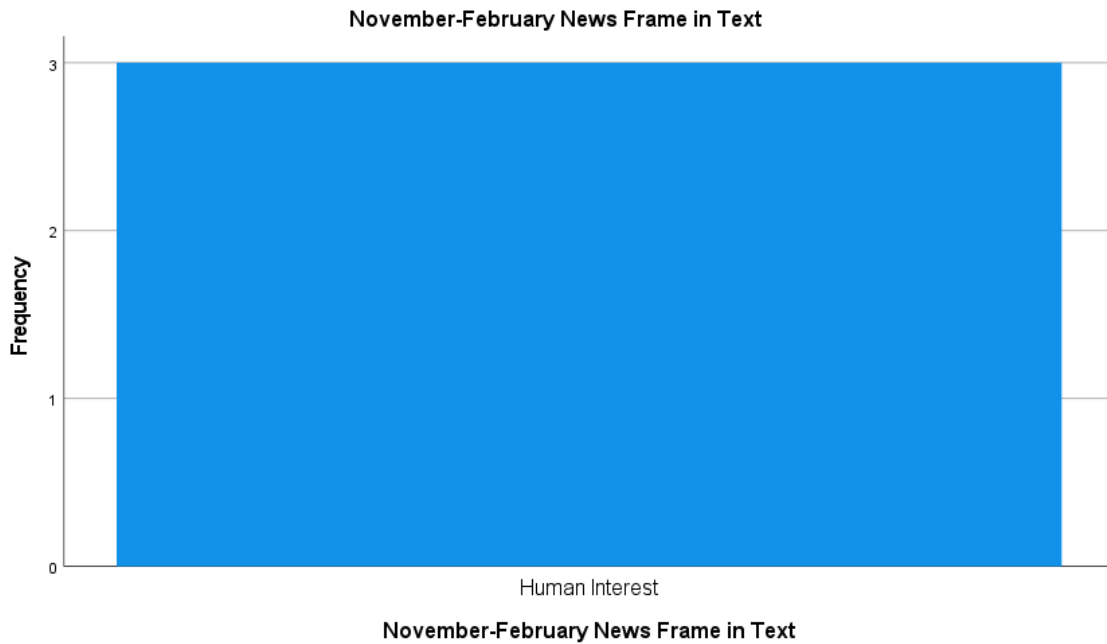
Figure 32. News Frame in Posts
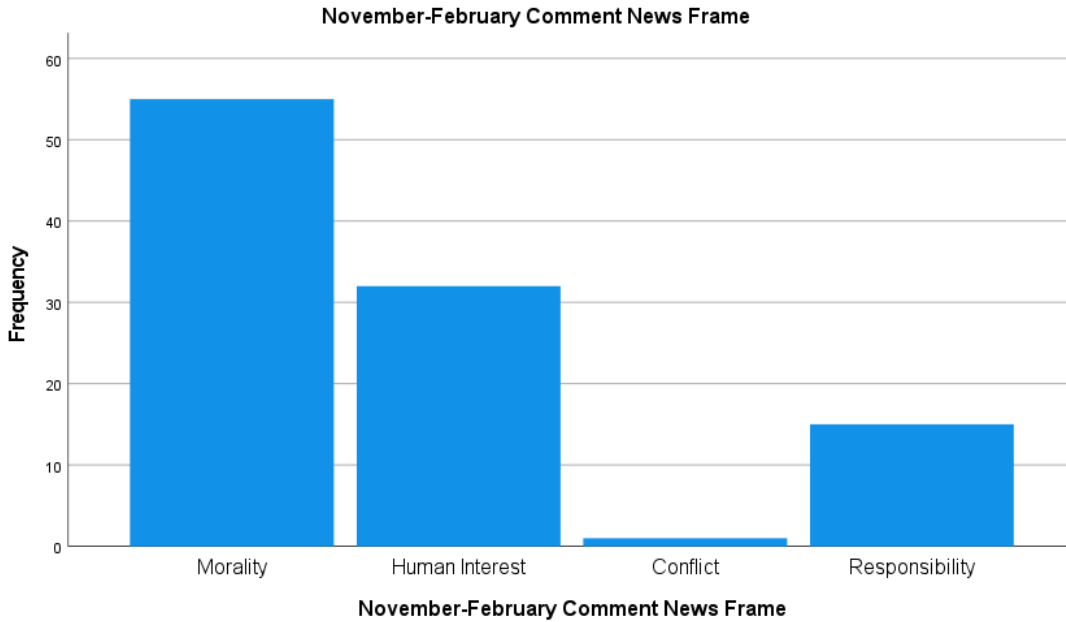
Figure 33. News Frame in Comments

The analysis showed two SSSW approaches taken in the three news posts, including

sensory 66.7% (N = 2) and ego 33.3% (N = 1). Among the comments 37.9% (N = 39) were

coded as social, 31.1% (N = 32) were routine, 29.1% (N = 30) were sensory; rational and acute

need each had the same count of 1% (N = 1).
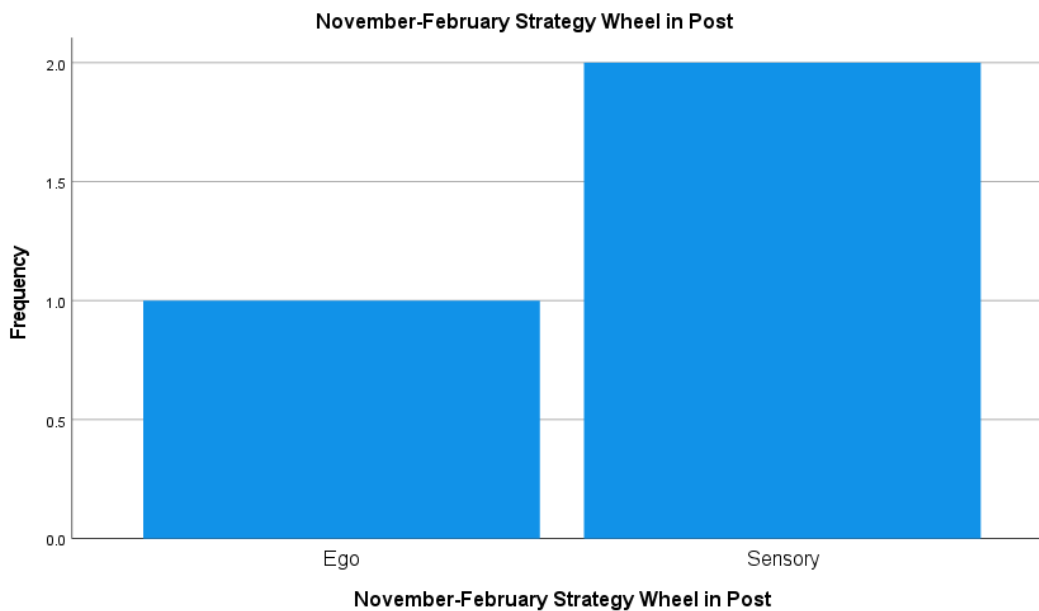
Figure 34. SSSW in Posts
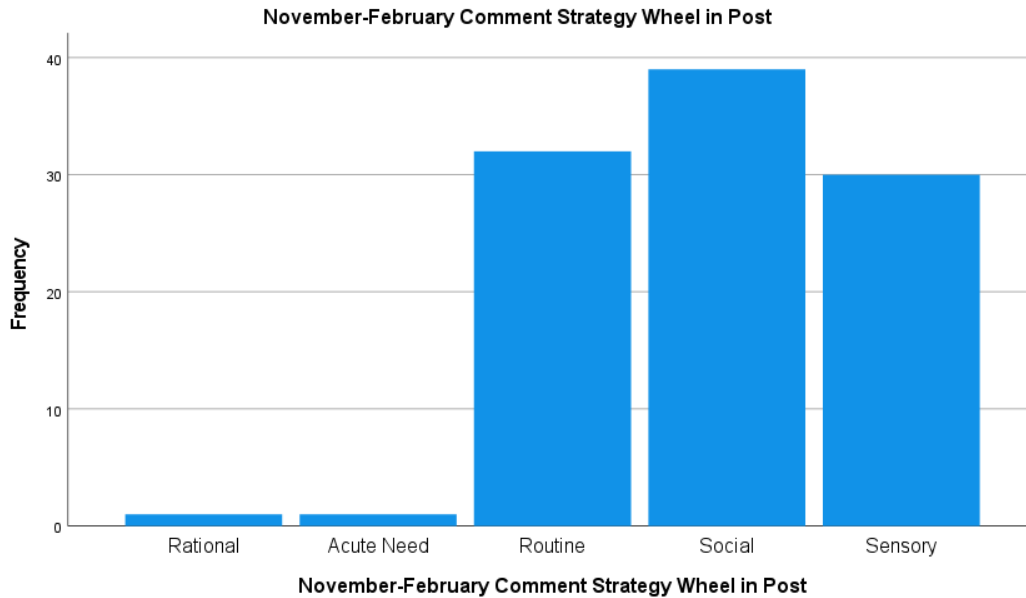
Figure 35. SSSW in Comments

April 2014

The final month of data collection was April 2014. There was a total of 16 posts and 490 comments. Like previous months, human interest was the most prevalent news frame in the posts75% (N = 12). Morality followed 18.8% (N = 3), and then conflict 6.3% (N = 1). In the comments, morality was the dominant frame 52.7% (N = 258), followed by human interest 32% (N = 157), then responsibility 14.1% (N = 69), conflict 1% (N = 5), and economic 0.2% (N = 1).
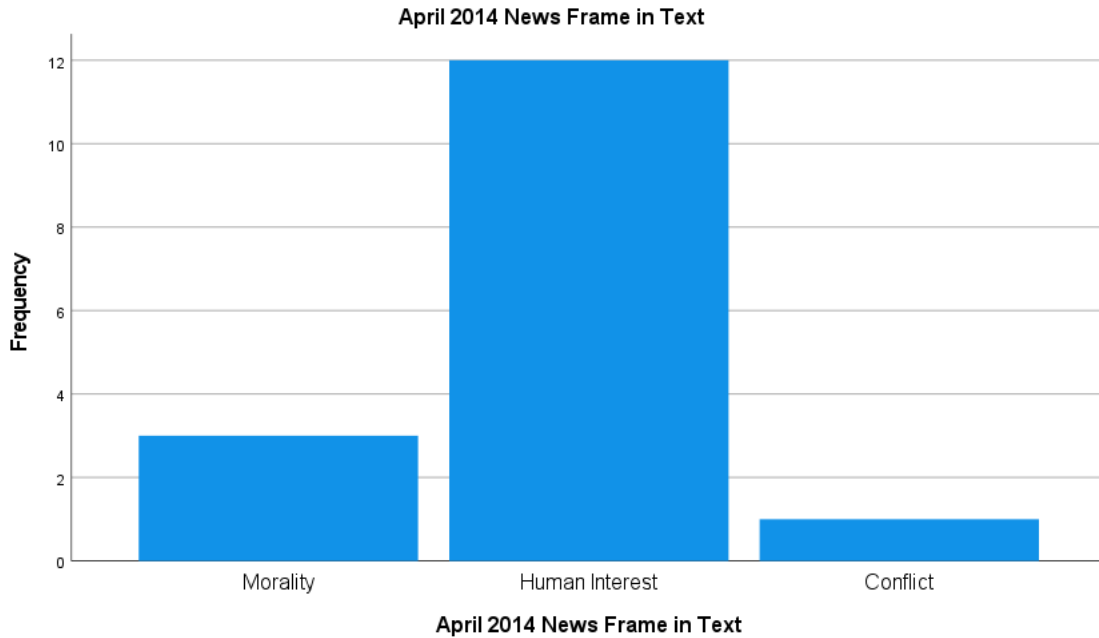
Figure 36. News Frame in Posts
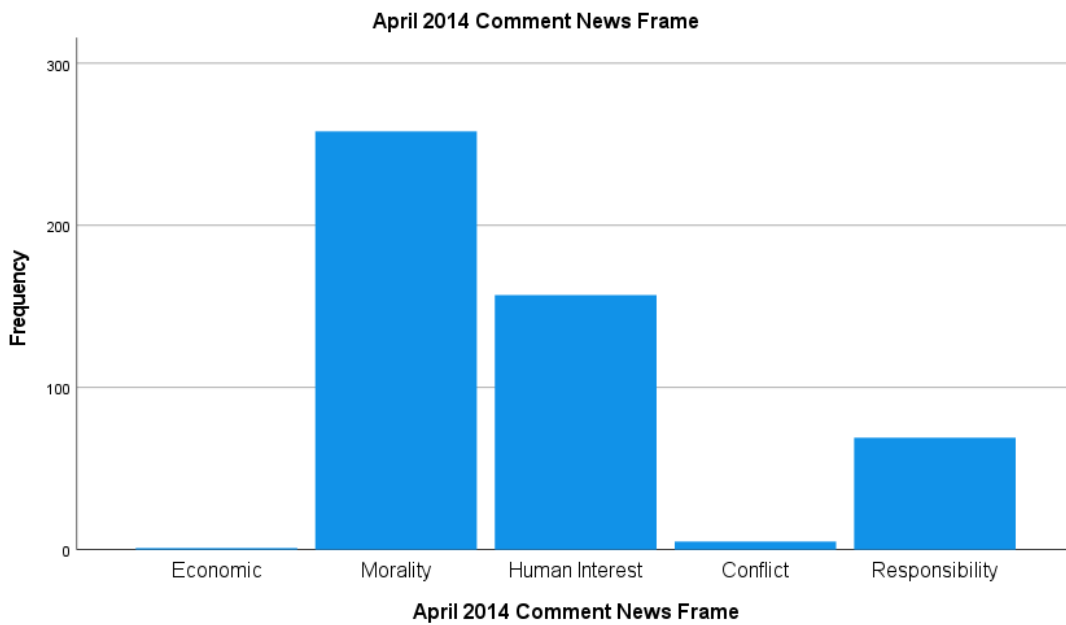
Figure 37. News Frame in Comments

The frequencies for SSSW in posts and comments were as follows. In the posts, the

dominant approach was sensory 56.3% (N = 9), followed by social 25% (N = 4), then routine

18.8% (N = 3). For comments 41.4% (N = 203) were social, 31.8% (N = 156) were routine, 26.5% (N = 130) were sensory, and 0.2% (N = 1) was ego.
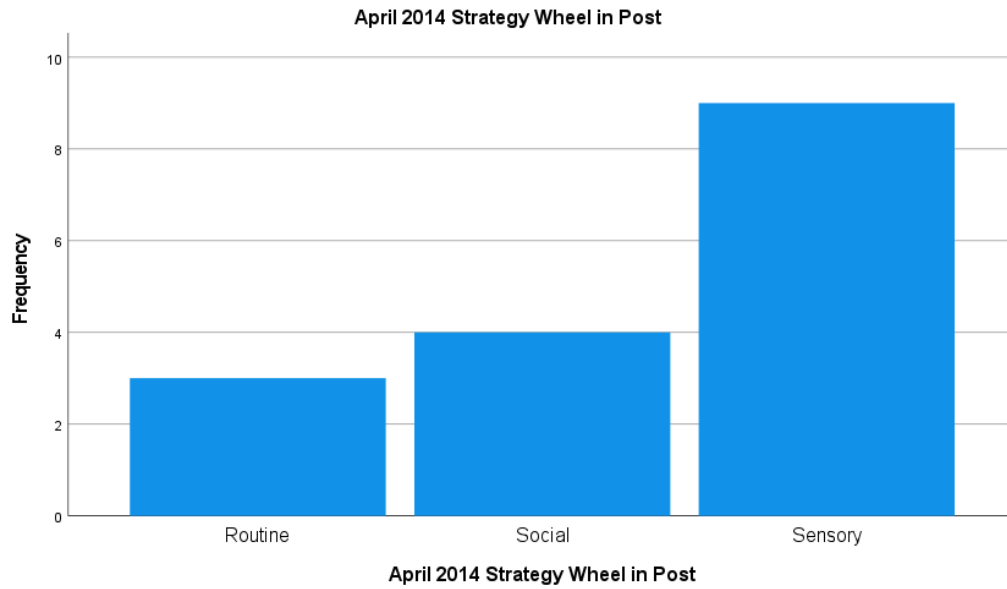
Figure 38. SSSW in Posts
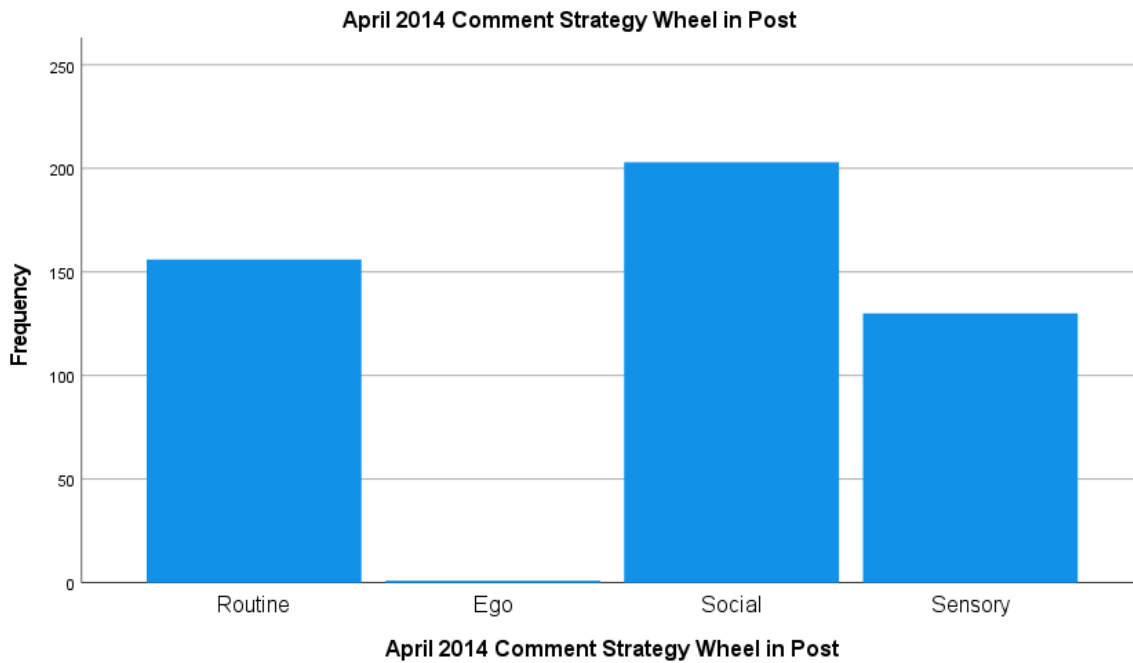
Figure 39. SSSW in Comments

Summary

To examine journalist's framing of terrorist attacks and audience reactions, the researcher collected and analyzed 68 posts including 43 pictures, and 2035 comments related to the marathon bombing from *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page during the timeline of April 2013 to April 2014. The data was coded to provide insight into views about terrorism, description of attackers, news frames, and SSSW items. A content analysis was the first method employed followed by interpretive data analysis. This chapter presented the results of the content analysis.

Both journalist and commenters viewed the bombing from a justice model. Similarly, both journalists and commenters identified the attackers as terrorists. Chi-square test computed to evaluate the association between news frames in posts and comments were insignificant. However, both posts and comments had human interest, morality, and responsibility as dominant frames, but in different distributions. When Chi-square analysis were computed to test SSSW between journalists and commenters, the results were significant. The dominant categories between posts and comments were social, sensory, and routine. The next chapter contains the findings from the interpretive analysis.

CHAPTER 6: INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. The previous chapter reports the results of statistical analysis. In this chapter of the dissertation, the qualitative findings are presented. To give readers a sense of the kind of stories related to the bombing that were reported in *The Boston Globe* from April 2013 to April 2014, this chapter contains detailed discussions of the interpretive findings from the news posts and then the comments, according to research questions 1b and 2b.

RQ 1b: Portrayals of View of Terrorism, Description of Attackers, News Frame, and SSSW Portrayed in The Boston Globe's Posts

View of terrorism and description of attackers

Terrorism is still a term that is loosely defined and is dependent on context. If a person walks into a supermarket with a firearm and starts firing at innocent people, the incident may not quickly be called a terrorist attack. But if this same person were to instead launch a series of explosives at a national event where a social ritual is being observed, speculations about terrorism would quickly arise. Several factors including the weapon, target, attacker, location, and magnitude of damage influence the use of terrorism construct. The Boston Marathon bombing was called a terrorist attack in the news and the suspects were identified as terrorists with good reason. The attackers intentionally used explosives that were launched at a prominent event with over 26,000 thousand people in attendance, to cause harm.

In results of a poll conducted by *The Boston Globe* (Figure 41), words like "penalty", "convicted", and "parole" were used to talk about the suspect. Even though the attacker was called a terrorist and his actions an act of terrorism, justice view was used to report the news. This phenomenon was evident in reports about the ongoing investigation. For instance, in the

periodic updates about the investigation of the bombing from the government, FBI, and police in

the journalists consistently used the terms "terrorist" and "terrorism" and "arrests" and "trial".

When the hunt for the living Tsarnaev brother was going on, *The Boston Globe* reported

that he was considered dangerous by the police and denizens of the Watertown area in Boston

were cautioned to stay indoors (see Figure 40). The bombing was often called a terrorist attack.

In a report about the penalty and handling of the suspects, *The Boston Globe* writes that

Americans rightly seek justice "in the aftermath of the tragic terrorist attack." The severity of

incidences identified as terrorism would imply that the penalty associated with such offenses

would be equally severe. For example, the September 11 attack led to a declaration of war on

another country.
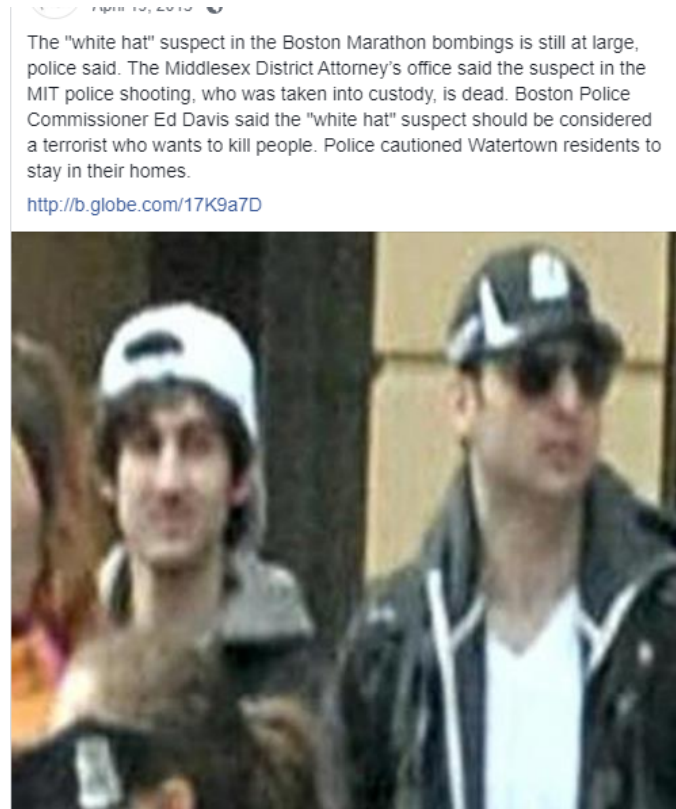
Figure 40. Suspects

Figure 41. Report of Poll

Even though the marathon bombing was identified as a terrorist attack, just like September 11, it was perceived differently among the public and news media. The September 11 incident was viewed as a declaration of war on the United States whereas, the marathon bombing was viewed as a criminal offense. The Boston bombing was less severe than September 11. Majority of Boston residents were reported to favor life without parole to the death penalty for Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. In addition, no religious extremist groups or countries were blamed for the attack unlike September 11.

Incidences deemed as terrorist attacks in the U.S. are not taken lightly. The September 11 attack caused the U.S. to wage war on Iraq. However, in the case of the marathon bombing, the attack was framed as a criminal offense that warranted an arrest and a trial. The way that government officials, authorities, and news media frame an event (using justice or war model) affect perceptions of the penalty of the attackers. Several factors may have contributed to the leniency with which the bombing was portrayed and talked about. One obvious reason for the way the attack was framed is the magnitude of the attack in comparison to September 11. Less lives were lost. In addition, the World Trade Center, which was targeted in 2001 with two

71

airplanes, is a national monument. Whereas, with the marathon bombing, the explosives were detonated in the streets. Clearly, the marathon bombing was a localized event. The attack on the Twin Towers was more calculated and deadly. It was an attack on the U.S. capital, near the most populated city in the U.S., in one of the tallest buildings the country had.

Not everyone supported the justice view of the bombing. Some disagreement was about how the case should be handled. An example was a post that read,

After terrorist attack, intelligence gathering is top priority…Senators Kelly Ayotte, Lindsey Graham, and John McCain write that the decision to charge Dzhokhar Tsarnaev in civilian court rather than as an enemy combatant hindered the government's ability to elicit information.

Several reports were about disagreement over how the investigation and persecution of the suspect should be handled. Some people even criticized the lockdown of certain parts of Boston during the hunt for the suspect, arguing that it turned what should have been a police investigation into a military-style occupation. Although *The Boston Globe* reported the event through justice-based constructs, the critique was referring to the forced lockdown of parts of Boston while the suspect was at large. In such posts, responsibility was put on the government officials. On the other hand, few government officials were said to disapprove of the decision to try the suspect in civilian court (justice model), saying it hindered ability to get information from him. From the reports, it was clear that majority preferred the incident to be handled from a justice-based view rather than a war-based view.

News frames and six-segment strategy wheel

When a crisis occurs, journalists choose to first report resulting damages to people and property. Therefore, news immediately following a tragic event such as terrorism is dreadful and

emotional. This approach could be due to several reasons. At the forefront is that sensationalism draws people and sells news. It makes a news story breaking news. A practical reason for reporting the resulting tragedies in the aftermath is simply the availability of information at the time. While journalists may not be able to answer questions about who or why an incident happened first, they can tell people what happened and who it happened to. Ultimately, journalists report what is available at the time and provide updates as events are uncovered.

In the first two months following the marathon bombing *The Boston Globe* reported about the immediate aftermath of the occurrence. When reporting the aftermath of the bombing, news focused on injury, death, and the magnitude of damage from the attack. These reports had human interest frame and sensory strategy of reporting. *The Boston Globe* reported the impact of the attack through personal reports and quotes from the victims. In one early post about the incident, we saw a lot of direct quotes from victims and touching pictures, with little added text from journalists (see Figure 42) to tell the story of the victims. The moving images and words quoted directly from the victims help people connect with the story on a deeper level. By doing so, *The Boston Globe* uses sensory approach and human interest news frame. Both the texts and images held emotional appeal. In addition, by using personal quotes, the reports humanize the story.

April 16, 2013 · 🌐

"My dear son Martin has died from injuries sustained in the attack on Boston. My wife and daughter are both recovering from serious injuries. We thank our family and friends, those we know and those we have never met, for their thoughts and prayers. I ask that you continue to pray for my family as we remember Martin. We also ask for your patience and for privacy as we work to simultaneously grieve and recover. Thank you."
- Bill Richard

Figure 42. Little Boy Killed in Marathon Bombing

Even when quotation from victims were not applied in the reports the news, stories in the aftermath of the event still carried high human interest frames in the journalistic style. One example is a report about how several days after the event, its impact is still significant. Reports about lost or injured people, particularly children, filled the early reports. An example from one post read, "BBs, nails embedded in kids treated at Boston Children's Hospital…The children most seriously injured in the marathon bombings had BBs and nails embedded in their bodies."

Following reports about the tragic aftermath was news about support from outside Boston. This is a natural progression of events after a devastating crisis – when people hear about what happened, they feel sympathy for the victims, and expressions of sympathy pour in as

support. Posts in this category focused on displays of support for Bostonians over the tragic

attack. Support came from Bostonians indirectly affected by the bombing, from different

organizations, from all over the United States, as well as from other countries. Morality news

frame and social approaches to reporting were high across these news reports. Posts about

support from outside Boston demonstrated the coming together of people during a time of grief,

thus showing morality in people choosing to do the right thing regardless of their proximity to

the attack (see Figure 43 and 44).

Figure 43. Support from Boston Red Sox

More support from communities outside the Boston area, this one from the Philadelphia Inquirer.

(Photo credit: Provided by The Inquirer, http://www.inquirer.com/)

Figure 44. Support from Philadelphia Inquirer

A few posts focused on the closure of businesses and other economic impacts of the attack. From such reports, economic news frame and rational strategy were noted. The temporary closure of some businesses was evidence of economic consequences brought about by the bombing. Rational strategy was presented through statistics and facts such as listing of

organizations – including schools and businesses, that were closed due to the search for the suspect was posted. Businesses that were directly affected by the bombing, due to their proximity to the event, were said to have trouble getting coverage from their insurance companies for not having coverage for terrorist attacks. Only a couple of posts utilized economic news frame.

Next in the timeline of reporting were stories related to the ongoing investigation. At this stage much was still unknown about the bombing, what it was, why it happened, and journalists were just starting to uncover who was responsible. *The Boston Globe* depended on the words from authorities such as the FBI and the police to report every detail. In the early reports, journalists leaned on quotes from victims and witnesses. In the first three months of the attack, this same approach was employed again with journalist presenting direct quotes in the news reports. Providing facts about the event from authoritative sources was a rational strategy. When suspects had been identified, the reports covered FBI involvement, police hunt, and presented whatever images of the perpetrators were made available.

The decision to handle the attack with a justice model did not seem to be ubiquitous among government officials. Controversy about the decision was reported. Here is an example where *The Boston Globe* stated that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev who is suspect number two will be tried in a civilian court and the disagreement among senators. It reads,

> Senators Kelly Ayotte, Lindsey Graham, and John McCain write that the decision to charge Dzokhar Tsarnaev in civilian court rather than as an enemy combatant hindered the government's ability to elicit information from him.

The suspects were identified by their names and pictures. In related reports, the saga between the police and the suspects, including the chase, the capture, and the death of one suspect were reported. After Tamerlan Tsarnaev the older of the two brothers involved in the

77

attack died in a shootout with the police, his younger brother Dzhokar Tsarnaev was on the run. He was eventually caught on April 19th, four days after the attack. The posts humanized the captured Tsarnaev brother. He was framed as a son, a brother, a college student, and young.

A lot of reporting attention was given to how the suspects looked (example see Figures 45 and 47). The suspects were said to be college-aged. In one post, three college students were reported to have been taken into custody in connection with the Boston Marathon bombings. Descriptors such as "college-aged", brings in social identification concept to understanding the reports. Social identification shows indicates membership to social groups. Several elements about the description of the suspects in the news photographs pointed towards social identification. In the pictures, they looked like ordinary people wearing typical western clothing. They were carrying simple backpacks. The older brother had on fashionable sunglasses and the younger brother, who looked very young in his photos was wearing a white baseball hat turned to the back (see Figure 45). Another aspect of social identification emerged through Tamerlan Tsarnaev - the older brother's radical Islam ideology. A post mentioned that the FBI had allegedly received intelligence about the attacker's radical shift. Perhaps they did not believe that he was much of a threat at the time, until the attack happened.

The posts provided the audience with details about the suspect's personal life and intentions through interviews with his mother, brother's roommate and friend, and his personal confession after being captured - about what he and his brother had intended to do. The suspects had apparently intended to detonate the bombs on the 4th of July 2013 but had moved their plans to earlier (April 15, 2013). No reasons were reported for why they wanted to do this in the first place. Both the mother and the roommate of the younger suspect found it hard to believe their son and friend was behind the attacks.

Figure 45. Suspect in White Hat

Some indicators in the news pointed to the social identification of the Tsarnaev brothers. The social strategies used in discussing their identity included responsibility framing. Simply presenting details about the attackers shows people who should take the blame, thereby utilizing responsibility news frame. Although the attack is never reported to have been motivated by Muslim fundamentalism, the religion of the attackers was mentioned several times. One example is this post about where the dead brother is buried,

Figure 46. Burial Site of Tamerlan Tsarnaev Announced

Again, through the news of Tamerlan Tsarnaev's burial, audiences see the humanization

of the suspect. By covering his individual religious burial rights despite his horrific crime and

presenting this personal information as breaking news, we the importance that journalists placed

on his personhood.

Figure 47. The Two Suspects

Posting a public photo, the suspect's mother also provides an indication of the suspect's religion. In the photo, the mother is wearing clothing with a long skirt, long sleeves, and a hijab - typical female attire in some Muslim sects. The mother believes her son is innocent and that the truth would eventually be revealed. Through another post, we learn that Saudi Arabia may be a country of interest in the investigation. Even though the post does not mention that the attackers are from Saudi Arabia, responsibility framing emerges through the connection implied. The post read,

> 'I don't think he could do that,' says roommate of Saudi Arabian man questioned in marathon bombings…The roommate of the Saudi Arabian man whose apartment was searched by Boston Marathon bombing investigators today said he doubts his friends played a role.

Ultimately, it is clear *The Boston Globe* presented the attack as terrorism fueled by religious beliefs.

In a new wave of posts in the latter half of the one-year timeline, the theme of encouragement started to emerge. These stories were reported through human interest news frames and social strategies. *The Boston Globe* offered encouragement to its audience with statements like, "Those who are struggling to cope after the Boston Marathon attack should not view themselves as weak, experts say." In addition, the phrase "Boston strong", an endearing term that represents the resilience of Bostonians was featured multiple times in news texts and pictures. Photos provided images that reinforced this message by showing banners, graphic illustrations, and whole store windows decorated with the words "Boston strong" in the reports. These social posts encouraged Bostonians and told the world about the strength of Boston. The

human interest aspect of these posts came from the emotional and compelling tone taken by the journalist.

Those who are struggling to cope after the Boston Marathon attack should not view themselves as weak, experts say. http://b.globe.com/19i1rM5 (Photo by Pat Greenhouse/Globe Staff)

BOSTON STRONG
MARATHON SPORTS

162   2 Comments 20 Shares

Figure 48. Boston Strong

Boston strong was a notable theme across the news posts. The phrase symbolizes the

unity and resilience of Bostonians and utilizes social and ego strategies of reporting. Two

subcategories were found through which Boston strong was presented. They include solidarity

and remembrance. Solidarity was a prominent theme. Solidarity was shown through the support

of others. For example, the Red Sox observed a moment of silence for the victims. Solidarity was

also presented as a call to action. The city was encouraged through the words of the Boston

Athletic Association for victims to stay strong. Solidarity in the aftermath of the bombing was

shown in the story of a photographer who was haunted by the photographs he took from the

incident but found hope from becoming friends with some survivors; a man identified as Muslim

deciding to run the marathon for the first time to demonstrate a love for his city Boston; people who met at the marathon a year before and experienced the attack reuniting at the current marathon in a show of unity; a policeman said to now be friends with a family he saved the year before.

Some posts focused on the social approach of encouraging and building solidarity among Bostonians focused on recovery. Recovery was another category in the posts that emerged in the latter half of the dataset. For example, the Boston Athletic Association, the official body that organizes the Boston Marathon was reported to have intentions to make the marathon even bigger in the upcoming year because of the attack. In addition, the Boston mayor planned to install more cameras at big events in Boston. These types of reports, like those of encouragement, were uplifting.

Around the same period that encouragement and recovery dominated the news reports, we started to see posts honoring heroes and victims of the bombing. Remembrance and religious rituals for the victims of the bombing were performed by members of their families, priests, and supporting organizations. These posts honored the lives that were lost to the attack. Some posts reported candle-holding ceremonies to honor the memory of those who had passed on. Morality frame and social strategy were prominent in these reporting. People came together as a community. In the final reports of the year celebration became the focus. Celebration here refers to expressions of joy, laughter, and love reported in the news. Such posts were high in sensory strategy. They reported laughter and hugs shared at the exact spot where a year before there was sadness and anguish. Other posts with the celebration theme featured injured victims triumphantly crossing the finish of the marathon a year later.

Not surprisingly, close to one year after the attack, stories of survival and continuation dominated the reports. These posts were high sensory strategies and human interest frame. Reports showed people, including injured victims at the marathon, and specifically crossing the finish line at the marathon a year later. The reports also featured lots of injury survivors showing up, and gatherings of friendship and solidarity.

The aftermath of the attack was evident through images of rowdy streets and smoke in the air. The pictures showed pain, loss, and grief. They showed victims in the hospital receiving treatment, but they also showed recovery. In one picture, an injured victim was shocked to look around at the aftermath of the bombing. In another picture posted months later, she can be seen well and smiling. The pictures helped in telling a story of hope after a crisis.

Other pictures showed resilience, for example, that of a man in a wheelchair being wheeled past the finish line of a race while people cheered him on. The images depicted survivors finishing the marathon and people smiling, a year later. The photographs featured people running the marathon to honor the victims and show love for their city. The pictures helped to tell the story of the commemoration of a police officer who lost his life in uniform, in front of an American flag. A priest is shown standing by a family who lost their loved ones. A woman whose face was cast downward was seen holding the hand of a little girl with a prosthetic leg and smiling. One picture showed "Boston Strong" through the celebration and excitement of people at a baseball game many months after the attack. A large image with the words "Boston Strong" on a store window expressed the resilience of Bostonians (Figure 48). The Boston story is a powerful story of hope and resilience, showing that life can go on after a great loss.

RQ 2b: Portrayals of View of Terrorism, Description of Attackers, News Frame, and SSSW

Portrayed in The Boston Globe's Comments

Morality and commenter's view of the attack

Our opportunity to learn whether *The Boston Globe*'s audience viewed the attack as a crime punishable by the law or a declaration of war on the U.S. came from their comments about the penalty for the captured Tsarnaev brother. Commenters discussed the bombing through a justice view. One commenter found a way to connect the bombing to an unrelated robbery that had happened earlier, thereby viewing both events as related, and as criminal offenses. The comment read, "Yes but before we kill him, let's see the surveillance footage from the 7-11 (robbery, not them but still) …". No talks of war were presented but commenters discussed prison and the death penalty. Morality and responsibility frames were dominant in these discussions. Clearly, people believed the suspect was responsible for the crime, but they did not think killing him was the right thing to do.

Morality emerged through comments on the proper way to penalize the suspect. Several individuals seemed to favor the death penalty because of all the lives that were lost due to the attack. One commenter said "Of course he should be executed once convicted. Why should we keep him alive? He is a murdering psychopath." Only a few commenters agreed with this perspective. Many others preferred jail time for the suspect, believing that the death penalty was an easier path. One commenter who shared this view put it this way "What good is the death penalty? All the death penalty don't seem to have lessened the rate in the US." Whether people wanted the death penalty or life in prison for the suspect, it was clear that they blamed the Tsarnaev brothers for the attack, showing attribution of responsibility frame.

Social identity and description of attackers

Interestingly, the age of the suspect seemed to be a major factor in the discourse about the fairness of the trial and the penalty. People constantly referred to the Tsarnaev brothers as "young" and clearly the age of the suspects played a role in perceptions of their innocence. In the previous section - that presented the findings from how journalists reported the attack, social identity was explained to be membership to particular social groups. Social identification helps to describe a person by their affiliations. Descriptors like age or choice of attire are features that can be used to understand identification. Social identification was found to be a notable factor in the comments, making the social strategy of commenting a salient approach. By talking about who/how the suspects were, commenters grouped them socially. Aspects highlighted included age, religion, and nationality, using social strategies to connect or disconnect the suspects to the audience. Here are two good examples where identification is discussed through youthfulness, religion, and attire (backpack), "The young man will soon be seen by the media as a "victim" of his brother's religious radicalization. And that may affect public perception of his prosecution".

In this first example, the younger brother is perceived as innocent and perhaps naïve to his elder brother's influence because of his age. In the second example (below), people want stronger evidence to convict the young men,

> Would like to see some hard evidence myself… so far we've seen 2 young men with backpacks (along with hundreds & hundreds of other men with backpacks & later, the same 2 men-one dead & one seriously injured… can we just see something in the middle please? I'm sure law enforcement did the job they needed to do but it would.

In this study, it is essential to understand how people react to news after a crisis and specifically to news about a terrorist attack in their locality. Therefore, it is necessary to see if people even saw the perpetrators as terrorists.

One of the categories investigated through the research questions was the description of attackers. Journalists at *The Boston Globe* described the terrorists as attackers. It was clear that commenters also viewed the attackers as terrorists through the way they talked about the incident. One commenter remarked "Boston Marathon 2013 was killed by a terrorist attack…" Comments like this, though simple, communicate a lot of emotion. Human interest frame and sensory strategy were applied in commenting about the attack. This frame is logical because the event caused a lot of pain and sadness.

Commenters shared their thoughts about how the captured Tsarnaev brother should be penalized. A lot of people echoed comments such as "Death Penalty!! No mercy for him!!!". Some offered justification for the death penalty by saying it would save tax dollars and one commenter wrote, "yes I don't want to put him in jail and pay taxes for him after killing and hurting people". While many commenters agreed to the death penalty, others thought the penalty should be delayed until the culprit had been questioned, the comment read, "let him talk first so there is closure for Boston and the families of the victims that lost their lives and were hurt then kill him!!"

The background of the suspects seemed to be an area of curiosity too, extending the discussion of social identification. A combination of social approaches to commenting and responsibility frame made up the theme of social identification in such comments. The reasons for wanting to know where the suspects were from was not clear from the comments but perhaps people would feel better if they understood who was attacking them. Speculations based on

physical features arose about the nationality of the suspects. People thought they looked like "*Israeli men". One commenter said, "They so do look 100% like Israeli/Mossad agents. Israeli (not Arab/Muslim) spies always carry out assassination and killings around the globe and then leave traces to make it look like Arab/Muslim men who did it. Wake up America and start asking some real questions…"

Perhaps if the attackers were not local, then they could go back to where they came from. At least these were the sentiments expressed by some commenters like this one who said, "Wow… unfreakinbelievable… Get the hell out of my country!" When *The Boston Globe* reported that the Tsarnaev brothers were Americans, some people doubted it while others then supported that they should be tried as Americans. Speculations and debates about the nationality of the suspect continued, nonetheless. Although most people believed they were Americans. We see evidence of these beliefs in comments such as, "I don't agree one bit. The kid was an American citizen. Done…next???" "He's an American citizen. How come the small government advocates are always ready to tale away someone else's rights?" and "He isn't an enemy combatant! He is a US citizen, and yes his awful actions in Boston were done to fellow citizens, like Tim McVeigh did too."

The belief that the suspect is an American citizen greatly affected perceptions of how he should be tried. It humanized him in the eyes of the audience, and we see this in the defense of his rights and in identification of his age when people called him a "kid". However, others doubted his American nationality believing instead that he must have come from the Middle East. People made comments like "he looks Israeli" and "well let's see (if) guy is a Saudi national".

Penalty and commenting strategy

The news frame of human interest, morality as well sensory strategy showed in how commenters talked about terrorism. One commenter said, "I just don't understand terrorism at all so sad and wrong". In commenting about terrorism at the marathon, some people connected the incident to previous terrorist events. While not specifying which previous attacks they were referring to, we could assume that it was September 11 because of the way the comments were framed. For example, one comment read "another terrible terrorist act! Pray for all those injured & those who died and their families" while another said "Take him alive need to find out what group he's with…" We know that the group behind the largest terrorist attack on the U.S. was Al-Qaeda so the commenters may have been referring to groups such as Al-Qaeda or ISIS. The curiosity about which group the terrorist may be affiliated with indicates responsibility frame.

Commenters took ego-social strategies to showing their resilience with the phrases "Boston strong". Some others phrased it differently with "we are Boston". The phrase as one commenter explained is saying "Boston strong people", meaning strength even in the wake of a tragic attack. In the coding sheet an explanation of ego included statements elevating oneself or bolstering the community. However, the context in which the phrase of Boston strong emerged was in response to, or discussions about the communal impact of the attack. Therefore, such statements were coded as social rather than just egoistic in the qualitative analysis. This is evident in most of the expounded comments about Boston strong. One example read,

> The rest of the nation marvels at how Boston wraps its arms around its own. While the circumstances are tragic…so much of this country should be so lucky to feel that sense of community that Boston has shown in these last 6 months (in crisis, in justice and in

healing). America still has much to learn from that corner of the nation where it all

started.

This commenter breaks down the meaning of Boston strong, a meaningful social construct of

support and community for Bostonians. We can infer that the phrase implies strength, bravery,

resilience, and solidarity of Bostonians.

The impact of the events that played out after the attack was discussed through a *social*-

rational approach. When commenters described the impact of the attack on social spaces such as

public streets and stadiums, the comments were both rational and social. This commenter's

description of what is usually a packed baseball game is an example of a social-rational approach

to commenting, "Stands are almost empty. Haunting & tragic." The impact of the attack on

social spaces and activities were acknowledge and discussed.

We also saw evidence of psychological impacts of the bombing in the comments. People

felt a sense of hopelessness and fear demonstrated in comments such as "I hate this ugly world"

and "That is awful   what is this world coming too!!!", and fear about the future,

> God help us all ~ this world is so full of hate, and it seems to be growing…or at least
>
> people express their hatred more freely than ever before…there doesn't seem to be any
>
> empathy….we need to take care of each other…

Morality news frame was applied in the comments through sending prayers for the

victims. Morality was a dominant frame found throughout the one-year timeline. The frame of

morality includes religious prescriptions in a message, but also involves discourses about doing

what is right or wrong. Offering a prayer is a way to show support when other ways of helping

are not available. Many people sent prayers to the injured and those who had lost family

members. The nature of the prayers was very socia*l*. In the prayers, victims who had been

mentioned in the news report, were called by their names. For example, one commenter said, "God bless Bill and family". Using names was a way for people to show camaraderie with those who had been directly affected. It was as if to say the attack was not the problem of those who had been directly affected alone but the problem of all of Boston.

Some prayers mentioned specific things like peace and comfort that were wished for the victims. One comment read, "I'm very sorry for you lost. My God give you peace and comfort. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your entire family." Peace and comfort are gifts that are helpful for the injured and hurting at that moment. Some commenters prayed for longer term blessings for the victims. One example read,

> Thinking of you, Bill, and praying that three years on, your wife and daughter have
>
> recovered, physically at least, and that you all have been able to deal with your grief
>
> somewhat and find ways to go on whilst honoring and celebrating.

Some simply said "I will remember you in my prayers".

Prayer was a way to connect with those who were suffering and to show them that they were not alone. The emotions presented in some prayers showed high sensory and social approaches to commenting. Some commenters wanted the victims to know that they had a lot of people supporting them. Prayer was also used to make sense of how to react to such a tragic event. The marathon bombing brought about confusion and pain, making people feel uneasy. We see prayer as a resource when things feel out of control. A clear example can be seen in this commenter's reply that read, "Romans 12:17 says do not repay evil with evil. I pray for a blessing unto you, Fight 5 good." Some commenters prayed for the victims, others extended their prayer to the whole country, while others prayed for the world, for example "…God help this world to be a better place".

Morality news frame was also high in discussions about heroes from the marathon bombing. The term hero was a social construct typically assigned to a person who demonstrates a courageous act for the sake of others. In times of danger and chaos when many are thinking about their own safety, if one person bravely acts on behalf of another, that person is seen as a hero. Several heroes emerged from the marathon bombing of 2013 as one commenter noted, " lots of hero's that terrible day". Another said "every Bostonian was helping that's the way we are". The heroes were appreciated and praised. For example, in response to one report about Joe Andruzzi, a New England Patriot carrying a woman who could not walk to safety, a commenter wrote, "Andruzzi family is full of heroes. God bless them all. They were raised the right way."

Heroism and commenting strategy

Sometimes, commenters contemplated the heroness of a heroic act. For a person to be called a hero, they would need to be saving someone who was hurt or in trouble. In response to the post about Joe Andruzzi's for instance, some questioned whether the woman he rescued was truly in distress. One commenter remarked, "…But where was she hurt? Her outfit looks spotless!" Another commenter said, "some have said her clothes are clean, many blast victims don't have any outward visible signs of injury." In addition to morality news frame about heroism, *rational* approaches that provided details and questioned facts, and *sensory* approaches that described the victims and their condition were visible in the comments.

Another use of heroism construct appeared in discussions about the penalty for the suspect. Bostonians were reported to prefer life in prison without parole to the death penalty for the suspect. One of two reasons given is that death is an easy way out. Taking the comments with the posts into consideration, a second and more important reason is to prevent the suspect from being perceived as a martyr or hero.

Sensory strategies of commenting were very high in the responses throughout the year following the attack. It is not unusual for tragic reports to elicit emotional responses from news audiences. Commenters expressed an array of emotions. Some people felt angry about bombing, others personalized the pain of the victims. One commenter said, "I see horror on those faces and it tears my heart and angers me…This is what separates the humans and the heartless!" Commenters expressed sadness with statements like "Makes me cry". Some comments demonstrated the pain people felt for the victims for example, "It still hurts. God they have courage". Commenters expressed disbelief over the magnitude of injury caused by the bombing. The events were so devastating that they could not understand how anyone would do such a thing. In one example from a surprised commenter, we can see expressions of disbelief and anger "Holy cow what idiot would be so corrupt to kill good people like that!!!!"

Commenters sometimes expressed distrust for the information they were receiving from *The Boston Globe*. This rational strategy was the case while the investigation was ongoing and a lot of information about the attack was unknown. In one of such reports, three college students are said to have been taken for questioning about the bombing. Commenters were outraged and critical about the report. Their critique was more so towards the authorities than the journalists. People seemed to have a general understanding that *The Boston Globe* was simply reporting information they were getting from authorities. Commenters' distrust was evident in comments such as this one, "More manufactures enemies of the State, huh?" Perhaps it was the fact that the people in custody were college students and likely young that led to disbelief about their association to the crime.

Other audience members were more concerned that the news media and authorities did not know what exactly was going on. An example is in this comment "that three additional

"suspects" had been taken into custody…Whatever happened to news reports? This doesn't make me want to take this story seriously." People were generally in disbelief of the news when they perceived uncertainty. Commenters were frustrated that information given about the investigation was more speculative than certain. Concluding the case and trial and deciding on a penalty for the suspect would have been a preferred outcome for commenters. Perhaps it would have helped them move on from the tragedy a lot quicker. As of the time of writing this paper, the Boston Marathon bombing case is still an ongoing investigation.

Overall, commenters discussed the bombing through a justice view even though they agreed that it was a terrorist attack. More thoughtfulness was given to the suspects, especially the younger and living brother. This leniency was found to be a result of their young years ages. The background of the suspects was a greatly debated area of inquiry among commenters. The Boston Globe's audience seemed to have a need to understand the social identification of the brothers. Morality, rational, and human interest were the dominant news frames applied. Sensory and ego-social strategies were the prevalent approaches in the comments.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

This study utilized quantitative content analysis and interpretive analysis to answer the primary questions: (1) How was news about the Boston bombing presented by journalists on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page? (2) How did the commenters react to the news about the Boston Marathon bombing? The categories used to examine journalist reports and audience responses were view of terrorism, description of attackers, news frame, and SSSW.

Terrorism is a prominent topic of discussion in media, and anyone who consumes social media is frequently exposed to news about terrorism (Iyer, 2014). In times of crisis and chaos, news media play a role in people's perceptions of safety, security, risk, and fear. According to Miles and Morse (2007) news media define public discourse associated with crisis. It is important for journalists to look more critically at the impact their framing of news can have on public perception, particularly in times of crisis. Journalist can undertake this evaluation by first understanding how news is reported and then assessing how it impacts audiences. Doing this, understanding how the Boston Marathon bombing was reported and how audiences responded, was precisely the goal of this paper.

When the Boston Marathon bombing occurred, the city was wounded, confused, and chaotic. Many people turned to *The Boston Globe*'s Facebook page for answers as journalists scrambled to gather relevant information. The findings clearly demonstrate that the way news is framed is associated with how people respond, even if the impact is not always direct. The previous chapters presented the quantitative and qualitative findings. In this chapter, the findings are contextualized within the larger literature.

The discussion in this section is organized according to the four categories through which the independent variable (journalist's framing) and the dependent variable (audience responses)

were examined. The categories are: (1) view of terrorism where the dissertation explains that a lenient justice-based view was taken because of government and journalist framing, as well as the suspect's identity, (2) description of the attackers who were called terrorist, framed as Muslim, but were not believed to be radical Islamist, (3) new frames where the dissertation discusses the common frames between journalists and commenters which were human interest, morality, and responsibility, and (4) SSSW where the manuscript discusses the social and sensory strategies in the posts and comments.

View of Terrorism: Criminal Offense, But Young and American

The first area the dissertation examined to answer research question 1a and 2a was whether terrorism was presented and responded to through a justice or a war model. The findings demonstrate that the marathon bombing was discussed through a justice model by journalists and commenters. In other words, rather than declaring the attack an act of war, it was deemed a criminal offense to undergo trial in a court of law. When a terrorist attack occurs, it can be addressed and interpreted with either a justice model or war model (Crelinsten, 2002). Indicators of a justice view include discourses about arrest, sentences, and trials. Terrorism from a war perspective would include discussions about missions, military troops, war, and even Martial law (Crelinsten, 2002).

Through reports of the bombing, the audience learned about the police chase of the suspects, the arrest, and the court trial. These events all pointed towards a justice-based view of the incident. Commenters' perceptions of the events from a justice model was evident through responses that compared the attack to a notorious robbery that had taken place around that time. Audience members also talked about the penalty for the suspect after his trial. Many wanted life in prison without parole.

Perhaps the most interesting discovery about the view of terrorism was the leniency with which commenters regarded the suspects of the Boston bombing compared to the attackers of September 11. The criminal justice view of terrorism is the more lenient perspective than war view because it utilizes approaches that are generally perceived to be "procedurally fair" (Braithwaite, 2002, p. 5). According to Braithwaite (2002) procedures such as a police arrest, a fair trial in court, a clear sentencing, while having the potential for bad outcomes, are accepted as fair. However, even reporting an issue from a criminal justice perspective can take a myriad of forms with several outcomes (Rentschler, 2007). Media activists in the U.S. highlight how reporting crime from a particular position can impact legislation and policymaking with regards to a victim (Rentschler, 2007). Increasing visibility of the families of a murderer in the news for instance, can shift perceptions of the family from being associated with the murderer, to being victims themselves (Rentschler, 2007). In the current paper the implication of framing the event through a justice model and highlighting the youthfulness, attire, and family of the attacker in news representation, was some sympathy from commenters and rejecting the death penalty.

Audience members questioned whether the captured suspect was truly guilty, whether he should receive the death sentence or life in prison, his age, and his American identity. Due to the young age of the suspect, people felt that he could not possibly be the mastermind behind the operation. Commenter called for a fair trial and for his rights to be honored as an American citizen. The humanization of the suspect may have also been the result of his survival. Audiences saw pictures and videos of him in the news. With September 11, the attackers embarked on a suicide mission. What they did was perceived as inhumane and it was treated that way. After the former U.S. leader President Bush made a public statement in which he declared war on Iraq for the September 11 al-Qaeda attacks, news media agencies ran with the narrative and many

Americans perceived the attack as a declaration of war (Braithwaite, 2002). The choice of handling the attack with a war model over a justice model made the difference in the U.S. going to war on Iraq.

In addition to learning the view of terrorism used to report and discuss the marathon bombing and the implications of thereof, two other lessons were evident. First, after a crisis such as a terrorist attack, journalist rely heavily on frames and constructs used by government officials and authorities. Second, when it comes to issues of terrorism, commenters describe events in similar ways to journalists. The findings regarding journalist framing of terrorism support the findings of previous scholars. Norris, Kern, and Just (2003) have argued that common frames are generally used among government officials, the public, and journalists.

Description of Attackers: Terrorist, Muslim, But Not Radical Islamist

This dissertation examined how the attackers were identified by journalists and commenters. As expected, journalists echoed the words of government officials and called the perpetrators terrorists. Commenters also referred to the suspects as terrorists. Th*e Global Terrorism Database* (GTD) defines terrorism as the use of illegal force or violence to attain goals by using fear, intimidation, or harm (Carson, LaFree, & Dugan, 2012). Although GTD's definition of terrorism is widely accepted, terrorism remains a loosely applied construct with no clear limitations. For example, an explosion at a public event would more quickly be called a terrorist attack than a shooting at a public event. Carson et al. (2012) argues that by the GTD's definition, the actions of several environmental and animal rights groups in the U.S. would fall under the category of terrorism. The bombing was described as an act of terrorism and the suspects were called terrorists. The attack in Boston led to destruction of lives and property through violence, fitting GTD's prescription of terrorism.

98

As established in earlier discussions, mass media typically rely on government frames when reporting news and that was the case in reporting with the marathon attack (Kleinnijenhuis & van Hoof, 2006; Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). In their report of the marathon bombing *The Globe* used a lot of quotes collected from government officials and authorities especially in the early months of news coverage. For example, the first time *The Boston Globe* called the bombing a terrorist attack was when citing the FBI. When a news-worthy incident occurs, it takes journalists some time to uncover all the facts, so they rely on direct reports from authorities (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). Eventually, as time passes, journalist's framing is more evident in the aspects they highlight about an issue and how they present it.

According to Iyer (2014) people who utilize social media for news is exposed to messages about terrorism. Certain aspects of news about terrorism elicit a heightened sense of worry compared to others (Woods, 2011). Woods (2011) found from his study that greater danger was perceived from radical Islamic groups compared to local perpetrators. This study uncovered that while the suspects were identified as Muslim (through attire worn by their mother, burial site of Tarmerlen Tsarnaev, links to Saudi Arabian etc.) they were never presented or discussed as radical Islamists.

Possible reasons for the separation of the suspects from religious extremism are: (1) the weapon of destruction. The Tsarnaev brothers used homemade pressure cookers to build bombs following instructions that they may have looked up on the internet. Perhaps the unsophisticated nature of the bombs, albeit deadly, did not seem like a collective religious effort, (2) no larger fundamentalist terrorist group claimed them. With the September 11 attack, al-Qaeda acknowledged and boasted that they were behind the attack, (3) the brothers were young. The older brother was 27 and the younger was 20 at the time they attacked, and (4) they were

American citizens. Given these factors, neither *The Boston Globe* nor is audience considered the bombing, the work of radical Islamist. Commenters even talked about the younger brother being possibly naïve and misguided.

News Frame: Personal, Moral, and Condemning

The third category examined how *The Boston Globe* reported news about the marathon bombing and how their audience responded was news frames. From the quantitative analysis, the most salient news frames in the posts were human interest, morality, responsibility, and economic. In the comments, the dominant news frames were human interest, morality, responsibility, and conflict. The most frequent frames used by journalists and commenters were human interest, morality, and responsibility. Although the findings presented similar frames of human interest, morality and responsibility used by journalists and commenters, insignificant Chi-Square test of association results demonstrate that the frames were not used in the same way in the posts and the comments.

News frames help journalists' structure and contextualize stories for their audience (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). Frames are inevitable and come with unintended bias because they serve the sender's purpose (McQuail, 2010). In news agencies, the purpose is typically to appeal to audience and increase readership/viewership. Given how crucial news media are in times of crisis, it is important to understand how news is reported and how it can influence people's reactions. In the aftermath of events such as a terrorist attack, journalists typically use frames of conflict, human interest, economic impact, responsibility, and morality to tell the story (Wasike, 2013). Conflict frame acknowledges adversaries and describes the nature of their discord, human interest emotionalizes news stories, economic frame shows consequences to people and

organizations, responsibility associates events with people or groups, and morality frame highlights religious and ethical issues in the story (Wasike, 2013).

Human interest, the news frame that is used to bring a personalized touch to news was prevalent in the reports of lose and injury that followed the immediate aftermath of the event. One reason is that sensationalism draws people and sells news. Another reason is availability of information at the time. While journalists may not be able to answer questions about who or why an incident happened, they can tell people what happened and who it happened to. Ultimately, journalists report what is available at the time and provide updates as events are uncovered.

Iyer's (2014) study showed that images greatly influenced the emotional responses that people had to news. Her study showed that viewing pictures of victims led to greater appraisal of victim's suffering and elicited sympathy. This findings in this study complement Iyer's (2014) study. Posts and the images featured held high human interest frame. Commenters expressed pain, sadness, and confusion. In the posts, human interest was portrayed through direst quotes from victims of the attack. In addition, reports were very descriptive and personal, painting a picture of how devastated families who had suffered loss were, how serious the injuries of amputees were, and how badly children were wounded. Conceptually, human interest frames went together with sensory strategies, permeating the posts and comments with emotions. Commenters personalized the attacks, expressing their shared pain and sense of connection to the victims.

The Boston Globe reported stories of priests visiting and praying for the victims, and commenters remarked about how terrible the attack was and sent prayers up for the victims. Prayer, a morality frame, was a way to share in the suffering of the victims and show them they were not alone. Therefore, morality frame in the news posts were typically in tandem with social

101

strategies. Morality frames are not typically high in crisis news except when the crisis is perceived as preventable and intentional (An and Gower, 2009). Since morality frame is about ethical and religious precepts, it makes sense that a bombing with high intentionality would be discussed with tenets of what is right and wrong. Religion in the comments was a way to offer support at a time of helplessness. Reporting well wishes and thoughts from others were another way morality frame was highlighted. Posts reported support from within and outside Boston. In the comments, morality typically accompanied responsibility frame and sensory-social strategy. On one hand of morality, people offered prayers for the victims, Boston, and the world, on the other hand they talked about how wrong the attack was, the anger and pain they felt, and condemned the attackers.

Responsibility was another salient frame among the posts and comments. Responsibility in the posts was shown through identification and description of the suspects. The photos of the suspects were spread across the posts at different stages of the reports. First when the FBI had identified them and wanted people to know they were about and dangerous. Second after the capture of the second suspect, and third during his investigation and trial. When blame is assigned to a particular group or individual, rather than an unknown cause, something Kühne, Weber, and Sommer (2015) call high-responsibility frame, higher emotional responses such as anger are elicited. Even though the justice view is presented in the study as the more lenient approach - after all such framing could make the difference in whether a country versus an individual or group is blamed, commenters showed strong emotion. People expressed anger and disbelief towards the suspects for carrying out a horrible act and hurting many people.

SSSW: Social Identity and Penalty

Journalists often claim to report only facts but as Lynch (2014) argued, facts are a category in an infinite number of options when telling a story. News is strategic and journalists have an obligation to make sure they are framing reports in ways that bring about positive outcomes. When it comes to terrorist attacks, justice is a better outcome than war. War leads to devastating consequences and destabilizes societies. Audiences who respond to news online also utilize strategy. Several reasons exist for why people respond to news about a crisis on social networking sites: for people who are in proximity to a devastating public crisis, talking about the event may be a strategic form of coping (Johnson & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2017). On the other hand, people may respond to news reports seeking more information and/or to share their perspective (Hille, & Bakker, 2014). Social networking sites like Facebook that allow journalists to receive feedback from their audience, offer opportunity for reporters to practice journalism that promotes peace in times of crisis. Analysis of reports about the marathon bombing on *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page demonstrated that news was presented through social, sensory, and rational strategies while responses had social, sensory, routine, and ego strategies. This chapter discusses how these strategies were utilized.

Journalists used rational strategies to provide details about the ongoing event. In the remaining days in the month of the attack, there were one to two posts per day, updating audience constantly. These reports provided details about the chase, trial, and description of the suspects. Audiences responded to these updates with routine comments like "RIP", "so sad", and "unbelievable". In some cases, social and ego strategies of commenting went in tandem. Commenters also utilized *ego-social* strategies with the phrase "Boston strong". The phrase

presented in posts and in comments means resilience and strength. Statements like Boston strong was bolstering to the community.

Statistical analysis revealed significant association in the use of strategies between journalists and commenters with the salient strategies in both categories being social and sensory. Social and sensory strategies were dominant, and this was expected due to the tragic nature of the incident. In addition, the attack happened in Boston during an event that was respected and valued by its denizens.

Many posts had a social approach to reporting. Reports discussed the Tsarnaev brothers and what they looked like. The news talked about their outfits and their background, referring to one of the attackers as "the white hat suspect". The background of the suspects also seemed to be an area of curiosity for commenters across different posts. They extended the conversation by asking where the suspects were from and which groups they were affiliated with. These ways of commenting are social and rational. The reasons for wanting to know where the suspects were from was not clear from the comments. Perhaps, by knowing the social identification of the suspects, people would feel better able to assess the level of danger. The belief that the suspect is an American citizen greatly affected perceptions of how he should be tried. Many people argued for his right to a fair process. Social identification is a social psychological concept that deals with perceptions of membership to any given social group (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004). When a person is perceived to be from an outgroup – with more differences than similarities, they tend to be subject to more negative and extreme perceptions (Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman,1993) and vice versa.

Sensory strategies were present in telling the stories of the victims. The reports were descriptive and conveyed a lot of pain caused by the attack and the images were shocking.

Journalists relied on direct quotations from people affected and images of victims to tell the stories of the sadness and loss. The stories told were of people who sustained injury from the bombing, of chaos in the streets during the attack, and of those who lost their lives, including children. Sensory strategy was demonstrated in comments through talk of pain, because of the attack. Audiences discussed the attack and how the news made them feel, mentioning emotions like "sad", "hurt", and "confused". Many commenters expressed fear and hopelessness. Unfortunately, when people react to news about terrorism with strong negative emotions, those reports were likely most memorable, and horrific images are stored in their long-term memory (Fahmy, Cho, Wanta, and Song, 2006).

Discussion conclusion

This study demonstrated that framing a terrorist attack through a criminal justice model as opposed to a war-based model had milder implications for punitive action. In addition, journalists' identification of a suspect as a terrorist did not seem to mitigate the justice view of the case. More importantly, social identification of the suspects played a salient whole in perceptions of guilt and penalty. Overall, the dominant news frame utilized by journalists and commenters were human interest, morality, and responsibility. The dominant strategies for reporting and responding to the news were social and sensory. Analyses of the data from posts and comments demonstrate that news frames used by journalists trickle into audiences' discussions of an event and have the potential to affect their perceptions of characters in a report. In addition, comments posted in response to the news offer insight about what audiences know, how they choice to respond, and questions they may have. Apparently, news representation is important in how audiences perceive a crisis. Therefore, journalists ought to focus on strategies of reporting that lead to positive outcomes (Lynch, 2014).

105

Strategy in journalism connotes different meanings to media researchers. Some scholars see it as the reporting of political strategies used to gain public support (Zoizner, 2021), others see strategic news reporting as the use of innovative communication affordances to tell compelling news stories (Koch, 2008). Advances in digital media has changed the way people interact with news (Durmaz, 2014). Grunig (2009) studied the opportunity digital media, like Facebook, offer organizations to engage in dialogic interactions with their audiences. Audiences can go online, read, and/or listen to news and - more importantly for this discussion - they can respond to the reports (Durmaz, 2014). Feedback can help journalist understand the information needs of audiences and strategically utilize news frames that cater to audiences needs and promote peace especially in times of crisis and uncertainty. Journalists can maximize this affordance to present news that answer the pressing questions of the public while updating them of important events. The next section which is the final chapter of this paper presents the limitations and implications of the study. The implications section furthers the discussion of journalist's strategic reporting to fulfill their moral obligations.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

News media constitute a crucial part of society (Biernatzki, 2001) by playing a role in the construction of social discourse. SNS will likely continue to grow in influence as platforms for people to consume news, particularly in times of crisis. With the proliferation of information, both credible and false saturating online platforms, journalists face the pressure of establishing credibility (Luttrell, 2018). Recognized and trusted news agencies with large followings such as *The Boston Globe* will continue to be a source that audiences prefer over less familiar news sources.

In this dissertation, the presentation of news about the Boston marathon bombing on Facebook, as well as audience comments, were analyzed. Data was collected from *The Boston Globe's* Facebook page from April 2013 to April 2014 and analyzed. The previous chapters contain the introduction, literature review, method, findings, and discussion. In this chapter, the implication and limitation of the study are presented.

Limitations of the Study

As with many qualitative inquires, generalization is not typically the goal. Rather, the aim of such studies is to better understand a phenomenon. This study emphasizes the important role news framing plays in perceptions of suspects and penalties after an attack. This research shows that journalistic framing is greatly impacted by government framing in the early phases of a story. Therefore, this paper achieved the goals for which it was designed. But no study is without its limitations. In this section, the shortcomings of this study are discussed.

Crises are unavoidable and happen unexpectedly, so it is important to better understand how they are reported and reacted to. A flaw of this study is that the findings are not predictive and cannot to generalized to other types of crisis asides from terrorism. In addition, a lot of the

literature used to discuss the findings came from studies about the September 11 attacks. The speculative links drawn to compare the two attacks need further research to strengthen the arguments. But it is hoped that the stages of events reported in this study, from aftermath of the bombing to celebration and recovery, can be emulated as an anecdote for helping a community get through a violent crisis. While causal relationships cannot be proven, clear patterns of news frames and SSSW existed between certain news posts and the reactions of the audience.

Another issue that limits the findings is that the study did not take account of the naturally occurring frameworks that present in news reports after a crisis. For example, this study reported that the attack was framed as terrorism, and while this was the case, the frame did not originate from the journalist but from the FBI officials whom they quoted. Erving Goffman (1974) one of the forerunners of framing research in media studies acknowledged this phenomenon. He said these external factors should be considered as physical and naturally occurring events that moderate assumptions of causation.

To effectively answer the research questions, it was necessary to investigate how journalists and audience perceived the incident and the attackers. Using content analysis and interpretive analysis, the data was examined to explore each category. Unfortunately, a high number of posts and comments had no identifiable description for the attackers nor indication of view of terrorism. Out of the 68 news posts and 2035 comments, only 25 posts and 105 comments were found to have a clear view of terrorism, with majority taking a justice view. Only 32 posts and 122 comments had a clear or implied description of the attackers. It was clear that coding post by post, and comment by comment for frequency of the two categories was not the most effective approach.

Another limitation of the project is that there was no way to verify the identity of commenters as all Bostonians. The researcher wanted to explore the community's reaction to news about the bombing that they received from their community news source. While it is known that a lot of the commenters were Bostonians based on their responses, it is possible that some audience members were not from the area. The influence of non-Bostonians was not accounted for in the analysis.

In qualitative research, there is always the issue of the findings being presented through the researcher's lens. Therefore, an unavoidable limitation to this study is my personal lens and biases as the researcher. Due diligence was done to ensure rigor and transparency of the study by recruiting additional coders and reviewing interpretations with colleagues. Also, the author's identity as a non-Bostonian is a factor worth mentioning as well—a non-Bostonian would not have the same kind of connection with the event in question as Bostonians. The author's connection to the case in study though strong and well-meaning, has limitations. While one may not be aware of all limitations posed by the lens of the researcher, they certainly must have been some.

Implication of the Study

The findings revealed that the most utilized commenting strategies after the bombing was social and sensory. Social and sensory approaches were used to express shared pain, show support, offer well wishes and thought, and convey togetherness. Interestingly, the identity of the suspects was an important part of the social responses. People wanted to know if they had been attacked by one of their own or an outsider. Whether the news was about the investigation, the confession, or the disagreement among senators, commenters showed a keenness in knowing the

ethnic and national identity of the suspect. Social identity is a key element in people's

sensemaking process after a crisis.

The Boston Globe relied heavily on the words of the authorities in their reports. This

finding aligns with arguments made in past research (Powell, 2011). When journalists rely solely

on repeating what has been said by the government when reporting news, the impact that news

can have on its audiences is not considered. Slone (2000) found that reports about terrorism can

have significant effects on people's level of anxiety. In Greenberg's (2002) study, 31% of people

said media coverage of September 11 was making them feel worse, the same amount of people

said it made them feel better, and 27% said the media had no effect on them. A significant

number of respondents said the media helped them cope with the crisis. Perhaps, that is why

many took to not just receiving news but expressing themselves in the comments on Facebook.

Comments posted by news audiences in the current study revealed that news representation

matters in reporting a terrorist attack. The findings in this study demonstrate that the framing of

terrorism may be able to justify or mitigate war.

The definition of terrorism is laden with several meanings depending on cultural context

(Kern et al., 2003). In the Western world, modern mass media frames religious terrorism as a

persistent war threat (Biernatzki, 2001). When September 11 occurred, media outlets ran stories

with a frame of responsibility and blamed Iraq, echoing the words of the then president (Powell,

2011). Eventually, the culprits were identified to be Muslims and a part of al-Qaeda group. A

completely different approach was taken with the marathon bombing. No ties were drawn

between the Tsarnaev brothers and a prominent terrorist group, and no war followed

immediately. Rather, responders to the news called for respecting the suspect's rights and a fair

trial. If the way that news about terrorism is reported makes a difference in whether people see

the attack as a war threat of not, journalists have an ethical and moral obligation to report in ways that lead to better, less destructive outcomes. In other words, journalists and editors should practice peace journalism especially in times of crisis.

Lynch (2014) defines peace journalism as the way "editors and reporters make choices – about what to report, and how to report it – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict." (p. 1). Peace journalism conforms with the current code of ethics for journalists – particularly the second principle. The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics outlines the principles of ethical journalism as follows: The first principle is to seek truth and report it. This entails gathering, reporting, and interpreting accurate and fair information. Also included in this principle is, providing context for reports, considering motives, serving as watchdogs, seeking sources whose voices are seldom heard, avoiding stereotypes, and avoiding distortions of facts (Slattery, 2016).

The second principle is to minimize harm. Journalists are to do this by balancing public's need for information against potential harm or discomfort, showing compassion for those affected by news coverage, being sensitive in reporting about juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and people who are unable to give consent. Journalist should weigh the cost of publishing personal information and realize that private people have more right to controlled information about themselves than public figures. The third principle is that journalists act independently. This entails disclosing and avoiding conflicts, refusing favors and gifts, and distinguishing news from commercial material. The fourth and final principle is accountability and transparency.

To practice peace journalism in an ethical way, choices and processes taken by journalists should be explained to audiences and dialogue should be encouraged. Journalists ought to respond quickly and fairly to questions about accuracy and fairness and acknowledge and correct

mistakes. They ought to also hold themselves and others to high standards (Slattery, 2016).

Utilizing communication in a strategic way while putting public interest at the forefront is crucial

in minimizing additional negative outcomes after a terrorist attack (Archetti, 2015; Fahmy,

2010). Moreover, Archetti (2015) argues that peace journalism has the power to shape policy

about war for the better.

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114

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APPENDIX: CODING SHEET

When multiple categories are present in the data text, make a note of what they are and how they occur.

1. Coder: ____ (1)   (2)   (3)
2. Post ID: ____ *Every post and comment will be assigned a number from 1*
3. Month of Post: ____

4.   **Views of terrorism** (Crelinsten, 2002)

1. Justice based	*2. War based*	*3. Multiple*	*4. No identifiable view*
The event is seen as a crime punishable by law/judiciary	The event is seen as an act of/declaration of war. "My country versus your country"	Both justice and war based views are taken	No identifiable views of the event are taken

5. **Descriptions of attacker(s**) (Kern, Just, and Norris, 2003)

1. Terrorist	*2. Rebel*	*3. Activist*	*4. Multiple descriptions*	*5. No identifiable descriptor*
Person(s) using violence and intimidation for religious or political goals	Person(s) using violence to oppose or resist established government or authority	Person(s) causing disruptive events to bring about political or social change	More than one description is used to describe the attacker(s)	No identifiable description is given to the attacker(s)

6. News frame applied (Semetko and1 Valkenburg, 2000) - These frames tell us how people talk or think about issues.

1-Economic	2-Morality	3-Human Interest	4-Conflict	5-Responsibility	6-No identifiable frame
Reports an event or issues in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, group, institution, region, or country.	Presents an issue within the context of religious or moral prescriptions. Presenting acceptable behaviors guided by morality.	Brings a human face or emotional aspect to the presentation. Personalizes, dramatizes, or emotionalizes news.	Emphasis on conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions.	Attributes responsibility of the cause or solution to person, group, or government.	

7. Six-Segment Strategy Wheel (Taylor, 1999)

Transmission View (*Informational*)			Ritual View (*Emotional*)			
1-Rational	2-Acute need	3-Routine	4-Ego	5-Social	6-Sensory	7-None
Hard facts (such as statistics) are presented	Gives the impression of an immediate crisis/emergency is at hand	Non-novel. Periodic update.	A statement about oneself. Bolsters the community (e.g. Bostonians are resilient!)	A statement about others. Communal impact of the incident (how the bombing affected the community)	Uses emotional appeal (e.g. blood across the street)	

8. Qualitative responses. Please write down a word, phrase, or sentence containing the focus of each posts and comments. Also use this space to write down any additional details, interesting information, and memos.