Racialized Media Frames: The Role of the Media in Shaping the Production of Black Power and Black Powerlessness

By

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To my late maternal grandfather, Baba, and my late paternal grandmother, Gladys, for always

inspiring me to reach for greater heights.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The social movement group known as the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) emerged in the late 1960s with other black power movement groups who sought to combat incessant police brutality and disinvestment in local institutions in poor black communities (Jones 1998; Joseph 2007; Alkebulan 2007). The armed resistance strategy of the BPP to protect black citizens from police abuse immediately garnered media attention, however much of the mainstream American media coverage distorted, vilified, and undermined the movement's goals (Davenport 2009; Rhodes 2017). Such delegitimization of black opposition to white institutional racism has a history that is as long as that of the formation of the country itself. In recent years, a new generation of scholars in history and the humanities have renewed the examination of black power movement activists and their efforts to establish social programs, defend civil liberties, and address police misconduct in disenfranchised communities throughout the United States (Jones 1998; Joseph 2007; Spencer 2008; Murch 2010; Williams 2013).

Although a few sociologists contributed to this scholarship (Nelson 2011; Bloom and Martin 2016), much of the literature on the black power movement tends to emphasize historical narratives (Jones 1998; Joseph 2007; Spencer 2008; Murch 2010; Williams 2013). Further, the scholarship on the Black Panther Party (BPP) has generally focused on the founding chapter in Oakland, without addressing the Party's expansion to the Midwest, despite the Illinois chapter's prominence in black power activism (Rice 2003; Haas 2011; Williams 2013). Not only was the chapter responsible for spearheading local social programs and coalitions, but the murder of the chapter's chairman, Fred Hampton, and his bodyguard and fellow activist, Mark Clark, by the local Chicago Police Department generated national opposition to state repression committed

against social movement activists of the 1960s. This event marked a turning point in the chapter's history and eventually led to its dissolution (Haas 2011; Williams 2013).

Although a few studies have engaged the media's coverage of the assassination (Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir 2004; Williams 2013), scholars continue to overlook the importance of the media framing of the activism of this important black power movement in Chicago. Similarly, social movement scholars tend to ignore the temporal and contextual factors that shape media frames. Thus, in an attempt to extend this analysis through a sociological lens (Bloom and Martin 2016; Nelson 2011), this thesis bridges the media and social movements literature (Gitlin 1980; Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993), and the sociology of race and racism literatures (Omi and Winant 2014; Bonilla-Silva 2017) to examine how the local mainstream newspaper, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the alternative black newspaper, the *Chicago Daily Defender* racially framed the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Uncovering racial frames in both mainstream and alternative media outlets allows for an analysis that captures the influence of the underlying social structure revealing the power of mainstream media to shape and legitimate a social movement while also exposing oppositional voices.

In sum, this thesis bridges two areas in sociology – the study of social movements and the sociology of race and racism - to analyze the coverage of the Chicago chapter in two newspapers prior to and following the assassination of the chapter's chairman, Fred Hampton, in 1969. Specifically, I draw on media framing theory and Bonilla-Silva's theory of color-blind racism (2017), which together provide a theoretical framework for understanding how the media contributes to the racialization and criminalization of black social movement groups. Through use of content analysis, I evaluate the positive, negative, and color-blind media frames of newspaper articles in the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Daily Defe*nder between the years

1968 and 1970 to capture the framing of the movement before and after the death of Fred Hampton. I focus on four research questions in this work: How do significant events shape the media's framing of a social movement? How do mainstream and alternative media represent the underlying social structure in its coverage—especially in the wake of an event that challenges it? Further, how do local newspapers frame the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party before and after Hampton's assassination by members of the local Chicago Police Department? Are these media frames color-blind, and, if so, how?

By addressing these questions, I make three theoretical contributions. First, this thesis extends the media and social movements literature by demonstrating the power of significant events to transform media frames over time. Second, this work's integration of media framing and color-blind racism theories helps demonstrate the propensity for mainstream media to deploy color-blind frames that mischaracterize the activism of social movements and alternative media to employ oppositional frames that expose counter-narratives. Third, this work reveals the embedded nature of color-blind media frames and their propensity to remain even in the wake of events that challenge the prevailing social structure.

In the chapters to follow I provide a brief historical background of the Black Panther Party, a review of the relevant literature, and discuss the framework applied in this study, Bonilla-Silva's theory of color-blind racism. I then proceed to describe the data and methodology used in my analysis, which is followed by the results section. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of my findings.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

Historical Background

In 1966, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the black power movement, The Black Panther Party for Self Defense (BPP) in Oakland, CA primarily as a repudiation of police brutality committed against black people in predominantly black communities in America's northern cities. Newton and Seale promoted armed resistance against police brutality and developed a ten-point program to address issues of social, economic, and political inequality plaguing black communities (Murch 2010; Joseph 2007; Jones 1998). To the movement's leaders, the legal advancements won by early civil rights movement activists was inadequate in addressing the challenges facing black communities. Although northern blacks did not face the racial terror and de jure segregation of the Jim Crow South, northern activists brought attention to the racialized policing practices and racial and economic inequality in major city centers (Joseph 2007).

On May 2, 1967, the BPP gained international media attention (Jones 1998). Armed members of the Party interrupted the California State Assembly to protest the signing of the Mulford Act of 1967, a gun control bill that would eliminate their right to bear arms. Previously, the Panthers had engaged their constitutional right to carry unconcealed weapons in the Bay Area. During this demonstration, Bobby Seale delivered a "Panther Mandate" that argued that the Panther's self-defense strategy was essential to the survival of black people (Booker 1998). Later that year, the Party's cofounder and chairman, Huey Newton, was involved in a shoot-out with two Bay area police officers, in which Officer John Frey was killed (Davenport 2009; Bloom and Martin 2016). Newton was subsequently arrested and charged with murder. With the

support of the new left movement's Peace and Freedom Party, the BPP initiated a Free Huey

campaign on the grounds that Newton had suffered police brutality in the exchange. This

incident attracted national and international attention to the Party. Another confrontation between

police and Panther members in 1968 resulted in the death of 16-year-old Bobby Hutton after he

had already surrendered to police. This killing galvanized even more devotees (Jones 1998;

Austin 2008).

By 1968, at the height of the organization, the BPP grew to over 40 chapters nationwide

(Bloom and Martin 2016). This growth was fleeting as there was the unprecedented surveillance

and subsequent repression of Black Power movement groups by local law enforcement and FBI

agencies that led to the collapse of the organization in the late 1970s (Churchill and Vander Wall

2002; Davenport 2009). Although the duration of the organization varied across the chapters, the

movement's ability to galvanize, advocate for, and act on the behalf of blacks in large urban

cities led to immediate and long-term advancement of black communities. In Chicago, one such

chapter would have a formidable effect on the trajectory of the Party and its lasting legacy of

activism (Williams 2013).

Largely growing out of student activism in colleges and high schools, the year 1967

marked the beginning of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party (Williams 2013). Drawn

to the BPP for it community organization and armed resistance, Fred Hampton, a former member

of the NAACP Youth Council joined and led the Chapter as its official chairman. The Illinois

chapter uniquely emphasized the Black Panther Party's community programming. Known to

members as 'survival programs', these local activists implemented the Party's national free

breakfast for children program, and provided free health care services and free transportation

services to prisons for the families of incarcerated individuals (Alkebulan 2007). As chairman of

the chapter, Hampton, was also instrumental in forming the first Rainbow Coalition in 1968, a coalition of local community organizations, such as the Puerto Rican civil rights organization, the Young Lords, the new left movement group, the Young Patriots, and the American Indian Movement (Williams 2013).

The Illinois chapter's existence was short-lived, however, due to state repression. In concert with the FBI's counterintelligence program known as COINTELPRO, the Chicago Police Department and the department's surveillance unit, the Red Squad, consistently undermined the Party's goals by creating dissent between local groups, infiltrating the organization with informants, and performing raids on the Party's headquarters (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002; Haas 2011). The FBI's COINTELPRO was a domestic covert program used to gather intelligence and destabilize individuals and groups deemed a threat by the FBI. Initially, the FBI launched COINTELPRO in 1956 to challenge domestic communism, then initiated action against white hate groups, various new left and antiwar activists, feminist organizations, civil rights movement groups and leaders, and black power movement groups, such as the BPP (Williams 2013).

In 1969, the Chicago Police Department, with intelligence obtained from FBI's COINTELPRO, performed four raids of the Illinois chapter's headquarters and arrested members 111 times for minor charges. In one of these last confrontations on December 4, 1969 around 4:00am, Chicago Police officers invaded Fred Hampton's apartment while he and fellow Panther members were asleep. The officers discharged ninety-nine shots against the Panthers killing Fred Hampton and the Party's deputy defense minister, Mark Clark in the process (Austin 2008; Williams 2013). Later evidence would show that the only bullet fired by the Panthers was discharged by Clark, who was on security duty that night, as he was dying.

The officers arrested the surviving members and charged them with attempted murder, aggravated assault, and several weapons charges. Later, due to inconsistencies between the officer's accounts and the actual evidence from the apartment, a deal was offered to the indicted members. The police would drop the charges against the Panthers if the grand jury agreed not to indict the officers for their actions in raid. Initially, the *Tribune* lent support to the police department's claims that the Panther's returned fire in the raid (Williams 2013; Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir 2004). This study aims to systematically examine whether and how the media's coverage of the Party's activism shifted over time.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I begin by defining social movements and highlight the inattention to the BPP in the social movements and sociological literature. Then, I review the extant literature on media and social movements, paying particular attention to work on media bias and the use of media frames in social movement scholarship. Next, I address the gaps in these literatures emphasizing the scholarship's tendency to overlook the structures that shape the media's framing of black movements. Consequently, I apply Bonilla-Silva's theory of color-blind racism to demonstrate the racialization of media frames and conclude with an explanation of the study's potential contributions.

Media and Social Movements

According to social movement scholars, social movements are composed of individuals with similar goals, beliefs, experiences, identities, interests, or values who seek to collectively engage and contest dominant structures and ideologies in society. These organizations often rely on resources, networks, collective identity, frames, institutions, or favorable structural conditions to accomplish their goals (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam 1982; McAdam 1989; Snow and

Benford 1988; Tarrow 1994; Taylor and Whittier 1992). In general, social movement groups tend to develop outside of formal institutional contexts and usually represent the objectives of marginalized groups in society seeking to confront these more formal structures (Snow et al. 2008).

Although an emergent black power literature in history and political science suggests that the activism of black power movement groups reflects many of the characterizations referenced above (Joseph 2007; Davenport 2009; Jeffries 2007), social movement scholarship has given little attention to the black power movement's contribution to American history and culture and its resistance against racism in American society. Further, the few existing studies on the black power movement within sociology have focused on the historical and structural processes leading to the national BPP's emergence and dissolution (Bloom and Martin 2016), the black power movement's contribution to black studies scholarship and black professional associations (Rojas 2007; Bell 2014), and the BPP's work to end medical discrimination (Nelson 2011). Sociologists, however, have yet to examine the media's portrayal of the movement. Thus, this thesis builds on recent work in history and political science that suggests that media bias obfuscated authentic accounts of the Party's activism (Davenport 2009) and even distorted the movement's actual objectives (Rhodes 2017). Still, these studies would benefit from the application of media framing theory as a theoretical approach to illuminate media bias.

Much of the study on media and social movements focuses on the quantity of coverage social movement organizations receive. For instance, in their study of interactions between social movement organizations and the media many social movement scholars delineate the variant factors that enable movement groups to attract media attention (Oliver and Maney 2000; Amenta et al. 2009; Wouters 2013). Some researchers suggest that extensive media coverage is

associated with a movement's size and propensity to utilize disruption (Amenta et al. 2009; Wouters 2013), while others find that the media interest in social movements is associated with intensity and the uniqueness of particular events (Myers and Caniglia 2004; McCurdy 2012). Still, studies within this area of scholarship tend to overlook the tone of this coverage and the factors that shape it.

In order to address this gap, a number of studies in the media and social movements literature concentrate on the quality of media coverage given to social movement organizations. For example, in their study of academic freedom organizations, Rohlinger and Brown (2013) draw on Bourdieu's field theory to demonstrate that not only do movements with stronger organizational reputation garner a greater proportion of media attention, but they also receive more optimal coverage. Another study (McCarthy, Phail, and Smith 1996) uncovers selection, description, and researcher biases in the coverage of protest events because of demands to meet temporary media-attention cycles. Still, these few studies overlook the messaging media outlets employ that ultimately shape social movement organizations. To better capture the tone of coverage articulated by media outlets, I draw on the concept of media frames and its use in the media and social movements literature.

Media Framing Theory

Erving Goffman (1974) introduced 'frame analysis' as a method that would address how individuals attribute meaning to objects, events, and experiences in order to understand the world around them. In an extension of Goffman's work, social movement theorists describe frames as the ideological factors or meanings, beliefs, and values that movement actors adopt to characterize their movements (Snow and Benford 1988). Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's (1971) notion that counter-ideology develops and is constructed out of the hegemonic structures it seeks

to challenge, Snow and Benford (1992) consider how social movements create and refashion their identity through interaction. Specifically, these scholars argue that frames represent "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment" (Snow and Benford 1992:137).

While social movement actors may employ resonant and effective frames to encourage mobilization (Gerhards and Rucht 1992; Hewitt and McCammon 2004; Ketelaars 2016), and combat oppositional forces (Chakravarty and Chaudhuri 2012; McCaffrey and Keys 2000), social movement groups often must contend with larger institutional forces that respond, shape, inform, and even oppose the movement's own frames (Benford and Hunt 2003). In addition, a reliance upon institutions such as mass media to disseminate the movement's frames often leaves social movements vulnerable to oppositional messaging (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). Thus, these theorists contend that media outlets employ frames that often counter a social movement's goals.

To describe frames employed by the media, Gitlin (1980) introduces the term media frame, which he argues represent "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organized discourse, whether verbal or visual (Gitlin 1980:7). In his study of the antiwar movement group, Students for a Democratic Society, Gitlin finds that the news coverage of the group's early efforts led them away from their initial goals, created dissent within the ranks, and ultimately resulted in the organization's demise. In this way, this influential contribution to the media and social movements literature brought attention to the media's power as an elite institution and its ability to transform the trajectory of nascent social movement organizations

that sought to radically challenge the dominant social structure (Gitlin 1980; Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Snow 2004). For instance, recent research finds that many organizations fail to attract media attention, and the few that do often receive coverage that fails to present an accurate portrayal of a movement goals (Smith et al. 2001). As a result, some social movement scholars find that mass media have the potential to distort a movement's frames by disseminating media frames (Altheide 1997; Tierney et al. 2006).

The current study also draws on Gamson and Wolfsfeld's (1993) conceptualization of the media arena as a symbolic contest between social movement organizations and media outlets. In this arena, success is determined by the movement's ability to garner prominence for their desired meanings. This symbolic contest represents an imbalanced power relationship between the media and social movement organizations, where the media possesses more power because social movements rely on news coverage to draw supporters and legitimize the movement's intentions. Therefore, the media can delegitimize a movement's intentions as in the case of local mainstream news representations of the BPP (Davenport 2009; Rhodes 2017). While Gamson and Wolfsfeld also highlight the interacting relationship between the media and social movement organizations many applications of media frames tend to be static in nature. For this reason, I draw on the work of theorists who study framing processes.

In his clarification of framing theory, Benford (1997) calls on scholars to expose framing as a dynamic and interactional process between movement actors and larger society. While some scholars have uncovered the transformation of movement frames by social movement activists themselves (Marullo 1996; Pedriana 2006), much research on media frames within the media and social movements literature fails to highlight the temporal dimensions of media frames after significant events. Since social movement scholars tend to ignore the temporal and contextual

factors that shape media frames (Carragee and Roefs 2004), I apply this notion of framing as a diachronic dynamic process to explicate how major events can transform media frames over time. Just as the deployment of various strategies and tactics by a movement might contribute to new movement frames over time, major events can also contribute to a dramatic shift in the media frames generated by media outlets.

Using content analysis of two local Chicago newspapers, this thesis investigates the presence or absence of shifts in media frames of the Black Panther Party. Thus, the work extends the media and social movements literature, substantiating that social movements are dynamic in nature, and engaged in an iterative process with the media to gain legitimacy. In addition, significant events can change the tone, engagement, and ultimately framing of the media, forcing a reassessment of initial conclusions. As a black movement contesting the existing racial hierarchy in American society, the BPP, I argue, faced different constraints than white movements. Given the tendency of social movement scholarship to give little theoretical attention to race and racism when studying movements (Bracey 2016; Bell 2014), I incorporate Bonilla Silva's theory of color-blind racism (2017) to assess how media frames might become racialized in an emergent color-blind era.

Frames of Color-blind Racism

In the wake of the legislative accomplishments of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act 1965, scholars of race and racism argue that overtly racist narratives were replaced by color-blind racism. Color-blind racism and ideologies rely on more subdued racial discourses that seek to weaken challenges to institutional racism and allow the dominant group to maintain their privilege and power (Omi and Winant 2014; Bonilla-Silva 2017). Further, Omi and Winant (2014) contend that the political unrest of antiracist movements in the 1960s fueled

12

the development of reactionary racial projects that sought to stymie this social unrest and lack of confidence in the American democracy. Instead of accepting the demands of black power and new left activists to address institutional patterns of discrimination, conservatives, and some liberals, sought to defend the status, power, and privileges accrued to whites by absorbing the movement through moderate reforms and laying the foundation for color-blind ideology through a transformation of conventional meanings of equality. This coalition of "New Right" conservative organizations promoted white populist, traditionally religious, and fiscally conservative ideals-- and characterized leftist movements and black communities as immoral and therefore undeserving of social services that required economic redistribution.

Bonilla Silva (2017) expands upon this research, arguing that the electoral victory of the Civil Rights movement ushers in a "new racial order" whereby social control is enforced through institutional agencies, such as the FBI, criminal courts, and law enforcement agencies. In an extension of his argument, I investigate the extent to which local media disseminate color-blind messages that promote these racialized systems of social control. Bonilla-Silva further argues that the media may promote and reemphasize the 'story lines' or 'testimonies' whites use to perform color-blind racism. In this way, the media's dissemination of these 'morality tales' act as social products to undermine challenges to institutional racism.

Bonilla-Silva (2017) also outlines specific features of color-blind racism, arguing that this racial ideology draws on notions of abstract liberalism, cultural racism, naturalization, and the minimization of racism. Abstract liberalism is the notion that the equality of all Americans can be analyzed through the prism of free-market economics and assumes that every individual possesses an equal opportunity to pursue and attain success. In this context, the history of racial discrimination and its structural consequences are ignored and proponents incorrectly assume

13

that every citizen begins life from the same social standing. Cultural racism refers to the belief that nonwhites exhibit deficient cultural practices focusing on outcomes instead of a long history of racism. For example, blacks may be blamed for high crime rates in black communities, because of perceptions that they are inherently "criminal". This racist assumption deliberately ignores unfair policing practices, police brutality, patterns of differential enforcement in black communities, and diminished investment in work and education opportunities (Garland 2001; Alexander 2012; Travis, Western and Redburn 2014). Naturalization is the notion that systemic patterns of racial inequality, such as residential segregation are "natural" or even biological manifestations of individuals' preferences and tastes. Finally, the minimization of racism frame refers to the common practice to undermine patterns of institutional racism or categorize overt instances of racial discrimination, such as police brutality, as anomalies. Through this frame, whites agree that discrimination occurs, but minimize its importance by overemphasizing the advancement of equality in American society.

Bonilla Silva (2017) also maintains that blacks use oppositional ideologies to challenge color-blind racism, even though they may draw on color-blind frames indirectly. However, he does not delve into the characteristics that shape these alternative, or oppositional, frames. To outline some of these characteristics, I will pay particular attention to themes that emerge in the alternative newspaper, the *Defender*.

Summary and Hypotheses

In summary, this study integrates the media and social movement literature with the race and racism literatures analyzing them through the lens of Bonilla-Silva's theory of color-blind racism. In the chapters to follow, I assess the features of color-blind and oppositional media frames and the factors that shape them. To accomplish this, I employ content analysis to assess

the color-blind media framing of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party between 1968 and 1970 prior to and following the death of the chapter's chairman, Fred Hampton, using the two news media sources referenced above – the *Chicago Daily Defender* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

In general, since the *Chicago Daily Defender* is geared towards a marginalized audience, I expect that the paper will frame the chapter more positively. In contrast, because the newspaper represents the dominant perspective of the time, I expect that the *Chicago Tribune* will frame the BPP more negatively than the *Defender*. Further, I predict that the *Tribune's* mainstream perspective will help advance more color-blind media frames and less oppositional media frames than the *Defender*. In addition, according to Bonilla-Silva's theory of color-blind racism, I expect that the *Defender's* alternative coverage will not only reflect color-blind media frames, but oppositional media frames as well.

I also anticipate that a transformative event in the Party's history, the murder of Fred Hampton, will lead to a shift in the *Tribune's* coverage. Because it brings national attention to the Party's experiences with police and state repression, I posit that positive media frames will increase and negative media frames will decrease in the *Tribune*. Similarly, I also expect oppositional media frames to increase. At the same time, due to the embedded nature of color-blind narratives, I suspect that Hampton's death will only have a moderate effect on color-blind media frames. Finally, I expect that the death should not change trends of largely positive and oppositional trends in the *Defender*. Thus, there should be no major shifts in positive, oppositional, and color-blind media frames after the death of Fred Hampton.

CHAPTER III

DATA AND METHODS

To uncover color-blind media frames of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party, I conducted a content analysis of 144 newspaper articles published between 1968 and 1970 in the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Chicago Daily Defender*. The oldest black owned newspaper in Chicago, the *Defender* focuses on the daily life of African-Americans (Sampson et al. 2005). Because of its emphasis on the experience of blacks in Chicago, I expected the *Chicago Daily Defender* to capture not just daily events in local communities, but the perspectives of chapter members and the black population in Chicago. Conversely, I selected the *Chicago Tribune* because of its reputation for advancing a mainstream perspective in the Chicago metropolitan area (Sampson et al. 2005).

I analyzed my data according to two independent variables. The first is a measure of periodization: about a year prior to the death of Fred Hampton in December 1969 and six months thereafter. This period measure assesses the effects of the murder on the dependent variables, positive, negative, and color-blind media frames. The second independent variable is an indicator of the newspaper the media coverage appears in. This measure allows me to assess whether the two newspapers covered the movement differently. The dependent variable measures positive, negative, and color-blind media framing in both the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Daily Defender*.

To assess the news coverage of similar events in each newspaper, I use stratified random sampling to select six to ten articles from five three-month periods before and two three-month periods after the death of Fred Hampton. The assassination of Fred Hampton represents a pivotal event in the both the local chapter and the national Party's trajectories. As chairman of the

influential Chicago chapter, Fred Hampton was beginning to develop a strong reputation as a young leader, gifted orator, and coalition builder of diverse racial groups and organizations (Williams 2013). This promising career as a young activist, however, was cut short when the Chicago Police Department with the aid of the FBI unlawfully entered his home on December 4, 1969. Later evidence would show that Chicago police officers initiated fire on Fred and other Panther members while most of them were asleep. This unprecedented display of state repression would bring national attention to the BPP's mobilization against police brutality and repression (Haas 2011). Therefore, I conduct my analysis by paying particular attention to this inciting event and divide my data into two major periods. The first overarching period begins in October 1, 1968, the month news of an Illinois chapter first appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, and continues until December 3, 1969, the day before Fred Hampton's murder. The second major period begins on the date of the Chicago Police's invasion of Hampton's home and continues until June 30, 1970, a period that marked a steep decline in the chapter's membership, due to fierce police repression.

Using the ProQuest database, I searched for articles that included the term "black panther" along with the terms "Chicago", "Illinois", "Fred Hampton", "Bobby Rush", or "Bob Brown". Including "Chicago" and "Illinois" helped capture the articles that explicitly focused on the Illinois chapter. For those articles that failed to mention the chapter's location, I include the names of key leaders in the Illinois chapter as the search terms, "Fred Hampton", "Bobby Rush", and "Bob Brown". Along with Fred Hampton, Bob Brown and Bobby Rush played key roles in the formation of the Illinois chapter. Brown and Rush worked as founding leaders of the chapter in 1968, and Rush would later assume leadership of the chapter after the murder of Hampton in 1969 (Williams 2012). Finally, I excluded any articles that focused on topics unrelated to the

activism of the local Illinois chapter or its leaders. Therefore, articles focusing on the legal proceedings of the Fred Hampton assassination were omitted.

Overall each article was coded as possessing a positive or negative media frame (see Table 2). Positive media frames are frames that reflect or affirm the goals and mission of the Black Panther Party. Therefore, articles with subthemes that illuminated the perspectives of BPP members, encouraged support of the BPP, included favorable adjectives to describe the movement or its members, or positively presented the BPP's missions were coded as positive. Negative media frames are frames that distort the BPP goals and mission. Therefore, articles with subthemes that included pejorative descriptions of the movements or its members, offered irrelevant disparaging information about the Party, included perspectives that discredit the BPP without including BPP perspectives, or discredited the movement's goals were coded as negative.

Next, to present color-blind media frames, I coded the content of each article according to Bonilla-Silva's typologies of color-blind racism (see Table 2). Color-blind media frames refer to the media's employment of subdued racial discourses that together undermine challenges to institutional racism and reinforce existing racial hierarchies (Omi and Winant 2014; Bonilla-Silva 2017). Color-blind media frames feature any expression of abstract liberalism, cultural racism, minimization of racism, or naturalization frames (Bonilla-Silva 2017). I coded abstract liberalism frames when subthemes supporting equal opportunity ideology or referencing the BPP's socialist ideology were present. I also coded cultural racism frames when subthemes of criminality and deficient family values were revealed. Further, I coded minimization of racism frames when challenges against institutional racism were discredited in an article. Since oppositional frames highlight the existence of discrimination, I coded these frames when

18

perspectives and organizational efforts challenging discrimination and institutional racism were

revealed. Naturalization frames, or the belief that patterns of discrimination are 'natural'

phenomena, were not present in any of coded articles. I discuss reasons for this in the results

section.

Finally, I coded quotes and paraphrases of BPP members who referenced the activism of

the Illinois chapter or its members (see Table 1). I also coded any quote or paraphrase of local

and federal law enforcement officials who referenced the Illinois chapter or its members. In

addition, I coded quotes and paraphrases of local advocates and local opponents of the Illinois

chapter respectively.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for All Study Variables (N=144)

	Chicago Tribune		Chicago Daily Defender	
	Frequency	Proportion	Frequency	Proportion
Document Type				
Letter to editor	5	0.07	1	0.01
News article	66	0.92	66	0.92
Opinion/Editorial	1	0.01	5	0.07
Media Frames				
Positive Frames	19	0.26	67	0.93
Negative Frames	53	0.74	5	0.07
Color-blind Media Frames				
Abstract Liberalism	19	0.26	0	0
Cultural Racism	58	0.81	8	0.11
Minimization of Racism	22	0.31	0	0
Oppositional Media Frames	10	0.14	63	0.88
Quotes and Sources				
Black Panther Party Member	10	0.14	49	0.68
Community Advocate	43	0.60	42	0.58
Opponent of the Party	23	0.32	7	0.10
Law Enforcement Official	61	0.85	24	0.33
Total quotes and sources	137	1.90	122	1.69
Total Articles	72	1.00	72	1.00

Table 2. Coding Schema: Key Codes, Definitions, and Subthemes

Positive vs. Negative	

Key Codes and Definitions	Subthemes
*Positive Frame*s: frames that reflect or affirm the goals and mission of the Black Panther Party (BPP)	• contains Black Panther Party (BPP) perspectives • includes favorable descriptions of the movement or its members • endorses or encourages support of the BPP • positively presents the BPP's missions (e.g. resistance against police brutality, survival programs)
Negative Frames: frames that distort the BPP's goals and mission	• includes perspectives that discredit the BPP *without* including BPP perspectives • includes pejorative descriptions of the movement or its members • offer disparaging information about the Party when irrelevant to the story • discredits the BPP's missions (e.g. resistance against police brutality, survival programs)

Colorblind Media Frames *refer to the media's employment of subdued racial discourses that together undermine challenges to institutional racism and reinforce existing racial hierarchies. Color-blind media frames feature any expression of abstract liberalism, cultural racism, minimization of racism, or naturalization frames.*

Key Codes and Definitions	Subthemes
Abstract Liberalism: challenge claims of economic inequality by upholding liberal values that suggest that all Americans possess an equal opportunity to pursue and attain success	• endorses equal opportunity ideology • references communist or socialist ideology of the Party without contextualizing
Cultural Racism: belief that nonwhites possess deficient cultural practices and values	• article presents perspective that negatively characterizes black culture or family arrangements • associates BPP with gang or criminal activity *without* garnering member perspectives or acknowledging repression against the Party
Minimization of Racism: diminishes discriminatory practices and institutional racism affecting minority groups	• claims of discrimination discredited through pejorative adjectives or characterizations
Naturalization: belief that patterns of discrimination are a 'natural' manifestation of preferences	• includes perspectives that suggest patterns of discrimination are 'natural' or a matter of taste

Other Media Frames	

Key Codes and Definitions	Subthemes
Oppositional Media Frames refer to ideologies that challenge colorblind media frames, by highlighting the existence of discrimination in American society	• narratives or perspectives that highlight patterns of discrimination • references to programs that seek to undermine institutional racism

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Color-Blind Media Frames During Height of The Illinois Chapter

Chicago Tribune

Overall, as hypothesized, the results for this study suggest that the *Chicago Tribune* employed more negative and color-blind media frames and less oppositional media frames than the *Chicago Daily Defender* in its coverage of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP). Table 1 demonstrates these notable differences in its summary of the key study variables.

Figure 1 shows that prior to the assassination of Fred Hampton, between October 1, 1968 and December 3, 1969, 80 percent to 100 percent of the articles in the *Tribune* possessed negative media frames. Figure 2 also shows that a variety of color-blind media frames appeared in the *Tribune* during these periods as well. Of the color-blind media frames, cultural racism frames were most dominant, followed by minimization of racism, and abstract liberalism frames. Interestingly, the naturalization frame does not appear in the *Chicago Tribune* or the *Chicago Daily Defender.* Recall, naturalization refers to the belief that patterns of discrimination are natural manifestations of people's preferences and not consequences of structural racism (Bonilla-Silva 2017). Perhaps these frames were absent in both newspapers, because journalists did not garner opinions about patterns of discrimination such as segregation in its coverage of the Panthers. Finally, oppositional frames or frames challenging institutional racism were almost absent in the *Tribune* prior to Fred Hampton's death.

The *Tribune's* overreliance on color-blind media frames instead of oppositional frames likely is a consequence of the paper's failure to include sources and quotes from Black Panther Party members and community advocates. Table 1 shows that together quotes and sources from

law enforcement officials and opponents exceeded those from Black Panther Party members and community advocates. For instance, Figure 3 shows that prior to Fred Hampton's death on December 4, 1969, quotes, and sources from BPP members peaked at a mere three quotes, while law enforcement quotes peaked at twelve. Through the lens of law enforcement agents and party opponents, the *Tribune* utilized color-blind frames to portray the chapter. The following paragraphs highlight examples of the dominating color-blind media frames in these periods.

Figure 2 shows that in the first five periods of coverage, before December 4, 1969, 80 percent to 100 percent of the articles appearing in the *Tribune* possessed cultural racism frames. As Bonilla-Silva explains (2017), cultural racism frames represent a notion that nonwhites inherently exhibit deficient cultural values. Consequently, the frames presented in the *Tribune* largely suggested that the Illinois chapter possessed organizational values of criminality and violence. Instead of garnering the perspectives of BPP members to describe their own organization's values, the *Tribune* articles during these periods suggested that the BPP's activism resembled gang activity, and ultimately mitigated the actual grievances and aims of the movement itself. For instance, in one of the first articles covering the Illinois chapter, the *Tribune* not only disseminates negative frames through its pejorative descriptions, but cultural racism frames when it associates the newly formed Illinois chapter with local Chicago gangs:

> Contingents of the militant Black Panther Party are being organized thruout [sic] the midwest among known street gangs, including the Blackstone Rangers in Chicago, the *Tribune* learned yesterday. First evidence of the group's existence in Chicago came last Friday when police undercover agents observed 30 members of the Panthers at a meeting...The group, dressed in their "uniform" of black beret and black leather jackets marched in military fashion to their seats to hear speeches by admitted revolutionaries and street gang leaders (**Find Black Panthers Are Recruiting Here. *Tribune* 10 Oct 1968**)

The above account fails to capture the efforts of BPP members to mitigate violence among gangs in Chicago (Williams 2013). In fact, prior to Fred Hampton's death, many of the *Tribune's*

articles focused on the chapter's legal troubles, and encounters with the criminal justice system, in the form of arrests, criminal charges, indictments, and sentencings, and less on the members' experiences with police brutality and repression.

In its emphasis of the Panther's communist ideology, frames of abstract liberalism also appeared in the *Tribune* before the death of Fred Hampton. As displayed in Figure 2, articles including these frames peaked at about 50 percent in the first five periods. Because abstract liberalism frames focus on a prevailing concept that suggests that each citizen possesses an equal opportunity to engage the free market and thereby attain success in American society, the BPP's Marxist ideals directly countered this belief system. Thus, by referencing the Party's engagement of Marxism or communism without highlighting the organization's concern for structural inequality, the *Tribune* minimized the Party's intentions and movement goals. For example, the *Tribune* deployed negative, abstract liberalism, and cultural racism frames in the quote below:

> In a report released last week, the Federal Bureau of Investigation noted that the leaders of the Black Panther Party, which was formed in Oakland, Cal., base their political philosophy on the teachings of Mao Tse-Tung, the Chinese Communist leader, and advocate use of guns and guerilla tactics (**Find Black Panthers Are Recruiting Here.** ***Tribune* 10 Oct 1968**)

In this article, the *Tribune* failed to provide a balanced report of the Party's goals by including the perspectives of the Party members to contextualize the information presented in the article. In this way, the *Tribune* capitalized on the anti-communism sentiments prevalent in America during that time, by suggesting that the chapter's mission represented a threat to liberalism.

Figure 2 also shows that during the first five periods of the *Tribune's* coverage 30 to 50 percent of the articles relied on minimization of racism frames. Recall, minimization of racism frames describe the tendency to overlook or downplay institutional racism and the inequality it produces. Typically, minimization of racism frames would appear when the *Tribune* sought to

undermine the BPP's challenges to discriminatory practices. Instead of highlighting the BPP's concerns with police brutality and economic injustice, the *Tribune* emphasized the perspectives of law enforcement officials who sought to delegitimize the movement's goals.

Chicago Daily Defender

In contrast to the *Tribune's* persistent use of negative and color-blind media frames, positive and oppositional media frames were dominant in the *Chicago Daily Defender's* coverage of the Black Panther Party both prior to and following the assassination of Fred Hampton. Figure 4 shows that between October 1, 1968 and December 3, 1969, in the first five periods of the *Chicago Daily Defender's* coverage, 67 to 100 percent of the articles sampled presented positive media frames of the Illinois chapter's activism. In striking contrast to the *Tribune's* heavily racialized coverage, Figure 5 also shows that oppositional frames dominated in the *Defender*. Accordingly, I only found partial support for the hypothesis that the *Defender* would express color-blind media frames in its coverage of the party, since only cultural racism frames appeared.

In the five periods before Fred Hampton's death, the percentage of articles possessing oppositional media frames ranged between 50 and 100 percent, while the percentage possessing cultural racism frames ranged between 0 and 33 percent (see Figure 5). The cultural racism frames in the *Defender* relied on discourses of criminality through the lens of local and national law enforcement agencies. Meanwhile, the absence of minimization of racism and abstract liberalism frames in the *Defender* is likely due to its consistent reliance on oppositional frames, which highlight institutional racism and counter mainstream values of American liberalism.

The *Defender's* persistent emphasis on oppositional frames was also likely advanced by its inclusion of quotes and sources from BPP activists and community advocates. Table 1 shows

that together the quotes and sources from BPP members and community advocates exceeded those from law enforcement officials and opponents of the Party. By including the perspectives of the BPP members to describe their movement and its activism, the *Defender* was able to contextualize the perspectives of law enforcement agencies and opponents of the Party. Through this lens, the number of oppositional frames dominated.

Thus, the oppositional ideologies featured in the *Defender* presented sharply different accounts than the *Tribune*. These oppositional media frames referenced BPP programs that sought to uproot institutional racism and highlighted perspectives that challenged discriminatory practices. Oppositional frames were especially presented through themes of community activism, police repression and brutality, and coalition building. Community activism themes highlighted the wide range of community services the Illinois chapter offered to ameliorate the institutional inequality affecting their communities. This programming included their survival programs, the Panther's free medical clinic and the breakfast for children program, along with educational presentations, rallies, and demonstrations.

The *Defender* also disseminated oppositional media frames by highlighting the discriminatory practice of police repression and brutality affecting the BPP. In the quote from the chapter's deputy minister of defense, R. Chaka Walls, the *Defender* uncovers positive and oppositional frames:

> "We want an immediate end to the police brutality and murder of black people as we say in point 7 of our 10-point platform and we believe we can end this in our black community by organizing self-defense groups dedicated to defending the black community from racist pig oppression and brutality," **(Panther Rally Saturday: 'Genocide, Brutality' To Be Hit** *Defender* **23 Oct 1969)**

Later in the article, the *Defender* reporter lends support to Walls' account by referencing the police killings of two local black youth and including similar accounts by local community members.

Further, when reporting on the interactions between BPP members and officers of the Chicago police department, the *Defender* often included perspectives from both organizations. The *Defender* featured positive and oppositional frames of repression even prior to Hampton's assassination by Chicago police. For example, the chapter's deputy chairman, Bobby Rush, references the destruction of the Panther headquarters by local police during one of their frequent raids:

> He [Bobby Rush] estimated that damage was upwards of $20,000, and said that two desks were partially destroyed, a strong box containing $3,000 was missing, and assorted office equipment was also gone after the raid. Also destroyed was food, mostly dry cereal stored there for use in the Panther's Breakfast for Children Program.
> (**Panthers, FBI Tell Views: Rush Hits Raid on Party's HQ** *Defender* **5 Jun 1969**)

Later in the article, the *Defender* reporter refers to law enforcement sources as well:

> Earlier, following the raid, agents reported finding several guns and quantitates of ammunition in the office. However, none of the weapons supposedly confiscated were described as of the completely automatic type. Possession of automatic weapons is a federal offense. (**Panthers, FBI Tell Views: Rush Hits Raid on Party's HQ** *Defender* **5 Jun 1969**)

This inclusion of both BPP and law enforcement perspectives exemplifies the more balanced reporting presented in the *Defender*. In this way, the *Defender* legitimized the BPP as a social movement group, without mitigating other perspectives.

The *Defender* also deployed oppositional frames through its efforts to build coalitions with groups who would support their efforts to ameliorate inequality. These frames highlighted the Panther's work with organizations as diverse in viewpoints as the new-left group, Student's

for a Democratic Society, the Latino organization, the Young Lords, the Afro-American

Patrolmen's League, and the Chicago's Cook County Physicians Association.

Media Frames and The Impact of an Event

As hypothesized, the *Tribune's* deployment of negative frames declined and its use of

positive frames increased after Fred Hampton's death. This shift suggests that the event of Fred

Hampton's death transformed the *Tribune's* coverage. Figure 1 shows that while articles

possessing negative frames ranged from 80 to 100 percent before Fred Hampton's death on

December 4, 1969, this percentage ranged from 30 to 60 percent in the last three periods of

coverage. Conversely, the percentage of positive frames in the *Tribune's* articles ranged from 0

to 20 percent before Hampton's death, and 40 to 70 percent in the periods after. For example, the

Tribune's coverage exposes positive description of the Party and its members:

> Ronald Satchel, one of the BPP members who was arrested on the night of Fred
> Hampton's murder, was allowed by the judge in the case to travel to San Francisco to
> continue work with the BPP's free medical clinics. He received a note of support from a
> doctor of Chicago's Mount Sinai hospital and the judge after confirming his work noted
> that he was "a remarkable young man". (**Judge Epton Praises Panther Accused in
> Apartment Raid.** *Tribune* **14 Mar 1970**)

Further, Figure 2 reveals that oppositional frames only increased in the immediate two periods

after Fred Hampton's death, suggesting partial support for the hypothesis regarding an increase

in such frames in the *Tribune*. This trend was likely due to an increased inclusion of perspectives

from community advocates of the BPP as shown in Figure 3. Indeed, the oppositional media

frames that emerged in the final periods were often associated with themes of police brutality

and repression used in the murder of Fred Hampton and increased coalition building between the

BPP and various civil rights organizations. This increased support from community advocates,

black elected officials, and civil rights organizations, such as Jesse Jackson's Operation

Breadbasket, the Afro-American Patrolmen's League, and the NAACP, helped bring national

attention to the Chicago Police Department's repression of the Illinois BPP. For instance,

positive frames and oppositional frames through themes of repression appear in Jesse Jackson's

account below:

> The Rev. Jesse Jackson, Operation Breadbasket leader, announced yesterday that blacks will march next Saturday on police headquarters, 1121 S. State St., as a part of a nation-wide "campaign against repression" … "We see these events as a direct attack on the civil rights of black which is greater than the threat posed in the early 60s." (**Blacks Set March on City Police HQ** *Tribune* **17 May 1970**)

Thus, Hampton's death inspired a new awareness of repression and initiated challenges by a

variety of organizations. Still, this upward trend in oppositional frames did not persist, possibly

due to the *Tribune's* continued reliance on color-blind discourses and a decline in opposition to

the repression exhibited in the assassination.

After Fred Hampton's assassination, the Illinois chapter suffered, as Hampton's deputy

chairman, Bobby Rush, assumed leadership amid fear for his life, and suspicion and allegations

of disloyalty among members began to reduce the organization's membership (Williams 2013).

Further, the organization still suffered from mischaracterizations in the *Tribune*. Even though the

Tribune highlighted the support of other activists through positive and some oppositional frames,

many articles still relied on racialized discourses. The *Tribune*'s continued overreliance on law

enforcement quotes and sources, as shown in Figure 3, allowed frames of cultural racism,

abstract liberalism, and minimization of racism to persist and included little evidence of the

chapter's activism in the community. Thus, as expected, despite the slight shift in the *Tribune's*

coverage, the paper continued to draw on dominant hegemonic discourses to characterize the

chapter.

In contrast, positive and oppositional media frames continued to dominate in the

Defender's coverage after Fred Hampton's assassination as hypothesized. Specifically, Figure 4

indicates that positive frames ranged between 90 and 100 percent in the periods after Fred

Hampton's death. Figure 5 also shows that during these periods, articles containing oppositional

frames ranged between 70 and 100 percent, while articles including cultural racism frames

ranged between zero and 20 percent. Thus, the event of Fred Hampton's assassination did not

dramatically alter the *Defender's* framing of the BPP, as the paper continued to include the

quotes and sources from the organization and its supporters after Hampton's death (see Figure

6).

The *Defender* consistently published articles that used positive and oppositional frames;

such coverage challenged inequality through community activism, coalition building, and

resistance against police brutality and repression. For instance, positive frames and oppositional

frames that reveal the Panther's goal of black liberation are presented in a Panther woman's

perspective below:

> The Panther women emphasize the fact that everyone need not be a Panther. There is
> enough work in their food, education, health, clothing, and political education drives for
> everyone, in or out of the party. "But if you become a Panther", they say, "you'll find that
> the work is not part time. It's your life. It's not something you do after school or after work.
> It's a 24 hour a day job. If you're not in the party but you work with the party, you learn
> through social practice. It's impossible to have theory without practice. Some people
> consider the question of liberation as being an issue in Vietnam. It's right here."
> (**Meet Women of the Black Panthers** *Defender* **24 Jan 1970**)

Like the *Tribune*, the *Defender* also featured the support of civil rights movement leaders, black

congressional representatives, new left organizations, and feminist organizations. These new

coalitions and supporters helped legitimize the BPP's account of FBI and police repression. For

instance, the league of Women Voters of Proviso's open letter to the district attorney's office

featured in the *Defender* reveal not only positive, but oppositional frames*:*

We, the League of Women Voters of Proviso, have a large membership in the Village of Maywood. Along with many Maywood citizens, we find ourselves disturbed by the recent slayings of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in Chicago. Many of our members, black and white, feel themselves threatened by what seems to be national police action against the Black Panthers. What the Black Panthers believe is beside the point. The League is concerned about the protection of the constitutional rights of every citizen. If these constitutional guarantees do not hold for the Black Panthers, then they do not hold for the League of Women Voters. (**Wants Answers** *Defender* **03 Jan 1970**)

In this way, the brutal assassination of Fred Hampton inspired critiques across the country against repression by the state. Although this repression would lead to the Illinois chapter's dissolution in 1974, Hampton's death brought attention to the insidious practices of the FBI's counterintelligence program, COINTELPRO, and police brutality as a legitimate movement grievance.

Figure 1. Positive and Negative Media Frames in the *Chicago Tribune*
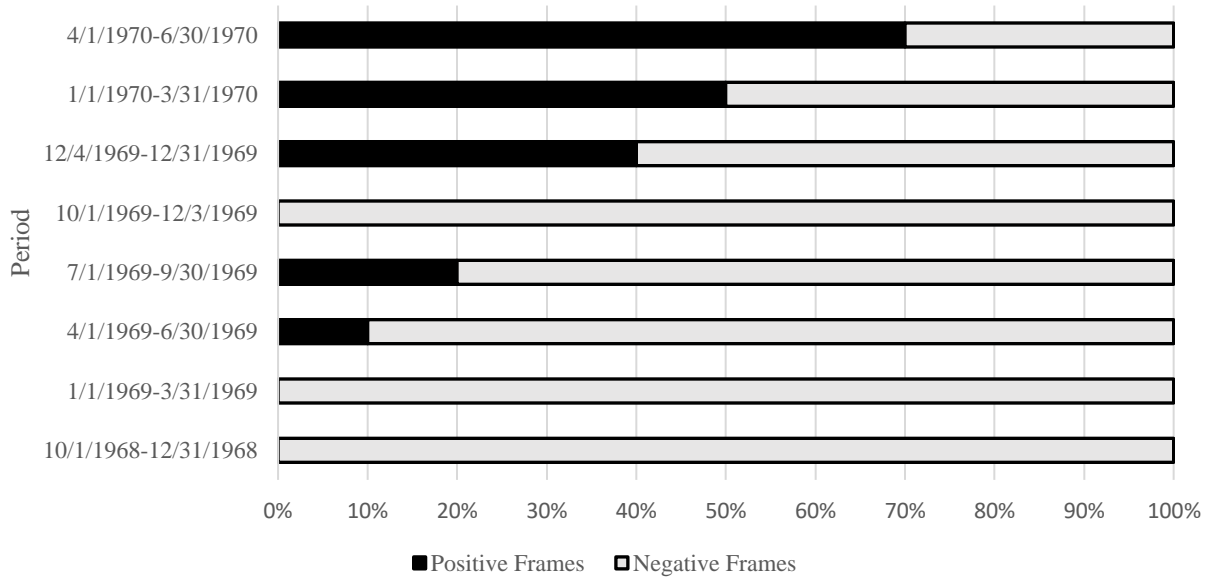

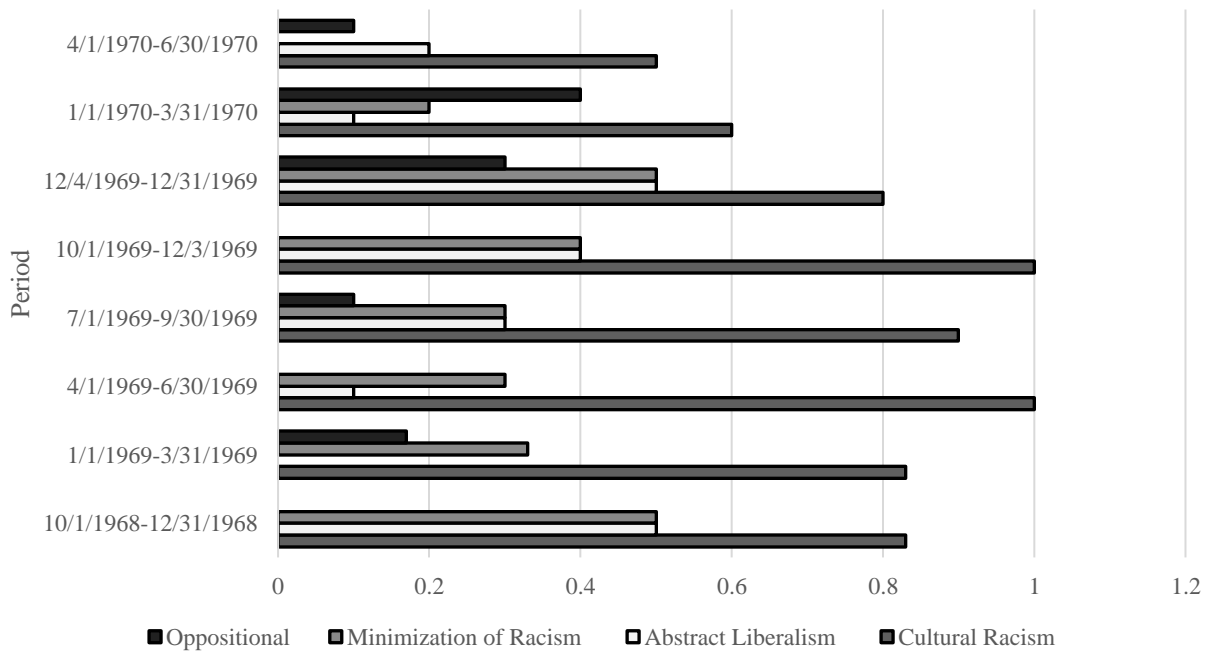Figure 2. Color-blind and Oppositional Media Frames in the *Chicago Tribune*

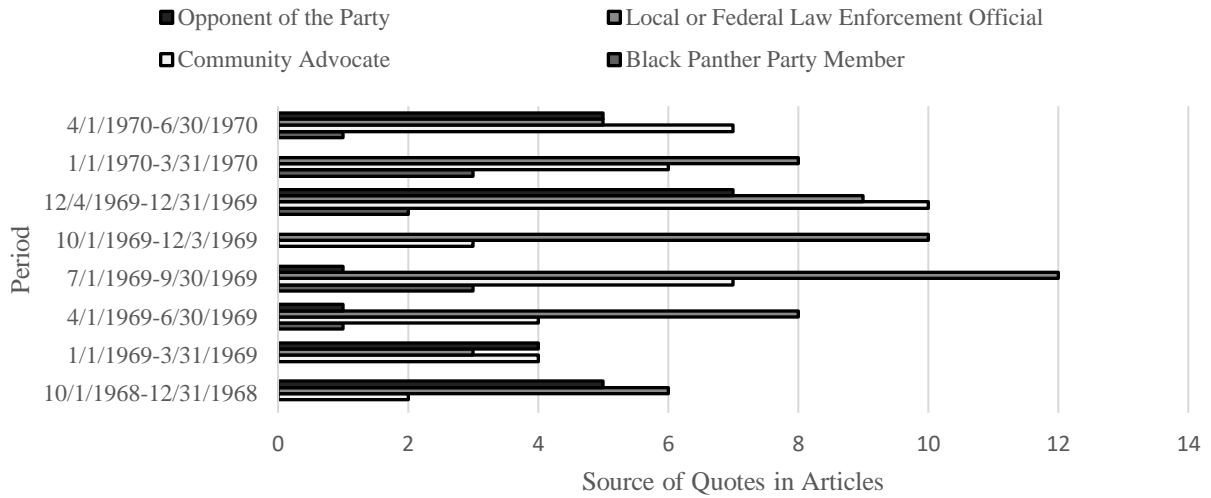Figure 3. Quotes and Sources from the *Chicago Tribune*

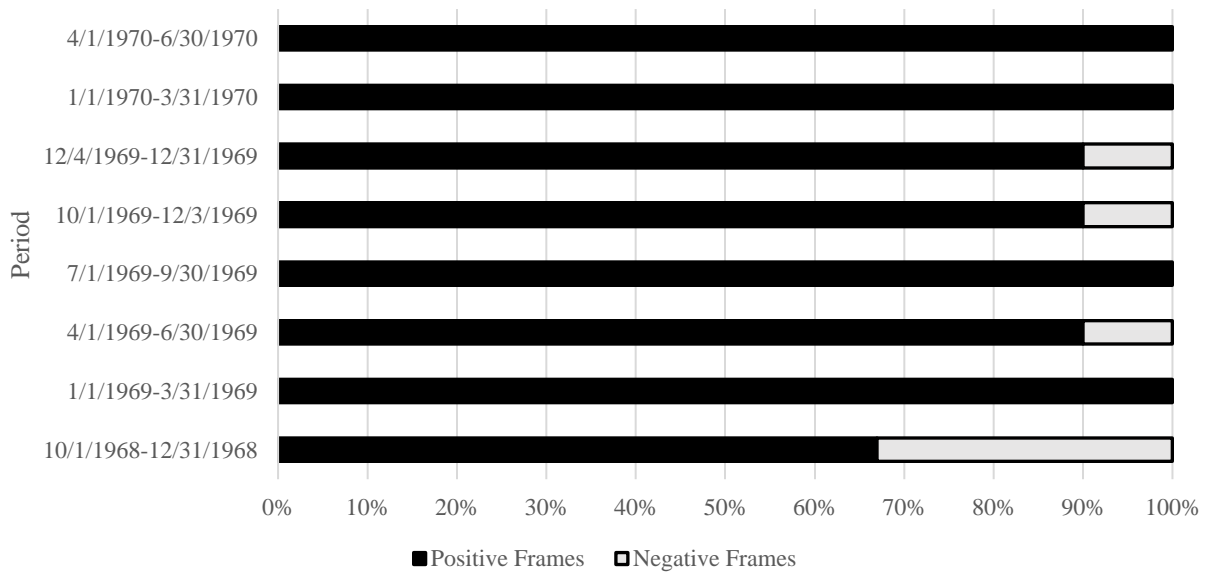Figure 4. Positive and Negative Media Frames in the *Chicago Defender*

Figure 5. Color-blind and Oppositional Media Frames in the *Chicago Defender*
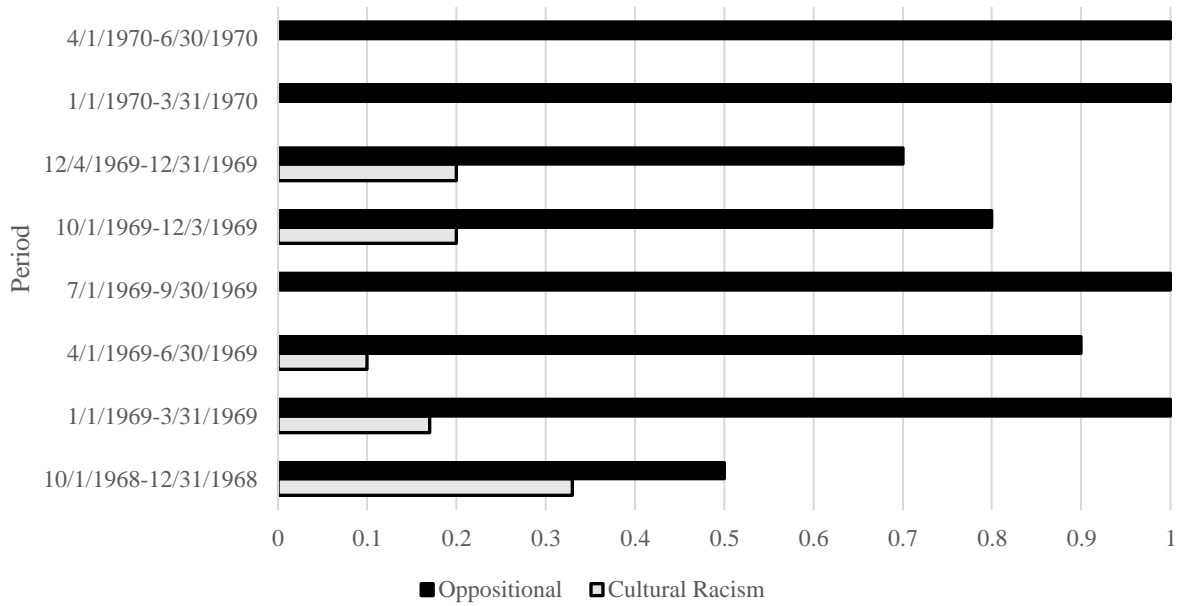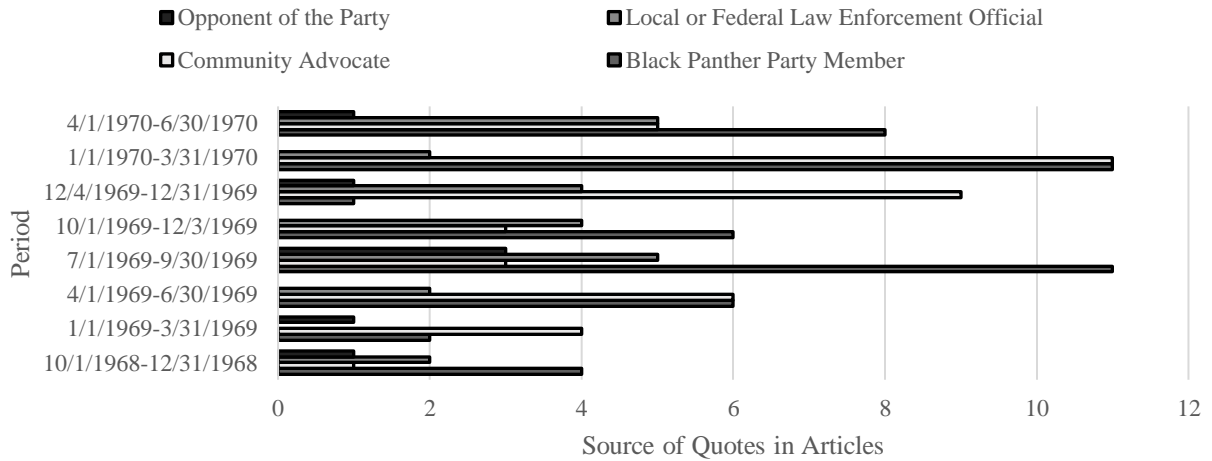

Figure 6. Quotes and Sources from the *Chicago Defender*

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I integrated the social movements and the sociology of race and racism literatures to systematically identify and assess positive, negative, color-blind, and oppositional media frames presented in local Chicago newspapers regarding the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party. In addition, I examined how these frames shifted over time in the wake of a major event in the Illinois Chapter's existence, the assassination of Fred Hampton. Findings from this study confirm most of the projected hypotheses. Overall, the *Chicago Tribune*, the mainstream newspaper, utilized more negative media frames than the *Chicago Daily Defender*, a newspaper run and produced by black journalists. Further, the *Chicago Tribune* employed more color-blind media frames and less oppositional media frames than the *Chicago Daily Defender*. In contrast, positive and oppositional media frames dominated in the *Defender*.

As hypothesized, the event of Fred Hampton's assassination also transformed the coverage of the *Chicago Tribune*, such that positive media frames increased. In addition, Hampton's death only generated a moderate decline in color-blind media frames, confirming the embedded nature of racism in the fabric of society during the period of study. In contrast, as hypothesized, there were no major shifts in the *Defender's* coverage after Hampton's death, as it remained largely positive and oppositional.

For two hypotheses, I only found partial support. While the *Defender* advanced oppositional frames as expected, it did not rely on all aspects of color-blind media frames. Low proportions of cultural racism frames were the only color-blind media frames disseminated in the *Defende*r. This is likely due the newspaper's propensity to garner perspectives from BPP members and community supporters. Further, the newspaper's formal representation of

marginalized voices likely subdued pejorative beliefs that would advance abstract liberalism and minimization of racism frames. I also found partial support for the hypothesis that oppositional frames would increase in the *Tribune*, as these frames only increased slightly. This is likely due to the *Tribune's* continued dependence on mainstream color-blind discourses and a decline in featured perspectives challenging the repression demonstrated in the assassination.

Findings demonstrate that shifting structural contexts influence the features of media frames in a dynamic and iterative process. These findings also suggest that the mainstream and independent coverage of the same movement can uncover competing narratives that result in vastly different media frames, forcing a symbolic contest between mainstream and oppositional perspectives (Gamson and Wolfsefeld 1993). In addition, these findings confirm Bonilla-Silva's (2017) theory of color-blind racism by revealing the colorblind narratives mainstream media outlets employ to promote the objectives of racialized systems of social control in its media framing of black revolutionary movements. Through these findings, I make three contributions to the relevant literature.

First, this study shows that while negative media frames were initially present in the *Tribune's* coverage of the BPP, the influence of Hampton's assassination shifted the tone of the *Tribune's* coverage. As intended, this decision to assess how temporality informs media coverage demonstrates iterative, interactive, and dynamic features of media framing as a process that shifts over time. (Benford 1997). This work also extends research on framing processes to suggest that a new social context, the significant event of Fred Hampton's assassination, altered the media frames deployed by the *Chicago Tribune*. Through this analysis, this work shows that not only does the quality of media coverage influence the characterization of a movement group, but major events can affect their portrayal as well.

Second, this thesis extends the media and social movements literature by demonstrating how larger structural forces shape media framing and instruct the coverage movements receive. Much of the social movements literature simply identify media frames without examining the structural forces and temporal factors that inform them. Further, the inattention to the impact of structural racism on revolutionary black movements in the social movements literature tends to overlook the challenges marshalled against movements that seek to counter liberal rhetoric. Such rhetoric incorrectly assumes all individuals have an inherent and equal chance to pursue and be successful in American society. By incorporating Bonilla-Silva's theory of color-blind racism (2017), I was able to outline the features of seemingly benign race neutral narratives that instead harm the mobilization of black movements seeking to uproot and eradicate structural inequality.

Still, the *Defender's* proximity to marginalized communities and its inclusion of their perspectives revealed counter-narratives through oppositional frames. Without the record of the *Defender's* more nuanced coverage of both the perspectives of BPP members and institutional agencies and sources, the actual movement goals of the BPP may not have been illuminated. In this way, the *Defender* as a source revealed narratives that countered the *Tribune's* reliance on institutional and mainstream perspectives. Specifically, the *Defender's* coverage highlighted both positive and oppositional media frames used by black power movements, their supporters and their challengers, enabling the *Defender* to respond to and actively challenge racialized media framing. Still, the success of these oppositional frames to shape mainstream society are determined by structural forces and must compete with the dominance and power of mainstream media outlets.

Third, this research confirms the embedded nature of color-blind media frames, suggesting that major events are not enough to completely uproot these narratives. Therefore, the

structural context must be addressed when assessing media frames. By identifying the structural and temporal factors that shape media frames, scholars might improve not only their own conceptual understanding of media frames, but also its impact on movement groups and the communities that they represent.

While this work is an instructive example of the media's role in shaping processes of racialization, more work is needed to uncover how media outlets contribute to the racialization and criminalization of black movements and possibly impede the desires of individuals to transform major institutions. In addition, future research that uncovers the structural forces that constrain and aid in the dissemination of oppositional frames would provide a greater understanding of the features of these oppositional ideologies.

While this study makes a contribution to the social movements and sociology of race and racism literatures there are a number of limitations. First, while the benefits of drawing on news articles in local Chicago newspapers provides a more focused study of color-blind media frames, future research that engages other news outlets at both the local and national level might provide greater variation in media perspectives. Second, while outside the purview of this study, future work might also engage the meso-level organizational dynamics that shape color-blind media frames.

Nonetheless, this research demonstrates that while periodization and sudden events can transform the characteristics of media frames, larger structural forces in American society instruct the quality of media frames as well. In essence, the mainstream media both responds to a dynamic and shifting cultural and social environment, and reflect the obdurate nature of structural forces as well.

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