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Teaching Our Violent History: Shifting Opinions on Peace and War through Information and Media Frames

Sam Lees

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Under the Direction of Toby Bolsen, PhD

ABSTRACT

I expand the current research on how graphic images in accounts of historical violence impact students' views on war, peace, violence, and the role of the international community. By first manipulating the amount of violent detail and images in an article on the Rape of Nanking, I measure the shifts in opinions on 1) the inevitability of war, 2) the violence of human nature, 3) the level of conflict in the world today, and 4) the role of the international community in punishing war crimes. I also measure shifts in 5) the level of importance placed on teaching historical violence and ask 6) if students shown graphic images support their use in education settings. Surprisingly, I find that students shown violent images were less likely to report that humans are inherently violent. Students were also less likely to support using violent images in educational settings.

INDEX WORDS: Framing, History, Visual Media, Peace, Pedagogy, Personality Type, Violence

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SAM LEES

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SAM LEES

Committee Chair: Toby Bolsen

Committee: Jeanie Grussendorf

Carrie Manning

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Services

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Jennifer Lees, the first person to ever call me smart to my face.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Bringing the violent history of humankind into the classroom can be a difficult task for today's teachers. Teaching students about events like the Holocaust or the lynching of blacks in the American South carries with it a significant burden. We want to provide knowledge of our ethical shortcomings as a species without normalizing these events in students' minds. Many argue that students who are shown graphic visual images of historical violence or are made to read about the most explicit crimes against humanity, begin to feel as though this type of violence is an inevitable part of life on earth. This is the exact opposite of the results that most teachers hope for when molding the minds of our planet's future citizens. Still, some believe that understanding these events is essential enough to justify the use of graphic images and that students will not care about our violent history unless they are "shocked" into caring. It is, therefore, essential to understand how students react to, and form opinions on, the history of human violence.

In this paper, I assess the impact of learning about an especially violent historical event on students' opinions on peace, the inevitability of war, and violent human nature through framing the event with varying levels of violent detail and images. This will contribute to the growing body of literature both on how the way we teach the history of war effects opinions on peace (Page, 2000) and on the educational and attitudinal merits of using the potentially upsetting details associated with it (Lieberfeld, 2007; McKinley and Fahmy, 2017). Much research has been done on how studying the history of violence influences opinions on its inevitability (Richmond, 2007; Page, 2000). However, no recent studies have experimentally tested whether changing the accentuation of violent details in a specific account of historical violence may shift these particular opinions. This could go a long way in helping political

scientists, historians, and educators better understand how students absorb and operationalize information on the history of war and whether future research may be able to find a compromise between teaching *about* war and *teaching war*.

2 VIOLENT CONTENT AND FRAMING

This research expands upon previous research which suggests that increasing the level of graphic content when discussing a violent event will trigger stronger emotional reactions and result in shifts in public opinions on, and importance being placed on, the event (Grizzard, 2017; Fahmy et al., 2014; Scharrer & Blackburn, 2015). In a 2017 study by McKinley and Fahmy, which incrementally amplified the level of graphic detail in reporting on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, increasingly strong negative mood from participants was observed. However, they observed only a moderate strengthening in attitudes about the conflict, and even in these cases, the violent images only served to strengthen preexisting attitudes and not foster new ones. But can increasing the level of graphic detail in an account of historical political violence actually change some preexisting attitudes?

Druckman and Chong (2007) define framing effects as the measure of how individual or public opinions on an issue can shift dramatically based on how that issue is presented. Put simply, framing can be said to be the process by which individuals conceptualize a particular issue. Individuals draw their beliefs from stored attitudes or memories that can be retrieved and applied to new information (Chong and Druckman, 2007). In communication, framing can be images, words, phrases, or "presentation styles" which can be used by the presenter to direct the reader to focus on a specific aspect of an issue and form a desired opinion about it (Druckman, 2001). Frames are considered an unavoidable part of human communication, in which large amounts of information are compressed into meaningful "chunks." This study specifically

utilizes what is known as “emphasis framing” (Druckman, 2001). Emphasis framing occurs when a communicator’s emphasis on a subset of the potentially relevant considerations toward any “attitude-object” causes the listener/audience to place greater “weight” on that consideration (relative to other potentially relevant considerations) when forming an opinion toward the object.

For this study, I used a specific, potentially relevant *aspect* (extreme violence in history) of an issue, and emphasizes it to prompt an individual to focus on this consideration when developing their opinion on the issue (in this case, human nature, war, and conflict). Entman (1993) explains framing as focusing on certain aspects of an individual’s perceived reality to make them seem more “salient.” In his argument, hyper-focusing on specific aspects of an issue can potentially be used to influence an individual’s opinion on or moral interpretation of that issue. This is particularly important because research shows that the more credible the source, the stronger the framing effect (Druckman, 2001) and the framing of history as continuing episodes of extreme violence is not only done in the media, but in textbooks, classrooms, and museum exhibits as well.

In researching how framing impacts making risky choices, Druckman and McDermott (2008) found that different negative emotions affect frames in different ways. They stress the importance of distinguishing between different types of negative emotions when using frames that incite such emotions. According to the study dealing with risky choices, different negative emotions will depress or exacerbate effects. In this study, I measure the emotional impact of framing a historical event in increasingly violent detail on students. To address this issue and because these conditions will undoubtedly incite some level of negative emotions, I include measures for anger, sadness, upset, and disgust.

3 WAR, HISTORY, AND PUBLIC OPINION

Teaching students to effectively apply historical knowledge of violent events like genocides to modern political issues is tricky and usually requires a lot of prompting (Shreiner, 2017). Nevertheless, these events and their impact on our understanding of war and human aggression are argued by scholars to be among the most important lessons in human history (Meyers-Walls, Meyers-Bowmann, and Pelo, 1993; Dutton, 2007; Glass, 2008). Despite the importance placed upon the "great" wars in history classes all over the world, there is considerable disagreement over how exactly these wars are supposed to be taught. On the one hand, wars have traditionally been the crux for which nations build their identity and formulate their national pride (Renan & Giglioli, 2018). Indeed, there is little doubt that the courageous stories and unmarked tombs of dead soldiers touch at the very heart of modern nationalism (Anderson, 2006; Pennell, 2016). But for those who do not buy into national pride as the primary goal of preserving history, teaching history as a series of violent wars within and between states is problematic. The arguments against it are many but can be broken down into two major camps; the first is that teaching history through war has the added consequence of validating the idea that war is inevitable. Put plainly, it suggests that since we have always had war, we will always have war (Richmond, 2007; Page, 2000; Galtung, 1969). The second major issue, which plays off the first, has to do with moral responsibility. The tendency, according to many scholars, is for the history of war to be taught without moral responsibility being assigned to those who engage in the wars in the first place (Page, 2000, Mandlovits & Walker, 1987), or for the winning side to present their role as just and morally necessary (Ferro, 2004). Thus, moral responsibility for violence in wars is assigned to the losing side or to those who can be used as scapegoats for the people in charge, as individual perpetrators of genocide often are (Dutton,

2007; Hinton, 2005). This serves to further exacerbate the idea that, as the saying goes, "peace was never an option."

Still, another concern when teaching about the history of war and violence, and one which this paper seeks to address, is the alternative tendency to reduce the very real, human experiences in war to "confusing arrows, blocks, and squiggles." (Reardon, 2008). This creates not only confusion for students but can cause them to become disinterested or even intimidated. Throwing a series of dates and military maneuvers at students to memorize is not likely to cause students to become pessimistic about the possibility of peace. However, it is *also* not likely to cause students to assign any relevance or importance to that history. Thus, no lessons at all are learned from history when students are not made to care (Reardon, 2008). Daniel Lieberman (2007) presents an alternative to these two trends, stressing the necessity of discussing war and violence as a social, rather than a natural or quasi-natural phenomenon, leaving it open for social analysis. This categorization is extremely important as social analyses are designed to study cultural and social phenomena, which are based on unfixed norms and traditions rather than natural occurrences. This research attempts to further measure how these theories play out in an experimental setting with real college students. Since what is being controlled for in the experiment is the level of violent detail in the historical account being presented, I can show students a dry account of war that does not use any of the "shock value" normally used in lessons/exhibits on political violence and directly measure how much importance students place on the event. To my knowledge, this is the first experiment in recent literature that directly adjusts the level of violent content to influence students' opinions on these specific big-picture issues. My first four hypotheses deal with expectations on how students view war in relation to human nature.

Many political scientists who study war do not hesitate to argue that "[n]othing is more important to a nation than war and peace" (Atwood, 2005) and that the best way to understand peace is to study the history of violence. This idea has come under fire in recent decades. Many peace scholars posit that learning about history in a way that hyper-focuses on violence teaches that violence is inevitable – put simply, it promotes the idea that since war has always happened, it will always happen (Page, 2000; Davis, 2008). By this logic, I expect students to report a stronger belief that war is inevitable when given a highly graphic depiction of a violent event in history.

Hypothesis 1

Individuals presented with graphic visual images of historical violence will be more likely to view war as inevitable.

Hypothesis 2 aligns very closely with my first hypothesis; only it seeks to measure opinions about individual human beings outside of a war context. Apart from opinions on war in general, there is another layer of pessimism in response to learning about war with no peace context and with an acute focus on violence - this is the idea that human beings are natural killers and inherently violent when given the chance (Dutton, 2007; Goldhagen, 2007; Baumeister, 1999). While this idea is often perpetuated by those who study and write about war and war crimes it has been widely argued that violence is, in fact, not an instinct in humans but something that must be learned (Nordstrom, 1998; McDoom, 2012; Posner, 2004; Enloe, 1990). A study often referenced is Dave Grossman (1995), who stated that 80% to 85% of American soldiers in

WWII on the front lines reported not firing their weapons during the heat of battle. By the time the Vietnam War ended, the reported percentage of American soldiers who did not fire their weapons in the heat of battle was between 5% -10% (Grossman, 2009). Nordstrom (1998) uses this research to make the argument that direct initiatives by the U.S. government to "desensitize" soldiers to killing were used to counter our natural propensity toward nonviolence. Today, our history tells of U.S. soldiers participating in massacres like My Lai and No Gun Ri (Allison, 2012; Weinberger, 2008) with minimal discussion on the conditioning which made this sort of violence possible. Because these kinds of discussions are not normalized in most school curricula, I expect students who are given a highly violent account of history to show more agreement with the statement that violence is natural in humans.

Hypothesis 2

Individuals presented with graphic visual images of historical violence will be more likely to view human beings as inherently violent.

My next two hypotheses deal with the political end of the discussion. I want to know how these opinions play out in the way students perceive the world around them and how they think the international community should address war crimes. As discussed above, a significant amount of literature has been written on how teaching a violence-focused history causes students to perceive violence and conflict in the world (Page, 2000; Nordstrom, 1998; Enloe, 1990). How an event of political violence is framed has a palpable influence on how much political violence is perceived around us. We see this phenomenon played out in the framing of the attacks on 9/11/2001 by the mainstream news media as described by Mathilde Roza:

> The constant replaying of the attacks on television, to the accompaniment of the ominous headline ["America is Under Attack"], helped transform them into a highly symbolic public performance in which some 3,000 Americans had been cruelly forced to participate through their deaths. As a result, it was possible for every American to think of him- or herself as a potential victim, as well as a survivor. - Roza, 2009 (Pg 105)

Hence, when presented with an account of a particularly disturbing violent event in history with graphic images, I expect students to have a more negative outlook regarding the perceived state of the world around them. I include two response questions to measure this effect - the first asks about perceptions of conflicts in the *world* and the second asks about perceptions of the subject's particular *country*[1].

Hypothesis 3

Individuals presented with graphic visual images of historical violence will report a more pessimistic outlook on the state of peace and conflict today.

The next set of questions addresses how students believe the international community should deal with conflict. Scholarship suggests that, despite the decades of debate over the moral quagmire of criminal deterrence by experts, the general public usually supports criminals getting their "just desserts" through judicial retribution over other options (Haist, 2009; Keller, Oswald, Stucki, and Gollwitzer, 2010). This effect is stronger when the "wrongdoer" is a foreign actor or state (Liberman, 2013). This, despite the largely inconclusive research on the actual effectiveness

[1] Student research pool was from a university with a large percentage of international students. It is likely that many of these students were answering based on countries other than the U.S. which may have more or less conflict in general.

of the ICC and the general distaste expressed by many in an international body tasked with avenging "yesterday's victims" (Porok, 2017; Akhaven, 2001; Hillebrecht, 2012). Despite the many concerns from scholars over the issues involved with creating a "punitive society" (Garland, 2001; Pratt et al., 2005; Simon, 2001a; Simon and Sparks, 2013), Carvalho and Chamberlen (2017) show that the need to feel that the rules and norms of society/community have meaning drives people to support punishment for breaking those norms. Hence, learning about a war crime like a military massacre, may make students feel insecure about their norms and values, this leads to the "hostile solidarity" of punishment as they attempt to project their insecurities onto the perpetrators (Carvalho and Chamberlen, 2017; Mead, 1918; Matravers and Maruna, 2005).

Hypothesis 4

Individuals presented with graphic visual images of historical violence will report stronger support for punitive action by the international community against countries that commit war crimes.

3.1 Attitudinal Effects of Violent Content

Hypothesis 5 deals with how students assign importance to violent historical events. As stated, I expect students to have an emotional response to the treatments. Similar experiments have found that being exposed to violent content produces stronger anger and disgust responses (Grizzard et al. 2017). Additionally, altering the level of violent/graphic content used in discussing a political conflict has been shown to strengthen the preexisting opinions held by those surveyed when asked whether they supported drone strikes (Scharrer & Blackburn, 2015).

Emotional reactions rely on external stimulation; they are the product of our available beliefs and knowledge when evaluating a specific situation or phenomenon (Grossman and D'Ambrosio, 2004; Lazerus, 1991; Roseman, Spindel, and Jose, 1990). It has been shown, however, that framing and priming can alter the relationship between a person's predispositions and their emotional responses (Gross and D'Ambrosio, 2004). Thus, despite an individual's predispositions, frames that generate an emotional response do seem to consistently influence opinions. The nuances of how exactly these emotional responses mix with predispositions to influence opinion are far less easy to predict (Druckman, 2001; Brewer, 2001). Regardless, it stands to reason that an emotional response will generate a greater assignment of overall importance to the historical event by the students surveyed.

While the relationship between violent content and public opinion has been studied extensively, it is important to take a step back and ask whether using such content in teaching about war actually causes the student to assign more importance to the topic. In a 2014 Time Magazine article, Fred Ritchen made a case for showing highly graphic images in reporting on humanitarian crises by writing "… whether [we] look at these photographs or not their existence remains important; they provide reference points for both the present and the longer view of history" and "[t]here is no calculus to determine the most effective way to show horror. But certainly it would be important to investigate the process that engendered it." *Hypothesis 5* addresses the discussion on how graphic depictions of violence may cause students to assign more importance to a topic. I believe this is a necessary preliminary step in drawing conclusions about why this relationship occurs. Assigning importance to an event like a genocide is not easy to teach (Shreiner, 2017) since students so often view history as "one damn fact after another" (Barton and Levstik, 2004). For this study, I want to expand on the existing research and

measure whether using images of violence will truly cause students to assign more importance to an event from history.

Hypothesis 5

Individuals presented with graphic visual images of historical violence will assign more importance to those events than students who only get the bare facts.

3.2 Visual Media, Violence, and Learning

As mentioned, part of the debate among scholars over how to teach about violence and war is over whether students will care more when more graphic content is used and violence is accentuated (Totten and Feinberg, 2001; Lindquist, 2008). *Hypothesis 6* deals with whether students shown graphic violent images will support the use of similar images in an educational setting. The use of violent media, from videogames to films to pictures of war, has been suggested to influence behavior, emotional responses, and learning in young people (Anderson et al. 2003; Wilson, 2008; Hurley, 2004; Carnagey and Anderson, 2005). Highly violent visual media and its effect on young people is hotly debated and much researched throughout academia. Derby (2014) found that violent media can be used to recruit soldiers into the military through the use of reward responses from violent videogames but that these same games can combat post-traumatic stress disorder among military veterans. In the context of war violence, many argue that most people in developed countries are shielded from the horrors of war and human rights abuses (Grizzard et. at., 2017; Pinker, 2011). Hence, there is a growing body of literature that calls for educational bodies to not shy away from using graphic information and images

because it can strengthen students' "moral sensitivity" and support for change (Grizzard et al. 2017; McKinley & Fahmy, 2011).

While many argue that it is necessary to "bombard" students with the most violent and graphic images available to "drive home" the horrors of political violence (Totten and Feinberg, 2001 Ritchin, 2014), others rebuke this method as unnecessary and difficult to justify. Shawn (1995) illustrates the use of such images in teaching school children about the Holocaust by asking "What do we do as adults when we have a nightmare? Who among us would wake our children and share the experience with them?" However, exemplification theory (Zillman, 2002) dictates that focusing on specific "case reports" (images, details, etc.) in media reporting elicit more robust responses and comprehension than using statistics and data (Grizzard et al. 2017; (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). This suggests that violent images may be worth the potential emotional impact on students, but creates a dilemma when teaching students about extreme political violence.

It is important to note the implications of including images into the study and how the use of images (over text only) influence attitudes. Treatment condition 3 (*Figure 4.3*) of the study includes pictures as well as graphic detail. As can be seen in *Figure 4.3*, the final condition includes four images reportedly taken during the Rape of Nanking[2]. By including these images, I expected to observe a higher reported emotional response from participants and, as a result, a shift in support for using such images in teaching the horrors of war. Studies have shown little evidence that survey conditions which include pictures are better evaluated than those with text

[2] It should be noted that there is some controversy surrounding the origins and authenticity of these images. However, this controversy and these images' authenticity is not directly relevant to how violent images affect attitudes or learning and, therefore, does not discredit the use of these images in the study.

or verbal conditions (Toepel and Couper, 2011), but the use of pictures in teaching does produce a change in attitudes (Samuels, 1970; Litcher and Johnson, 1969).

The use of visual media in social experiments has been shown to influence individual opinions, emotions, and responses. Pictures and video of presidential candidates, for example, can have a significant impact on voters' opinions on the electability, trustworthiness, and even the perceived masculinity or femininity of the candidate – especially for voters who are less educated on the issues or more distracted (Bauer and Carpinella, 2018; Druckman, 2003). In general, individuals today have become used to, and prefer, visual information over text. However, it is worth asking if visual images are preferred by students when they are highly graphic and not completely necessary to understand the educational content being presented.

Levesque and colleagues argue that students analyze historical images in very different ways than professional academics. While historians view and analyze violent historical images within the contexts surrounding them, most students lack the "historical empathy" (Davis Jr., 2001) to place themselves into the contexts of the photographs and, instead, rely on their own life experience and initial emotional reactions to make conclusions about the appropriateness of the images. Hence, many find that it isn't until discussing the intricate contexts of violent images in a classroom setting that most students begin to fully appreciate their historical and educational value (Fitchett et al., 2015). Therefore, I hypothesize that students shown violent historical images will be less likely to support using such images to teach others.

Hypothesis 6

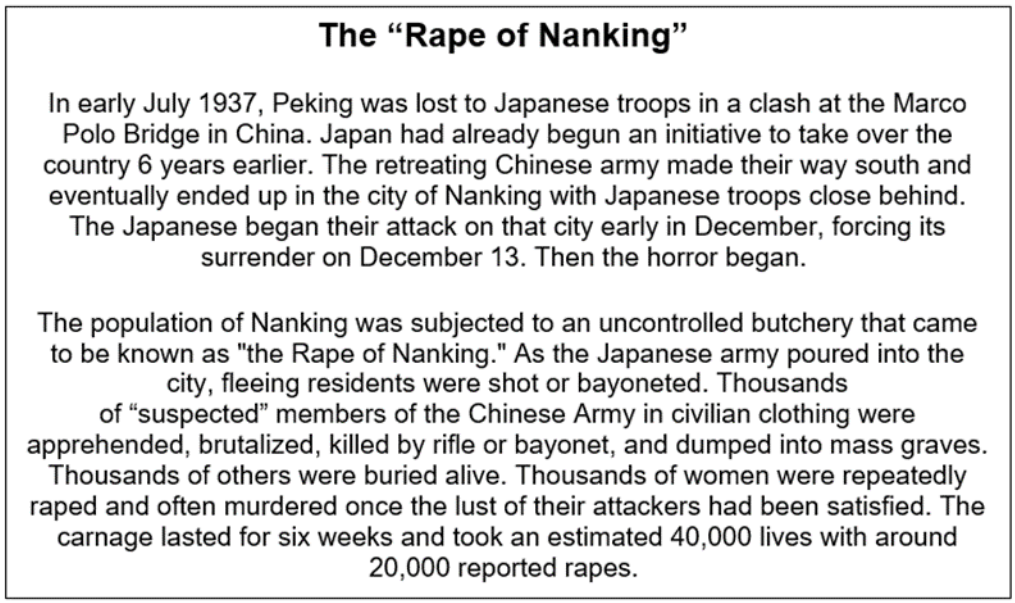
Individuals presented with graphic visual images of historical violence will be less likely to support using similar violent images in educational settings.

4 EXPERIMENT

For this study, the primary focus is to understand how university students already think about peace and war, and how those opinions may be shifted through the exploration of a particularly violent historical event. Three hundred thirty participants were given a survey which asked questions to gauge their opinions on whether war is inevitable, whether peace is possible, and what the role of the international community should be in regards to promoting world peace and punishing states for violent behavior. Additionally, questions were asked about the importance of teaching about violent events in history and whether the use of highly violent visual images should be used when doing so. It should be noted that these survey questions referred to a specific age range; 10-18 year-olds. This was to ensure that participants would have similar images in their minds when thinking of who the audience would be. A more ambiguous term such as "young people" or "students" could mean very different things to different individuals. Additionally, the use of terms like "high school" or "middle school" would not likely translate to all participants, as the study was conducted at a university with a high percentage of international exchange students who would not necessarily come from these grade structures. As stated earlier, one proposed "mistake" when teaching military history is the tendency to use dry facts, geography, and dates to describe events that arguably should invoke an emotional response in students. This approach has the unintended consequence of making students feel disconnected, confused, or disinterested by what they are learning. The treatments for the survey, as described below, range from a very basic description of a violent historical event to a highly graphic description that includes pictures.

4.1 Design

Students were randomly assigned 1 of 3 treatment conditions or a control condition through an online survey platform (Qualtrics). In the first condition, students were presented with a short account of the Rape of Nanking. The condition uses dry language and bare facts to explain the event with as little "shock value" as possible. The first paragraph discusses the date and the movement of Japanese soldiers from Peking to Nanking; the second paragraph briefly describes the massacre but focuses primarily on the number of deaths/rapes and does not go into much explicit detail on specific acts committed by the Japanese soldiers. Precautions were made to give an accurate description of what happened at the Nanking massacre without giving too much detail. This was to ensure that the basic information remained consistent across all treatment conditions.



The "Rape of Nanking"

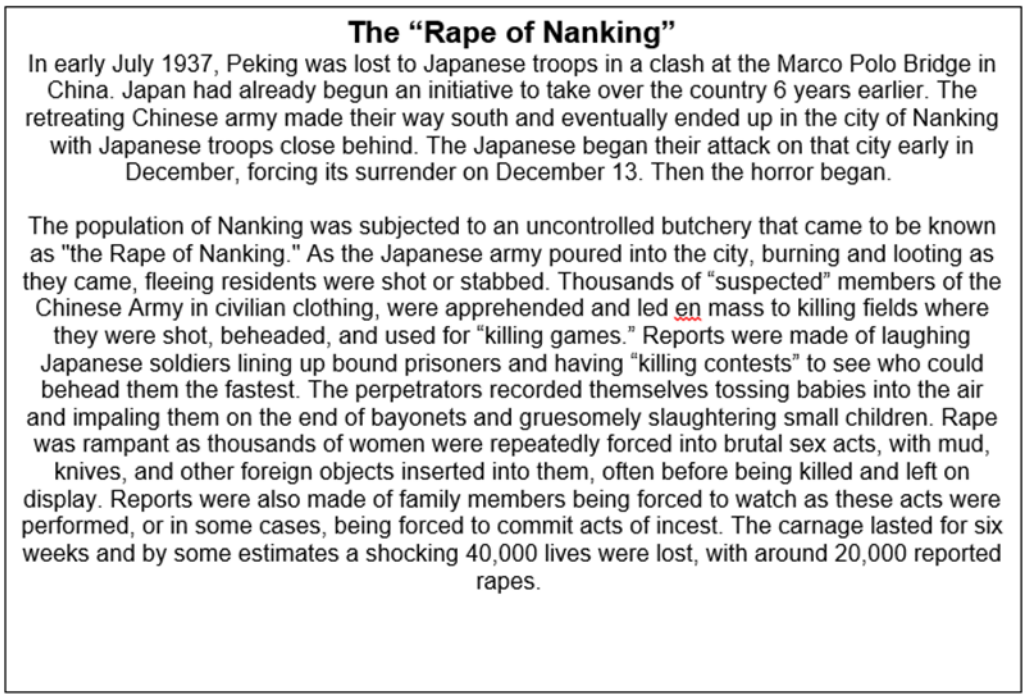
In early July 1937, Peking was lost to Japanese troops in a clash at the Marco Polo Bridge in China. Japan had already begun an initiative to take over the country 6 years earlier. The retreating Chinese army made their way south and eventually ended up in the city of Nanking with Japanese troops close behind. The Japanese began their attack on that city early in December, forcing its surrender on December 13. Then the horror began.

The population of Nanking was subjected to an uncontrolled butchery that came to be known as "the Rape of Nanking." As the Japanese army poured into the city, fleeing residents were shot or bayoneted. Thousands of "suspected" members of the Chinese Army in civilian clothing were apprehended, brutalized, killed by rifle or bayonet, and dumped into mass graves. Thousands of others were buried alive. Thousands of women were repeatedly raped and often murdered once the lust of their attackers had been satisfied. The carnage lasted for six weeks and took an estimated 40,000 lives with around 20,000 reported rapes.

Figure 4.1 Treatment Condition 1

Participants given *Treatment Condition 2* were shown an almost identical article but with much more elaboration on the violent acts allegedly committed against the Chinese. The second

condition provides participants with a violent narrative designed to create a stronger mental image of the violence in the mind of the reader.



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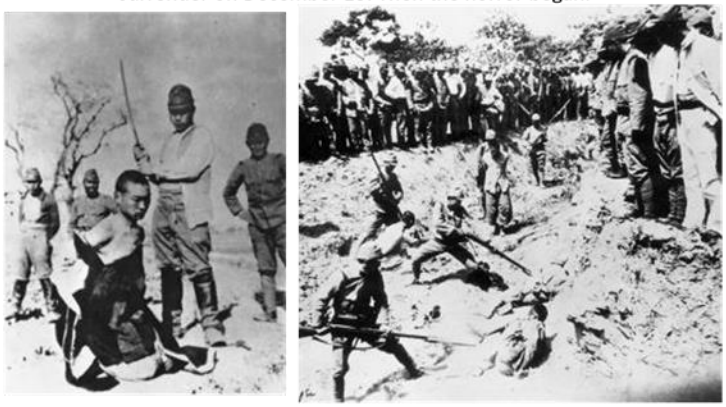
The population of Nanking was subjected to an uncontrolled butchery that came to be known as "the Rape of Nanking." As the Japanese army poured into the city, burning and looting as they came, fleeing residents were shot or stabbed. Thousands of "suspected" members of the Chinese Army in civilian clothing, were apprehended and led en mass to killing fields where they were shot, beheaded, and used for "killing games." Reports were made of laughing Japanese soldiers lining up bound prisoners and having "killing contests" to see who could behead them the fastest. The perpetrators recorded themselves tossing babies into the air and impaling them on the end of bayonets and gruesomely slaughtering small children. Rape was rampant as thousands of women were repeatedly forced into brutal sex acts, with mud, knives, and other foreign objects inserted into them, often before being killed and left on display. Reports were also made of family members being forced to watch as these acts were performed, or in some cases, being forced to commit acts of incest. The carnage lasted for six weeks and by some estimates a shocking 40,000 lives were lost, with around 20,000 reported rapes.

Figure 4.2 Treatment Condition 2

The 3rd randomly assigned condition contained the same texts as condition 2 but included visual images. The 4th group was assigned a control condition which had no article and simply read: "*Answer the following questions as honestly as you can."*

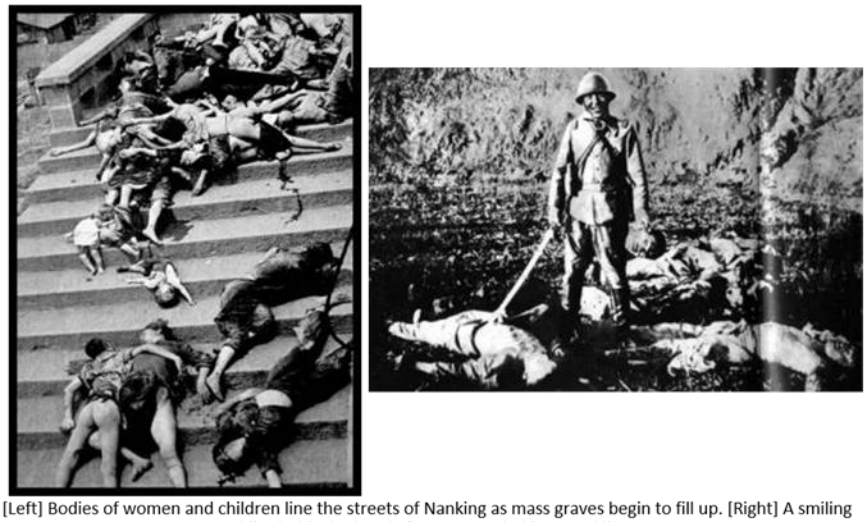
The "Rape of Nanking"

In early July 1937, Peking was lost to Japanese troops in a clash at the Marco Polo Bridge in China. Japan had already begun an initiative to take over the country 6 years earlier. The retreating Chinese army made their way south and eventually ended up in the city of Nanking with Japanese troops close behind. The Japanese began their attack on that city early in December, forcing its surrender on December 13. Then the horror began.



[Left] Chinese man being beheaded by Japanese soldiers. [right] Mass killings by rifle and bayonet in ditches used as mass graves.

The population of Nanking was subjected to an uncontrolled butchery that came to be known as "the Rape of Nanking." As the Japanese army poured into the city, burning and looting as they came, fleeing residents were shot or stabbed. Thousands of "suspected" members of the Chinese Army in civilian clothing, were apprehended and led en mass to killing fields where they were shot, beheaded, and used for "killing games." Reports were made of laughing Japanese soldiers lining up bound prisoners and having "killing contests" to see who could behead them the fastest. The perpetrators recorded themselves tossing babies into the air and impaling them on the end of bayonets and gruesomely slaughtering small children. Rape was rampant as thousands of women were repeatedly forced into brutal sex acts, with mud, knives, and other foreign objects inserted into them, often before being killed and left on display. Reports were also made of family members being forced to watch as these acts were performed, or in some cases, being forced to commit sex acts with their own family members. The carnage lasted for six weeks and by some estimates, a shocking 40,000 lives were lost, with around 20,000 reported rapes.



[Left] Bodies of women and children line the streets of Nanking as mass graves begin to fill up. [Right] A smiling soldier holds the head of a suspected Chinese soldier.

Figure 4.3 Treatment Condition 3

The Rape of Nanking was chosen because, as part of the study, I want to test whether participants will assign more importance to the event if more graphic detail is added. Because of this aspect of the test, it was necessary to use an episode of extreme political violence with which American/Western students would not be as familiar. It is important to note that, because the study was conducted at a university with a large percentage of international students, the amount of familiarity with the Rape of Nanking likely differs strongly from one student to the other. In particular, students from China will likely be highly familiar with the event, while students from Japan may have been taught that the event never happened (Nakano, 2018). To control for this difference, I include a question specifically measuring the students' previous familiarity with the event. After the assigned article or control condition, students then answer a series of questions designed to measure their opinions, explained in more detail in the next section.

4.2 Methods

For each hypothesis, I include 1-2 survey questions designed to measure the relationship between condition and response. For example, for "*inevitability of war*," I included the question "*How much do you agree with the following statement: War is an inevitable part of life on earth*" as well as the question "*How much do you agree with the following statement: World peace is possible, eventually.*" In asking essentially the same question in more than one different way, I expect to get a more accurate measure of how effective my treatment conditions are. All questions were multiple choice on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = "Entirely disagree" to 7 = "Entirely agree," as has been shown to be effective in recent political psychology survey experiments measuring the effects of frames on individual opinions (Druckman, 2001; Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook, 2014). I use a series of statistical tests, including ANOVA, basic T-Tests

for differences in means, and a series of multivariate regressions to determine the statistical significance of these changes.

In addition to the treatments, I include a very brief personality test into the survey in which participants are asked to answer a short series of questions based on the "Big 5" personality domains. I used the 10-item questionnaire from Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann (2003) to measure personality type against responses to see if the personality domain acts as an antecedent variable for participants' responses to violent content. The Big Five personality domains, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (worded as "stability" in my tables) have been used to explain everything from peoples' propensity to political protest (Brandstätter & Opp, 2014) to ethical leadership (Kalshoven et al., 2011). These domains (or types) are generally agreed upon to significantly influence opinions between and across ethnic and socioeconomic groups (Gerber et al., 2010; Schoen, 2007; Caprara, 1999). The 10-item short version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10) I use in this experiment was shown to still retain significant validity when compared to the longer BFI-44 questionnaire (Rammstedt & Oliver, 2007; Gosling et al., 2003).

In addition, I include a measure of four predicted emotional responses to the content of the articles, sadness, anger, upset, and disgust, which are also measured on a 7-point scale. Although I suspect the changes in graphic content between articles to translate into stronger opinions regarding my dependent variables, it is important to keep in mind the difference in individual reactions to violent content. By including these measures of emotional reaction I can measure the impact of the participants' emotional reactions to the content on my DVs independent of the different treatments. Simply put, by including these measures I can determine whether having a strong emotional reaction to an account of historical violence, regardless of

graphic detail, causes students to have stronger opinions on my dependent variables. The results of all tests are explained below.

5 RESULTS

The survey was taken by 330 students in total. Out of those 330, 39 participants either did not agree to the informed consent or left all answers blank, leaving a total usable N of 291. It should be noted that the total N of the experiment is relatively small, given the nature of the study, and could raise concern. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the number of students that attended college in America in 2019 was 19.9 million. Statistically, the ideal *minimal* sample size for this population is 385 for a 95% confidence interval with a 5% margin of error and 273 for a 90% confidence interval[3]. Since this study is primarily seeking to make inferences about American college students, the sample size is just shy of an ideal size for this population. These limitations should be taken into consideration when making assumptions based on the following models. However, the ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic diversity of the university campus surveyed does offer a rich sample of students from different backgrounds and may provide a more robust sample of the overall population than a school with less diversity in the student body.

The distribution of these participants was as follows: 75 participants were assigned treatment condition 1 (the basic article), 71 participants were assigned treatment condition 2 (the article with graphic detail), 72 participants were assigned treatment condition 3 (the article with visual images), and 73 participants were assigned the control condition (no article). The median rating by participants on how familiar they were with the Rape of Nanking before taking the

[3] Based on an online statistics calculator (surveymonkey)

survey was a 6 – moderately familiar. The response averages and standard errors for each question across the four groups can be seen below in *Figure 5.1*.

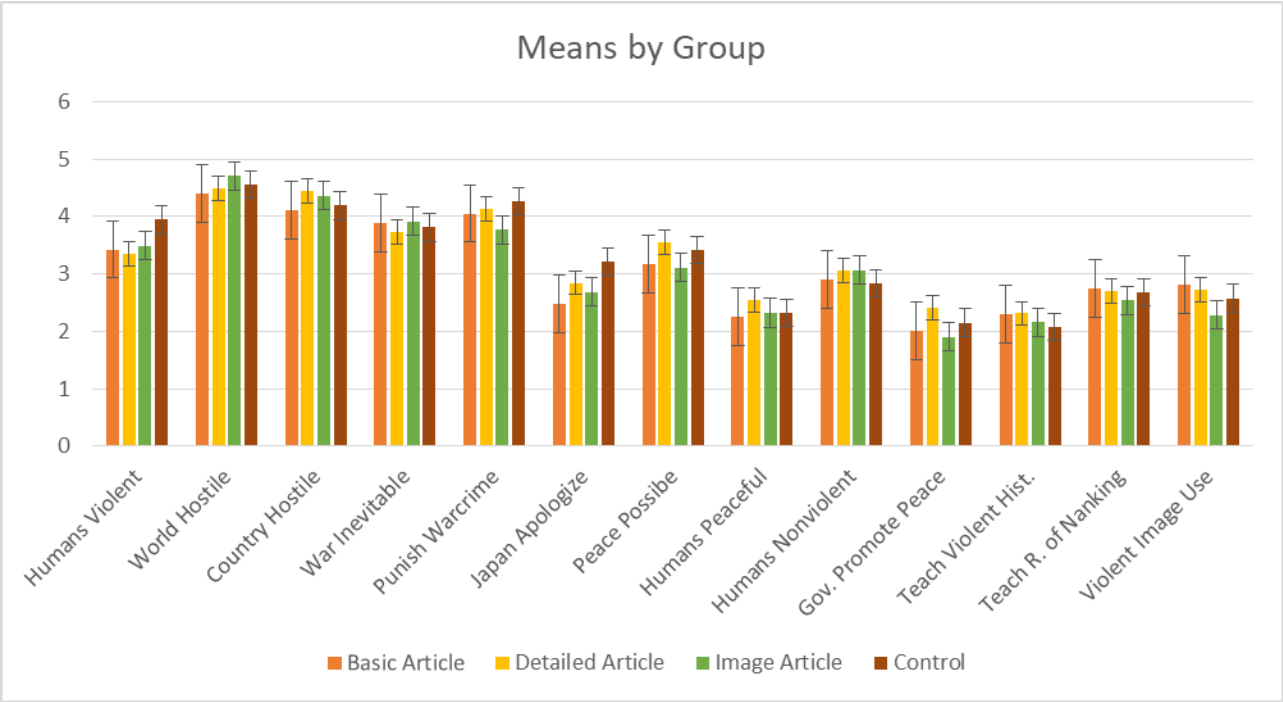


Figure 5.1 Means by Treatment Group

While few differences stand out immediately when looking at the graph above, we do see some variation. Specifically, where students are asked if the international community should force Japan to apologize for the Rape of Nanking, whether governments have an obligation to promote world peace, and whether the use of violent images is justified in museum exhibits. Some statistical models are necessary to get a more robust picture of what the relationships are between the treatments and responses. Below, I discuss the results of these models and my findings in greater detail.

5.1 Shifting Opinions with Media Frames

I begin by performing a series of Independent Samples t-tests for equality of means in responses of my groups from one treatment condition to the other. By running Independent Samples t-tests I observe only the changes in the average responses between each condition individually; that is, change from condition 1 to condition 2, from condition 2 to condition 3, from condition 3 to control, etc. The results of these tests can be seen below in *Table 5.1*. I expect to observe the most significant differences in the column labeled "3,c" which shows the differences between the mean responses in Condition 3 (article with visual images) and the control. It is important to note that the differences in means shown are from the first condition in the column label to the second. This means that a negative mean difference in column "Cond 1,3" for example, shows that the average response was higher in condition 1 than in condition 3.

Table 5.1 Difference in Means

Difference in Means (T Test)	*Cond.1,2*	*Cond.1,3*	*Cond. 2,3*	*Cond. 1,c*	*Cond. 2,c*	*Cond. 3,c*
Humans Violent	.075	.059	.134	.519	.593	.459
	(.30)	(.24)	(.51)	(2.04)**	(2.27)**	(1.74)*
Humans Nonviolent	-.150	.163	.013	-.071	-.221	-.234
	(-.69)	(.73)	(.05)	(-.36)	(-.10)	(1.35)
Humans Want Peace	-.296	.066	-.230	.062	-.234	-.004
	(.19)	(.35)	(-1.14)	.32	(-1.13)	(-.02)
World is Hostile	-.086	.308	.223	.162	.076	-.147
	(-.41)	(1.45)	(1.08)	(.74)	(.36)	(-.68)
Country is Hostile	-.336	.245	-.082	.085	-.251	-.169
	(-1.41)	(1.03)	(-.33)	(.36)	(-1.05)	(-.68)
War is Inevitable	.148	.037	.184	-.072	.076	-.108
	(.52)	(.14)	(.64)	(-.266)	(.26)	(-.40)
Peace is Possible	-.376	-.062	-438	.238	-.138	.300
	(-1.41)	(-.24)	(-1.51)	(.92)	(-.48)	(1.06)
Punish War Crimes	-.088	-.289	-.377	.207	.119	4.96
	(-.34)	(-1.09)	(-1.39)	(.80)	(.45)	(1.84)*
Force Japan to Apologize	-.365	.201	-.165	.739	.374	.539
	(-1.47)	(.85)	(-.64)	(2.92)***	(1.36)	(2.04)**
Govt. Should Promote Peace	-395	-.111	-.506	.137	-.258	.248
	(-1.75)*	(-.56)	(-2.20)**	(.76)	(-1.21)	(1.35)
Should Teach Violent Histories	-.017	-.141	-.157	-.225	-.241	-.084
	(-.08)	(-.71)	(-.76)	(-1.13)	(-.13)	(-.43)
Should Teach R. Nanking	.042	-.205	-.163	-.075	-.033	.130
	(.19)	(-.89)	(-.67)	(-.31)	(-.13)	(.51)
Support Using Violent Images	.095	-.536	-.441	-.238	-.143	.298
	(.38)	(-2.35)**	(-1.80)*	(-1.02)	(-.57)	(1.30)

T-score listed in parentheses. All numbers corresponding to 7-point scale. * P < .1; ** P < .05; *** P < .01

In looking at the data, the first thing that we can observe is that there is very little variation in individual opinions on the inevitability of war or the state of conflict in the world. This means that both *Hypothesis 1* and *Hypothesis 3* do not hold up to the test. It is likely that students' opinions on the inevitability of war and the possibility of peace are deeply ingrained beliefs and not easily changed by a single condition. This does not discount theories on how a violence-focused history determines opinions of the inevitability of violence; it simply means that these opinions are not easily shifted by a single case study. Future research should look at long-term treatments on teaching history in a way that accentuates peace. Similar conclusions could be drawn about *Hypothesis 3;* it is unlikely that a single historical case study is enough to shift perceptions on the level of conflict in the world or one's country.

Hypothesis 2, that students will be more likely to assume human beings are inherently violent when given a more graphic treatment, appears to work in reverse. Participants were significantly more likely to feel strongly that humans are inherently violent when given no treatment than in all treatment conditions. This is perhaps due to a need for students to "defend" themselves when faced with a particularly shocking case of human barbarism. This idea ties in with research on how, although a majority of people in historical episodes of political violence like lynchings and military massacres are perpetrators or bystanders, we tend to see these individuals as exceptionally "evil" and "not like us" (Vollhardt and Bilewicz, 2013; Dutton, 2007; Monroe, 2009; Brownmiller, 1975). However, the inclusion of visual images in condition 3 does appear to lessen this effect.

Hypothesis 4 deals with the punitive role of the international community. From the data, we see that support for punitive action by the international community against war crimes, in general, is not significantly influenced by the level of violent content in the treatments, but

support for the international community forcing Japan to apologize is. However, once again this relationship works in reverse from what was hypothesized and is strongest between *Treatment Condition 1*, the basic facts article, and the control group. This change is more difficult to explain but could relate to how the event was presented to students in treatment condition 1. It could be that the participants in the control group (mean previous familiarity score of 4.64) were imagining the Rape of Nanking to be a more modern war crime; once realizing the event happened in the 1930s, most respondents were less likely to support punitive action against modern-day Japan for it. However, this explanation is by no means perfect and there is presently no way within the scope of this experiment to test this.

The data also shows a significant difference between participants' opinions on whether governments have an obligation to promote world peace. As can be seen above, students who received the treatment with the graphic visual images were significantly less likely to believe that promoting world peace should be a priority of world governments. The mean response to this question for participants in the visual image group was the lowest overall at a 1.9 out of 7. This observation does fall in line with what I expected to see based on my theory that being exposed to graphic violent images will cause students to feel more hopeless about the prospect of world peace. Hence, while being presented with graphic accounts of historical violence does not cause students to report stronger feelings that war is inevitable or world peace is possible, it does seem to make them feel that the pursuit of peace by the international community is less worthwhile.

To measure the level of importance students placed on the event as per Hypothesis 5, participants were asked the question: "How important do you think it is that children ages 10-18 learn about the Rape of Nanking in school?" They were also asked to rate how important they thought it was that other violent historical events be taught in schools. As can be seen above,

these questions did not bring back significant results meaning that it is unlikely that students assign more importance to history when shocking images and violent stories are used in teaching it. This would seem to contradict arguments that shocking, violent images are necessary to make students care about these histories.

Finally, we see substantial results in support of *Hypothesis 6* in that participants shown the image treatment were significantly less likely to support using graphic visual images in museum displays on violent events than those who were given the article only. While the differences in responses between the image treatment and the control were not significant, the changes from treatment conditions 1 to condition 3 and 2 to condition 3 are significant. The data suggest that including graphic images into accounts of historical political violence is not only generally not supported by students (mean of 2.6 out of 7), but that those who are exposed to the images are even less likely to support using them.

This observation is congruent with findings from a qualitative study by Fitchett, Merriweather, and Coffey (2015) where pre-service history teachers were taken through a museum exhibit showing photographs of lynchings and then asked about the use of similar images in their future classrooms. Across the board, they found that teachers were quick to promote the educational value of teaching the violent history but overwhelmingly rejected the prospect of using similar visual images in American middle and high school classrooms. Fitchett et al. point to how individuals of different educational backgrounds in history view these types of images for an explanation, pointing to work by Levesque, Ng-A-Fook, and Corrigan (2014). Levesque and colleagues argue that students generally lack the historical empathy to view violent historical images in their proper context and so will not assign the same level of educational value to them as a veteran academic might.

To reiterate, the data suggests that students do not appear to assign any more importance to violent historical events when graphic images are used to present them, and students who do see these images do not support showing them to others. This indicates that "shocking" students with graphic images in museum exhibits, textbooks, and classrooms may not be producing the educational benefits that many claim.

However, it should be noted that most of these significant results do not hold up to more robust statistical models. After the initial Independent Samples t-tests, I run a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with a Bonferroni post hoc test (*Table 0.1* in Appendices). A one-way ANOVA works similar to the Independent Sample t-test but compares the means of all groups simultaneously to check for significant differences while assuming that the groups are independent of one another. A one-way ANOVA is an omnibus test and requires a post hoc test to determine which groups were statistically different. I chose a Bonferroni post hoc because it is the test that is least likely to make a "type 1" error (showing significance where there is none); the obvious downside being that it is also more likely to *not* show significance where it *does* exists. The one-way ANOVA showed significance only for the variables "Govt Should Promote Peace" between treatment conditions 2 and 3, and "Force Japan to Apologize" between condition 1 and the control group (labeled as '4' in *Table 0.1* in *Appendix A).*

5.2 Shifting Opinions through Emotional Response

As stated, a substantial part of my theory is based on the expectation that the media frames used will invoke an emotional response in the participants. I have shown how the treatments themselves influence the opinions of those tested, but it is important to observe whether those treatments truly caused an emotional response and how those emotional responses are translated.

To test this, I first run a second one-way ANOVA with a Bonferroni post hoc test to see if there was a significant change in participants' reported feelings of sadness, anger, upset, and disgust.

Table 5.2 Emotional Response

Difference in Means (ANOVA)	(A) Group	(B) Group	Mean Difference (A-B)	Std. Error
Sadness	1	2	-.508	.313
		3	-.740	.312
		C	1.663***	.312
	2	1	.508	.313
		3	-.232	.316
		C	2.170***	.316
	3	1	.740	.312
		2	.232	.316
		C	2.403***	.315
	C	1	-1.663***	.312
		2	-2.170***	.316
		3	-2.403***	.315
Anger	1	2	-.030	.329
		3	-.437	.328
		C	2.452***	.325
	2	1	.030	.329
		3	-.408	.333
		C	2.481***	.331
	3	1	.437	.328
		2	.408	.333
		C	2.889***	.330
	C	1	-2.452***	.325
		2	-2.481***	.331
		3	-2.889***	.330
Upset	1	2	-.112	.315
		3	-.500	.313
		C	2.134***	.312
	2	1	.112	.315
		3	-.388	.320
		C	2.246***	.319
	3	1	.500	.313

		2	.388	.320
		C	2.634***	.316
	C	1	-2.134***	.312
		2	-2.246***	.319
		3	-2.634***	.316
Disgust	1	2	.040	.321
		3	-.433	.320
		C	3.176***	.319
	2	1	-.040	.321
		3	-.473	.325
		C	3.136***	.324
	3	1	.433	.320
		2	.473	.325
		C	3.609***	.323
	C	1	-3.176***	.319
		2	-3.136***	.324
		3	-3.609***	.323

* P < 0.1; ** P < 0.05; *** P < 0.01

The ANOVA shows that there are clearly significant differences in the strengths of reported emotions between the control group and all treatment groups. This means that we can be very certain that *all* treatments did invoke feelings of sadness, anger, upset, and disgust in respondents. However, there are no significant changes in emotional response between the treatment groups, so we cannot say from this test that changing the level of violent descriptions or including visual images substantially influences the emotional reactions to reading about an upsetting violent event. Still, as described above, this is a highly robust test that is designed to strongly avoid Type 1 errors. We can see that the changes from treatment group 1 to treatment group 3 are still very high and may show as significant in a standard t-test. Yet, even given the robustness of the Bonferroni post hoc, the test does show highly significant changes between the control group and all treatment groups for all four responses.

Since I have shown that simply reading about an extremely violent event in history causes students to feel more sad, upset, angry, and disgusted, I can then test if and how these particular feelings influence students' reported opinions on our dependent variables regardless of the specific treatment. I have already discussed how it has been shown that, although the way emotion and predisposition work to influence opinion is difficult to predict (Druckman, 2001; Brewer, 2001), emotional reactions to frames influence opinions despite peoples' predispositions (Gross and D'Ambrosio, 2004). With the data collected, I can measure how a reported increase in each of the four emotions tested influences the strength of participants' opinions on my dependent variables. I run a series of linear regression models on the influence of each emotional response on my primary dependent variables. The results can be observed in *Table 5.3*.

Table 5.3 Emotional Response Regression

Emotional Response (Regression)	*Sadness*	*Anger*	*Upset*	*Disgust*
Humans Violent	.053	.059	.020	-.179
	(.59)	(.58)	(.03)	(-2.22)**
Humans Nonviolent	-.234	-.032	0.24	.155
	(-.37)***	(-.38)	(.23)	(.279)**
Humans Want Peace	-.106	.069	-.071	0.86
	(-.19)	(.90)	(-.764)	(1.40)
World is Hostile	.205	-.065	-.131	.085
	(2.80)***	(-.79)	(-1.33)	(1.29)
Country is Hostile	.047	-.066	0.17	.080
	(-.55)	(69)	(.15)	(1.05)
War is Inevitable	.061	.038	.061	-.110
	(.62)	(.34)	(.46)	(-1.25)
Peace is Possible	.100	-.013	-.090	.031
	(1.03)	(-.12)	(-.69)	(.36)
Punish War Crimes	.214	-.043	-.194	.005
	(2.29)**	(-.42)	(-1.55)	(.06)
Force Japan to Apologize	-.036	.081	-.207	-.127
	(-.42)	(.86)	(-1.83)*	(-1.69)*
Govt. Should Promote Peace	-.081	.035	.035	.055
	(-1.15)	(.44)	(-1.70)*	(.88)
Should Teach Violent Histories	-.018	-.176	.123	.027
	(-.26)	(-2.24)**	(1.30)	(.42)
Should Teach R. Nanking	-.070	-.024	.087	.000
	(-.82)	(-.25)	(.76)	.001
Support Using Violent Images	-.063	.101	-.057	-.006
	(-.75)	(1.07)	(-.50)	(-.08)

T-score listed in parentheses. All number corresponding to 7-point scale. * P < .1; ** P < .05; *** P < .01

Once again, we see no evidence that being presented with a single account of historical violence has any measurable effect on students' opinions on the inevitability of war or the

possibility of world peace, despite their emotional response to the content. The most interesting thing to notice in Table 5.3 is that, in general, individuals who reported stronger feelings of disgust were significantly less likely to report feeling that human beings are inherently violent and more likely to feel that they are generally nonviolent. This relationship appears to work in the opposite direction for individuals who had a higher sadness response. This is also notable because of all of my reported emotional responses, disgust is arguable the least likely to be a feeling that students were already feeling before getting one of the survey treatments. The relationship between disgust and believing that humans are nonviolent is possibly tied to the participants' preexisting opinions about human nature, and the relationship could be spurious. Meaning that, while someone who already believes that human beings are violent would likely be saddened when reading about a violent event because it "just goes to show" how violent people truly are, someone who has a more positive opinion about human nature would be far more shocked in learning about such an event and, therefore, could feel more disgusted. Once again, this is only conjecture.

Sadness is by far the emotional response which seems to produce the strongest changes in opinion. Participants who rated themselves higher on the sadness scale were significantly less likely to say that humans are nonviolent, significantly more likely to view the world as hostile, and significantly more likely to support punitive action by the international community against countries who commit war crimes. Individuals who have a strong sadness reaction to being presented with an episode of historical violence, then, seem to translate those feelings into a more adverse view of humans in general. But, they also believe that it is something that should be addressed by world leaders. Meaning that the negative opinions do not necessarily translate into feeling more "hopeless," but they certainly seem to influence preexisting opinions. Once

again, the relationship between these variables and feeling sadness after receiving the treatment articles could be partially due to other variables like personality type. I take a more in-depth look into personality type in the next section.

Increased feelings of upset and anger do not seem to have a very significant impact on participants' opinions on any of the DVs. However, feelings of anger do seem to correlate negatively with supporting teaching violent histories to children ages 10-18 years. Students who report stronger feelings of sadness and disgust after being presented with a historical account of human violence tend to shift their opinions on human nature and violence in the world. Thus, we can say that this data suggests that *certain* emotions do have a predictable impact on *certain* preexisting opinions, but not on all of them and not on the issue of world peace. Generally, the data suggests that it is more the student's emotional reaction to violent content than the level of "graphicness" that influences their opinions on human violence and world conflict.

5.3 Influence of Personality Type on Responses

Finally, I want to measure how personality type may be playing into these relationships. I have already stated that certain people may be more likely to believe that human beings are inherently violent or that the world is hostile and war is inevitable. Since it is not within the scope of this paper to attempt to measure all factors that could contribute to these preexisting opinions, I chose to look at one in particular: personality type. I used a 10-question personality survey asking participants to rate their level of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability, as well as their counterparts, on a 7-point scale. In gathering this information, I can measure these personality types in much the same way that I measured emotional reaction, observing how a higher level of any one personality trait may

correlate with a propensity to agree or disagree with my DVs. As a control, I have included the participants' reported level of familiarity with the Rape of Nanking prior to the experiment.

Due to the smaller-than-expected sample size, however, it would not make sense to try and measure the effect of personality type for each variable per treatment group as the results would likely be skewed. Future studies should seek to obtain a larger sample size per treatment group and control to measure how personality and level of violent detail/images presented interact. The results of the personality type regression can be seen below in *Table 5.4*.

Table 5.4 Personality Type

Effect of Personality Type	*Humans Violent*	*Humans Nonviolent*	*Humans Want Peace*	*World is Hostile*	*Country is Hostile*	*War is Inevitable*	*Pease is Possible*	*Punish War Crimes*	*Japan Apologize*	*Govt. Promote Peace*	*Teach Violent History*	*Teach Rape of Nanking*	*Support Violent Images*
Extravert	-.117	.070	-.011	.043	.069	-.103	.059	-.041	.067	.056	-.088	-.048	-.123
	(-1.72)	(1.22)	(-.21)	(.79)	(1.11)	(-1.44)	(.83)	(-.61)	(.98)	(1.07)	(-1.74)	(-.79)	(-2.06)**
Introvert	.017	.104	.128	-.037	.009	-.013	-.042	.080	.133	.039	.033	.080	-.004
	(.24)	(1.76)	(2.43)**	(-.65)	(.14)	(-.17)	(-.56)	(1.13)	(1.87)	(.72)	(.63)	(1.27)	(-.06)
Conscientious	-.098	-.134	-.108	.050	.019	-.115	.114	-.015	.047	-.025	.108	.081	.022
	(-1.21)	(-2.00)**	(-1.78)	(.77)	(.25)	(-1.34)	(1.32)	(-.18)	(.58)	(-.40)	(1.78)	(1.13)	(.31)
Unscrupulous	.160	-.148	-.063	-.033	.005	.200	-.138	.124	.051	-.034	.114	.128	.025
	(2.26)**	(-2.49)**	(-1.18)	(-.58)	(.07)	(2.67)**	(-1.84)	(1.74)	(.71)	(-.63)	(2.15)**	(2.03)**	(.41)
Open	.150	.080	.039	.040	.021	.131	.043	.141	.025	.025	.120	.042	.334
	(1.81)	(1.15)	(.62)	(.60)	(.27)	(1.49)	(.48)	(1.69)	(.30)	(.40)	(1.93)	(.57)	(4.54)***
Closed	-.052	.080	-.028	.160	.173	.085	-.051	.107	.059	-.012	-.110	-.131	-.180
	(-.86)	(1.60)	(-.62)	(3.31)***	(3.10)***	(1.32)	(-.79)	(1.76)	(.96)	(-.25)	(-2.42)**	(-2.43)**	(-3.35)***
Stable	-.009	.068	.117	.033	.072	.014	.091	-.004	.004	.103	-.088	-.085	.011
	(-.12)	(1.13)	(2.18)**	(.57)	(1.08)	(.19)	(1.20)	-.004	(.05)	(1.86)	(-1.65)	(-1.33)	(.18)
Unstable	-.018	-.096	-.036	-.028	-.050	-.079	.086	-.102	-.169	.029	-.110	-.114	-.041
	(-.25)	(-1.63)	(-.69)	(-.51)	(-.77)	(-1.06)	(1.15)	(-1.46)	(-2.38)**	(.53)	(-2.11)**	(-1.83)	(-.67)
Agreeable	-.082	.181	.160	-.141	-.060	-.141	.110	-.258	.190	.283	.150	.181	.041
	(-1.05)	(2.80)***	(2.75)***	(-2.28)**	(-.83)	(-1.71)	(1.33)	(-3.31)***	(2.41)**	(4.73)***	(2.60)***	(2.63)***	(.59)
Disagreeable	.000	.027	.036	.084	.051	.100	.034	.031	.032	.016	.175	.116	.092
	(.00)	(.50)	(.77)	(1.66)	(.87)	(1.49)	(.51)	(.48)	(.51)	(.33)	(3.71)	(2.08)**	(1.64)
Familiar w/ RN	.013	.055	.049	.132	.142	.018	.065	-.052	-.002	-.035	.012	.059	.041
	(.28)	(1.40)	(1.38)	(3.51)***	(3.26)***	(.36)	(1.30)	(-1.10)	(-.04)	(-.96)	(.33)	(1.41)	(.98)

T-values in parentheses. All numbers corresponding to 7-point scale. ** P < 0.05; *** P < 0.01

With a quick look through the results of the tests, we can see very clearly that personality type does have a strong influence on how participants responded to the survey prompts. People who rate themselves as "unscrupulous," for example, were far more likely to agree that human beings are inherently violent. In contrast, people who rate themselves as "agreeable" felt that humans were more nonviolent. Individuals with high agreeableness had the largest number of significantly different responses overall, with answers that suggest an optimistic view of human

nature and government and public obligation to promote peace. However, those who rate themselves as agreeable were far *less* likely to support the international community taking punitive actions against countries who commit war crimes. Interestingly, none of the personality types reported significantly different responses to the question regarding the possibility of eventual world peace. Even when addressing personality type, students' opinions on the possibility of world peace do not differ substantially. Meaning that one individual is not any more or less likely than anyone else to believe that eventual world peace is possible based solely on difference in personality.

Those who self-reported as being "emotionally closed" were significantly more likely to rank the world, and their country, as being more hostile than other personality types. They were also far less likely to support teaching 10-18-year-olds about violent historical events or using violent historical images in museum exhibits. The model also shows that students with a higher reported familiarity with the Rape of Nanking were more likely to report both the world and their country, as hostile. This is very likely because students who are more familiar with the Rape of Nanking are also more familiar with similar historical episodes of human violence, and so have a more pessimistic view of the world around them. However, this logic would suggest that those more familiar with the Rape of Nanking would also report stronger beliefs that humans are inherently violent or that war is inevitable, which is not the case.

From the data obtained, it appears students' opinions about violence, war, and their importance in history correlate strongly with personality type and are not easily influenced by a single instance of exposure to violent images and information. Future studies would obtain a much larger sample size and focus on the interaction between the personality types and the

treatments – perhaps using a more current episode of political violence as was done in McKinley & Fahmy (2011).

6 CONCLUSIONS

The debate over how to teach the problematic history of extreme inter-group violence has produced many diverging schools of thought. While this study does not necessarily offer an answer to the question "how should we teach about the history of violence?" it does answer some of the questions about how students react to and process, an account of extreme historical violence. This study shows that students generally report a significant emotional response to historical accounts of extreme human violence, which manifests into stronger opinions on the inherently violent nature of human beings and what the role of the international community should be in addressing it. These changes in opinion manifest most notably when the account of violence produces strong feelings of sadness or disgust. The study results do not support the arguments suggesting that learning about a particularly upsetting episode of political violence in human history causes students to believe that all human beings are inherently violent. This relationship actually appears to work in reverse, as students presented with an account of historical violence seem to go on the defense and are less likely to say that violence is natural among humans. Thus, *Hypothesis 2* of my study does not hold up to the test.

Hypothesis 1 and H*ypothesis 3* of the study show little support from the data as well. Students' opinions on whether war is inevitable (or peace is possible) and on the state of hostility in the world (or country) today were not significantly influenced by changing the level of graphic detail and images in a historical account of extreme violence. However, students who reported strong feelings of sadness in response to the treatment conditions, in general, reported

significantly higher levels of pessimism when asked to rank the level of hostility in the world as a whole. This suggests that opinions on these "big picture" issues are not easily influenced by a single exposure to an upsetting account of political violence, but that it can influence how people perceive them playing out at any given time based on the strength of their emotional reaction.

Learning about an upsetting event of extreme political violence in history also did not change the likelihood that students would support more punitive action against countries that commit such acts by the international community. *Hypothesis 4* theorized that seeing graphic images from a violent military massacre would trigger students to report more strongly that the international community should use military force to punish countries who commit war crimes. This correlation is not observed even when graphic visual images are included but is present when students report feeling higher levels of sadness from learning about the event. In general, the data suggests that teaching students about extremely violent events in history is not a strong determinate of whether students support more forceful international intervention.

The level of graphic content in an account of historical violence is also not significantly correlated with how much importance students placed on the event, contradicting similar research done on news reporting on current events and *Hypothesis 5* of my study. Only students who report a strong anger response to the content felt significantly stronger about the importance of teaching the event; they believed more strongly that the particular event should not be taught to 10-18-year-old students. *Hypothesis 6* did produce significant results, however. The study seems to support arguments that students who are shown violent visual images from history are less able to use the type of "historical empathy" that many educators expect from them without further discussion of the historical context. Hence, they are far less likely to support the use of similar images when teaching about the history of political violence. This suggests that, although

none of the negative concerns in the literature about using these types of images were substantiated, students who were shown these images generally felt strongly that they were not necessary for describing the event and did not assign significant educational value to the use of the images.

Much of the concerns over how violent images influence students' political opinions on "big picture" issues of peace, war, and violence do not hold up to the data. The factors which impact these opinions appear to be based on more abstract preexisting factors like whether a person is more agreeable or unscrupulous, or a student's knowledge of the context surrounding the images. Future research on this topic should attempt to focus more on the long-term conditions that students pull-from to form opinions on peace, war, and violence. Examples would be long-term education, socio-economic background, or personality type. Future research using this study would obtain a larger sample size and study the interaction of personality type against the treatment conditions, perhaps on a more current episode of political violence.

To conclude, this research indicates that including graphic detail and images when teaching about violent events in human history does not have many of the negative side-effects that researchers suggest and worry about. However, doing so also does not appear to cause students to assign any more importance to the historical event than they otherwise would. The primary take-away from this research is that students who are shown these violent images feel upset, angry, sad, and disgusted, while ultimately maintaining their preexisting opinions on peace and violence and considering their use in educational settings to be unjustified.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 0.1 Difference in Means ANOVA

Difference in Means ANOVA-Bonferroni	(A) Group	(B) Group	Mean Difference (A-B)	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
HumansViolent	1	2	.075	-.61	.76
		3	-.059	-.74	.62
		4	-.519	-1.20	.16
	2	1	-.075	-.76	.61
		3	-.134	-.82	.56
		4	-.593	-1.28	.09
	3	1	.059	-.62	.74
		2	.134	-.56	.82
		4	-.459	-1.14	.23
	4	1	.519	-.16	1.20
		2	.593	-.09	1.28
		3	.459	-.23	1.14
WorldCond	1	2	-.086	-.65	.48
		3	-.308	-.87	.25
		4	-.162	-.72	.40
	2	1	.086	-.48	.65
		3	-.223	-.79	.35
		4	-.076	-.65	.49
	3	1	.308	-.25	.87
		2	.223	-.35	.79
		4	.147	-.42	.71
	4	1	.162	-.40	.72
		2	.076	-.49	.65
		3	-.147	-.71	.42
CountryCond	1	2	-.336	-.98	.31
		3	-.254	-.90	.39

		4	-.085	-.73	.56
	2	1	.336	-.31	.98
		3	.082	-.57	.74
		4	.251	-.40	.90
	3	1	.254	-.39	.90
		2	-.082	-.74	.57
		4	.169	-.48	.82
	4	1	.085	-.56	.73
		2	-.251	-.90	.40
		3	-.169	-.82	.48
WarInevitable	1	2	.148	-.59	.89
		3	-.037	-.78	.70
		4	.072	-.66	.81
	2	1	-.148	-.89	.59
		3	-.184	-.93	.56
		4	-.076	-.82	.67
	3	1	.037	-.70	.78
		2	.184	-.56	.93
		4	.108	-.63	.85
	4	1	-.072	-.81	.66
		2	.076	-.67	.82
		3	-.108	-.85	.63
InternatPunish	1	2	-.088	-.79	.61
		3	.289	-.41	.99
		4	-.207	-.90	.49
	2	1	.088	-.61	.79
		3	.377	-.33	1.09
		4	-.119	-.83	.59
	3	1	-.289	-.99	.41
		2	-.377	-1.09	.33
		4	-.496	-1.20	.21
	4	1	.207	-.49	.90
		2	.119	-.59	.83
		3	.496	-.21	1.20
ApologizeRN	1	2	-.365	-1.05	.32
		3	-.201	-.88	.48
		4	-.739*	-1.41	-.06
	2	1	.365	-.32	1.05

		3	.165	-.52	.85
		4	-.374	-1.06	.31
	3	1	.201	-.48	.88
		2	-.165	-.85	.52
		4	-.539	-1.22	.14
	4	1	.739*	.06	1.41
		2	.374	-.31	1.06
		3	.539	-.14	1.22
PeacePossibe	1	2	-.376	-1.11	.35
		3	.062	-.66	.79
		4	-.238	-.96	.49
	2	1	.376	-.35	1.11
		3	.438	-.30	1.17
		4	.138	-.60	.87
	3	1	-.062	-.79	.66
		2	-.438	-1.17	.30
		4	-.300	-1.03	.43
	4	1	.238	-.49	.96
		2	-.138	-.87	.60
		3	.300	-.43	1.03
DesirePeace	1	2	-.296	-.82	.23
		3	-.066	-.59	.45
		4	-.062	-.58	.46
	2	1	.296	-.23	.82
		3	.230	-.30	.76
		4	.234	-.29	.76
	3	1	.066	-.45	.59
		2	-.230	-.76	.30
		4	.004	-.52	.53
	4	1	.062	-.46	.58
		2	-.234	-.76	.29
		3	-.004	-.53	.52
HumansNonV	1	2	-.150	-.74	.44
		3	-.163	-.75	.42
		4	.071	-.51	.65
	2	1	.150	-.44	.74
		3	-.013	-.61	.58
		4	.221	-.37	.81

	3	1	.163	-.42	.75
		2	.013	-.58	.61
		4	.234	-.36	.82
	4	1	-.071	-.65	.51
		2	-.221	-.81	.37
		3	-.234	-.82	.36
GovPromoPeace	1	2	-.395	-.94	.15
		3	.111	-.43	.65
		4	-.137	-.68	.40
	2	1	.395	-.15	.94
		3	.506*	-.05	1.06
		4	.258	-.29	.81
	3	1	-.111	-.65	.43
		2	-.506*	-1.06	.05
		4	-.248	-.80	.30
	4	1	.137	-.40	.68
		2	-.258	-.81	.29
		3	.248	-.30	.80
EducateVH	1	2	-.017	-.55	.52
		3	.141	-.40	.68
		4	.225	-.31	.76
	2	1	.017	-.52	.55
		3	.157	-.39	.70
		4	.241	-.30	.78
	3	1	-.141	-.68	.40
		2	-.157	-.70	.39
		4	.084	-.46	.62
	4	1	-.225	-.76	.31
		2	-.241	-.78	.30
		3	-.084	-.62	.46
EducateRN	1	2	.042	-.60	.68
		3	.205	-.43	.84
		4	.075	-.56	.71
	2	1	-.042	-.68	.60
		3	.163	-.49	.81
		4	.033	-.61	.68
	3	1	-.205	-.84	.43
		2	-.163	-.81	.49

		4	-.130	-.77	.51
	4	1	-.075	-.71	.56
		2	-.033	-.68	.61
		3	.130	-.51	.77
GraphicMuseum	1	2	.095	-.54	.73
		3	.536	-.10	1.17
		4	.238	-.39	.87
	2	1	-.095	-.73	.54
		3	.441	-.20	1.08
		4	.143	-.49	.78
	3	1	-.536	-1.17	.10
		2	-.441	-1.08	.20
		4	-.298	-.93	.34
	4	1	-.238	-.87	.39
		2	-.143	-.78	.49
		3	.298	-.34	.93