10-31-2018

Covering a Killer: A Content Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of White Male Mass Murderers in the U.S

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Masters of Arts Thesis
Covering a Killer: A Content Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of White Male Mass Murderers in the U.S.
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2018
Contents

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................ v
Introduction .................................................................................................................................... 1
Literature Review ........................................................................................................................... 2
Methodological Framework ........................................................................................................... 9
  Sampling framework ................................................................................................................... 9
  Breadth: Article classification .................................................................................................. 10
  Thematic terms and how newspaper journalists use them ...................................................... 11
  Depth: Rhetorical Device and Schematic Stratification ............................................................ 13
Findings ......................................................................................................................................... 15
  Missing Conversations about Masculinity and Misogyny ......................................................... 16
  Something other than racism: Factors used to explain white supremacist killers’ motivations .......................................................................................................................... 23
Breadth and Depth Analysis ........................................................................................................ 29
Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 34
Appendix ....................................................................................................................................... 38
References .................................................................................................................................... 39

List of Tables
Table 1: Sampling Structure ................................................................................................................. 9
Table 2: Frequency (Top 10 most popular search terms) ........................................................................ 15
Table 3: Dylann Roof Breadth and Depth .......................................................................................... 29
Table 4: Elliot Rodger Breadth and Depth ......................................................................................... 32
Table 5: Glenn Miller Breadth and Depth .......................................................................................... 33
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ABSTRACT

White men represent a disproportionate number of mass murderers via guns/bombings in the U.S. Though, there may be disparities in how often white masculinity is probed as a conflictual site of socialization when compared with other social racial and gender identities. Holding concern for how masculine violence is criminalized across racial lines, I conduct a review of racial typifications of Black crime in newspapers to juxtapose with contemporary discourse of white masculine crime.

Using content analysis, I examine hundreds of newspaper publications released from 2011-2016 covering mass killers. I look for tendencies from paper writers to minimize sociological similarities between cases, especially in favor of pathological approaches to explaining disorder as a path to violence.

KEYWORDS: Mass shootings, Terrorism, White Racism, Masculinity, Black Crime, Newspapers, Media Analysis
Introduction

The recent mass bombings and shootings in the United States have heightened fear in the nation\(^1\). Killers have terrorized public institutions, such as schools and churches, for decades. Though there has been a rise in mass attacks in the U.S. in the last few years; over 1000 Americans have been slain in mass shootings since 1970, and nearly forty percent of those murders have come since 2010\(^2\). White people,\(^3\) and specifically white men\(^4\) commit most mass shootings in the United States. Sociological assessment of how newspapers cover these crimes may reveal how white male crime is commonly understood, within a larger framework of how violence is perceived across race and gender lines. Newspaper coverage of mass killings have the capacity to present, shape, and prioritize narratives about these shootings through their expansive reach, position as a credible news source, and consistency established over decades. Based on existing literature of how newspapers discuss crimes committed by men of different racial backgrounds, I seek to assess how newspapers present, explain, and discuss violent attacks by white men. Using content analysis from newspaper articles published in the US and across the globe from 2011 to 2015, I pursue several areas of analysis.

First, I examine how newspapers present and analyze three recent shooters, in terms of expression of warnings, their shared identities, and motives. Second, I point out discrepancies between how the three shooters describe their own motivations (as evident in their manifestos) and the way newspapers document them. I show how much these white men focus on their social identity compared to how readily newspapers avoid social identity dialogue in favor of personal

\(^1\) http://news.gallup.com/poll/220634/four-americans-fear-victim-mass-shooting.aspx  
\(^2\) https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/national/mass-shootings-in-america/?utm_term=.9c8ba52252dd  
\(^3\) https://www.statista.com/statistics/476456/mass-shootings-in-the-us-by-shooter-s-race/  
\(^4\) https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data/
issues in each man’s life. I show that deeply entrenched white logic and patriarchal social norms influence news coverage of white male mass killers. Based on my findings, I explore how we can disseminate nuanced, sociological analysis to newspapers, so they do not shy away from honest and insightful assessment of the ways social identities motivate violence.

**Literature Review**

Americans tend to be more fearful of Black crime than white crime (Parker, 1988). Furthermore, they tend to remember Black violent criminals more often than whites. When asked to recall recent news stories on violent crime, Whites are more likely to mis-remember these events, and mistakenly associate violent news stories more with Black people and less with fellow Caucasians. This tendency perpetuates myths of Black Americans being more dangerous, while suppressing growing violent crimes by white Americans (Oliver, 1999). Scholars of newspaper and crime (e.g., Liska and Baccaglini, 1990) argue that beliefs about crime are shaped more by newspaper coverage of crime than the raw crime count itself. They point to several national opinion polls (Gallup, Harris, National Crime Survey etc.) that demonstrate fear of crime as an emergent, significant social issue in the U.S. since the 1960s. Liska and Baccaglini argue this fear as a characteristic of macro social units (such as neighborhoods or cities), shaped by exposure to crime rate statistics and newspaper coverage. They contrast this with a compilation of studies that have shown fear of crime as historically linked to experienced or observed victimization (Yin 1985; Kennedy and Silverman, 1985; Meithe and Lee, 1984; Baumer, 1985).

Their study on fear of crime highlights social, geographical and political disparities between cities, such as regional social solidarity and cohesiveness, migration patterns, and business patterns. The implications of these difference, while not explicitly racialized, come with
racialized consequences. The authors specify “urban” environments as a more feared sites within their study. “Urban”, a euphemism for Blackness in America (Silverman, 2015), functions as a racial code for whites to show race-based fear without being explicitly racial. Researchers (Garofalo and Laub, 1979; Taylor and Hale, 1986) have investigated “urban unease” as a source of conflict for whites, who produce shared viewpoints of fear and anxiety towards non-whites, even when crime rates would not suggest a reason to suspect victimization.

To explain crime committed by Black men, sociologists such as Moynihan (1965) pathologized Black families as unstable. Today, scholars insist that “dysfunction and pathology are raced, gendered and classed terms that are deployed toward or against people’s interests” and that analyses of Black norms often come to the aid of “redrawing of symbolic boundaries and the retelling of stories that, in turn, bring a settled, orderly, and pleasing meaning to whiteness.” (Hughey, 2012). Violent Black crime is viewed as manifestations of cultural norms, however scholars now consider how these cultural norms may be byproducts of poverty and structural violence faced by low-income Black communities (Parham-Payne, 2014). Ulmer, Harris and Steffensmeier (2012) have highlighted how structural inequalities such as poverty, unemployment, and high rates of communal violence in the lives of Black and Latino men lead to their overrepresentation in homicide statistics in the United States.

Crime becomes a cultural issue, where exaggeration of Black criminality and poverty, and underreporting of white crime in newspapers leads to an overrepresentation of the unstable Black family trope. This process is accompanied by a dissociation of white families with crime (Dixon, 2017). In his work The Condemnation of Blackness, Khalil Gibran Muhammad cites how cultural anthropologists such as Franz Boas shifted race from an issue of biological determinism to cultural disparities. Yet, mid-nineteenth to early 20th century statistical evidence on Black criminality
remained rooted in Black inferiority and Black pathology (2010). These findings led Harvard Press to the declaration “Whites commit crimes, but Black males are Criminals” (2010). The problem of Blacks is the community and the identity, the problem of whites is the individual.

Such cultural and collective explanations for Black criminality versus individual explanation for white criminality promote white supremacist logic, or “White Logic” (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008; 17). A tenant of this logic, that sociological analysis and methodology used to investigate racial matters reflect a white led, white dominated field is pertinent to my study. While not explicitly sociological works, newspapers offer sociological critiques, assessments (which my research design demonstrates), and sociologically biased arguments. James McBride Dabbs, leader of the Southern Regional Council, reflected on the reach of white owned newspapers:

“Local newspapers, with exceptions so small as to be negligible, are owned, published, and edited by Southern whites. Their subscribers are white; their advertisers are white. Is it not going a little far to expect complete objectivity and candor of a white Southern editor in discussing the duties of his subscribers and advertisers to members of a race that brings him no bread and butter?” (quote in Ashmore, 1994).

The previously cited works on fear of crime show how non-sociological literature such as newspapers may shape the ways whites perceive their social world, and the following works demonstrate how newspaper publications have historically shaped the social realities of Blacks. These differences in statistical reporting and prominence on Black and white crime for publication may be borne out of the ways in which white versus non-white criminals and victims are covered in newspapers. Extensive review of newspapers shows a preponderance of coverage of black homicide (especially when whites are the victims), reproducing sensationalized stereotypes of

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5 Other fundamental problems that white logic pose are whites interest in keeping a racialized social order in place, construction of social sciences that have legitimized the development of racial stratifications, and the prominence of white masculine influence on the sciences even in alleged cases of integration
racial dynamics in the United States, dynamics grounded in white racism (Lundham, 2003; 378). Additionally, domestic violence coverage also tends to focus on black men’s violent behavior, perpetuating another stereotype of Black men as more capable of violence, especially gendered violence, than white men (Enck-Wanzer, 2009).

Prior to assessing how Black owned newspapers cover and discuss crime, sociologists of race and gender (Lundman, Douglass and Hansen, 2004) conducted a thorough review of white owned big-city US newspaper coverage of crime via case studies, and reached three primary conclusions: (1) the relative frequency of newsworthiness, the “novelty” or freshness of an unusual homicide case and the new angles it presents (Meyers, 1997) is an inconsistent predictor for how likely white newspapers will talk about white murders in their papers (2) white newspapers devote attention to African American violators and male violators; and (3) white newspapers concentrate on white victims and female victims.” They suggest race and gender stereotypes and typifications play a much larger role in predicting the patterns of white newspapers publishing stories on homicide, particularly indicating a preponderance for stories with a black male violator and a white female victim. Their research on Black newspapers suggest these papers do not employ the same types of longstanding specifications and stereotypes when reporting on murder, and that Black newspapers do not show a systemic emphasis on interracial crime (including instances of white violators and Black victims).

Furthermore, Liska and Baccaglini (1990) hypothesized that newspaper coverage of violent crimes generates the greatest fear in the general public especially among those “least likely to experience victimization,” i.e., white, elderly and female. Coupling this claim with extensive data collection of regional newspaper coverage of homicide. Paulsen, (2003) showsthat there is greater attention when victims are white, especially when they are white women although whites
make up the second lowest number of homicide victims. Therefore, it might be safe to say that newspapers contribute to the creation of a national fear of violence targeted at whites, especially white women by black men. Paulsen’s study indicated that white and Asian homicide victims make up 73% of newspaper reports on homicide despite accounting for only 23% of total homicides in the United States. Paulsen does not indicate a significant difference in how often newspapers report on white murderers compared to murderers of other race, however this study does reveal that crimes with multiple victims are much more likely to be covered than crimes that have a single victim.

Even when white male violence is featured, lack of direct attribution of white violence to racism may be an example of inadvertent complicity with modern racism (Entman, 1992). For example, rather than link white violence to racism, newspaper coverage often rationalize white violence through 1) inclusion of certain biographical details, such as recent developments and/or personal downfalls (such as Roof’s engagement in racist ideology after moving to a black neighborhood, or Rodger’s isolated adolescence being linked to a disdain and desire for sexual affection) and 2) by associating such extreme and irrational cases with class status or mental health (MacDowell, 2009). Pathologizing masculine violence makes it more acceptable to readers, as the killer is presented as an individual pushed to the edge by extreme conditions. This erases the killer’s social identity focusing instead on their mental state, creating a killer identity that any rational person can fall into given circumstances. Rationality, operates in support of men and masculinity, either in the work force or for persuasive coherence (Hirdman, 2000, Holth, 2014). Such rationalization of white men’s violent crime normalizes black men as criminals and makes invisible how white masculinity normalizes violent crime, while constructing and controlling a lasting imagery of Black men’s crime (Hill Collins, 1990)
This leads me to ask: is this process of reproducing modern racism intentional, or the product of trends and patterns in article production and commercial dissemination? (or possibly both?) A professor of finances spoke on media scrutiny on “lone-wolf terrorism” as having monetary benefits for newspapers:

“The solitary nature of lone wolf terrorism is its most pernicious aspect and also the most important aspect to incorporate into a formal economic analysis of lone wolf terrorism. Traditional approaches to the economic analysis of terrorist propaganda have tended to concentrate on the ‘terrorist propaganda’ as the unit of analysis. This makes sense. Although terrorism may be perpetrated by formally or informally affiliated groups and individuals, the terrorist propaganda has been the typical originator of terroristic operations. It is, for example, to terrorist organizations and not affiliated individuals that fatalities and injuries are attributed within the GTD (Global Terrorism Database). The economic analysis of lone wolf terrorism therefore involves a refocusing of the analytical framework to encompass the terroristic propaganda of the lone individual with no formal ties to an propaganda and, for true lone wolves, no accomplices. The starting point is that lone wolves respond to incentives. Payoffs and risks are weighed up and considered carefully in the choice of attack type and target. (Phillips, 2011).

To indicate the influence of white supremacist, capitalist origins, I must assess patterns in targeting and focus of articles across publications, such as an emphasis on a killer working alone. Gitlin (2003; 98-100) acknowledges a trend amongst reporters to collaborate during the coverage of events, sharing angles, issues and questions while working on a story. This process, known as borrowed frames, aids the expedition of publications against a deadline. This propensity for intellectual collaboration is most prevalent when reporters cover a story in territories they consider unfamiliar, even forming hermetically sealed social groups that reporters rely on for data collection over the scene itself. These tendencies lead to practices aptly described as “pack journalism” (Crouse, 1973), resulting in various publications (across regional and ideological difference) using each other as reference sites for factual reports of a case.

In his studies of American newspaper habits, Gitlin cites three details about reporting that provide more context for this practice, which I find foundational for my research. First, he highlights how reporters on a scene usually are not experts in the subject or area of impact,
especially if major regions of the country only have a handful of travelling correspondents assigned to cover them. News reporters have a responsibility to relay information in a timely fashion; sufficient background information is not as necessary if a writer can flesh out a quick story based on a few collected details, then correct or retract later. Second, he identifies how newspaper editors engage in a pack-based operation within news construction, describing how many editors defer to wire service or high prestige newspapers to certify or legitimize a story and take appropriate cues or fill in blanks in the story as necessary to ensure their paper remains relevant.

Lastly, Gitlin describes how regular subscribers serve as the backbone of most publishers’ earnings, so collective profit relies upon the horizontal (across news organizations) and vertical (within similar organizations) spread of knowledge for publication. Although Gitlin’s work challenges my theory that white logic actively seeks to erase gender and racial analysis of white male criminals in news coverage, it suggests that the structure of newspaper reporting reproduces implicit biases that normalize white male violence. Given that most reporters are white and male such implicit biases are likely to reproduce a white logic.

Given the aforementioned difference in coverage of crimes, I examine how newspapers pathologize and individualize whiteness, even when the killers understand themselves in a social world order. Since whites do not hold the same fear or multi-generational racialized stereotypes towards whiteness as a social category vis a vis crime (Swigert and Farrell, 1976), it can be deduced that whites likely do not respond to newspaper reports of white male violent crime with the same fear and anxiety that they do with Blacks. From this, I theorize white mass shootings and killings will not be racialized at prominent rates by newspaper publications. I believe fear-based publication tendencies can shape the perception of Black and Brown youth in America, while
simultaneously preventing a macro-level reassessment of white masculine socialization as a pathway to violence.

**Methodological Framework**

“Color-Blind: The Treatment of Race and Ethnicity in Social-Psychology,” serves as a frame of reference for my content analysis of newspaper coverage. Hunt, Jackson, Powell & Steelman, (2000) show how race and gender get decentered within social-psychological studies, in favor of a focus on non-descript “social processes” that can be found in individuals across racial lines. Following Altman & Taylor (1973) I study the frequency, breadth, and depth of race and gender in newspaper coverage. The number of times white, male, and other terms appear in newspapers serves as the frequency, my sampled analysis of these two terms and their context constitutes breadth, and my focused analysis of select passages (chosen for their telling details and relevance to my research question) provides depth.

**Sampling framework**

Using a 95% confidence level and 2.5% confidence interval, I created a sample of 852 from a population of 1,910 articles on Dylann Roof, 610 articles from a population 1011 for Elliot Rodgers 1,011 all the 166 articles for Glenn Miller as the total is too small for sampling. Together, these three samples (852 + 610 + 166) result in a total sample of 1,628 articles.

**Table 1: Sampling Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Killer</th>
<th># of articles</th>
<th>Sampling Interval</th>
<th>Sample Size (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodger</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>610 (Rounded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To retrieve my article pool, I logged into LexisNexis Academic and ran a search on the name of each killer. I used the advanced options tools to restrict my search to newspaper articles published within one year of the attack. I then uploaded these articles onto Nvivo coding software. Finally, I randomly selected a number of articles from each killer based on my sampling framework above. I used a random number generator to select a representative number of articles from each sampling pool. I then assessed each article for frequency, breadth, and depth of race and gender.

For frequency, I run a query for the 10 most popular words in all articles related to each killer. This provides a general assessment of the most popular words and concepts used in each killer case. For breadth, I use a temporal stratification of my sample to situate publication styles with the time period since the killings occurred (days, first week, first month, full year post-incident). This demonstrates a progression in narrative construction related to each killer. Lastly, my depth follows the usage of certain forms of structural analysis in the different rhetorical components of an article. This will reveal tendencies of writers to use more visible parts of their articles to include non-antagonistic details about white killers, and vice versa.

Breadth: Article classification

I found that articles could be placed in the following stylistic categories:

- **Coverage**: These articles primarily/exclusively focus on reporting initial facts or details about the case. This may include demographic data, brief/concise presentation of known facts, or recent updates/revelations in a case.
- **Synopsis**: a timeline of events, a summary of data or key points, or a retelling of events, potentially through the perspective of an afflicted party or the editorial board of a newspaper.
- **Reaction/Response**: Emphasis on interview data, reports or direct coverage from those impacted or within proximity of the attack.
- Academic: those written by scholars, or newspaper articles that draw heavily from scholarly works
- Cultural: cultural analysis across crimes, either of the targeted populace or with the perpetrator of the crime. These articles may not have contributions from scholars or may not specifically point to peer reviewed studies or publications

My goal for my breadth section is to place the articles in these five categories and then order them based on date of publication. This will later be used to make claims about what types of coverage and arguments may be most appropriate within a certain time frame following a mass murder, and what publishers can consider including in their initial reports based on how past cases have been handled by newspapers.

*Thematic terms and how newspaper journalists use them*

In my preliminary reading of newspaper articles on white murderers, certain terms stood out to me as thematically relevant. I found discussion of “mental health” or “mental illness”, “lone wolf” or “lone gunman” and “racist” and “isolated” to be popular descriptors of the killers. I took note of these terms and wanted to contrast them with some other terms that may be sociologically relevant to the discourse: “white masculinity”, “misogyny”, “racism”, “terror” and “white supremacy”. These descriptors for white male mass murderer appear more consistent with the terms used by sociologists e.g., Kalish and Kimmel, 2010, who note that there is a tendency to emphasize unique instances of each case of violence and overlook the things that all the cases share, namely all are white men. These similarities also extend to the young men’s profiles, and patterns in their evolution towards a mass violent outcome. The goal of my research is to present similarities between each of the selected killer’s ideology and goals as outlined in their manifestos and assess whether newspapers analyze the race and gender of the shooters or whether they promote individualized pathology without context.
After preliminary readings of the articles I constructed a five-category system to analyze the level of analysis presented in the articles: ambivalent, pathological, micro, meso and macro

- **Ambivalent**: indicates a reluctance to engage structural factors.
- **Pathological**: provides a psychological analysis of killer. Authors may try to explain their acts, or establish a life narrative with clear connections between their upbringing and their crime
- **Structural Assessment (micro)**: assesses the nature of the killer’s living arrangements, smaller circle, household/parenting circumstances
- **Structural Analysis (Meso)**: provides insight about killer’s school, community/neighborhood, and their interaction with mid-level social organizations
- **Structural Analysis (Macro)**: discusses how social factors such as race and gender and national white supremacist organizations conditioned killers

This system enables me to evaluate the aim and reach of the journalists. Journalists, who make macro level arguments about a macro level issue (dangerous white masculinity, for example) may serve as examples for how newspapers can establish mass murders as products of misogynistic, white supremist ideology to their audience. Macro and meso level codes create links between social structures and community habits and rituals that may enable the fostering of violent identities and rationales.

Ambivalence, by contrast, reflects a reluctance by journalists from engaging with social factors that highlight disparities between white violent crime and crime committed by other races. This perpetuates stereotypes of black men and crime while leaving unexamined white masculinity and violent crime. Passages that point to micro level causes or pathologize the killers turn each attack into an isolated incident; these codes run counter to self-described meso and macro level influences that the killers themselves identify. As white men commit almost all mass attacks in the
US, one can safely suggest that pathological and micro levels of analysis are evidence of newspapers attempts to protect white masculinity from critical assessment.

**Depth: Rhetorical Device and Schematic Stratification**

Tracking global publications reveals how papers follow routine scripts and organizational syntax. This process allows for readers to quickly identify relevant information based on placement within a text, and authors can follow established literary mapping strategies to set information along a hierarchy in a piece. Within this section we assess how the construction of a narrative occurs through the replication of sentence and literature design. This paper will use the narrative based form of discourse schema, best used for storytelling. Sampling conventional categories of discourse schemas (Labov, & Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972c), I place contentious codes found in newspaper articles into one of several areas that highlight where in a sequence of sentences details best fit to set a setting for events of a story (Dijk, 1988, pp.49). The (abridged) categories are as follows:

- **Summary or Abstract:** If present, this stage functions as a signal to prepare the readers for the text that follows.

- **Setting or Orientation:** This stage provides readers with the information they need to understand the narrative and usually provides preliminary information (5 W’s) about participants in the story. This stage is typically demonstrated by presenting reference and expressions of habitual action.

- **Complication:** This stage involves a problem culminating in a crisis. This stage is typically realized by a shift from conjunction relations of temporal sequence (*and then…*) to relations of concessive counter-expectancy and simultaneity (*but…all of a sudden*)
Resolution: In this stage we are told, how the protagonist manages to resolve the crisis. Through the resolution, usually returns and equilibrium is restored. Realizations include causal conjunction relations (so) introducing the redemptive action, followed by a return to temporal sequential relations.

Coda: This stage often refers back to the theme of the abstract and makes an overall statement about the text. This stage is often signaled by a shift in tense (from the simple past used for the narrated events to the present of the narration, for example); or by a shift from statements about specific participants, events and settings to generalizations about ‘experiences like that’

Identifying where specific details are mentioned within an article may help elicit why journalists may mention the details they include. The discursive practice of telling a story takes a different trajectory than simply accumulating facts or data points. If a discernable pattern can be traced between where within an article specific details can be routinely found, then I may be able to identify how a publisher may include just enough details or portray said details within a certain way to make white masculine identities featured but not the highlight of a reflective piece. I use this system to analyze the locations in a paper that an author uses a certain level of analysis, and then make meaning of patterns I trace within each case. I will refer to this section when assessing passages for depth.
Findings

This section presents preliminary findings on the most popular words associated with each killer. This was obtained through a word search query on Nvivo software for all articles obtained for my cases.

Table 2: Frequency (Top 10 most popular search terms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dylann Roof</th>
<th>Elliot Rodger</th>
<th>Glenn Miller Jr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flag</td>
<td>7638</td>
<td>3693</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>6989</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>6845</td>
<td>1321</td>
<td>1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>6593</td>
<td>1196</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>6258</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>5657</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>5035</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederate</td>
<td>4760</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>4634</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4534</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>Hate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These search terms on the surface may not yield much relevance. Though I do take note of the appearance of some phrases. “People” appears in the top 10 for three of the four killers, just missing out of Glenn Miller’s top 10. On the other hand, “White” appears for killers Glenn Miller Jr. and Dylann Roof, but not for Elliot Rodger, which I find interesting given Rodger’s background as a half-white male, entitled to aspects of white privilege. “Women” is under the list for Elliot Rodger, but not for our other two killers. This is because Rodger specifically targeted women and highlighted a jealousy towards others’ access to women within his manifesto. “Hate” also appears under Miller, indicative of the hate crime designation his case often received in publications, this was not the case for our other shooters.
Missing Conversations about Masculinity and Misogyny

My analysis demonstrates that newspapers are reluctant to discuss misogyny outside the direct mention of physical violence towards women. “Misogyny” appeared only twice in articles about Roof, the first coming in an Arab News article that mentions modern societies access to internet sites that promote racism, sexism and bigotry, and the second in a New York Daily News article that links Roof’s attack to the 2015 Lafayette shooting, where the authors describe gunman John Russell Houser as a “maddening misogynist” in the opening sentence. Neither reference Roof’s murders or intent, and I did not find any stems for misogyny in articles covering Miller’s attacks at all. I found 19 references to masculinity in my search, and 66 mentions of misogyny in the Rodger’s coverage, but even the Rodger’s case revealed interesting limits to what counts as “misogyny.” (which I discuss in detail later). This tells me that only Elliot Rodger’s case, a murder spree directly fueled by a desire to control women’s bodies and exact revenge on the men he viewed in possession of them, was classified as misogynistic by newspapers.

After looking into their manifestos (see Appendix for excerpts) and on-site quotes from my 3 case studies, all the murderers emphasized some form of demands for access to, or restriction of, spaces, bodies and resources for woman. Miller frames men’s desire for sex as a weakness exploited by Jews, writing: “All the White man seems to care about now is satisfying his belly, pocketbook, and genitals…. The Jews give us sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll, while they rule over us and lead us toward oblivion” (Miller 1999:102, emphasis added).” Likewise, prior to his attack, Roof accuses Blacks of raping white women and “taking over our country”, before telling them they “have to go,”6 a euphemism for his attack that would leave nine Black church-goers dead.

6 https://www.nytimes.com/live/updates-on-charleston-church-shooting/gunman-was-quoted-as-saying-i-have-to-do-it
The killers center sex roles vis a vis gendered performance and antagonize any racial categories either for failing to live up to certain standards of masculinity, or for allegedly having access to white women’s bodies; they all subscribe to a gendered concept known as the white male chivalric phallacy: the preservation of white masculine supremacy refigured as the protection of white females for white males (Fraiman, 1994). This is evident through each killer’s manifesto descriptions and on-scene accounts, where Rodger expresses disdain for men of color whom white women choose over him, Miller antagonizes cowardly white men who do not take up a stance as communal protectors in an encroaching race war, and Roof accuses Black people of being rapists and violators of white women.

Analyzing media accounts of Roof’s claims about rape against white women provides specific evidence of gender non-specific coverage. Eugene Robinson, associate editor and author of the *Washington Post* article “America will only end racism when it stops being racist,” highlights Roof’s accusation in his complication section, but not to draw attention to the gender dynamics. He uses Roof’s story to trouble the overemphasis of black-on-white crime to fuel desires from white supremacists to start a race war, however does not speak on the history of white male supremacists in the U.S. using violence against Black men to affirm their morals and values and assert their own white masculinity (Bosworth and Flavin, 2007). The Pulitzer prize winning author could have gone into detail of how white men use white women’s bodies as the rallying cry of a race war against fearsome Black masculinity, however he exclusively focuses on Roof’s claims as essential for creating a narrative of “‘European heritage- as being in dire peril’ in a gradually more multi-cultural America. (Robinson, 2015). Articles such as these provide concrete evidence that for white supremacists, white women and their well-being are not really an area of concern at all,
rather white women operate as pawns to galvanize white rage towards Black men who are supposedly a threat to their space and possessions (in which white women are included).

Analysis of Elliot Rodger’s engagement with online masculine culture was consistent in my dataset. Commentary on the Pick-Up Artist community found in the Rodger case showed another key way that media coverage downplayed misogyny: by treating only physical violence as misogyny. For example, one author wrote, “Like any culture, the PUA community has a spectrum of adherents. Some are misogynist sickos. Many are just average guys looking to learn social skills” (de Brito, 2014). By framing PUA as being just like “any culture” and labeling some who engaged in misogyny as “just average guys,” the author normalizes their behavior. Some papers provide interviews with members of the community who disassociate from Rodger due to his violent approach and focus attention on likening Rodger to “Going Sodini”, referencing another man who murdered 3 women and injured 9 others before killing himself after being rejected online (Woolf, 2014). When newspaper columnists offer a space in their writings for intra-communal PUA members to disassociate shared ideology with the actions of a member who held that ideology in high regard, authors further a separation between misogynistic ideology and misogyny-fueled extreme violence (ideology fueled action vs the ideology itself).

A senior editor for BBC news uses a headline that frames responsibility as a topic for debate with the title “Are ‘Pick Up Artists’ to blame for Isla Vista shooting?” Placing Rodger’s manifesto in parenthesis to denote an unusual phrase, the author details the history of this community, but still concludes that gender and dating and relationship dialogue “becoming grist for the mill” being owed in “Thanks to Rodger’s particularly long, vitriolic internet paper trail”, in reference to his

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7 That the PUA community houses many individuals seeking social and sexual fulfillment, however individuals within the community can take this pursuit to extreme ends through violent methods.
manifesto. (Zurcher, 2014). In their eyes, Rodger and his unorthodox manifesto sparked a conversation that needed to be ongoing. This author defines a manifesto, a public declaration of aims or pursuits, by the tone and damning nature of the type of manifesto that Rodger wrote, and credits increased critique of PUA culture to the publishing of the manifesto itself. This definition and subsequent attribution erases ongoing discussions of gender dynamics and posits social reform as a cause and effect process post-tragedy. The recent murderer is described as the catalyst for dialogue on social reform, ignoring the many scholars and cultural analysts who have already been discussing gender dynamics.

Of the 66 mentions, 36 focused on Rodger’s beliefs and values as emblematic of misogyny, and 30 characterized his actions as misogynistic. Jennifer Siebel Newsome and Imran Siddique characterized Rodger as seeking support for his extreme thoughts in articles titled “The Men we value”. The authors lament Rodger’s apparent mental health conditions and place blame on American culture for teaching Rodger he was entitled to dominate the world as a white man pursuing hypermasculinity. While they recognize white men as enactors of violent outbursts, I find the focus on Rodger’s thoughts, as opposed to his acceptance of widely shared ideologies, as troublesome, and the continued description of his misogynistic beliefs as “extreme” to be a reductive measuring stick for misogynistic beliefs and actions.

Articles that primarily focus either on his violent acts, or his beliefs as extreme, engage in the same practice as the PUA community who seek to disassociate Rodger as one of those men who simply took things a little too far; I sought articles that assessed the mindset of a misogynist for comparison. In Zamu Ndlovu’s editorial for the South African Business Day titled “Patriarchy is the shelter that houses misogyny”, the author critiques society at large for enabling men to develop misogynistic mindsets, seeking elevation of this train of thought over emphasis on
“individual misogynistic acts as the building blocks to misogyny. I highlight this approach as holding Rodger individually responsible for committing violent acts in the name of misogyny, but also for characterizing his social development as a fundamental example of how a misogynistic culture is developed and maintained. The authors place Rodger’s social location within a larger puzzle deconstructed through macro level sociological analysis. Rodger was a man who openly desired to “punish all females for the crime of depriving me of sex”; he was a misogynist long before he visited any PUI sites or committed any acts of violence.

When discussing men who commit mass murders, centering of the “punishment” that Rodger describes (which is unspecified, but in his case was persecution and gun violence) places emphasis on the ways ideologies manifest as actions. Linking of the shared sense of entitlement and desire of coveting bodies as possessions to misogyny demonstrates the process by which a man begins to see women as objects, parts of a social exchange in which he may be entitled to sex. The dissimilar use of the phrase misogyny highlights a nuanced approach towards how newspapers can discuss misogyny as a social ideology and practice, which readers can then analyze and recall when engaging with stories of men who do not specifically target women. Such recall may be more difficult when newspapers do not characterize men who share misogynistic views as misogynists at similar rates in their papers, as highlighted by both Dixons study on the reporting of Black familial crime vs white crime and Erick-Wanzers study on Black domestic violence.

The word “masculinity” only appeared one time for Roof and not at all for Miller, despite evidence of how they idolized a certain form of gendered performance and expectation. For example, The Independent, a London based paper, reported that Roof’s parents had given him a gun for his 21st birthday, but instead of analyzing this act as an example of ritualized performance of gendered expectations, they frame this broadly as a comment on violence and U.S.
exceptionalism. While we know that gun violence is an issue in the United States\(^8\), there is little engagement within the articles for why so many white American have been socialized to feel the need to have guns. (Christoffel, 1987).

Despite Roof’s demands that white women must be protected from the testosterone heavy, low IQ Negroes and that it takes bravery to take a necessary race war beyond the internet into the real world, many articles were short in their interrogation of his chivalrous justification for racial antagonization and his perceived solution for the problems facing the white race. This would be an example of complicity with modern racism as described by Entman; hostility, rejection or denial from whites towards the well-being of Blacks (Entman, 1994; 341). Even when killers place their intent at the forefront of their actions, journalists were often reluctant to prioritize their intent from the onset of their writing. Similarly, connections between Miller’s ideology and theories of an ideal white masculinity were lackluster within newspaper articles published within the first week of his attack, at least in comparison to Elliot Rodger’s data sample. It was clear that all these men valorized a certain form of masculinity that promotes valor and protection against the masculinity of other races, so discussions of these cases must consider the role of gendered expectations vis a vis misogyny before highlighting gender persecution as an example of misogyny at play.

In “Humans, both good and evil”, Pulitzer Prize winner Colbert I. King provides excerpts from Miller’s failed 2010 senate run to highlight his call-to-arms for fellow white male “cowards,” but does not critically assess his possessive viewing of white women as “our women” and how these views reflect longstanding views of hegemonic white masculinity towards women. King’s article focuses on creating a setting, based on accounts of the humanity of the victims (falsely)

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\(^8\) https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/01/17/gun-violence-masculinity-216321
targeted by an inhumane crime and despicable motivation. Though this analysis could have come with an additional troubling of Miller’s beliefs that white men needed to engage in on behalf of white women everywhere. A primary motivator for three men has been misogynistic approaches to racialized boundary setting along the lines of gender (Lamon and Molnar, 2002), though a dialogue of masculinity often comes up short even in critical coverage of these murders.

By downplaying the role of misogyny and masculinity, these newspaper accounts normalize other important ways in which masculinity operates on a daily, non-tragic basis. These men all spoke in similar ways of expectations for control of social space and access, especially interactions of white women and non-white men. Their concern for dangerous, hyper violent behavior of Black men towards white women was not shared for Black women, a clearly racialized issue. Their concern reflects communal entitlement reminiscent of what scholars call hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987). Hegemonic masculinity presents a single, “correct” way of being a man valorizing aggression, toughness, and male chauvinism to ultimately reinforce women’s subordination.

Likewise, the birthday present of a gun for Dylann Roof was framed as an aberrant signifier of American gun violence, rather than a broader signifier of the problematic valorization of violence and aggression in men. Millers fearmongering rallying cry of the outcomes for white men lacking the toughness to protect their property could be interpreted as a preoccupation with perceived cowardice of white men and how proving oneself is linked to the commodification of white women’s bodies, though the data does not suggest this as a popular conclusion.? When journalists do not problematize the ideological approaches these men all share towards white masculinity and its role in conjunction with white femininity, and when they do not link the
murderous acts of these men to misogyny and hegemonic masculinity, the newspaper reporting itself helps to normalize performances and practices of masculine power and cultural ideals.

Something other than racism: Factors used to explain white supremacist killers’ motivations

My analysis showed that newspapers focused on upbringings, childhood backgrounds, and other personal details about white killers who commit racially charged mass murders. For example, The Tampa Bay Times qualified gun control dialogue as a moral imperative due to the prevalence of non-standard US citizens, notably the neuroatypical: “At a minimum, existing laws must be enforced and buttressed by local law enforcement agencies that enter arrest data into crime databases designed to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, drug users and the mentally ill”.

However, at no point in any of these men’s manifestos did they self-identify as mentally ill, and neither Rodger nor Roof had an extensive criminal background. None of these men were noted drug users. The placement and timing of these discussions could be deflection from the primary concern here, white males using their access to guns to commit mass murders, with racist intent. Once again, these pivots away from explicit dialogue on race and gender and towards background details suggest modern racism.

Passages that establish groups such as the mentally ill and criminals as unfit for gun access establish them as a form of a social “other”, where all three categories of people appear to be linked based on a capacity to harm: criminals who have harmed others, drug users who harm themselves (or may use guns in criminal form to satiate their drug addiction), and the mentally ill. The mentally ill functions as a group capable of harming themselves and others; mental illness is now problematized on a basis of violence, so discussions of white supremacist shooters such as Dylann Roof highlight his capacity for violence as a mentally ill figure. Background checks become a legal site to restrict access to a social privilege, carrying a gun, based on the capacity to cause harm,
though discussion of racism is missing. This usage of pathology backs Hughey, Dixon and the Harvard Press’ claims on racialized pathological dialogue, that engagement with personal issues and psychological analysis is often employed for protecting white interests. The de-emphazing of Roof’s direct claims harms Blacks by reducing the visibility of arguments on racism within newspapers, while also using pathology for whites’ interest by making white America like a non-conflictual social location within which problematic individuals exist.

Journalists may also downplay white supremacist motivations in favor of highlighting other social problems. The headline “Murder suspect was ‘big into segregation’, published by The St. Paul Pioneer Press (MN), paints the following profile of the killer:

Roof, 21, was described Thursday as a once-nonthreatening youngster who kept largely to himself. But his quiet manner and racial views changed as he grew older and left schools in the Red Bank area of Lexington County and the Shandon area of downtown Columbia.”

Pathological codes like the above see white men as non-violent, non-threatening and only capable of committing violent acts when prompted, fleeing to white supremacist rhetoric and ideologies when wrought with inconsistent life circumstances or a desire for belonging in some collective. A departure from non-violence to violence is marked by region and age-related progressions, and the white murderer is described as a formerly non-violent, non-racist Roofs departure to primarily Black, urban schooling coincided with his engagement with anti-Black ideology and rhetoric. This was not a man who sought out racist internet spaces as a solace or place of community, but rather to actively plot against the new community he felt trapped inside. Even the headline highlights the form of racial discrimination that Roof subscribed to, without associating him with the groups that openly subscribe to segregation (white supremacists). Roof’s white family is not interrogated nor blamed for their raising of the child in similar ways to Black families, rather most responsibility attributed to them is their moving of Roof to a Black
neighborhood. This is evidence of white families not being attributed responsibility for white dysfunction in ways that Black families were demonized as producers of Black crime.

The most telling aspect of the Miller search was the prominence of the phrase “White Supremacy” and its stems. Its appearance was double that of all the other phrases combined. Four articles published within 48 hours of the shooting describe Miller Jr. as a white supremacist in their title. These include a synopsis article by the Belfast Telegraph Online (North Ireland) that details a local police chief’s proclamation that Miller Jr.’s attack was being investigated as a hate crime, and an additional *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* synopsis/response article that uses its complication section to detail accounts of Miller Jr.’s perceived shortcomings as a terrorist:

"If he was really going after Jewish communities, why didn't he find Jewish communities closer to home? Did Passover really have anything to do with it? ... Did his [late] son have anything to do with it? It's hard to know ... because he's essentially a traitor to his own movement. He's the fringe of the fringe."

Most of the mentions of “racist” reference of Miller Jr. either mention his proclivity to indulge in literature or sites that promote racism, his association with other racists, or his acknowledged hatred of Black people or Jews. All of these cases demonstrate the individualizing of a man with self-described group-oriented mindsets; by establishing the outlier (fringe) of white supremacy is one methodology for engaging in racism rather than the racist ideology itself, Miller stands as an isolated and dangerous one-off case from the other individual racists he engaged with. He is twice removed from the rest of society as the “fringe of the fringe.”

One headline, published by *The Spokesman Review* (WA) two days following the incident reads “Kansas killing suspect has racist ties to region: Miller testified in Aryan nations case.” Another headline from the New York Times depicts Millers acts as an “Apparent Hate Crime
aimed at Jews instead strikes Christians who gave to others.” Newspapers consistently refer to Miller Jr. as either a white supremacist or a racist, and often mention the religion of his target group and that of his actual victims. While I cannot make a conclusive distinction of why Miller’s case is treated differently, perhaps recognition of anti-Semitic racism in the U.S. is valorized in ways that anti-Black racism is not (Levy and Sznaider, 2002). It is possible that global media in the last 50 years has aided in the construction of a cosmopolitan memory (Idem, 2002) of Nazi power onto Jews in ways that differ from American Black/white dynamics in the same time frame. Thus, overt targeting of Jewish communities draws connotations to white supremacy more readily than non-religious targeting.

These depictions take up prominent opening space within articles related to him (i.e. headlines, introduction sentences) and establish the type of criminal outcome readers can visualize, then work backwards to show how Miller got to this point. This runs counter to the overt criminalization faced by Black males in newspapers and strengthens Oliver’s claims on racialized criminalization myths in whites’ eyes. Miller is shown as someone who has studied and surrounded himself in racism, but his incompetence limits his ability to perform bigotry ‘properly’ as he attacked Christians, not his intended Jewish category. His status as “fringe of the fringe” makes him the type of killer readers need to think more about, ponder, and pathologize on how he became such a disturbed supremacist. This gives his case novelty, which Lundham et. al deemed an inconsistent factor for predicting white newspaper patterns. Within Rodger’s articles, racism is mentioned 5 times, though all mentions came alongside discussion of another form of bigotry. These references were to sexism, homophobia, politically polarized racism (specifically right-leaning racism), misogyny and masculinity. Specific focus on “racist” produced 3 quotes within my sample set. This means individuals who subscribe to racism as an ideology (the racist) garner
more attention than the system itself (racism), and that critical dialogue of racism in newspapers posit the system as either an outcome or branch of other systems of inequality. I interpret this as evidence of individual vs. systemic focus, for all three incidents used the term “racist” to describe Rodger’s rants. This includes The Daily Mirror’s synopsis three days after the shooting, and several other assessments that shift between micro level racial antagonism and pathological assessment of isolation and retaliation. While Rodger’s own words\(^9\) reflect white supremacist ideology and places an entire racial category as inferior to whiteness at the systemic level (slave based descendance), the focus is on Rodger as an individual racist, and not on the theories that promote and spread the rationale he, and many others, subscribe to.

White supremacy is an interesting site for analysis in relation to the self-described “Half-White” Rodger, born of “British aristocracy”. The Christian Science published a synopsis/cultural study with a lengthy title: “

Why Santa Barbara shootings are not just about gun control: The rampage that left seven people dead near Santa Barbara, Cali., fit the trend of past shooting sprees: A young, angry, white man trying to draw attention to the ways he felt mistreated by society. That means neither gun control nor mental health is the core issue, some experts say”.

Rodger’s, like many mixed-race Americans, has his mixed racial identity erased in newspaper portrayals to fit a larger narrative about white men as a whole, missing the nuances that may be found with white passing people of mixed race descent (Zack, 2010). Mischaracterizing Rodger’s identity misinterprets some of the unique struggles Rodger may have been going through as a mixed-race person pursuing white identity, belonging, and entitlement (as described in his

\(^{9}\) Describing himself as “the supreme gentleman”, he at once point launched into a racist rant over a black friend being able to attract girls when he could not. He wrote: “How could an inferior ugly black boy be able to get a white girlfriend and not me?”I am beautiful half white myself. I am descended from British aristocracy. He is descended from slaves... the injustice!” (Bucktin, 2014)
manifesto) and how ones proximity to whiteness grants access to power that may be otherwise inaccessible for non-white and non-white passing mixed-raced peoples (in Rodger’s eyes, white women’s affection). (Zack, 1993)

The author of the aforementioned article points to writings by Ari Schulman, an editor for a *Wall Street Journal* column, who discusses isolationism in his orientation passage. Shculman identifies Rodger’s insecurity as a product of his mixed-race identity and demure stature, and later uses the resolution passage to pathologize why insecure men like Rodger commit these violent acts:

“A mass killing, then, becomes a plea for attention – an attempt by the chronically overlooked to be heard, and feared. To Mr. Schulman, that means the particulars of each case – looking at motive, mental health, or misogyny – are less important than the way society reacts. When the media spread fear, broadcast a killer’s manifesto, and endlessly show his photos, they fuel the next round of potential mass killers by helping the last one accomplish his goals.” (Sappenfield, 2014)

Based on this conclusion, misogyny is not factored into the way society reacts, as misogyny is treated as an outlook of the individual killer, and not a social construct that operates nationally with consequences other than the physical realm. This conclusion situates mental health as a barometer for measuring violent capabilities, and thus frames societies view on mental health as reactionary to the crimes that some mentally ill (and racist and sexist, but specifically mentally ill) people commit. Lastly, this conclusion erases the specifically violent supremacist ideologies that these killers admit to subscribing to by reducing them to one of several “motives”, all that come to aid a lonely, deranged white killer that wants attention.

Newspaper authors create a profile of a white man who has been abandoned or let down by his social surroundings and is at risk of developing a mental illness. This person is likely to seek out a white supremacist collective to become a part of a group (a white supremacist group, a
PUA community), and is liable to commit violence due to feelings of entitlement over what another racial or ethnic group has taken from them. These passages construct an identity for white men who commit mass murders, one that is based on pathological narratives and fraught with curious assessments of what society either did or could do better.

**Breadth and Depth Analysis**

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My dataset only contained one published article within the first 24 hours of the Charleston shooting, and my random selection only produced 17 articles within the first 3 days, from a pool of 39. Though this could also be a limitation of the LexisNexis Academic retrieval tool, which sometimes has inconsistencies with article generation (and now is no longer available for UConn students, since replaced by LexisNexis Uni). I adjusted my metric to appropriately account for the production of articles over time in my dataset.
One byline from an academic inspired paper is telling. “Dylann Roof is the product of a system that has bred racist hatred for centuries. The Charleston shooting is not an anomaly: as Maya Angelou argued, white America must face up to the imprint of slavery on US culture and the violence that black people suffer”. This paper contained an immediate engagement with demographic detail (describes the shooter as a young white man), but does not shy away from characterization of his actions. Depicting Roof as “virulent” with “toxic hatred”, he “took advantage” of the “well-known hospitality” of the church. All these statements appeared within the first few lines of the summary and setting, and the details continue later in the resolution and complication. The authors hold Roof responsible and demonstrate his awareness over the traits of his victims. A Black person entering a white space is immediately analyzed, judged, and treated in accordance to their perceived level of threat (Anderson, 2015), however a white man entered a Black space and was welcomed before killing 9 church goers. This racialized violence was noted but the racialized disparity was not present in other articles in my dataset.

Beginning their complications section, the authors rephrase their headline: “This shooting was not an anomaly, but a manifestation of the violence cultivated in America towards black communities”. This is their opening into a complication of the protection modern white America hides under (phrased as a cloak) from the continued racism that plagues the U.S. The authors offer a resolution that calls for revisiting and uplifting of the voices of Black scholars, artists and literature, such as the works of Maya Angelou. They phrase this as an incident that reminds the public of the necessity for “systemic analysis,” they pivot to the works of Daniel Chae, a professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of Maryland, to make the definitive claim that “Racism kills,” as an empirically backed environmental threat. They end with a Coda that returns
to those still living in Charleston who may predictably pivot to dialogue on mental health as a means to diffuse discussion of racism.

This would be an example of a paper that uses all parts of its rhetorical scheme to make a macro level indictment of racial systems at play long before this individual case of mass violence, and a paper that suggests the public redirect to the lived experiences of Black professionals in the US. This paper was also among the last published within the first week of the attack. Another Guardian article was titled “The Charleston shooter killed mostly black women. This wasn't about ‘rape’”. The article begins with a sub-heading that reads: “The motivation for killing six women and three men at church wasn't that white women are inviolable. It must have been that black women are disposable.” Author Rebecca Carol, a cultural critic and writer of works such as Sugar in the Raw: Voices of Young Black Girls in America highlights the notion of patriarchal chivalry espoused by men like Roof, where their concern over Black men’s aggression comes up short for any women who are not white; such critique? operates in conjunction with his victimization of primarily black women. This reinforces Roof’s subscription to the white male chivalric phallacy that Fraiman described.

Roofs work yielded the most variance; this tragedy also appeared to be among the first cases where I could find the writings of black analysts (either as primary authors, co-contributors or consultants) within the initial cycle and elongated reflection of the murders. As the year went along, we saw more of an equilibrium across article content, as more coverage and synopsis articles sprang up as Roof’s case and details were compared to other cases, and as Roof’s criminal case began and took precedence for most of his exposure in newspapers.
Table 4: Elliot Rodger Breadth and Depth

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Accounts from academic contributions for Rodger mostly came via law and criminal scholars weighing the logistics of stricter gun control, or professional psychologists offering their thoughts as to what may have led to the decline in Rodger’s mental state or his motivations.

My dataset contained a single article, a cultural study published by The Globe and Mail (Canada) two weeks after his attacks, which described Rodger as a terrorist. The Globe and Mail published another article titled: “Elliot Rodger: How misogyny can become terrorism.” The author uses their coda section to place responsibility for white masculine socialization on internet sites for enabling “violent misogynist subculture”:

“There was no terrorist organization that actively recruited Mr. Lépine or Mr. Rodger, but we can’t ignore that there is an extremely violent misogynist subculture on the Internet that encourages the worst kind of thinking. Nor can we ignore that women are still treated like chattels in far too many parts of the world. But what we also should not do is let random acts of terror tear us apart. Men and women should listen to each other, honour the victims, and remember that we have a common enemy.” (Associated Press, 2014)
This passage frames his actions as terrorism without making any ties to organized group terrorism and posits violent misogynist subculture as a common enemy for people across the gender binary.

**Table 5: Glenn Miller Breadth and Depth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;24 hrs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-72 hrs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7 days</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post month</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Complication</th>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathological</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have less data on Miller, however the data is clear. His engagement with, and open support for, white supremacy was over a decade long defining identity, and this was consistent with headlines, summary and setting passages. Complication sections, such as that in *The Sun*’s “Return of the KKK” offer academic analysis of the process in which racist organizations rely on younger members to recruit contemporaries in the wake of a declining “cultural significance”. Though even those professors describe the acts of KKK members like Miller as “desperate,” which may be inconsistent with both his long-documented aims and the history of acts committed by the KKK. Resolutions for Miller, being a social extreme, rarely demands much change from the public, and perhaps this is because there is not much the average person needs to alter in their own life to adjust behaviors and ideals believed to be indicative of Nazism. However, the lack of gender
dialogue for Miller was still concerning, as he professed many of the same values of white male chivalric phallicies that Rodger and Roof shared.

**Conclusion**

Analysis of newspaper articles covering white male mass killers from 2011-2015 reveals tendencies for writers to overwhelmingly engage in impartial analysis of case-by-case facts within the first few days of an attack. Rarely would cases be compared, at least until several days had passed. Most authors who provided macro level arguments prioritized discourse of mental health (Rodger and Miller), confederate flag symbolism (Roof) or gun control (all three). It would be worthwhile to do a follow up study content analysis of how these three issues may be used to diffuse or deflect away from critique of white supremacy and white masculine culture within newspapers. The analysis I found on these topics could mostly be found in the complication and resolution passages of articles, published around a week or so after a killing.

Most journalists, I found, critically assessed the racial and gender dynamics of each attack (or cross-examined reports of the attacks) were Black or Black women. This was not limited to professional journalists, critics or academics, this was reflected even in opinion pieces and some letters from the readers to the news board. This reveals to me a necessity to have a wide range of perspectives when reporting on stories, especially those explicitly racial and gendered. It would also be interesting to conduct a deeper analysis to the percentages of articles that were sociological in nature that were written by sociologists or public intellectuals directly, rather than simply cited by journalists. I would wonder how many featured perspectives on white racism and white
masculine violence come from white male scholarship, which would further Zuberi and Bonilla-Silvas claims of a continued monopoly on sociological discourse by white men.

Within rhetorical construction of a piece, the abstract and orientation sections come equipped with enough facts for readers to garner a rundown of the incident, though they were generally lacking in assessment. I found these sections to be most loaded with data (specifically as it pertains to my areas of emphasis) in coverage or synopsis style articles. The complication section typically contains the writers’ assessment (individual/pathological, 3 level structural, or ambivalent analysis) to shine when making a transition towards a solution in the resolution passage; reaction/response articles focus on this section to make a connection between the quotes they select and an argument presented in the orientation or finalized in the resolution. The Coda section was useful for providing a final quote or point that grounds the intent of the writer; rarely did I find this section used to restate compelling arguments in coverage or synopsis articles, and academic articles used this section to offer additional details to an argument presented in the orientation. This lends some weight to an argument that critical assessment of racist and sexist ideology as a motive for killers is either minimal or overshadowed within early publications and in the early sections of papers.

Headlines appear to avoid blatant association between a white masculine identity and a problematic description, though this trend was not as apparent for articles related to Glenn Miller Jr. In comparison to the others, publishers seemed to have no problem identifying Miller Jr. as a white supremacist, even within the first 48 hours of his attacks. Supremacist associations came later for Roof, specifically for articles published after 72 hours had passed (despite Roof’s open embrace of white supremacy). Rodger related headlines showed focus on mental health as an
outcome or association with loneliness and rejection; his articles contained the most pathologizing
of all killers, both in title and content of articles.

From my analysis I reach two potential, non-contradictory conclusions for newspaper
publication patterns: national newspaper trends for covering white male killers attacks has changed
over time up to the Charleston attack, and/or newspapers have been complicit with modern racism.
Either way, a killer’s profile must include certain traits if the killer as a white male, such as
descriptions of an individualized illness or personal downfall that led to a violent outburst. This
leads to narratives that follow and protect white violent crime in ways that do not align with
historical coverage of crimes committed by Black males. Based on Phillips report on emphasis on
lone wolf terrorism within media publications, the data warrants reason the belief that newspaper
publications may protect their own financial interests (maintaining a consistent white subscription
base) by individualizing white violent crime, rather than making it a sociological issue.

While international newspapers show a greater tendency to discuss American hypocrisy
towards racialized coverage of mass violence, these papers also lacked gendered analysis overall.
Across all backgrounds, women took a gendered approach to the mass killers stories, and Black
women uniquely analyzed both race and gender. Violent men who hold misogynistic overtones do
not seem to provoke gendered analysis unless there is a clear violent targeting of women, and
discussions of white masculinity tend to get overshadowed by other socio-political narratives as a
possibly implicit outcome of modern racism. Based on my conclusions, I make the following
suggestion: newspaper publishers should consult or hire more sociologists, race and gender
scholars, and specifically Black feminists/Black feminine cultural analysts to cover initial reports
of white male enacted violent crime, and refer to former studies on white masculine violence when
publishing within the first 48 hours of a white male mass attack. This should, broadly, reduce the
number pathological assessments of white supremacy and lead to more multi-faceted and wholly inclusive sociological takes on patterned U.S. gendered violence along racial lines.
Appendix

Glenn Miller Jr.

Whitey, you and I were born with an inheritance. America was given to us by our forefathers, who fought, bled, and died, and who endured incredible hardships so they could pass on this great country to us, their posterity. We have sat by like timid cowardly sheep and allowed it to be taken from us. All the White man seems to care about now is satisfying his belly, pocketbook, and genitals and allow himself to be entertained by the Jews-media while the noose around his neck gets tighter and tighter. The Jews give us sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll, while they rule over us and lead us toward oblivion. (Miller 1999:102)

Elliot Rodger

My father drove up to Santa Barbara to meet me a few days later. The two of us went to have lunch at a restaurant in the Camino Real Marketplace, an area that I often frequented. When we sat down at our table, I saw a young couple sitting a few tables down the row. The sight of them enraged me to no end, especially because it was a dark-skinned Mexican guy dating a hot blonde white girl. I regarded it as a great insult to my dignity. How could an inferior Mexican guy be able to date a white blonde girl, while I was still suffering as a lonely virgin? I was ashamed to be in such an inferior position in front my father …. It was so humiliating. I wasn’t the son I wanted to present to my father. I should be the one with the hot blonde girl, making my father proud. Instead, my father had to watch me suffer in a pathetic position. Life is so cruel to me. When I said my farewell to father before he drove home, I felt absolutely miserable. I then went back to my room and sulked for hours. (Rodger 2014:87)

Dylann Roof

I have no choice. I am not in the position to, alone, go into the ghetto and fight. I chose Charleston because it is most historic city in my state, and at one time had the highest ratio of blacks to Whites in the country. We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me. (Roof 2015:6)
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