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Re(claiming) and Re(naming) #MyDallasIs: An Analysis of Citizen Framing of Dallas after the 2016 Ambush

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After a peaceful protest in Dallas, Texas became the site of an ambush of police officers, *The Dallas Morning News (DMN)* asked readers to tell the world about their city, through a meme generator and #MyDallasIs hashtag. Citizen framing was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods to discover how the city was framed on Twitter (n=277 tweets), publicly available Instagram posts (n=91), and through comments left on a The *DMN* webpage (n=209). Participants opted for frames that re(named) and re(claimed) their city, with themes of home, unity, diversity, city pride, beauty, love and resilience. On the newspaper's page, one additional dominant theme surfaced: otherness, aggression, and privilege. This research expands the literature with the notion that platforms exhibit differences in frames projected by the citizen journalists. Authors offer implications of social media citizen framing and recovery efforts for cities after urban trauma.

Keywords: mixed methods, social media, #MyDallasIs, hashtag activism, citizen framing

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A peaceful Black Lives Matter protest in Dallas, Texas, became violent when five police officers were killed and seven shot on July 7, 2016. About 800 people and 100 police were present at the rally to protest the shooting of black men by police officers days before in Louisiana and Minnesota (Fernandez, Pérez-Peña, & Engel Bromwich, 2016). Toward the end of the rally in Dallas, shots were fired at police officers, and a suspect

was cornered in a parking garage in downtown Dallas. After time spent negotiating, bullets were exchanged and the police decided to detonate a bomb via remote-controlled robot (Fernandez et al., 2016). Gunman Micah Johnson was killed.

During a week of other shootings, Dallas became the latest tragedy and headline news. The national media descended upon Dallas to cover the event, framing the city in its coverage. The entire media contingent had not been to the city since 2014 for the Ebola outbreak, and 2013, which marked the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's assassination (Vognar & Wynn, 2016). Covering the 2016 ambush, The *New York Daily News'* headline read "MADNESS: Snipers shoot 11 cops-killing 4-at police brutality protest in Dallas," while the *New York Post* opted for "CIVIL WAR: Four cops killed at anti-police protest" (Kludt & Stelter, 2016). The *Dallas Morning News* used "AMBUSH" with the subheads "11 officers shot; 4 dead" and "Snipers fire on downtown protest" (Kludt & Stelter, 2016). Broadcasters used packages like ABC's "America In Crisis: Ambush In Dallas," CBS's "48 Hours: Bringing A Nation Together," and Brian Williams called it a "national emergency" (Kludt & Stelter, 2016). These are examples of how the legacy media framed, or cast the narrative, for the event. The hometown newspaper, The *Dallas Morning News* (*DMN*), asked its readers to be a part of the conversation.

The DMN developed an interactive product for its digital presence: a meme generator where visitors could customize an image of Dallas with a text overlay of their choosing. The site read: "As our city mourns, it's important to understand this tragedy doesn't define us. Help tell the world what #MyDallasIs" (Dallas Ambush, n.d.). The generator prompted participants to finish: #MyDallasIs <<fill in the blank>>. From *The DMN* page, users could then share their customized meme via social media. They could also use the comment feature on that *DMN* web page.

The background for this study is based on literature about framing theory, citizen journalism and citizen framing, how cities are framed, place-making, social media memes and hashtags. The issue at the core of this study is citizen framing of tragedy and how the locations of tragedies, and their residents, are part of the conversation. Cities have always dealt with natural disasters, but recent shootings, bombings, and brutality make such an investigation worthwhile. The project analyzes the public's framing of one city, Dallas, after the 2016 ambush, using a hashtag and meme generator from *The Dallas Morning News*. Specifically, it asks what frames emerge on the #MyDallasIs hashtag on Twitter and Instagram, and what frames emerge on the comments left on the #MyDallasIs meme generator page hosted by *The Dallas Morning News*. Additionally, the research asks what do the citizen journalism frames in #MyDallasIs reveal about social media, citizen journalism, and framing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing is the way in which a narrative or experience is delimited and cast. The definition has meandered over the years, but Edelman's 1993 explanation fits the current study: "The social world is a kaleidoscope of potential realities, which can be readily evoked by altering the ways in which observations are framed and categorized" (p. 231). In legacy media, framing is what information is included in a news article, and how the article is organized to make sense (see Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974; Ryan, 1991). News frames are defined as episodic or thematic, with the former focusing on an immediate event (Iyengar & Simon, 1993). They are flexible and subjective (de Vreese, 2005) and are typically parts of a larger pattern, sometimes called generic frames (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003).

Examples would be frames of conflict, human interest, economic impact, responsibility and morality (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

Research shows that similarities exist between framing in social media and legacy media (Armstrong & Gao, 2010) and how they are nuanced (Kwon & Moon, 2009; Moody-Ramirez, Lewis, & Murray, 2015; Wasike, 2013, 2017). Guggenheim, Jang, Bae, and Neuman (2015) challenged the idea that legacy media solely sets the agenda, and the relationships between traditional media and social media are dynamic. They suggest "mutual influence with social media and even independent responses" (p. 221) in their study of framing and Twitter messages related to mass shootings.

Citizen Journalism and Framing

This study adopts an understanding of citizen journalism provided by Goode (2009) in which "citizen journalist" characterizes individuals who contribute news content to legacy media. Like Jurrat (2011), the working definition of citizen journalists for this project accounts for the fact that they can bring themselves into the story, and that many are also activists. Mainstream media outlets have encouraged readers and viewers to be a part of the journalistic process by asking them to comment on news articles, provide information through crowdsourcing, and uploading content (Jurrat, 2011).

With the advent of social media, people could easily move from consumers of media to content producers themselves. Twitter, as an example, is a "technologically mediated public forum for participatory communication" (Sauter & Bruns, 2014, p. 13). Today tweets from anyone with a mobile device and data plan share images providing citizen journalism at the scenes of many breaking news events. A portion of the public desires to share in the news and newsgathering. Anderson and Caumont (2014) found that 50% of social media users have "shared news stories, images or videos" and 46% have discussed news. In addition to sharing news on social media, a small number are covering the news themselves, by posting photos or videos of news events. Pew Research found that in 2014, 14% of social media users posted their own photos of news events to a social networking site, while 12% had posted videos (Anderson & Caumont, 2014). Social media acts such as reposting, linking, tagging, rating, and commenting have been considered citizen journalism (Goode, 2009).

Ahva (2017), building upon Carpentier (2016), developed a schema for citizen journalism and participation, in, with, around, for, and through journalism. "Participation in" refers to citizens acting as content creators by providing pictures, videos, etc., and "having an impact on the selection and presentation of the covered stories" (Ahva, 2017, p. 155).

This practice of using citizen-created content has played a role in a number of recent breaking news events, including the protests in Ferguson, Missouri. In a citizen framing study of #Ferguson, researchers found that through Twitter, citizens framed the Missouri city and residents with historical cultural narratives (Moody-Ramirez, Tait, Smith, Fears, & Randle, 2016). Mainstream media framed Ferguson as a conflict between public and authority as well as frames of black disadvantages (Bowen, 2015). In another example, a Twitter community used framing to establish a shared meaning and construct their identity (Choi & Park, 2014). In essence, the *Dallas Morning News*, via its meme generator and hashtag, was seeking post-trauma identity construction for its city, from its readers. A difference between framing from legacy and social media outlets is the openness and availability to watch the framing unfold. In a traditional media newsroom, much of the negotiations are backstage, but on Twitter the process is front and center (see Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).

Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2016) called for researchers to be more specific with framing language and move beyond the catch-all term "framing." They propose emphasis and equivalent framing. Emphasis frames present alternative perspectives of a phenomenon and are closer to what is seen in news coverage (Nelson, 2012). Meraz and Papacharissi (2013) offered a definition of networked framing — a process where evaluations, interpretations, definitions and recommendations surface and gain prominence through crowdsourcing. The current study focuses on citizen framing, enabled by a meme generator created by a legacy media outlet. We argue this is an example of emphasis and networked framing that is mostly episodic.

City Framing and Place-making

Cities are framed by legacy media and, more recently, social media when disaster or tragedy befalls a locale. Dallas has been framed by its own media outlets and those on the world stage. In the 1950s, two Dallas newspapers framed the city differently during racially motivated bombings. *The Dallas Morning News*, with a mainly white audience, and *The Dallas Express*, with a mainly black audience, used divergent frames of objectivity and advocacy, and "supplied very different narrative accounts of the events and what they meant to the community" (Kraeplin, 2008, p. 94). After President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, the city was nicknamed, the City of Hate, a moniker that was still mentioned in articles about the 50th anniversary of the assassination (Achenbach, Thompson, Samuels, & Dennis, 2016; Sherwell, 2013). *The Dallas Morning News* alluded to this in the front-page editorial after the ambush:

> This city, our city, has been tested before. Now we face a new test. More than 50 years ago, madness struck like a lightning bolt and cut down our nation's president, leaving shadows that lingered for generations. We rebounded, but slowly. We eventually remade our city into one all but unrecognizable to anyone alive in 1963. (Editorial, 2016)

Other Texas cities have been framed as backwards (Schneider, 2007), rural or racist. Waco, Texas, was framed poorly during the Branch Davidian stand-off (Wessinger, 2009), which occurred miles outside of the city. Jasper, Texas, was cast by reporters as a racist city known for its Ku Klux Klan activity during the James Byrd Jr. murder (Burleson, 2004; Burleson & Moody, 2011).

Similarly, during the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, hashtag #SochiProblems emerged on social networking sites. Laskin (2014) found that other frames about the games outnumbered the problems reported of the host city and the Olympic facilities, but the #SochiProblems hashtag experienced early popularity and coverage by legacy media. Results showed the hashtag had a high level of engagement (Laskin, 2014).

After Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans was framed with images and mentions of anarchy (Stock, 2007) and as a "disorganized city on the brink of collapse" (Rodríguez & Dynes, 2006, para. 7). New Orleans and New York City both used frames to reposition their cities post hurricanes (Fox Gotham & Greenberg, 2014).

Place-making literature digs into the nuances of place and explores how it is both a physical space and a socially constructed one, complete with politics, activism and everyday life. A place represents the shared experiences of people in that place. Martin (2003) argued "place-framing" asserts a place's identity, "albeit one based on partial accounts of the neighborhood, emphasizing only some social characteristics of residents and portrayals of the physical landscape to support the organizations' different activities" (p. 732). Pink (2008) looked at place as "people's ways of being in the world" and

those collective memories require time and energy to understand. They are not instantly accessed. In her research, she spent time walking through a community trying to take in the same experiences of the residents. Pink (2008) wrote, "In doing so we are better enabled to understand how others remember and imagine through their own immediate embodied experiences" (p. 193). One could argue that a hashtag and meme create a small digital stroll through a community.

The Hashtag, Meme, and Activism

Twitter's hashtag system creates ad hoc publics (Bruns & Burgess, 2011) that can mobilize when they are needed. Additionally, hashtags provide ad hoc thematic frames (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013). Jackson and Welles (2016) assert "the technological architecture of Twitter becomes an important tool for subverting traditional citizen-state power structures, enabling counterpublics to drive national conversations" (p. 413). #Ferguson, #SochiProblems, #BlackLivesMatter and #MyDallasIs are more than just search terms in social media. Bonilla and Rosa (2015) said the hashtag is more than a "quick retrieval system" for news and topics; it allows users to "performatively frame what these comments are 'really about'" (p. 5). These frames or hashtags are "close to providing a form of many-to-many communication, facilitating both mass input and mass output of information" (Anstead & O'Loughlin, 2011, p. 454). An advantage to looking at framing via hashtags is how platforms like Twitter offer narratives from populations who might be "overdetermined, stereotyped, or tokenized" by mainstream media (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015, p. 6). Papacharissi (2016) looked at the soft storytelling that happens with what she calls affective publics, or those networked groups connected through a hashtag campaign like Occupy's #ows. She posits that hashtags can "serve as framing devices that allow crowds to be rendered into publics; networked publics that want to tell their story collaboratively and on their own terms" (p. 308).

The Dallas Ambush occurred at the end of a peaceful #BlackLivesMatter (BLM) protest. Hoffman, Granger, Vallejos, and Moats (2016) called #BLM "one of the most influential and controversial of the contemporary protests movements" (p. 595). They added that the movement provides a "healthy cultural critique and creative use of pain, anger, and suffering to advocate for human dignity and positive cultural change" (p. 595), and the media has largely misportrayed the campaign. Jackson (2016) estimates the hashtag has been used more than 100 million times, and "hashtags and other forms of situated knowledge arising from networked counterpublics ... should be treated as important contributions to the democratic process" (p. 378). Hashtags can bring issues and stories to the legacy media. Canada's #IdleNoMore was the focus of a framing study where researchers found that emergent frames from the hashtag reported in two legacy media outlets "set new boundaries for public policy debates" (Moscato, 2016, p. 10) and brought attention to the country's indigenous communities.

Likewise, memes can exhibit and perpetuate frames (Richardson, 2016). Shifman (2014) defines Internet memes as "a group of digital content units sharing common characteristics of content, form and/or stance" and these build upon each other; they are "multiparticipant creative expressions through which cultural and political identities are communicated and negotiated" (p. 177). More plainly stated, memes are viral concepts and images. They are "widely propagated ideas or phenomena" online (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007, p. 217), which spread rapidly by online participants (Wiggins & Bowers, 2015). For example, The World's Most Interesting Man and Grumpy Cat have been remixed and tailored to fit creators' specific needs, and entire websites have been created to give would-be creators a meme at their fingertips. Users simply pick the image or video, overlay text and download the final

product to post to their own social networks. With the 2015 release of movie *Straight Outta Compton*, marketing executives created a meme generating website where visitors could tout their own hometown pride by filling in the blank Straight Outta <<place>>. An estimated 10.8 million visited the meme webpage, and it was the No. 1 trending topic on Twitter within 24 hours (Straight Outta, n.d.)

Following the mass shootings and police shootings in 2014, 2015 and 2016, hashtags and memes materialized on social media feeds. The nightclub shooting in Orlando had #PrayforOrlando and #GaysBreaktheInternet, the Methodist church shooting had #CharlestonShooting, the shootings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile inspired hashtags of the men's names and #FalconHeightsShooting. As *The Arizona Republic* stated, "Social media once again became a place for public grieving, rage and solace" (#PrayforOrlando, 2016). #IfTheyGunnedMeDown memes used visuals to raise the question about which picture media outlets would use in event of a black victim. The meme used contrasting side-by-side images of the same person to illustrate "the pejorative selection of images used in news stories about black victims of police shootings" (Ramsey, 2015).

It is important to note that some hashtag campaigns and meme initiatives developed as public relations efforts with positive frames have been "hijacked" or overtaken by dissenting voices. Jackson and Welles' (2015) analysis of the hijacked #myNYPD hashtag "reflects a larger pattern of collective counterpublic activism" (p. 949). Meant as a positive image campaign about connecting with officers, participants used the hashtag to document brutality. Likewise, Bill Cosby's social media team experienced a backlash when it asked followers to make the comedian into a meme (Durando, 2014). Instead of lighthearted fun, memes highlighted allegations of sexual assault, framing Bill Cosby as a predator. Even with good intentions, the creators of *The Dallas Morning News* meme generator risked conflicting frames about the city.

Legacy Media's Role in Crisis, Community and Engagement

One role legacy media play in crisis and tragedy is that of "reconstituting community" (Novak & Vidoloff, 2011, p. 184). In recent mass shootings, newspapers have opted to run front-page editorials and memorials for victims (Editorial, 2016; *Orlando Sentinel*, 2016; *Post and Courier*, 2015). While journalists may have always had ways to engage with audiences, the Internet and social media have made direct engagement easier (e.g., Heise, Loosen, Reimer, & Schmidt, 2014; Wang, 2016). Before, newspaper readers or TV viewers might have mailed or dropped off letters to the editor, recipes or photos after reading the print edition or watching the news. Now, viewers can tag a social media message for an easy share with their favorite media personalities for instant dissemination. News outlets leverage the new citizen journalists by soliciting viewer videos, pictures and eyewitness accounts for weather stories, crises and other newsgathering. A recent example is how the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* re-tweeted citizens' messages from the Ferguson protests and "produced provocative coverage, which, in turn, influenced the way the newspaper journalists used social media" (Araiza, Sturm, Istek, & Bock, 2016, p. 307).

In the case of #MyDallasIs, *The Dallas Morning News* brought the interactive social media product to its readers. Through the newspaper's interactive department, developer Andrew Chavez created a way for readers to select one of 12 photographs of Dallas and its landmarks as a backdrop for a meme with a textual overlay that said #MyDallasIs <<fill in the blank>>. Users could select from the images, or upload their own, and then pick the words that best expressed their Dallas. The "stock"

images included Reunion Tower, the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge, Texas bluebonnets, the Trinity River with a skyline, aerial shots, and Big Tex.

Studying citizen framing gives a glimpse into the mindset of participants and how they cast a situation. In this case, a legacy news organization created a special digital outlet for citizen framing. The partnership blends the legacy model with an interactive social media spin, and crowdsources citizen reactions. To start this line of inquiry into citizen framing initiated and encourage by a legacy news organization, this paper addresses the following research question:

R1. How did citizen journalists frame Dallas, Texas, after the 2016 police ambush using the #MyDallasIs hashtag on Twitter, Instagram, and the #MyDallasIs meme generator page hosted by *The Dallas Morning News?*

R2. What do the citizen journalism frames in #MyDallasIs reveal about social media, citizen journalism, and framing?

METHODS

Researchers used a mixed-method approach. Tweets (www.twitter.com/#mydallasis) were manually copied and pasted into a spreadsheet. User comments on *The Dallas Morning News* page for the MyDallasIs meme creator (http://interactives.dallasnews.com/2016/my-dallas-is/) were also copied and pasted into a spreadsheet. The people behind the tweets, Instagram posts, and comments on the *DMN* site are considered citizen journalists for this study. They participated in the *DMN*'s call for readers to define their city. Both datasets were captured on Dec. 31, 2016; 277 tweets were posted on Twitter from July 10, 2016 to Dec. 31, 2016, with the majority of tweets occurring July 10-15. Collectively, the tweets garnered 594 retweets and 1,198 favorites. On *The DMN* web page, 209 comments were posted from July 10, 2016 to July 14, 2016. Instagram posts were retrieved from publicly available posts using the hashtag. These messages were added after the initial data review. Of the 121 available, only 91 were available on the open web.

Datasets were cleaned and then reviewed by two researchers individually using open coding methods to search for emergent themes using framing theory (deVreese, 2005; Edelman, 1993; Entman, 1993). In multiple meetings, the researchers discussed emerging frames from the datasets; through discussion and consensus the frames were developed (Creswell, 1998). A third researcher reviewed the texts as well as the frames the first two researchers felt were most emergent in the datasets. Her input helped finalize the frames and added a layer of triangulation. Additionally, using the developed themes, a round of closed coding was used to evaluate the prominence of each frame. Two coders reviewed each dataset, with an intercoder reliability of K=.92 for the *DMN* dataset and K= .95 for the Twitter dataset. Coders were looking for how the messages fits into one of the categories from the qualitative part of the study. The categories were 1) home, 2) unity and togetherness, 3) diverse and welcoming, 4) city/state pride, 5) otherness, aggression and privilege, 6) beauty, 7) love, 8) strength and resilience, and 9) none or not codable (see Table 1). The entries coded as not codable were again reviewed for themes within the category. Sample tweets included in the findings are presented as they were written online.

FINDINGS

Both the #MyDallasIs tweets and comments on *The Dallas Morning News* webpage for the #MyDallasIs meme revolved around two overarching frames of (re)naming and (re)claiming. Renaming

and naming messages were ones used to identify Dallas as more than what it was before, or more than outsiders would know – now it's diverse, artistic, unbreakable, etc. Messages broadened the city beyond one identity or perception. The reclaiming and claiming frame included messaging using the #MyDallasIs hashtag to reclaim space that has been "violated," changed or misunderstood. This frame also meant reclaiming a city from "tourists" and from the news media. Within these frames, content clustered around general concepts (see Table 1) that created the overall frame.

Table 1
Frames from #MyDallasIs Tweets and Comments on The Dallas Morning News Meme Generator Web Page

Frames		Sample tweet/comment	*DMN* Frequency (n=197) %	Twitter Frequency (n=277) %
Re(claiming)	Home	•9 years in Dallas. Thanks all for making this the place I love! #mydallasis home. • #MyDallasIs Home Forever • #MyDallasIs a beautiful sight to see from the sky when flying home	12 6%	34 12%
	Unity and togetherness	• #MyDallasIs unified. • #MyDallasIs the blueprint of how to hold a community together. We are bruised, not broken! #Dallas #OneLove	5 3%	22 8%
	Diverse and welcoming	• #MyDallasIs diverse, creative, and welcoming. • #MyDallasIs a place who welcomes everyone & helps you to fulfill your dreams. Full of opportunities and new beginnings. • As a new Dallasite, I was welcomed with open arms.	8 4%	19 7%
	City/State Pride	• #MyDallasIs the best city in Texas • #MyDallasIs All about good people who just want to live and work in peace with one another. #OneDallas #Dallas • what makes me proud to be a Texan.	8 4%	28 10%
	Otherness, Aggression and Privilege	• My Dallas City is a segregated racist city. Just step out of line and you will find out • This was supposed to be a peaceful and healing post! Comments blasting President Obama, comments saying we're a Christian city, pride that we're an open carry city? I'm not Christian, do I not belong here? I don't own a gun, should I leave? I admire and voted for president Obama, am I not a real American? No, the violence doesn't define us, but the bigoted, racist, partisan comments do define us, and that is what the world sees when they think of MY Dallas. • Hate it when outsiders define us.	54 27%	9 3%
Re(naming)	Beauty	• #MyDallasIs beautiful, friendly, fun, and diverse. • #MyDallasIs a beautiful amazing city with some of the best people on earth.	2 1%	11 4%
	Love	• Love and Respect. • #MyDallasIs FULL of LOVE • #mydallasis Love! Kindness! Loyal!	12 6%	20 7%

Strength and resilience	• Strong. Bold. Resiliant. #MyDallasIs • Vibrant, Strong, and Hopeful for a Brighter Future. • Stronger than hate. • #MyDallasIs Resilient. We always bounce back stronger.	11 6%	53 19%
Not codable		85 43%	81 29%

Re(claiming)

Re(claiming) was expressed through home, unity and togetherness, diverse and welcoming, and city (and state) pride. On the *DMN* site, 87 messages or a little more than 43% were categorized as re(claiming). For the Twitter feed, 112 messages (40%) fell into this category. Home was both a physical and psychological reference; "#MyDallasIs is amazing. Regardless of how far away I live it will always be home" and "#myDallasIs. My Dear Friends. Home" were just two tweets within this frame. Some posted that Dallas was their hometown, and others added about belonging: "#MyDallasIs home. A place where I know I belong."

Unity and togetherness (3% *DMN*, 8% Twitter) were expressed as a unified front and community working together, especially in an effort to heal. One meme filled in #MyDallasIs with "Everyone united." Another chose, "#MyDallasIs big enough for all of us, together." This ties closely to the diverse and welcoming category. Many of the diversity comments were about how the differences of the city's people were an asset and added richness to the city. One participant tweeted: #MyDallasIs black. white. brown. more. it's colorful, and color is BEAUTIFUL." Another added this to the meme: "a city that embraces and celebrates multiple perspectives."

City pride (4% *DMN*, 8% Twitter) ranged from being proud of Dallas residents, first responders, memorable places and city attributes. One example was "Best skyline anywhere." Another comment was "I am proud to say I am a Dallasite and that I am so proud of our police officers in Dallas..." City pride was sometimes accompanied by state pride. On Twitter, a participant said his/her Dallas was "The brightest place in Texas." Another posted, "#MyDallasIs is a beautiful city filled with many wonderful, loving, giving, selfless human beings. We exemplify what's great about Texas."

Otherness, aggression and privilege was scant on the Twitter feed (3%), but prominent on *The DMN* meme generator page (27%). One comment summed up this category effectively:

> This was supposed to be a peaceful and healing post! Comments blasting President Obama, comments saying we're a Christian city, pride that we're an open carry city? I'm not Christian, do I not belong here? I don't own a gun, should I leave? I admire and voted for president Obama, am I not a real American? No, the violence doesn't define us, but the bigoted, racist, partisan comments do define us, and that is what the world sees when they think of MY Dallas.

Otherness was demonstrated with messages about outsiders (tourists, media, etc.) and even became a discussion on the otherness in various Dallas neighborhoods and divisions between the north and south parts of the city.

Aggression was found in the tone of comments directed at the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, police officers, the general establishment, as well as other commenters on the site. One example was "Clearly you don't know anything about black Lives matter. Maybe if you weren't so

wrapped up in being defensive.... being concerned about everyone being equal and not being at the top of race pole you could be more open minded."

Privilege was layered throughout the comments. Concepts ranged from owned access to the city, to how the city is to be seen and defined by outsiders. Specially, commentators challenged the race-based experience of the shooting during the #BLM event, managing to connect the #MyDallasIs concepts to anti-#BLM. Several comments questioned who has the right to comment on race-based events. One commenter on *The DMN* site spoke to the layered nuances of privilege in Dallas:

> A beautiful city separate by North & South.....lovely apartments being built only the wealthy can afford...A homeless and housing crisis that's a shame...one big beautiful white bridge for the homeless to look at but get jailed or fined if they live under one... domestic violence, trashed out communities, over priced properties owned by slum lords...And a overpaid thieving school district....But it's my home AND I stand by it until something changes.

Research into privilege and geography has served to demonstrate that local landscapes do not only show racial patterns, but also how locations become racialized over time (Bonds & Inwood, 2016). Geographic themes include the creation of privileged spaces, as is reflected in the previous mention of the bridge, and the following post:

> I have to go.to south Dallas every morning to a clinic. Ever since this tragedy happened all I've heard is blks celebrating saying they got what they deserve. I almost been in two fist fights over it its so infuriating.to here these racist p.o.s. say these things. Im pretty sure if I.wasn't around they would be saying f white ppl too. Blk ppl, the most racist group of ppl in America now. #facts #dealwithit #effBLM.

These comments function as both a reminder of racial locations, north and south Dallas, as well as giving commentary on who specifically is allowed to be racist. Privilege itself functioned as a lens to the perceptions and feelings expressed, allowing commentators to reclaim and reframe others' quotes to suit their needs:

> "I support you," said Dr. Williams wearing scrubs and his white coat while addressing police relations with blacks. "I will defend you and I will care for you. That doesn't mean I don't fear you." And THAT folks. Is reality for a black man in Dallas Tx. Dr Williams is a surgeon at the best trauma hospital in the Area.

Commentators continued with the reclaiming when mentioning the Presidential visit: "Too bad Obama politicized the memorial in such a negative way." The Presidential visit was reframed from honoring the fallen police, into a negative act.

Re(naming)

Re(naming) revolved around love, beauty and strength, which one meme captured perfectly; the participant filled in the #MyDallasIs blank with "Strong, Beautiful and Full of Love." The beauty of the city (1% *DMN*, 4% Twitter) was characterized by its people, place and other attributes (like strength and diversity). Some memes and tweets simply used the word "beautiful" to describe Dallas. On the *DMN* site, re(naming) represented 25 messages (13%), and on Twitter, there were 84 messages (30%).

Love (6% *DMN*, 7% Twitter) was expressed for the city and people's connections to the city. At times, it was a single word hashtag, or short phrase like, "Love my city!" One participant expressed love for Dallas as a poem to the city and another chose a video love letter. Someone else said, "#MyDallasIs mourning right now but it will learn from this. #MyDallasIs going to be a city of love again." Love was

also used as the antithesis to hate: “Hate isn't Dallas. Love is.” One tweet directly referenced Dallas’ old “City of Hate” moniker: “#MyDallasIs NOT the City of Hate.”

Strength and resilience (6% *DMN*, 19% Twitter) manifested as both text and hashtags. One meme said, “In the hands of God; Stronger than ever; Unshakable, strong, beautiful.” Another commenter said, “STRONG AND DETERMINED! (emphasis from original)” Unbreakable and unshakable were other ways posters conveyed Dallas’ strength and resilience. One even tied to a pop culture reference to the TV program, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*: “*Cue @KimmySchmidt theme song* #MyDallasIs #Unbreakable.” Additionally, participants used the #DallasStrong hashtag in their messaging.

Images

The Dallas Morning News provided 12 images for users to select in their meme maker. Listed in Table 2, most were iconic images of landmarks associated with Dallas, like Reunion Tower, the Margaret McDermott Bridge, and the downtown skyline. On Twitter, participants selected an image with an evening skyline with buildings lit up (n=28) or a purple sunset skyline image (n=16), and even more used their own images (n=28). About 62% of participants on Twitter relied solely on text, opting for no picture. Several of the pictures provided by the *Dallas Morning News* were not used by any participant posting with the hashtag. On Instagram, very few people selected the provided images, and instead created their own.

Table 2

Images used from the DMN Meme Generator

Image selection	Twitter (n=277) %	Instagram (n=91) %
Margaret McDermott Bridge with Reunion Tower	3 1%	0 0%
Bluebonnets	0 0%	0 0%
Trinity River greenspace	0	0

	0% 	0%
Purple sunset skyline	16 6%	0 0%
Picnic with blossoms	0 0%	0 0%
Crowd image	11 4%	3 3%
Urban aerial	3 1%	0 0%

Big Tex 	1 0%	0 0%
Evening skyline with buildings lit up 	28 10%	4 4%
Sunrise tent 	0 0%	0 0%
Mobile Pegasus	6 2%	0 0%

Margaret McDermott Bridge 	8 3%	1 1%
Custom picture	28 10%	83 91%
No picture	173 62%	0 0%

Note: Retweets of another's meme were not included.

Overlap and multiple frames were used by individual posters, who described Dallas with a short list. One opted for the #MyDallasIs meme with the text overlay of "Reflecting love and unity." Strength and unity were showcased in this tweet: "#MyDallasIs a strong city, rising and falling often but always holding together, showing our unity in the toughest of times." A third tweeted: "#MyDallasIs openhearted, open-minded, inviting to all walks of life and Texas Friendly! So proud of my city!" A portion of participants chose one-word contribution like "beautiful" or "home" or "love." The multiple frames and overlap led to a large overlap in the research questions.

This paper focused on the frames that emerged from the #MyDallasIs hashtag on Twitter, the #MyDallasIs meme generator page hosted by *The Dallas Morning News,* and Instagram posts using the same hashtag. We observed differences between the platforms. On Instagram, posts were largely connected one entity's own campaign with its own photography and was excluded from the thematic look for frames. The frames overlapped for Twitter and the *DMN* page, but the Otherness, Aggression and Privilege frames were scant on Twitter and prominent on the *DMN* page. Some of this may be attributed to the nature of Twitter and comment sections on online news products. Twitter's character limit would require someone with more to say to use an image or other linked multimedia to extend commentary beyond 140 characters allowed at the time. On *The DMN* site, one participant wrote:

> Dallas is a diverse community which embraces people from all over the world who contribute to the growth of business and the communities in which we live. Diversity is the norm and embraced throughout the Metroplex. Thank you to those who protect our freedoms, live within

> the laws of society, feed our souls, entertain us while providing residents and visitors alike with exceptional choices to enjoy. #toomanywordsfortwitter.

The hashtag illustrates the limitations of the platform. People posting publicly on Twitter were sending a message to their followers, and anyone looking at the hashtag. Comment sections on news site can become robust debate forums, but also attract trolls and those who bring up the same "garbage cans" (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972) of topics that incite responses. Some news agencies have even disabled the comments features all together or for particular stories (Ellis, 2015). A few comments had been removed by *DMN* moderators, as noted on the meme webpage. In the past well-meaning public relations hashtag campaigns have elicited negative responses, like the #MyNYPD (Hayes, 2017), #AskSeaWorld (Coffee, 2015), and #McDStories (Hill, 2012).

Compared to the Twitter feed, *The DMN* site had more banter back and forth between participants, and even taunting: "Sure, tell us. Come on...." Anstead and O'Loughlin (2011) suggested that diverse viewers (they call them the viewertariat) and their activity online "can enrich democratic deliberation" (p. 458). The discussion and debate on *The DMN* page went deeper than the by-comparison superficial tweets. People could share why they loved the city, or offer a more nuanced response such as: "My Dallas is diverse, alive, forward looking, wildly imperfect, softly strong, intense, sometimes angry, with a vast undercurrent of love. We are strong! I teach at the epicenter of education in down town. You may have messed in my house but you will not tear it down." The discourse that occurred on *The DMN* page would help prevent an echo chamber, which could occur on an individual's Twitter feed (Cacciatore et al., 2016) if he or she maintains a narrow stream of information. The Twitter feed was largely positive, declarative and one-way in nature. It was also more dependent on text than visuals, and a handful of provided pictures from the Dallas Morning News were not used in the feed. The springtime shot of bluebonnets, Trinity River greenspace, picnic scene with blossoms, and a sunrise scene were not selected as participants build their memes. #MyDallasIs participants shared many images and thoughts, but did not appear to resonate with these particular images despite their selection by the *DMN*.

DISCUSSION

By creating the #MyDallasIs meme generator, *The Dallas Morning News* was asking its readers and Dallas resident to help frame the city on social media. Participants were co-creating the narrative and helping to frame their city. Tweets and comments echoed *The DMN* prompt: "As our city mourns, it's important to understand this tragedy doesn't define us. Help tell the world what #MyDallasIs." Participants did just that, adding to the names and claims of their city.

To answer the research questions, citizen journalists framed Dallas by renaming and reclaiming their city. They seemed to understand the responsibility of framing an entire city with one meme. Some might have been reluctant to describe or frame their city with one word, but instead selected a string of adjectives to give a fuller picture of their city. For the second line of inquiry, this study revealed differences between the social media platform and the *DMN* hosted website for citizen journalism frames. Otherness, one of the only negative frames, was found in almost one-third of the online *DMN* page, and in only 3% of tweets. For news organizations, this offers some guidance to how platform selection for citizen journalists' projects can affect the outcome of the project.

The Dallas Morning News used agenda setting when it created the meme generator and #MyDallasIs hashtag. When they asked people to fill in the blank, they were asking participants to frame

the city for others. One tweet expressed a reason for the campaign: "Most days we build the news. Today @adchavez [*The DMN* developer] built an opportunity to heal." This study did not measure campaign effectiveness, but it is worth mentioning the implications of such a framing exercise. By creating a simplistic meme generator, *The DMN* empowered readers to become content producers with an understood meme structure. Wiggins and Bowers (2015) suggest a meme requires more than just creation; it must have structures that are then repeated. They wrote, "Once spreadable media become emergent, and further, once the emergent gains the attention needed in order to become remixed and iterated, a meme is realized" (Wiggins & Bowers, 2015, p. 1902). Would #MyDallasIs reach meme or emergent meme status by that definition? With its short window of popularity, it was likely an emergent meme for the moment. Counting the followers of the participants, the campaign had a potential of 3.2 million impressions in Twitter. The *DMN* was probably not looking to become the next Internet sensation, but rather help its readers participate in a framing exercise to explain Dallas from its own voice, not that of national news headlines.

Through its meme project, *The DMN* was asking readers to react as a member of the larger Dallas, and not members of smaller enclaves of "place" within the massive city. Martin (2003) predicted that "focusing on these common experiences in different locales could form a set of place-based, collective-action frames that situated calls for activism across a broader political and social sphere than that of a single neighborhood" (p. 747). By nature of the meme and hashtag, the *DMN* created an ad hoc public (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). Legacy products will need to consider what this means to them and for them, beyond offering an instance of reader participation.

This research adds to citizen framing studies and observations on how social media users are co-creating mass media messages with legacy media. The #MyDallasIs provides an example of emphasis and networked framing that is mostly episodic. The *DMN* creation of the meme offers an investigation how legacy media continue the role of "reconstituting community" during and after crises (Novak & Vidoloff, 2011, p. 184). Understanding how a community frames itself or a tragedy offers a listening opportunity for city leaders and media outlets. The legacy outlets leveraging social media offers a vehicle for many-to-many communication after crises with some structure or purpose.

The study provides another look at how viewers will engage with an easy-to-use low-level invitation to participate. Beyond the scope of this current project is the return of investment for the participants and the *Dallas Morning News*. We would argue that the *DMN* receives the benefit of appearing to be proactive and interactive.

Studies of hashtags, especially related to city identity and branding, will need to consider the production of space and how it is also a political process (Lefebrve, 1995, cited in Thompson, 2017). This study connects hashtag research to the place-making literature.

Van Gorp (2007) wrote, "Frame packages with a cultural phenomenon as a central theme influence the schema of both the journalist and the audience member, because these frames are part and parcel of their shared collective memory" (p. 73). Shared collective memory allows the #MyDallasIs to shift and track the changes in dialogue from supportive (#MyDallasIs Love) through to those who sought to leave the city and the associated dangers behind (#MyDallasIs I'm getting out too, don't worry. Y'all F**'s can have this place to yourself). When the themes of the #MyDallasIs are individually examined, the collective memory becomes positive, and is more about the good of Dallas than the bad. The question to be furthered within the framework of collective memory, however, is

whether that memory remains and makes an impact. When the #MyDallasIs is revisited, briefly, the impact remains primarily positive (#MyDallasIs Resourceful and generous). Additionally, the collective memory bends the Twitterverse toward a support of others, adding to the scope of people involved in the memory, (#MyDallasIs Proud to #BacktheBlue) as well as adding to the commercial appeal of the memory: "#MyDallasIs Proud of Our Zoo." However, as scholars, we cannot assume that collective memory creates true connection and cultural support, or even that the memory is retained long term. Previous research on collective memory indicates, "the memory must be transmitted to members of the community until the community as a whole shares the same memory" (Hirst & Echterhoff, 2008, p. 187). #MyDallasIs allows participants to rhetorically reinforce their Dallas identity, even if they were not really of the Dallas community.

Cities and their media outlets could help frame a community during an international media event and promote a favorable or neutral hashtag. #MyDallasIs attracted some negative comments, but at least it offered an outlet for citizen comments. Hashtags like #FalconHeightsShooting and #CharlestonShooting link the tragedy and the location. For how long we do not know, but how a city or place is perceived matters, especially when it comes to tourism dollars. Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2006) said city branding is a "powerful image-building strategy, with significant relevance to the contemporary city" (p. 183). Hashtags can occur organically, and a community does not control which tags go viral, but offering one early in the process could prevent unfavorable tags. Actively tagging social influencers could help move a good idea to a viral endeavor. #MyDallasIs was short-lived and had a relatively small footprint in the digital realm.

Limitations, Future Study and Conclusion

Limitations for the study include how the data were collected. Manually pulling data from Twitter is problematic (Tinati, Halford, Carr, & Pope, 2014). Even when selecting "all tweets," pulls are based on Twitter's algorithms, and may not represent a total dataset. With about 500 tweets and comments, and 120 Instagram posts, the #MyDallasIs hashtag was only active for four days on *The DMN* site and lost its steam on Twitter in about the same timeframe. Other hashtags may have been more organic, viral, and shareable, like #DallasStrong, #PrayforDallas, and #stoptheviolence. Participants in the online discussion may not adequately represent the discussions happening offline. On Twitter, groups of people come together around news events they feel passionately about. But opinions expressed on Twitter often differ from broad public opinion and can change quickly (Matsa & Mitchell, 2014). The participants may not be Dallas residents or connected to the city in any way. From the Twitter dataset, only 31 participants had geolocation information, and 26 of those were in the Dallas area. The participants may not reflect the majority of Dallasites. Further investigation could solicit input on city framing beyond social media outlets.

Future studies could test the collective memory of such campaigns. Did the frames bear on the collective identity? Was the rhetoric picked up and used in stories about Dallas in other media outlets? The reach of the campaign warrants measurement and a full network analysis—was it widespread or contained within a small network? Figure 1 provides a network analysis of the participants and their replies, of which there were only 12.

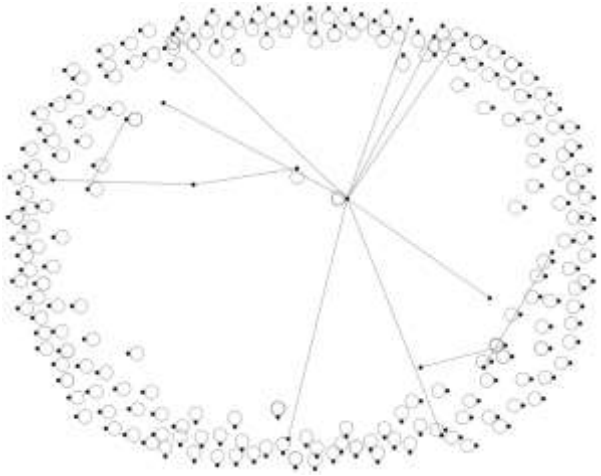

Figure 1. Network analysis using NodeXL plotting participants with replies.

The effectiveness of an imposed hashtag versus a more organic one could give insight into hashtag activism. Can a short-lived hashtag campaign help others understand the place of Dallas? Pink (2008) would likely say not, but maybe a digital "walk" through the city via the #MyDallasIs campaign would show some common experiences and therefore understanding. Papacharissi's (2016) essay suggests that we expect change to come about quickly from such campaigns because of the speed of the technology used to disseminate the cause Highfield and Leaver (2014) agree that even short-lived hashtags can be "efficient and significant."

Participant motivation is open for investigation. Did they simply wish to add their two cents to the conversation, or did participating help them cope with a tragic community event? Additional research could analyze the images *The Dallas Morning News* selected as options and how participants used some more than others. It is possible the "beauty" frame was impacted by the photography options. The 12 pictures offered as meme backgrounds are very time specific, and not even the time the shooting occurred. They speak of history, spring, rebirth, celebration at the harvest, but not high summer, not the barrenness of the heat, and helplessness of bodies trying to survive the temperatures and lack of cover.

To conclude, Van Gorp (2007) argued that frame analyses look at the parts as whole and "to relate them to the dynamic processes in which social reality is constructed" (p. 72-73). From the overarching frames of re(naming) and re(claiming) their city, participants define Dallas for others to see. In that social reality, #MyDallasIs a place of love, beauty and strength. For online news page commenters, Dallas can be a place of aggression, otherness and privilege. For participants on Twitter, Dallas is a home, a welcoming place of unity and togetherness, diversity and city pride. While the hashtag did not spin into a viral phenomenon, the *Dallas Morning News* engaged a portion of Dallasites with an interactive campaign for collective mourning after a tragedy and redefining a city.

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