

## **FRAMES AND FACTORS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF CRIME NEWS IN THE NEWSPAPERS.**

**HIMANI Binjola Tiwari,**

Department of Media & Mass Communication , Graphic Era Hill University,  
Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India 248002,

### **ABSTRACT**

This research looks at how crimes are portrayed in the media. We use 71 pairings to compare and contrast the ways in which crime tales are reported in newspapers and on local television, focusing on the similarities and contrasts between the two forms of media. action taken in the year 2020. The Karachi newspaper issue was chosen, and then crime-related articles were retrieved from the newspaper's archive. Following that, the headlines were sorted. There has been a lot of study on the ways in which different forms of media cover the same narrative, but very little into the ways in which the same crime "gets recounted" in different media. This is made possible by pairing together related anecdotes. To further investigate how non-typical victims and perpetrators are depicted in the media, we employ content analysis to analyze a sample of incidents involving adolescents. Crime and victimization among young people are dramatically underreported compared to their older counterparts. Taken as a whole, the results point to the fact that the media portrays crime, perpetrators, and victims in ways that are diametrically opposed to what is indicated by official crime data. This was particularly true of stories about young perpetrators and victims.

**KEYWORDS:** media, victims' studies, media, perceptions of crime, policy opinion, racial context

### **INTRODUCTION**

Live blogging, in which reporters cover a criminal trial by continuously writing brief accounts of events, has been a standard and popular method of reporting on trials over the last two decades. Yet, there is a lack of information on how trials and lawyers are depicted in the media. This is worrisome because the production of such reports occurs at the intersection of two fields with fundamentally different aims and objectives: law and the media. The first of these areas is the relatively emotionless arena of the criminal trial, which requires the thorough presentation and appraisal of evidence. Because of this, it's important for emotional displays to adhere to the "emotional regime of the criminal trial"—a set of rules for how people should feel and behave in court that aims to keep the proceedings as detached from personal bias as possible. Given the context of this research—the "subtle drama of the Swedish courtroom"—emotional expressions may be muted and easy to notice. Yet, the second realm stated above, the media, places a premium on capturing emotions and drama. Here, dramatic and emotional components help make a piece noteworthy and, thus, clickable. It is important for live blogs to "frame" events so that readers may focus on them even when they are meant to be devoid of emotion.

This is true of all court reporting, but live blogging adds the capacity to post voluminous and personal facts in real time that no other medium can match. Moreover, live blogs must capture and maintain readers' attention in the face of an

ever-increasing number of competing online news articles. According to studies, in the digital age, complicated tales are simplified in favor of readership. Reporters covering a trial in real time run the danger of providing stereotypical, sensationalized, and emotionally charged accounts of the proceedings. As live blogs establish social reality by developing and disseminating cultural meanings, it is crucial to comprehend how trials and legal practitioners are portrayed in this media. Hence, live blogging help shape and create public understanding of the legal system, the courts, and the players within it.

## **LITREATURE REVIEW**

**Harrison, V. S., & Boehmer, J. (2020).** To better understand the role of sports journalism in relaying complex social problems, we want to study how newspapers throughout the world cover sport for development and peace (SDP) activities. Exploratory content analysis of 284 English-language articles published between 2013 and 2016 was conducted using the theme and episodic frames proposed by Iyengar (1991) and the five general news frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). The findings show that media portrayals of SDP tend to be episodic, attributable to wire reports rather than people, and human-interest oriented. Sport journalists nevertheless need to fully commit to their work as sport journalists despite the fact that these frames may improve the public's knowledge of SDP concerns. Journalists all over the world who cover this topic are given advice.

**John Carter Wood (2016),**This article looks at the evolution of crime reporting in British newspapers from the late 18th to the mid-20th century. It outlines developments in the study of crime and media history, provides an overview of the press's most common discussions of "crime," "criminals," and "criminal justice," names the essential players in the production of crime coverage, and proposes future lines of inquiry. It demonstrates that crime reporting has consistently constituted a significant component of newspaper material going back to the late eighteenth century. The media's portrayal of crime has historically been inaccurate, with a focus on the most extreme cases that seldom show up in official figures. This may provide light on the prevailing anxieties and attitudes of the time. Human interest reporting, although sometimes sensationalist, has occasionally included societal criticisms that are quasi-political but written in more accessible terms.

**Pröll, F.; Magin, M (2022)** There are very high rates of violence against women in Colombia. There were 630 gender-motivated murders of women in 2020. With the coronavirus lockdown in March of 2020, there has been an uptick in the frequency of these feminicides. While the news media plays a crucial role in shaping the public's conception of feminicides, there is a dearth of empirical study on the topic in Colombia. This study used a quantitative content analysis of articles covering feminicidal homicides in four Colombian newspapers between August 2019 and July 2020. As the lockdown and the time period being examined both overlap, it is possible to compare news coverage from before and after the incident. Using a hierarchical cluster analysis, we identified four major themes: prejudice against women based on gender, the criminal justice system's treatment of criminals, the feminicide's origins and progression, and the reactions of local residents and eyewitnesses. According to our research, the four newspapers we analyzed provide rather consistent depictions of feminicides. Moreover, we discovered that the cluster

occurrence was not significantly impacted by the article's publication date in respect to the COVID-19 quarantine.

**Lisa A. Kort-Butler and Patrick Habecker (2018)** Using the problem framing, cultivation, real world, and interpersonal diffusion theses as a foundation, this study looked at how exposure to the media, being a victim, and being part of a network affected participants' views on crime and punishment. Adults in the state of Nebraska (n = 550) were surveyed for this study, including questions pertaining to their social circles, trust in the news media, media consumption habits, and the extent to which they were exposed to violent content in various media. The study's findings linked exposure to TV violence to feelings of anxiety and anger regarding criminal activity. Individuals who looked to the media for information were more inclined to be angered by criminal behavior and to support the justice system. Victimization, both individually and throughout social networks, was also associated with perspectives. Knowing law enforcement personnel or inmates had a smaller impact on one's chances of avoiding arrest or incarceration. The findings are consistent with the problem frame and cultivation theses, which postulate that exposure to and interpretations of the media affect people's views on crime.

## **METHODS**

We compiled crime reports from the Washington Post and the 11 o'clock news on the Washington, D.C., ABC station from October 19, 2005, to December 2, 2005. We call any tale in which violating the law plays a significant role in the plot a crime story (Grabe 1999:38). Around that time, I read the Post every day and clipped crime articles from the first section and the Metro section. We created a recording of the local newscast that aired at 11 o'clock every night. The next day, every police report was typed out.

A criminal narrative required to exist in both formats to be included for the sample. A homicide in Northeast D.C. would be included in the sample if it was reported on television news but not in the Washington Post the next day. We created our sample of identical pairings by collecting and categorizing 71 crime narratives during the course of the research period. Two different media outlets' coverage of the same incident serve as "matched pairs" in this analysis. We can tell whether and to what degree crime tales are reported differently across channels by comparing matched pairs. Not the incident itself, but rather its reporting serves as the study's unit of analysis. That is to say, some of the 71 crime reports in our sample are repeats from different time periods. Due to the nature of crime reporting, several cases are covered in both print and broadcast media many times.

## **RESULTS**

Seventy-one pairings were gathered for matching throughout the coding process. Some of the crimes that took place this week include the assault of a well-known rapper, the accidental shooting of a young woman at a high school football game, the abuse of an infant by his foster mother, the sentencing of a man who knowingly spread HIV to his sexual partners, the infamous "cell-phone bandit," a stabbing at a local mall, the murder of a newborn baby, and a car chase from Northern Virginia to Maryland.

**Table 1 Distribution of Crimes related news according to crime types**

Crime Type	Frequency
Theft	3
Murder	25
Robbery	11
Kidnaping	5
Death (firing)	3
Violence	3
Gang Rape	8
Physical violence	5
Supplying drugs	2
Clash	3
Snatching	3
Total	71

Table; 1 The newspaper crime coverage is broken down by category below. The data reveals that twenty-five of the thirty news items were related to the murder. The robbery crime accounted for the second-highest number of headlines (11). Half of the 71 total offenses were attributed to less widespread reports.

**Table 2 Distribution of Criminals according to their occupation**

Criminal's Occupation	Frequency
Engineer	-
Doctor	2
Teacher	2
Student	1
Software expert	1
Policeman	1
Government Employee	1
Laborer	1
Total	9

**Table; 2.** In this table, we can see how often articles on criminals' professions appear in the news. The number of reports detailing the criminals' professions, however, was limited to only nine. Of the nine news articles, four described the perpetrators as medical professionals or educators.

**Table 3 Distribution of Criminals' identities**

Identities	Frequency
Brother	3
Cousin	5
Friend	-
Father	4
Son	1
Mother	-
Husband	5
Wife	1
Daughter	1

Total	20
-------	----

**Table; 3** This table shows how the word of the criminals' identities spread around the country. Yet, 20 news outlets reported on the atrocities that had befallen the family. The spouse, cousin, and father were all named as perpetrators in three separate sets of news (five, five, four).

**Table 4 Distribution of the crimes according to their reasons**

Crimes Reason	Frequency
Land dispute	4
Honor killing	13
Joblessness	3
Others	5
Total	25

**Table; 4** The news reports are broken down below by the motives behind the crimes they covered. Twenty-five different news outlets were discovered to have reported on the crimes and their causes. The majority of reports (13) said that honor killings were to blame for the murders.

Table 5 shows how often neutral facts were used in broadcast and print media. For each of the 71 tales that were a perfect match, both sources included the same details about the state and the most severe sort of crime. Two other data were broadcast virtually similarly by both channels: the sex of the attacker and the victim. Yet, there is still considerable consistency when reporting perpetrator and victim ages, despite the fact that it is less likely to be reported similarly throughout the channels. This shows that both the local newspaper and television news cover the news in the same neutral manner.

**Table 5: Frequencies and Percentages of Objective Facts for Newspaper and Local Television News Reports**

		Frequency for Newspaper	Percentage for Newspaper	Frequency for Television	Percentage for Television
Crime Type Reported?	Yes	71	100.00	71	100.00
State Reported?	Yes	70	98.6	70	98.6
Offender Sex Reported?	Yes	51	71.8	52	73.2
Victim Sex Reported?	Yes	55	77.5	51	71.8
Offender Age Reported?	Yes	42	59.2	34	47.9
Victim Age Reported?	Yes	40	56.3	27	38.0

Table 6 provides further evidence for this conclusion by displaying crosstabs for the most often reported violent, property, drug, or other crime category. In Table 6 we can see that the newspaper covered 61 incidents of violent crime, 7 cases of property crime, and 3 cases of other crimes. The same held true for news broadcasts on television. In addition, cross-tabs on the state where the crime took place (not displayed) showed that both sources consistently reported the same states.

**Table 6: Cross-tabulation for Most Serious Crime Type Newspaper by Most Serious Crime Type Television (N = 71)**

Most		Violent	Property	Drug	Other	Total
Serious	Violent	61	0	0	0	61
Crime	Property	0	7	0	0	7
Type	Drug	0	0	0	0	0
Newspaper	Other	0	0	0	3	3
	Total	61	7	0	3	71

Even if there are minimal differences between the matched and mismatched instances, cross-tabs for perpetrator and victim age (not displayed) do reveal some differences. Only two pairs of cases where the offender's age was reported in both mediums had different ages reported. One case involved a school shooting in Tennessee, where the perpetrator's age was reported as 15 on TV but 14 in the newspaper. In another incident, a high school kid attacked his teacher, and the TV news said the attacker was 16, but the newspaper said he was 15. There were also slight variations in victim age. As a result, there is no difference between TV and print reporting when it comes to providing facts.

Not only that, but it's also noteworthy that despite the official statistics showing how uncommon violent crimes are (in comparison to property and drug offenses), 61 of the 71 complaints were for violent crimes. That is to say, when it comes to the kind of crimes that make it into the news, the "law of opposites" is always at work. Both the newspaper and the local newscast confirmed this. Consistent with other studies, we find that violent crime is disproportionately reported in the media.

### Subjective Facts

Subjective information appears often in media such as newspapers and television broadcasts, as seen in Table 7. As was shown, objective evidence is offered much more often than subjective evidence. For instance, both print and broadcast seldom (less than 27%) explicitly state the racial background of either the culprit or the victim. There are two more subjective factors that are cited more often: victim/offender connection and aggravating circumstances. It's understandable that the news would focus less on subjective facts, given how little weight they carry in establishing the truth of a situation. Yet, this supplementary data is available in print and on local TV news, and some of it is superfluous and may even serve to reinforce prejudices.

**Table 7: Frequencies and Percentages of Subjective Facts for Newspaper and Local Television News Reports**

		Frequency for Newspaper	Percentage for Newspaper	Frequency for Television	Percentage for Television
Offender Race Reported?	Yes	7	9.9	3	4.2
Offender Race Reported?	Yes	14	19.7	19	26.8
Victim Race Reported?	Yes	1	1.4	2	2.8
Victim Race Reported?	Yes	7	9.9	8	11.3
Victim/Offender Reported?	Yes	60	84.5	60	84.5
Relationship					
Aggravating Reported?	Yes	29	40.8	29	40.8

According to Table 7, there are also differences in the dissemination of at least some subjective information across different media. For instance, the newspaper is more likely to provide information on the racial background of a criminal, whereas television is more likely to imply such background (typically through pictures shown during the segment). Even if the discrepancies are minor, it's crucial to keep in mind that the media are covering the same incident.

Tables 8 and 9 provide the corresponding cross-tabulations for the races of both the reported offenders and the inferred offenders, respectively. Indicated in these tables are the missing pairs for these criteria. By comparing newspaper and TV news coverage of the same incident, it is clear that the two sources often provide quite different depictions of the offender's race when reporting on subjective facts.

**Table 8: Cross-tabulation for Race of Offender Reported Newspaper by Race of Offender Reported Television**

		Race Of Offender Reported Television			
		White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Other
Race Of Offender Reported Newspaper	White				
	Black	1			
	Hispanic			1	
	Asian				
	Other				
	N.R.R.	1			
Total		2		1	
		N.R.R.			
		Total			
		43			
		44			
		48			
		51			

**Table 9: Cross-tabulation for Race of Offender Implied Newspaper by Race of Offender Implied Television**

		Race of Offender Implied Television						Total
		White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other	N.R.I.	
Race of Offender Implied Newspaper	White	1						1
	Black		2				3	5
	Hispanic			6				6
	Asian							
	Other					1	1	2
	N.R.I.	4	3	2			28	37
	Total	5	5	8		1	32	51

Table 8 shows that only 45 reports were consistent across mediums for the 51 matched cases where an offender was known by the police or made reference to in the report, permitting a racial classification to be made; one matched pair had a report of a Black offender, one included a Hispanic offender, and 43 included no report of an offender's race. Six examples were not matched, one involving a White criminal, one involving a Black offender, and three involving a Hispanic offender, however the latter were the most intriguing. Yet, the television news claimed that there was one Black offender, but the newspaper did not mention race at all.

As can be seen in Table 9, there are also discrepancies across the channels with regards to the racial identity of the criminal. The television news did not indicate the criminal's race in any of the three situations where it was mentioned in the newspaper, but did so in the case when it was inferred that the culprit was Black. Four of the incidents where race was suggested on television news but not in the newspaper included a White perpetrator, three had a Black offender, and two involved a Hispanic offender.

## CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the benefits of the research, there are flaws that should be considered. The data was acquired from newspapers in a single city over a very little time span, therefore its applicability outside that context is doubtful. Including other news outlets, such as radio stations or online news websites, would help researchers gain a fuller picture of how crime news is constructed in different formats. There were seventy-one crime-related articles in the publication. According to the news articles in the chosen publication, homicide rates have been rising. Most of the crimes have familial motivations and are perpetrated inside the home. More than one example from each media should show that there are reporting variations even within each medium. It's possible, for instance, that two newspapers with, say, one defined as having a liberal lean and the other as having a more conservative attitude, might cover the same story in quite different ways. So, our capacity to generalize to other news media throughout the country and in Washington, D.C. is limited by the fact that the two news sources included in this research were of a relatively liberal character. Yet,



we are not worried that this study's results are out of the ordinary, since the conclusions obtained are in line with those of prior research.

## REFERENCE

1. Kort-Butler, Lisa and Habecker, Patrick, "Framing and Cultivating the Story of Crime: The Effects of Media Use, Victimization, and Social Networks on Attitudes About Crime" (2018). Sociology Department, Faculty Publications. 570.
2. Pröll, F.; Magin, M. Framing Feminicides—A Quantitative Content Analysis of News Stories in Four Colombian Newspapers. *Journal. Media* 2022, 3, 117-133. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia3010010>
3. John Carter Wood (2016), "Crime News and the Press," Forthcoming: The Oxford Handbook of the History of Crime and Criminal Justice, ed. Paul Knepper and Anja Johansen (OUP, 2016)
4. Harrison, V. S., & Boehmer, J. (2020). Sport for Development and Peace: Framing the Global Conversation. *Communication & Sport*, 8(3), 291–316. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479519831317>
5. Badii, N., and H. Ghandi. 2016. *Röznamenegariye novin* [Modern Journalism]. 10th ed. Tehran: Allame Tæbataebayi University.
6. Baranauskas, A. J., and K. M. Drakulich. 2018. "Media Construction of Crime Revisited: Media Types, Consumer Contexts, and Frames of Crime and Justice." *Criminology* 56 (4): 679–714.
7. Broersma, M. J. 2011. "From Press History to the History of Journalism: National and Transnational Features of Dutch Scholarship." *Medien & Zeit* 26 (3): 17–28.
8. Carbaugh, D., and M. Berry. 2017. *Reporting Cultures on 60 min: Missing the Finnish Line in an American Newscast*. New York: Routledge.
9. Chiarcos, C., B. Claus, and M. Grabski. 2011. *Salience: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Its Function in Discourse*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
10. Donkers, H., S. Markhorst, and M. Smits. 2010. *Journalistiek schrijven voor het hoger onderwijs* [Journalistic Writing for Higher Education]. Bussum: Uitgeverij Coutinho.