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## Rhetorical Analysis of Unraveling the Protest Paradigm

Unraveling the Protest Paradigm is an article by Danielle Kilgo who is a professor of Journalism, Diversity and Equality at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. The article is about a pattern in which protests fall due to how the press addresses it. The root causes of the protest are delegitimized by the press' focus on the disruption aspect of the movement. The article was created to inform anyone who watches, reads or listens to news that the press doesn't always cover both sides of the story. The example used in the article is the Black Lives Matter movement. BLM had large protests in 2020 following the death of George Floyd. The press covered these protests in a way that glossed over **why** they were occurring and focused on destruction and chaos being the focus of the story. Kilgo has been studying the coverage of Black civil rights protests since 2012 and has seen the same pattern throughout. The author of this article succeeded in making her argument believable because she is a credible voice on the subject along with her use of emotional examples that display the paradigm in action.

Kilgo's credibility mixed with the emotions that the BLM movement evokes are used to persuade people into paying more attention to what the author is saying. There is also a logical aspect of her argument when the author addresses that only certain kinds of protest fall into the paradigm. Kilgo explains that there is a "hierarchy of struggle". Protests relating to, for example,

women's rights, environmental causes, etc. are covered in a more legitimate light. These tactics make it easier to believe and reflect what Kilgo is saying.

At the beginning of the article Kilgo uses the example of the shooting of Stephon Clark. The author talks about how the coverage of the protests that occurred after the shooting was focused on the disruptiveness of the protest rather than the grievances of the protesters. This leads to Kilgo talking about how she started to research the coverage of Black civil rights protests in 2012. This gives her more credibility added on to her being a professor of journalism because of how long she has been studying the topic of her argument. After she establishes more credibility Kilgo goes on to explain what the protest paradigm is. The author states "This pattern is known as the protest paradigm; protest movements that might convey their concerns through news coverage instead see their efforts delegitimized by a press "that favors spectacle, conflict, disruption, and official narratives over the substance of movements that challenge the status quo." In this quote Kilgo uses a quote from an article by Danielle K. Brown who is an assistant professor at the same university as Kilgo. This quote adds another credible source to Kilgo's argument and gives the readers another source to look deeper into the topic. By giving an example before explaining what the paradigm is the author gives the reader the ability to see how the paradigm works. Being able to see the pattern makes people more likely to believe the argument. By using a quote from another credible source Kilgo adds onto the credibility of the information being given.

After the explanation of the paradigm Kilgo uses the death of George Floyd as another example. Floyd's death was more recent and had a huge reaction from the public which led to large protests and a major call for justice and reform. Since this example is so well known it can make emotions rise in the reader and the reader can think back to the coverage of the protests.

Since the reader knows what the protest paradigm is they can point out how the protests after Floyd's death fell into the pattern. Now that the reader can point out the pattern the authors argument becomes more believable because of the personal experience of the reader.

In the last seven paragraphs of the article there is a switch from talking about the faults in the press coverage to how journalists push the protest paradigm. Kilgo talks about the research she did with colleagues George Sylvie and Rachel Mourão where they studied the press coverage of the protests that occurred after the shootings of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown and the protests that occurred after the acquittal of George Zimmerman, in Martin's case, and the lack of charges for Daren Wilson, in Brown's case. In both cases there is more legitimizing coverage of the second wave of protests after a not-guilty verdict or lack of indictment which Kilgo connects to powerful institutions being protected after the fact. With the switch from talking about how the press is the cause of the paradigm to how not all press only focuses on the negative aspects of a protest gives hope to the reader. With the new instillation of hope Kilgo states a call to action.

She wants the foundations of journalism to be redone.

Kilgo's argument was based on her own credibility along with the emotions that the protests evoke in the reader. These helped in getting her point across and made her argument more persuasive. She used examples that people have strong emotions about and used the examples as a way for the reader to realize the paradigm on their own. Kilgo was successful in this argument because of her strong use of pathos with the examples and her credibility as a professor in journalism.