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On the Boundaries of Framing Terrorism: Guilt, Victimization, and the 2016 Orlando Shooting

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The 2016 Orlando shooting offers an intriguing lens through which to evaluate the boundaries of media frames in the interpretation of terrorism. Using an experimental design (*N* = 243), the current study investigated the effects of two dominant frames—the homophobic hate crime and the Islamic terrorist frame—on collective guilt, collective victimization, and pro–lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) political action. In addition, political partisanship and social network diversity were evaluated as potential moderators. Compared to the Islamic terrorist frame, exposure to the homophobic hate crime frame increased collective guilt and decreased collective victimization, subsequently enhancing support for the LGBTQ community. Moreover, social network diversity was shown to override the framing effect, as individuals who reported high diversity were more likely to sign a petition in solidarity with the LGBTQ community, irrespective of frame condition.

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In the early hours of June 12, 2016, a 29-year-old Muslim American man named Omar Mateen opened fire on the patrons of a Latin Night event at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. He killed 49 people and left 53 others wounded. This makes it, at the time of this writing, the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. In the days that followed the attack, journalists struggled with how to frame the event. The shooter was a Muslim man who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in a phone call to 911, so was it an Islamic terrorist attack? The shooter was also an ostensibly heterosexual man who frequently made homophobic comments to his friends and family, so was it a homophobic hate crime? Or, as Haider (2016) asked, was it more specifically a "homophobic terror" attack? Because of the ambiguity of the event, and the consequent difficulty of attributing cause and consequence, media frames of the event became significant sources of guidance for public deliberation. Or did they?

In this study, we investigate the effects of two competing frames of the attack on Orlando's Pulse nightclub—the homophobic hate crime frame and the Islamic terrorist frame—on individuals' experiences of collective guilt and collective victimization, as well as their attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people and willingness to take pro-LGBTQ political action. This inquiry expands the literature of framing on two distinct fronts. First, in part because of the ambiguity of the circumstances of the event and the inapplicability of preexisting frames, the coverage of the Orlando attack offered competing accounts regarding the perpetrator (homophobic crime vs. Islamic terrorist) and the victim (the LGBTQ community vs. Americans). Arguably, these framing choices have direct implications for the underlying mechanism used to interpret this event. Second, the 2016 Orlando shooting brought to the fore many deeply entrenched conflicts in American culture, such as the tension between gun control and gun rights, as well as the tension between LGBTQ rights and religious conservatism, offering a unique opportunity to examine the role played by political ideology and social networks in moderating the effects of media frames.

FRAMING THE NEWS

Framing has proven to be one of the most enduring and productive paradigms in communication research. Although understandings of framing vary considerably across subfields, most perspectives converge on the idea that framing effects occur when the processing, interpretation, and retrieval of information are altered consequent the manipulation of message features (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Framing has been explicated as an attempt to construct social reality by providing audiences with schemas for interpreting events (Scheufele, 1999), as the selection of some elements of perceived reality and increasing their salience (Entman, 1993), and as a "discursive process of strategic actors utilizing symbolic resources to participate in collective sense–making about public issues"

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(Pan & Kosicki, 2001, p. 36). Because frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies (Entman, 1993), they directly contribute to public deliberation and the formation of public opinion (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). Thus, it is not surprising that framing, together with priming and agenda-setting, has played a crucial role in the resurgence of academic interest in substantive media effects on the political process (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

This is not to suggest that journalists manipulate news content to promote particular political agendas, but rather that media frames are inevitable consequences of the attempt to convey complex and uncertain realities in an accessible, efficient, and timely manner (Gans, 1979; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Nonetheless, different framings influence perceptions of those complex and uncertain realities. Indeed, framing effects have been found to persist across diverse contexts, such as civil liberties (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997), corporate crises (Cho & Gower, 2006), immigration (Igartua & Cheng, 2009), feminism (Terkildsen & Schnell, 1997), climate change (Wiest, Raymond, & Clawson, 2015), and terrorism (Walter, Demetriades, Kelly, & Gillig, 2016).

Given that it is virtually impossible to communicate information without offering a dominant frame, the prevalence of studies that concentrate on message design and "unique frames" has been a target of recent criticism (Borah, 2011). In particular, Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2016) maintained that it is time to retire the selection and salience paradigm and shift focus to equivalence framing—"a form of framing that involves manipulating the presentation of logically equivalent information" (p. 8). According to this argument, events that produce media frames with only minimal variations are particularly productive for analysis, as they potentially offer generalizable insights that go beyond the overstated assertion that exposure to content affects its interpretation (Reinhart, Marshall, Feeley, & Tutzauer, 2007). In reality, however, logically equivalent framing is rarely observed outside the laboratory, especially as, over time, interpretations tend to gravitate toward a dominant frame (Entman, 1993).

Yet, in the case of the Orlando shooting, two similar yet distinct frames competed for dominance: the homophobic hate crime frame and the Islamic terrorist attack frame (Haider, 2016). Whereas the homophobic hate crime frame identified homophobia as the cause of the attack and LGBTQ people as the victims, the Islamic terrorist attack frame identified anti-Americanism as the cause and America as the victim. Although the facts of the attack remained the same, the change in emphasis on various elements of the shooter's identities and proclaimed motives produced different frames. This was in part the case because of the "lone wolf" nature of the attack. In such contexts, when an attack is committed by a single perpetrator, though the fundamental facts tend to be clearly established and agreed on, the motives for the act remain unknown, which leaves a much wider void for interpretation (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003). In the absence of a first-person rationale, questions of cause,

responsibility, blame, and remedial actions are often dictated by journalists and advocacy groups to highlight a particular ideology (de Vreese, 2012). Thus, the 2016 Orlando attack provides a constructive context in which to examine framing effects by offering an observed instance of equivalence framing.

FRAMING AND COLLECTIVE EMOTIONS

Framing is rooted in the cognitive approach to social psychology (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). However, more recent studies argue that framing effects are based on cognitive as well as *emotional* processes (Kühne, Weber, & Sommer, 2015). For example, Lecheler, Schuck, and de Vreese (2013) demonstrated that both anger and enthusiasm mediate the effects of framing on opinion toward economic policy regarding Eastern European EU members. In the context of drunk driving, Nabi (2003) found that participants exposed to an "anger frame" were twice as likely to exhibit an individual responsibility attribution, compared to those exposed to a "fear frame." Thus, whether as moderators (Kim & Niederdeppe, 2014) or mediators (Lecheler et al., 2013; Walter et al., 2016), emotions can enhance or attenuate the power of frames.

Of interest, studies have demonstrated that the effects of media frames are not restricted to individual-level emotions (e.g., fear, joy, guilt, and disgust), but frames can also vicariously arouse collective-level emotions. In particular, collective guilt and collective victimization emerge as important outcomes of framing that are relevant for intergroup relations due to their capacity to induce either self-examination or scrutiny of others (Roberts, Strayer, & Denham, 2014). This is one of the subtler, yet highly consequential, outcomes of framing, as it suggests that by highlighting certain aspects of reality, media can prompt not only ephemeral mental states (e.g., feeling anger after watching a news report or feeling sad after reading an article) but also long-lasting emotions that reshape intergroup relations (Adarves–Yorno, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2013).

Collective guilt differs from individual-level guilt in that it can be experienced even when the individual is not directly implicated in the transgression (van Leeuwen, van Dijk, & Kaynak, 2013). Individuals experience collective guilt when they realize that their ingroup has transgressed against outgroup members. As Doosje and his colleagues (1998) observed, "People can experience feelings of guilt on behalf of their group when the behavior of other ingroup members is inconsistent with norms or values of the group" (p. 873). More important, however, just as the individual-level guilty impulse is to make reparations for the caused harm (Lazarus, 1991), the collective-level guilty impulse is to make amends or reconcile with outgroup members. For example, Karaçanta and Fitness (2006) demonstrated that collective guilt can impact both attitudes and behaviors. In their study, heterosexual participants who watched a video-

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recorded interview with a gay student who described being physically assaulted because of his sexuality experienced collective guilt, which translated into a willingness to volunteer for a gay and lesbian antiviolence program (Karaçanta & Fitness, 2006). Similarly, Harvey and Oswald (2000) exposed White Americans to a videotape of Black civil rights protestors being abused by police and found increased support for programs that compensate Black Americans. The ability of collective guilt to entice compassion for outgroup members was also supported in studies that analyzed intergroup relationship in the context of indigenous Australians and White Australians (Halloran, 2007), American citizens and immigrants (Walter et al., 2016), and Jewish Canadians and Palestinians (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). When such transgressions are made salient through media framing, ingroup members can experience collective guilt even though they were neither personally involved in nor responsible for the harming (Branscombe, Slugoski, & Kappen, 2004).

Although harm perpetrated by the ingroup can elicit feelings of collective guilt, harm perpetrated by outgroups to one's ingroup can elicit feelings of collective victimization. If collective guilt entails a concern for exonerating the ingroup and maintaining a positive group identity, collective victimization motivates a need for justice and is associated with actions aimed at punishing the wrongdoing outgroup (Rothschild, Landau, Molina, Branscombe, & Sullivan, 2013). In contrast to collective guilt, feelings of victimization alleviate moral concerns and serve as justifications for future transgressions. These feelings can transverse generations and result in negative emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral responses to contemporary members of the perpetrator group (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). For example, among Jewish North Americans and indigenous Canadians, increasing the salience of participants' religious and ethnic identity resulted in more negative responses toward Germans and White Canadians, respectively (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005).

Moreover, the effects of collective victimization seem to be highly robust, such that it alleviates moral concerns regarding current transgressions, even if the events are only distantly related to the original injustice. This point was illustrated by a study that primed Canadian Jews with a memory of the Holocaust, which led to more positive perceptions of Israel's occupation of Palestinians (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). Similarly, Americans who were reminded of the attacks of either September 11 (15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudis) or Pearl Harbor (attacked by Japanese fighter planes) experienced less empathy to the harm inflicted on the Iraqi people during the war in Iraq (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). In the context of the terrorist attack on the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, Walter and his colleagues (2016) showed that framing the attack as the "French September 11" led to higher levels of collective victimization among Americans, increasing support for anti-immigration policy in the United States.

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Altogether, this line of research suggests that collective guilt and collective victimization are powerful catalysts that reshape attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward outgroup members, which occur irrespective of whether or not the person was directly involved in the transgression (O'Keefe, 2000; Schmitt, Miller, Branscombe, & Brehm, 2010). Consistent with the literature, we expect that the framing of the Orlando nightclub shooting will significantly impact whether participants experience collective guilt or collective victimization. Whereas framing the shooting as a hate crime against the LGBTQ community may make salient the historical transgressions of heterosexuals and in turn induce collective guilt, framing the shooting as a terrorist attack against the United States may make salient the ongoing conflict between the United States and so-called Islamic terrorists and, in turn, induce collective victimization.

Thus, based on the findings of past literature, we hypothesize the following:

H1a: Compared to participants in the terrorist attack frame, exposure to the hate crime frame will result in higher level of collective guilt.

H1b: Compared to participants in the terrorist attack frame, exposure to the hate crime frame will result in lower levels of collective victimization.

H1c: Compared to participants in the terrorist attack frame, exposure to the hate crime frame will result in more positive attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals.

H1d: Compared to participants in the terrorist attack frame, exposure to the hate crime frame will result in greater support for policy that would benefit LGBTQ individuals.

H1e: Compared to participants in the terrorist attack frame, exposure to the hate crime frame will increase the likelihood of signing a petition in solidarity with the LGBTQ community.

H2a: The effect of the frame condition on support for policy that would benefit LGBTQ individuals will be mediated by collective guilt.

H2b: The effect of the frame condition on support for policy that would benefit LGBTQ individuals will be mediated by collective victimization.

H2c: The effect of the frame condition on support for policy that would benefit LGBTQ individuals will be mediated by attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals.

THE LIMITATIONS OF FRAMING TERRORISM

Analyzing the limits of framing is critical to understanding the underlying mechanism that links media frames and subsequent decision making. Although increased salience can increase attention to particular issues, individuals rarely change their behavior as a result of framing, especially when dealing with highly politicized events (Hong, 2014; Niederdeppe, Shapiro, & Porticella, 2011). For instance, Bechtel

and his colleagues (2015) found that, regardless of the frame with which they were presented, Swiss voters responded by increasing their support for the position of the political party with which they already identified. Similar limitations were also observed in the context of health care (Kim & Niederdeppe, 2014), support for the European Union (de Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Semetko, 2011), and gay rights (Brewer, 2003). As one might suspect, the moderating role played by preexisting beliefs is even stronger for political partisans. Thus, irrespective of the frame being used, partisans tend to act upon their extant belief systems (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2012), developed schemas (Holton, Lee, & Coleman, 2014), and party affiliations (Brewer, 2003; Hicks & Lee, 2006). In other words, compared to political moderates, partisans (on both sides) are expected to be less affected by the contextual frame and interpret the information as being consistent with their preexisting views. In the case of the Orlando shooting, this means that compared to political moderates, liberal partisans will tend to interpret the event as a hate crime, whereas conservative partisans will tend to understand the event as a terrorist attack.

Further, in the context of the Orlando nightclub shooting—an event that was not only a fatal mass shooting but also the deadliest incident of violence against LGBTQ people in U.S. history—individual understandings of the attack will likely be contingent not only on the level of political partisanship but also on social networks. Simply put, we expect that individuals who have LGBTQ people in their immediate social network will be less affected by the media frame (Herek & Capitanio, 1996). Conversely, people who are socially distant from LGBTQ individuals will be more susceptible to adopt the interpretation provided by the news coverage. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H3a: The framing effect will be moderated by participants' level of partisanship, such that the effect will be less pronounced for political partisans compared to their moderate counterparts.

H3b: The framing effect will be moderated by participants' social network diversity, such that the effect will be less pronounced for those with LGBTQ individuals in their immediate social networks.

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METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Data for this study were collected in the United Stated on August 10, 2016, 2 months after the shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Participants were recruited through Qualtrics Pools, and they received financial compensation

for their time. All participants were screened for age (older than 18), citizenship (United States citizens), English fluency, and sexual identity.[1] In total, 258 cisgender heterosexual individuals completed the questionnaire. After removing any participants with more than 15% missing data and cases that, based on the time elapsed, did not read the stimulus, data from 243 respondents were analyzed. All participants consented to take part in a study that focused on "news coverage." Then the sample was randomly assigned to either a terrorist attack frame or a hate crime frame of the same news article. Participants were subsequently presented with a questionnaire designed to measure all relevant constructs, as well as sociodemographic variables.

Material

Based on a procedure advocated in previous studies (Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999), whereas both articles had an identical core, their title, opening paragraph, and closing paragraph were slightly adjusted to reflect a specific frame (terrorist attack/hate crime). To ensure that both versions of the article provided the same facts and make the information equally salient, a pilot study ($N = 26$) asked respondents to list all the substantive information about the attack, as it appeared in the two equivalent versions of the article. The stimuli were based on articles from the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New Yorker* from the weeks of the attack that provided a factual description of the event, background information about the perpetrator, and an attributed quote at the end. To reduce potential confounds, the article was presented in a purposefully vague manner, stating, "The following appeared in a newspaper that covered the June 12, 2016, Orlando shooting."

Participants in the terrorist attack condition were exposed to an article titled "An Act of Terror: The Aftermath of America's Worst Mass Shooting" (463 words), whereas the headline in the hate crime condition read "An Act of Hate: The Aftermath of America's Worst Mass Shooting" (464 words). Both versions included five paragraphs that opened with a general description of the gunman and the scene of the attack. However, a notable difference between the stimuli was the concluding paragraph, which referenced a professor of queer history in the hate crime frame and a spokesman for the Islamic State in the terrorist attack frame.

Measures

All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale unless specified otherwise. *Attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals* were adapted from Walch, Ngamake, Francisco, Stitt, and Shingler (2012) and measured by participants' agreement

[1] Given potential confounds associated with varying levels of issue involvement, we decided to screen out nonheterosexual subjects ($n = 3$).

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ratings with 11 statements, including "I see the LGBTQ movement as a positive thing" and "I would not mind having an LGBTQ friend" (α = .95). *Support for LGBTQ policy* was assessed by participants' agreement ratings with five proposed policies to address LGBTQ-related discrimination in the United States, such as "ending bans on LGBTQ adoption" and "overturning antisodomy laws in all states" (α = .86). *Willingness to sign a petition* was measured by prompting participants with the following: "Would you be willing to sign a petition to stand in solidarity with the Orlando LGBTQ community—and against all forms of violence, discrimination, and hate? If you choose to sign the petition, you will be redirected to the petition's website." Those who chose to sign the petition were redirected to a petition website (www.thepetitionsite.com), where they were asked to submit their full name, e-mail, and street address; participants who did not sign the petition were redirected to the end of the questionnaire. *Collective guilt* was measured with four items that composed a validated scale (Branscombe et al., 2004). The specific items included "I feel regret for our harmful past actions toward the LGBTQ community" and "I believe we should try to repair the damage that we caused to the LGBTQ community" (α = .90). *Collective victimization* was assessed with six items adopted from Branscombe, Slugoski, and Kappen's (2004) scale, which included statements such as "It upsets me that Americans suffer today because of hatred from other groups" and "It upsets me that the American way of life has been threatened by other groups through history" (α = .82).

Social network diversity was measured in two steps. Adapting the network diversity measurement employed by Hampton (2011), participants were first asked to estimate with how many people they discuss current issues (e.g., politics, health, culture, religion, business) on a regular basis. The answer options ranged from 0 to 10. In the following step, participants were asked to identify the sexual/gender identity that describes each person they listed. The answer options were "straight," "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," "transgender," "queer," and "other." *Partisanship* was gauged with a political ideology scale, ranging from 1 (*conservative*) to 7 (*liberal*). After ensuring that the scale was normally distributed, individual scores were standardized and recoded to indicate contrasts between high and low levels of partisanship. Specifically, the first ($X < -.72$) and the fourth ($X > .90$) quartiles represented high partisanship, whereas scores within the interquartile range represented low partisanship (or moderates). The final part of the questionnaire measured participants' familiarity with the Orlando nightclub shooting, religious affiliation, education, gender, race, and income.

All analyses were conducted with SPSS v.24. Specifically, the direct effect hypotheses were assessed with independent samples *t* tests, ordinary least squares regressions, and a hierarchical binary logistic regression. In addition, the serial mediation/moderation hypotheses were examined using Hayes's (2013) PROCESS macro (Model 6/1; 10,000 bootstrapped samples, 95% confidence interval [CI]) and subsequently probed following the Johnson–Neyman procedure.

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RESULTS

The first set of analyses looked at the descriptive characteristics of the sample across the experimental conditions. As indicated in Table 1, results show that the average participant was 40 years old, White, Christian, finished approximately 13 years of schooling, had high level of familiarity with the Orlando nightclub shooting, was not affiliated with a particular political ideology, and reported fewer than one LGBTQ individual within their immediate social network.

We next examined the main effect of framing condition on research outcomes (see Table 2). Results show a statistically significant difference across conditions for collective victimization ($d = 0.30$) and a statistically borderline effect of framing condition on collective guilt ($d = 0.22$). Of interest, no significant differences between the hate crime frame and the terrorist attack frame were found for attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals, support for pro-LGTBQ policy, or willingness to sign a petition.

To further explore how the research variables are related, zero-order correlations were computed. Table 3 displays the results. As the table shows, there were high and positive correlations between collective guilt and attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals ($r = .51$, $p < .001$) and support for pro-LGBTQ policy ($r = .48$, $p < .001$), respectively. As expected, there was a negative correlation

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages for Research Variables

	Condition	
Variables	*Hate Crime*	*Terror Attack*
Age	41.29 (15.01)	39.90 (14.88)
Gender		
Female	51.6%	48.4%
Religion		
Christian	70.5%	75.3%
Unaffiliated	9.8%	7.4%
Atheist/agnostic	8.2%	10.7%
Muslim	0.8%	0.8%
Race		
White	79.4%	72.6%
Black	7.9%	13.7%
Hispanic	5.6%	5.6%
Familiarity with event	5.78 (1.31)	5.68 (1.44)
Political ideology	4.38 (1.86)	4.28 (1.84)
Network diversity	0.83 (1.68)	0.87 (1.59)
Education	12.98 (4.68)	12.69 (5.05)

Note. $N = 243$.

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TABLE 2
Summary of Principal Outcome Measures by Framing Condition

Variable	*Hate Crime*	*Terror Attack*	*t(241)/χ²*	*d/Φ_r*
Collective guilt	4.70 (2.18)	4.26 (1.89)	1.65†	0.22
Collective victimization	3.30 (1.17)	3.66 (1.23)	2.32*	0.30
Attitudes toward LGBTQ	5.71 (1.61)	5.39 (1.70)	1.48	0.19
Support for LGBTQ policy	5.48 (1.63)	5.21 (1.69)	1.31	0.16
Sign petition: Yes	54.4%	49.6%	0.45	.004

Note. The third column provides a statistical test for the comparison between the framing conditions, using independent samples *t* tests (for continuous outcomes) and chi-square (for categorical outcomes). The fourth column summarizes the effect sizes. LGBTQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.
†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$.

TABLE 3
Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1. Collective guilt	4.49	2.05	—				
2. Collective victimization	3.48	1.22	−.32***	—			
3. Attitudes	5.56	1.66	.51***	−.19**	—		
4. Support for policy	5.35	1.59	.48***	−.17**	.73***	—	
5. Network diversity	0.85	1.62	.11†	−.11†	.17**	.05	—

Note. $N = 243$.
†$p < .10$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

between collective guilt and collective victimization (r = –.32, p < .001). Likewise, concurring with previous research (Walter et al., 2016), collective victimization was negatively associated with attitudes (r = –.19, p < .01) and support for policy (r = –.17, p < .01), respectively. In addition, the correlation between network diversity and collective guilt (r = .11, p < .10) and collective victimization (r = –.11, p < .10), respectively, were nonsignificant. Finally, a weak, albeit significant correlation was estimated between network diversity and attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals (r = .17, p < .01).

H1 and H2 were tested using PROCESS (Model 6 set at 10,000 bootstrapped samples with CI of 95%), an ordinary least squares regression that provides unstandardized estimates (for direct effects, see Figure 1). In total, the path model results offer support for the hypotheses. Specifically, as expected, exposure to the Orlando nightclub shooting through the hate crime frame increased collective guilt (β = .59, *SE* = .26), which enhanced supportive attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals (β = .41, *SE* = .05), resulting in higher levels of support for

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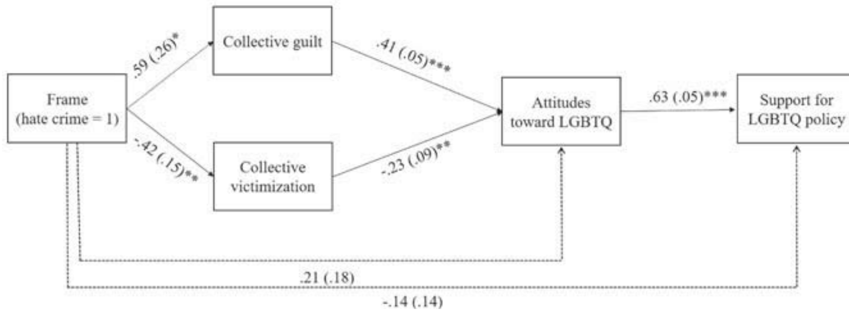

FIGURE 1 Unstandardized coefficients (and standard errors in parentheses) for the direct effects of framing condition on collective guilt; collective victimization; attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals (LGBTQ); and support for LGBTQ policy. *Note*. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

pro-LGBTQ policy (β = .63, *SE* = .05). Likewise, the hate crime frame decreased collective victimization (β = –.42, *SE* = .15), which was in turn a negative predictor of favorable attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals (β = –.23, *SE* = .09).

Furthermore, H1e predicted that exposure to the hate crime frame would increase the likelihood of participants agreeing to sign a petition of solidarity with the LGBTQ community. This hypothesis was assessed with a hierarchical binary logistic regression. Framing condition was entered at Block 1, collective guilt and collective victimization were added in Block 2, attitudes and support for policy were introduced in Block 3, and the role of social network diversity was estimated in Block 4. Contrary to our expectation, controlling for other variables in the model, exposure to the hate frame condition was not a significant predictor of signing the petition (odds ratio [*OR*] = 1.10, $p = .75$), 95% CI [.62, 1.95].[2] Of interest, collective victimization (*OR* = 0.68, $p = .005$), 95% CI [.44, .89], and attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals (*OR* = 1.45, $p = .01$), 95% CI [1.09, 1.94], were significant predictors such that, on average, collective victimization decreased the likelihood of signing the petition, whereas attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals increased the likelihood of signing the petition. Yet the best predictor of the likelihood of agreeing to sign the petition was the composition of participants' social networks (*OR* = 2.88, $p = .005$), 95% CI [1.74, 4.77]. Simply put, on average, having one additional LGBTQ person in one's immediate social network increased the likelihood of signing the petition

[2] *OR* = 1 indicates that the predictor does not affect the odds of the outcome. *OR* > 1 indicates that the predictor is associated with higher odds of the outcome. *OR* < 1 indicates that the predictor is associated with lower odds of the outcome.

by nearly 3 times. See Table 4 for a full layout of the logistic regression, including odds ratios and 95% CIs.

To examine H2, we used PROCESS (Model 6 set at 10,000 bootstrapped samples with CI of 95%). In agreement with our hypotheses, the effect of the frame condition on support for pro-LGBTQ policy was significantly mediated through collective guilt and attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals (b = .15, SE = .07), 95% CI [.03, .31], as well as through collective victimization and attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals (b = .06, SE = .04), 95% CI [.01, .18].

Finally, using PROCESS (Model 1 set at 10,000 bootstrapped samples), we examined whether the relationship between frame condition and collective guilt/ collective victimization varied by social network diversity and partisanship. First, results showed a statistically significant Frame Condition × Social Network interaction on collective guilt (b = –.19, SE = .11, $p < .05$). The analysis also found a statistically significant Frame Condition × Social Network interaction on collective victimization (b = .13, SE = .07, $p < .05$). As Figure 2 indicates, an increase in the number of LGBTQ people within participants' social networks tipped the effect both for collective guilt and for collective victimization. More important, probing the interaction with the Johnson–Neyman technique indicated that those who listed fewer than 1.15 LGBTQ individuals within their social

TABLE 4
95% Confidence Interval (CI) for Odds Ratio for the Prediction of Signing a LGBTQ Solidarity Petition by Research Variables

Predictor	*Block 1 OR*	*Block 2 OR*	*Block 3 OR*	*Block 4 OR*
Intercept	.86	.08	.01	.01
Hate-crime frame	1.05	1.01	1.10	1.10
	[.61, 1.84]	[.58, 1.76]	[.62, 1.95]	[.62, 1.95]
Collective guilt		1.29***	1.15†	1.15
		[1.11,1.49]	[.97, 1.37]	[.97,1.37]
Collective victimization		.71**	.69**	.68**
		[.54, .96]	[.54, .93]	[.54, .91]
Attitudes toward LGBTQ			1.51***	1.45**
			[1.13, 2.01]	[1.09, 1.94]
Support for policy			.96	.97
			[.74, 1.25]	[.75, 1.29]
Network diversity				2.88***
				[1.74, 4.77]
R^2 (Cox & Snell/Nagelkerke)	.001/.001	.07/.09	.12/.16	.22/.29
χ^2 (Hosmer & Lemeshow)	.001	3.77	4.38	8.49
Model χ^2	.001	15.27***	28.34***	58.83***

Note. Odds ratios (*OR*s) are shown for binary outcomes: 95% CI for *OR*s are in brackets. LGBTQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.
$^{\dagger}p < .10$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

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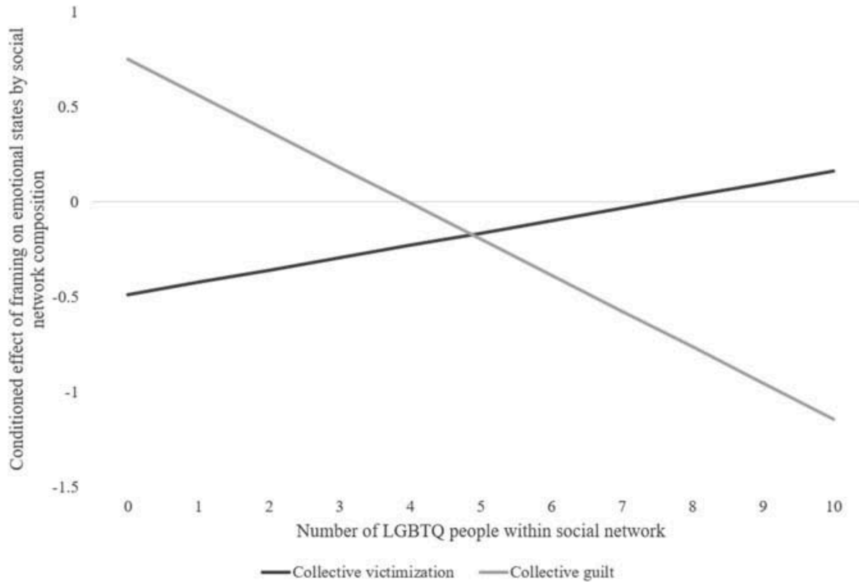

FIGURE 2 The conditioned effect of framing on collective guilt and collective victimization by social network diversity. *Note*. LGBTQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.

network (77.19% of the sample) showed a significant positive effect of the frame condition on collective guilt, whereas the effect was nonsignificant for the remaining 22.81% sample. Likewise, 1.92 (or fewer) LGBTQ individuals within participants' social networks (72.64% of the sample) was the cutoff score for a significant effect of frame condition on collective victimization. With respect to the moderation effect of partisanship, the analysis revealed nonsignificant interactions both for collective guilt ($b = –.51$, $SE = .53$, $p = .34$) and for collective victimization ($b = .47$, $SE = .41$, $p = .31$).

DISCUSSION

The current study used coverage of the Orlando nightclub shooting to demonstrate how media frames (homophobic hate crime and Islamic terrorist attack) cement competing interpretations by evoking social categories and collective emotions. Specifically, increasing ingroup inclusiveness—from an attack on the LGBTQ community to an attack on Americans—leads to greater collective victimization, subsequently undermining the need for reconciliation with the LGBTQ outgroup. Among participants exposed to the homophobic hate crime

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frame, we observed an opposite pattern of results, whereby framing the victim as the LGBTQ community increased collective guilt, encouraging participants to make reparations with the victims. It is important to note that these responses are not incidental, as they are motivated in service of reducing the social identity threat associated with exposure to either the misdeeds of the ingroup or the acceptance of harmful actions toward the ingroup (Rotella & Richeson, 2013).

The first and second hypotheses in the study assumed that, compared to the terrorist attack frame, exposure to a homophobic hate crime framing of the event will induce greater collective guilt, less collective victimization, resulting in more favorable attitudes toward the LGBTQ community and higher support toward policies that would benefit LGBTQ individuals. Even though the main effect analysis did not record any significant effects for the attitudinal outcomes, the path analysis supported our hypotheses. More specifically, exposure to the Orlando attack through the homophobic hate crime frame predicted support for the LGBTQ community, as participants tended to see their ingroup not as a victim but rather as the perpetrator against LGBTQ individuals.

Of interest, as often happens in social research, attitudes did not predict behavior—neither frame increased the likelihood of participants signing a petition in solidarity with the LGBTQ community. There are several factors that can perhaps explain people's hesitation to sign the petition. First, irrespective of the frame condition, people may think that their signature will not matter. Although political internal efficacy was not directly assessed in the present study, recent national reports suggest that, overall, 61% of the public falls into the low to medium political efficacy categories, with less educated White men being the least efficacious group (Pew Research Center, 2015). Keeping in mind that participants in the current study were predominately White and that nearly half of them were male, it stands to reason that low political efficacy played a role in people's decision not to sign. Second, given that the questionnaire was administered online and that in order to sign the petition respondents were redirected to a new website, perhaps people declined to sign the petition because they were concerned with being able to finish the survey. Relatedly, it can be argued that participants simply opted to take the shorter route to finishing the study, knowing that they will not receive additional compensation for signing a petition. Finally, another methodological explanation is associated with a potential ceiling/floor effect, namely, willingness to sign the petition was measured with two binary answer options (yes/no), thus more variance in this measurement would possibly have produced a significant effect.

The inconsistencies between the attitudinal outcomes and the behavioral outcomes shift the focus away from the direct effects of framing toward trying to analyze individual differences that can facilitate the role played by media frames. The third hypothesis attempted to test the limitations of the framing effect by assessing political partisanship and social network diversity as potential

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moderators. Based on previous research, we expected political partisans to rely on preexisting beliefs and established schemas rather than the contextual frame (Powlick & Katz, 1998). In reality, we found no support for this assertion, suggesting that the frame conditions tended to overpower existing belief systems. The failure to support this hypothesis may be due to what Haider (2016) recognized as the tension that arises when events do not necessary fit within a common framework. That is, although there are separate frames for homophobic hate crimes and Islamic terrorism, *homophobic terrorism* is much more difficult to pin down. Thus, preestablished schemas were of limited use when trying to categorize an unprecedented event.

Conversely, social network diversity was a significant moderator both for collective guilt and for collective victimization, suggesting that having LGBTQ individuals in one's immediate social network diminished the framing effect, putting more emphasis on people's interpersonal relationships rather than contextual frames. Using the binary logistic regression, the findings also indicate that social network diversity was the strongest predictor of signing the petition, as participants were 3 times more likely to comply for each additional LGBTQ individual within their social network. This is an area that deserves more theoretical and empirical attention. On one hand, in line with traditional approaches to media effects (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), the prioritization of personal influence compared to mass media highlights considerable limitations of framing. Namely, if ideas that flow from the mass media are mediated by interpersonal discussion, contextual media frames seem to lose part of their potency. On the other hand, given that homophily is a firmly established organizing mechanism of social networks, interpersonal relationships with outgroup members are often not a feasible option. For example, in the current study, on average, participants had fewer than one LGBTQ individual in their social network. In that light, media frames are highly influential, especially when covering events involving outgroups with whom ingroup members rarely interact.

There are several limitations that should be carefully acknowledged. First, the study was conducted 2 months after the Orlando nightclub shooting, and it offers only a single snapshot of a much longer time line of news coverage and public discourse. Thus, based on these measurements, it is impossible to determine how the framing effect unfolds over time, as more information becomes available to the public. For instance, one can speculate that in the immediate aftermath of terrorist attacks, media frames play a larger role in communicating the social reality, yet over time, interpersonal relations and secondary sources overpower the initial interpretations provided by media sources. Although this argument would be consistent with the media system dependency approach (Ball–Rokeach, 1985), it remains to be empirically evaluated. In addition, the current study did not employ a manipulation check, which could have helped ensure that the terrorist attack and the hate crime frames were actually interpreted as such.

Another limitation is related to the fact that our study focused only on a single event, which limits our ability to generalize these results to the coverage of other events that involve the use of competing frames. Indeed, future studies could apply the proposed theoretical mechanisms to other contexts, further examining the interplay between media frames, collective level emotions, and social identities. Another consideration related to external validity is the fact that we did not account for selective exposure. Simply put, one of the main assumptions of equivalence framing is that individuals have an equal chance to be exposed to either of the frames. Yet the documented need for opinion reinforcement may shape individuals' preferences for particular frames and the avoidance of frames that challenge their opinions (Garrett, 2009).

An additional limitation has to do with the question of causality. The interpretation of results offered in this article suggests that exposure to coverage regarding the Orlando nightclub shooting elicited an emotional response, subsequently affecting participants' attitudes toward the LGBTQ community. However, an equally plausible interpretation would maintain that framing directly affected attitudinal outcomes, which ultimately exerted an influence on collective guilt and collective victimization. Given that the mediators are not manipulated but rather simply measured, it is impossible to account for various alternative explanations (Pearl, 2014). Last, it is important to acknowledge that the present study did not utilize a representative sample, and thus it is hard to estimate the external validity of the results. Although the distribution for most variables seems to correspond with the general American population, the generalizability of other variables is harder to estimate. For instance, it is unclear whether the average American talks about current affairs with more or less nonheterosexual individuals than the average participant in the current study, who reported on talking with fewer than one LGBTQ individual. To some extent, if treating the prevalence of U.S. adults who identify as LGBT as a proxy for our measurement, then the distribution in the sample is relatively representative (according to Gates & Newport, 2012, 3.4% Americans identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender). With that in mind, it is hard to speculate the true distribution of discussions with LGBTQ individuals.

In closing, framing emerges as an important resource not only at the immediate aftermath of terrorist attacks but also in the sense-making processes that follow. Yet, excepting notable examples (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2012), the literature on framing has been largely silent about the interplay between media frames and other information resources available in individuals' communication ecologies. As demonstrated, these resources can be key elements in the acceptance of news coverage and its subsequent effect on political behavior. Moreover, the current study echoes the call made by Cacciatore et al. (2016) to reinvigorate framing research by proposing a more holistic approach to the study of framing and terrorism, one that is anchored in media effects, collective memory, and social networks.

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