"The Media, Fear of Crime, and Gender: The Production of News in a Popular Canadian Women's Magazine."

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how the media constructs fear of crime for women, and explicates why. I analyze 155 news articles regarding crime and criminal justice from 1970 to 1989 in *Chatelaine* magazine. Both content and textual analyses are deployed to evaluate media representations of crime and their role in facilitating images of fear and safety. This analysis is framed by social constructionism and feminist criminology to allow an evaluation of claims-making activities and gendered crime myths. I argue that the meanings associated with women's danger and safety in news narratives are socially constructed through claims, sources, content and culture, making the "social reality of crime" a human accomplishment. I found that the dominant form of news reporting in this study did not significantly incorporate signifiers of fear. Rational and balanced presentations of crime and criminal justice aimed at educating the reader prevailed. However, transformations in these representations did occur over time. Crime messages increasingly incorporated images of fear and danger, which were influenced by the rise in neo-liberal thought during the 1980s. These results indicate that ideological struggles external to the media itself construct and reconstruct representations of crime, which ultimately influence media signifiers of both danger and safety.

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Introduction

Introduction

> Suddenly there are footsteps behind her. Heavy, rapid. A man's footsteps. She knows this immediately, just as she knows she must not look around. She quickens her pace in time to the quickening of her pulse. She is afraid. He could be a rapist. He could be a soldier, a harasser, a robber, a killer. He could be none of these. He could be a man in a hurry. He could be a man walking at his normal pace. But she fears him ... (as cited in Walklate, 2001: 87).

One of the most fearful situations for anyone in this society is criminal victimization: crimes such as burglary, assault, and rape are inherently harmful. Yet, for most of its history, criminology treated the issue of fear of crime as a simple reaction to victimization, in need of little consideration. However, over the past three decades criminologists took a decidedly different perspective on this issue, as an increasing amount of evidence pointed to the fact that fear of crime can be as devastating as the actual victimization itself. Fear can unleash a series of negative social outcomes that lead to xenophobia, conservative penal policies, and a reduction of community solidarity (Conklin, 1975; Maxfield, 1984). As a result, criminologists gave up their assumption that fear was directly proportional to objective risk, while acknowledging that fear of crime had increasingly become a major social problem and therefore had a considerable impact on people's daily lives (LaGrange & Ferraro, 1987; Lewis & Salem, 1988; Gordon & Riger, 1989; Stanko, 2000). Not surprisingly, the causes of fear of crime have been studied extensively and with some debate within criminology.

At the forefront of these studies was the relation of fear to gender, which greatly influenced how fear of crime was researched over time. With monotonous regularity, the finding that women were more fearful than men had been reported almost without fail[1], regardless of the fact that official victimization rates for men were in general higher than rates for women (Clement & Kleiman, 1977; Dubow et al., 1979; Riger & Gordon, 1981). As a result, women were accused of being irrational. Feminist authors swiftly challenged this claim arguing that women's fears were not inappropriate once other indirect determinants of fear, such as physical vulnerability and fear for the safety of others, were taken into account (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Griffin, 1983; Stanko, 1985, 1987; Hanmer & Stanko, 1985). Once these arguments undermined the claim that women's fear could only be a product of direct victimization, criminologists attributed fear of crime to other practices, particularly to those of the mass media (Sparks, 1992:83).

The news media has always had an intimate relationship with crime. However, crime news is often selective and distorted, giving an inaccurate picture of crime in society. This observation has led Warr (2000:482) to argue that "fear of crime rests on highly uncertain information about risk." In fact, Marsh (1991) carried out a comparative analysis of crime coverage in newspapers in fourteen different countries. In Canada, he found evidence of misrepresentation, overrepresentation of violent crime, heavy reliance on "official" sources, false image of police effectiveness, uniform crime coverage, lack of educational value, racial prejudice and/or stereotyping, and little coverage of corrections. This is a significant finding as the majority of citizens only have symbolic rather than experiential knowledge about crime. Consequently, when the media are the primary

[1] For an exception to this rule, see Gilchrist, et al. (1998) "Women and the Fear of Crime: Challenging the Accepted Stereotype." *British Journal of Criminology, 38*(2), 283-298.

knowledge distributors about crime, distortions such as these are readily available to construct public perceptions. And because the consequences of crime can be severe, these perceptions can lead to an increased concern about victimization. This "resonance" hypothesis argues that the media "cultivate" a violent and threatening view of the world, which compounds preexisting fear (Gerbner et al., 1980).

This thesis pursues this research area. Drawing on social constructionism, this study takes into consideration how media representations create a "socially constructed reality" of crime in *Chatelaine* magazine from 1970 to 1990. This involves analyzing claims-makers that have the power to construct their preferred meanings of danger in the news. It also involves analyzing clear transformations in these sources, as well as the shifts in crime newsworthiness and signifiers of fear in order to identify the dynamic nature of a constructed reality. In other words, I investigate fear of crime as a constructed and contested category.

Also, I utilize feminist criminology to further explore how the media construct and constitute fear and safety, especially the construction and deconstruction of myths commonly associated with gendered crime danger. This entails highlighting the underlying ideologies embedded in the news narratives that reveal structural power relations.

I also examine the relationship between fear of crime and the media's content and/or claims that have been found to influence it. Research has shown that it is not the quantity of crime narratives that influence the audience's perception of crime. Of more importance is the content of these crime reports that influence fear (Heath, 1984). This

means that not all crime reports are equally fear provoking, so the study of media messages is vital to understanding the symbolic nature of fear in the media.

Fundamental to my analysis is the explanation of the transformation in crime narratives over time. To this end, I analyze several models of explanation to account for these discursive changes, with particular emphasis on political and economic strategies that affect crime control during the rise of neo-liberal thought. Comparisons are then made between dominant ideologies and the images of fear and danger in *Chatelaine*.

Ultimately, the goal of this thesis is to examine how the media are constructed as sites of fear for women. To accomplish this, I reveal the sources, claims, and content of crime narratives in order to assess how the "symbolic reality" of fear is shaped. Do crime messages signify fear of crime? How do the media define fear and reveal its meaning to audience members? Is this "reality" contested over time, and if so, why?

Importance of Research

Researching fear of crime is an important endeavor, as individuals as well as societies are negatively affected by it. The present study builds on the literature that aids in understanding these effects. This knowledge is essential, as fear of crime studies eventually translate into practical policies for reducing this fear: successful policies require insight into every aspect of this social problem. In particular, this study offers new insight into the relationship between fear of crime and media representations. This is essential as the media stimulates interest in crime, and circulates images of risk. Importantly, this study encourages the reader to be more critically aware of her beliefs and attitudes about crime danger.

This study fills another gap in the present criminological literature; that is, it "genders" fear of crime. While most research to date acknowledges that gender is an important variable in understanding fear of crime, it is still not studied as a gendered phenomenon. This means that research tends to measure the distribution of fear between men and women, but does not take into consideration, for example, the fact that a woman's sense of security is informed by the sex of the person she is with at any one point in time, which changes her analysis of risk. Therefore, this study contributes to feminist criminology by revealing the underlying myths, and assumptions in relation to women and signifiers of fear within crime news reporting.

The connection between broad cultural arrangements and discourses of fear are also developed in this thesis. Media research generally tends to examine the impact of reporting crime on individuals, rather than investigating why crime reports represent fear and danger the way that they do. This limitation is overcome in this study, as I examine the structural forces, such as culture, politics, and economics that are responsible for media transformations in crime control.

This study is also significant from a methodological perspective. The sample period for this thesis, which is 1970-1990, is significant as most media studies involving crime cover relatively brief periods of time[2]. This extended period of study allows for a comprehensive analysis to develop over the entire time frame, as well as separate time distributions. This reveals trends and patterns in crime narratives that would otherwise go unnoticed in studies that only give a snapshot in time.

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[2] Notable newspaper and television sample periods generally range from one week (Dussuyer, 1979; Heath, 1984), to one month (Roshier, 1971; Ditton & Duffy, 1983; Williams & Dickinson, 1993), to one year (Graber, 1980; National Television Violence Study, 1997).

In addition to this extensive sample period, I chose a popular Canadian magazine as my data source, as newspapers and television are over represented in media crime studies to date. Due to this imbalance, my study provides a basis of comparison with other forms of mass media. This is significant, as some media appear to influence consumers' perceptions values, and concerns, while others do not (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). More specifically, this data source is a "women's magazine," which is a resource that has been neglected by mainstream academic research (Hermes, 1995; Korinek, 2000). To date, no one has established research that examines women's fear of crime drawn from a women's magazine. This choice of source captures how fear is constructed through gender specific narratives written primarily by and for women.

A missing ingredient in crime and media studies is a comparison between crime messages that are highly representative of fear and those that are low. By employing a quartile analysis of the top twenty-five percent of crime articles that rate high and low on a fear scale, I am able to examine and contrast different forms of news reporting, and the range of preferred meanings that they produce. Importantly, these findings aid in understanding the relationship between fear and media reporting, and ultimately indicate how framing representations of crime can elevate or reduce fear.

Overall, this thesis answers the call to study fear of crime from more than one approach. Through the integration of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, I am able to study both the content of the crime messages and their preferred meanings. Unlike other studies that use one method only, this study yields a more reflexive analysis. And by approaching and framing this issue from two theoretical orientations, I am better able to explain how readers of crime narratives experience crime danger without having any

direct experience of it. In the end, the processes and theories employed in this study contribute to the current bodies of work that foster our knowledge about the relationship between fear of crime and the media.

Thesis Structure

This study is organized into five chapters. The next chapter introduces the theoretical perspectives that guide this study in understanding the construction of a gendered crime "reality." The key concepts of social constructionism and feminist criminology are explained and illustrated in relation to fear of crime. The connection between the media and fear of crime is explicated with an emphasis on the distortion of knowledge, audience effects, and media content and claims. Further, the effects of political economy on discursive transformations in the representations of crime are addressed.

The purpose of chapter three is to explicate the research methods that can answer my research questions. Here, I explain how the data are analyzed through two approaches: quantitative as a means to observe form and content, and qualitative to discover meaning. One hundred and fifty-five crime articles from *Chatelaine* magazine from 1970 to 1990 are coded to discover how fear is constructed. To supplement this quantitative approach, I also employ a textual analysis in which latent dimensions of texts are revealed through the analysis of rhetoric, semiotics, and ideology.

Chapter four presents my descriptive findings. I describe the criterion of newsworthiness for this medium, and illustrate how various sources of knowledge construct different "truth" claims in order to communicate their preferred meanings in the texts. I also explore the construction and reconstruction of a gendered narrative, as well

as the dimensions of crime narratives deemed fear provoking. I expose how representations of fear are contingent on the specific period of time in which they appear. In addition, I reveal how distinct patterns of news reporting signify fear and danger to different degrees.

In chapter five, I offer an interpretation of my findings. By drawing on the concepts central to social constructionism, I explain how the production of crime news aids in the creation of fear and/or safety. Through the orientation of feminist criminology, I analyze how the myths associated with women and crime dangers, once deconstructed, provide alternative crime news. I explore the contextualization and presentation of crime messages through particular patterns of news reporting, and how this symbolizes fear of crime. Lastly, I examine how preferred readings of crime narratives are contested over time, and explain why these discursive transformations occur. To conclude, I offer recommendations for future research made evident by the present study.

- Chapter 2 -

Social Theory, Media, and the Fear of Crime

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine social constructionism, feminist criminology, the mass media, and their connections to fear of crime. Firstly, I define and explain the theoretical orientation of social constructionism, including a brief historical description to provide setting for this study. I include the key ideas and concepts of social constructionism that inform this thesis: Lemert's (1951) work on deviance and stigma; Becker's (1967; 1963) "master status," "outsiders," "moral entrepreneurs," and "hierarchies of credibility;" Quinney's (1970) "social reality of crime;" as well as the concepts of "claimsmaking" and "moral panic," I argue, provide me with the structure needed to analyse the socially constructed nature of fear of crime as evinced in media outlets.

Secondly, I address gender, as of all the social characteristics typically considered in fear of crime research, it is the most important predictor. I examine the feminist criminological enterprise as a complement to social constructionism to develop a more multi-layered understanding of women's fear of crime. I discuss key concepts and ideas derived from a radical feminist standpoint that are relevant to fear of crime and its reporting: "patriarchy" "sexual danger;" "stranger danger;" "socialization," and "vulnerability."

Thirdly, because the mass media play a primary role in the creation and dissemination of beliefs about crime, I examine the literature surrounding media and fear of crime. While some of this media research emphasizes the inaccurate portrayal of

crime regarding rates and types of crime, as well as the effects of these crime portrayals on audience members, I examine and deconstruct media representations of crime danger by addressing contextual characteristics that have been demonstrated to influence readers' reactions to crime. I also explore the ways in which wider political, social and economic ideologies that governed crime control during the 1970s and 1980s effected these media representations. In sum, this chapter offers a framework of analysis for the study of gendered fear of crime in the media.

Social Constructionism

Social constructionism asserts that there is no such thing as an objective or predetermined reality. Instead, reality is said to be the result of an intricate process of learning and constructing meanings through language, symbols, and interactions with other people. Reality is a human accomplishment (Krasha, 2004). As Blumer (1969:11) puts it, "even tangible objects have different symbolic meanings for different individuals: a tree will be a different object to a botanist, a lumberman, a poet, and a home gardener."

Social constructionism is one strain of thought within the interpretive school[3]. "Interpretive" refers to theoretical models that assume that humans, by actively interpreting the world around them, create systems of meaning; interpretive theorists make sense of those meaning systems and expose their inner workings (Krasha, 2004). Ontologically, humans are seen as both active in the creation of their world and malleable in their communication with others (Einstadter & Henry, 1994). But as Blumer (1969) points out, humans also become subject to the meanings others construct of them so they incorporate some of the others' definitions into their own definition of themselves.

[3] The interpretive school encompasses different areas of theorizing in academics, including symbolic interactionism, social constructionism, cultural anthropology, rhetorical studies, institutional theory, ethnomethodology, and phenomenology.

Human behaviour is not fixed in its meanings but open to negotiation (Einstadter & Henry 1995). Accordingly, the social world is thought to have no underlying objective character.

Initially, the constructionist approach was a response to the structural functionalist approach to social problems. Structural functionalists insist that there is a clear separation between social conditions and a person's interpretation of them. But according to social constructionists, defining crime simply as a behavior that violates criminal laws prevents scholars from seeing that, "as a socially constructed phenomenon, what is or is not "criminal" changes over time, across societies, and even from one situation to the next" (Lilly, Cullen & Ball, 2002:106).

The massive social and political struggles of the 1960s, such as African-American civil rights and anti-Vietnam war sentiments, paved the road for this perspective as "sociologists soon found their students, children, friends, spouses, and even themselves being tear-gassed, arrested, spied upon, stigmatized, and bullied like common deviants. The target of social control thus shifted from burglars and dope addicts to political activists and disenchanted young people" (Pfohl, 1994:348). The social environment was right for the acceptance of new theoretical foundations and policies in criminal justice that removed, to some degree, the responsibility from the individual and placed it more on the actions of questionable government entities (Cooley, 2001:159).

Because of its view of crime as a social process, its inclusion of societal reaction, and its insights into the construction of "reality," social constructionism is particularly valuable for my research. I will examine the "reality" of fear and danger as constructed by the media. That is, I explore how crime is presented and framed in news accounts by

taking into consideration specific claims, sources, and content that support a fear discourse. Ultimately, social constructionism permits me to examine and analyze representation and meaning, which demonstrates that crime and reactions to crime are not constant but rather "the result of concrete efforts by men and women to construct a different reality" (Lilly, et al., 2002:107).

Key Ideas and Concepts of Social Constructionism

Once the social constructionist perspective became a foundation for studying crime and deviance, an abundance of innovative ideas and concepts came forward. Many of these ideas inform my analysis of the representation of fear in media crime messages.

Firstly, I draw on Edwin Lemert (1951) who suggested that the existence of deviance should not be taken for granted, as this fails to take into consideration how people or things come to be defined as deviant in the first place. This insight informs his concepts of "primary deviance" and "secondary deviance," which examine how labeling may amplify deviance or produce secondary deviation. He argues that societal reaction is integral to the creation of crime and deviance. This led me to question the media's relationship to deviance: What set of media images constitute the dangerous deviant?

Secondly, I take into consideration the ideas developed by Howard Becker. He conceived that deviance could act as a "master status" whereby a particular trait becomes the individuals' central identifying characteristic.[4] When a master status becomes criminal, all other traits are overridden, which puts the individual outside conventional society. To Becker (1963:9) creating these "outsiders" who are judged by others to be deviant is a political process:

[4] The concept of "master status" originated with Becker's teacher, Everett Hughes, who argued that a status like race could operate as a "master status" which overshadows all others (Pfohl, 1994:354).

> Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender." The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.

Accordingly, the rules that constitute deviant behavior are "the products of someone's initiative" and this makes them the "object of conflict and disagreement, part of the political process of society" (Becker, 1963:18). This raises important questions pertinent to my thesis: Do media producers construct evil villains that consumers are willing to blame, shame, and punish, and therefore treat as dangerous outsiders? Who are these "abnormals" that women should fear as evinced in news reporting?

To further illustrate his belief that the creation of deviance is a political process, Becker (1963:148) developed the concept of "moral entrepreneurs." He felt that those who created laws were people who "feel that nothing can be right in the world until rules are made to correct it." The moral entrepreneur insists that any means is justified to rid the world of whatever social ill he or she claims as disturbing. In his now famous analysis of the marijuana tax act of 1937, Becker showed that social rules were constructed and created by moral entrepreneurs. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics, interested in increasing the scope and power of their own divisional branch, launched an anti-marijuana propaganda campaign without benefit of empirical facts in order to uncover deviant behavior. This eventually produced a new rule, "whose subsequent enforcement would help create a new class of outsiders – marihuana users" (Becker, 1963:145). Similarly, in Harris's (1969) account of *The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act* of 1968, he found that moral entrepreneurs were a major part of the

political process. When Senator John L. McClellan, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures, took over this crime Bill, he scoffed at the notion that social unrest had social causes. Instead he insisted that the Supreme Court was to blame for rising crime rates, stating "the reason the police cannot stop crime is the Court decisions" and that "decisions of the Supreme Court endangered the nation's stability" (Harris, 1969:30-33). McClellan continually evoked a populist discourse: members of the Supreme Court and others in high places were "coddling criminals" and "handcuffing the police," and as a result they had dispatched "the depraved to roam the streets at will" and "prey on the innocent." In time, the clichés began to appear in newspapers, on television and in letters written to members of Congress. Ultimately, a combination of socially constructed fear of crime and political cowardice pushed McClellan's own conservative version of the Crime Bill into law. Lee (2001) concludes that the political stage was set for this type of populist fear-mongering to continue through the presidencies of both Nixon and Ford.

In his study on the relationship between the media and fear of crime in Newfoundland, Elliot Leyton (1992:109) employed a social constructionist perspective to capture the significance of moral entrepreneurs. He argues that special interest groups use the mass media to gain public recognition of their cause. They participate in a kind of "media theatre" in which the goal is to generate a great deal of anxiety over the supposed increasingly violent nature of society in order to whip up public sentiment for their cause. The concept of moral entrepreneurs is particularly useful to my thesis, as it assists me in deconstructing how the authors of crime narratives in the media try to create

and enforce their own rules. Does the media reproduce the preferred rules of certain social groups? What professionals and experts are used to assist in this reproduction?

Also of use is Becker's (1967:241) concept of "hierarchies of credibility." He argues that "in a system of ranked groups, participants take it as given that members of the highest group have the right to define the way things really are ... and members of lower groups will have incomplete information, and their view of reality will be partial and distorted in consequence." Once socialized into this system, participants believe that the "tales" of the "superordinates" deserve the most credibility and legitimacy and the most right to be heard. Therefore, police are given more credibility than drug addicts, warden's more than inmates, and lawyers more than defendants. Becker (1967) contends that judgments of credibility need to be examined as social constructs that buttress an established social order. Under the social constructionist paradigm, Welch, Fenwick, & Roberts (1997) examine the concept of hierarchies of credibility in the media and its relationship to fear of crime. Their findings demonstrate the media's heavy reliance on law enforcement officials in formulating primary definitions of crime. Importantly, these expert's quotes are statements that confirm crime and fear as a social problem. These researchers find this significant as alarmist reactions to crime offered by state managers contribute to fear because their messages are delivered by seemingly credible authorities. Thus, I examine those given the most voice of authority in the media in order to assess credibility. By knowing who has the power to voice their opinion, I can examine the preferred narratives of the media. What news sources are positioned with the most power in constructing criminality and fear?

Becker's (1967; 1963) social constructionist work regarding moral entrepreneurs and hierarchies of credibility is directly connected to the concept of "claims-making" by which he means statements of persuasion used to define a perceived social problem. I use this concept to examine who decides on which crimes constitute a social problem, and why such claims are constructed in the first place. As Spector and Kituse (1987) argue, groups with enough power engage in claims-making activity, which enables them to stake and secure their claims regarding social problems. Once members of society construct a social problem, "claims, complaints, or demands for change" are made concerning some supposed condition that is objectionable to these members (Spector & Kituse, 1987:78). Loseke (2003:35) argues that the goal of claims-making is to "construct claims that audience members evaluate as believable and important." She reminds audiences that even claims-makers at the top of the hierarchy of credibility[5] construct knowledge through a social process. Tierney's (1982:210) work also emphasizes this claims-making process. She argues that the development of the battered women's movement and the 'production' of the wife-beating problem can be attributed to social work, mental health, legal professions and the mass media, all of whom amplified it into a social problem and gave the movement its "claims-making" power. Fear of crime is also socially constructed through claims-making in the media. McCormick's (1995:144) media analysis shows how one MP's comments feed on people's concerns that "kids are getting away with murder" because the YOA is "seriously flawed," a "joke," and "an invitation to break the law." Independent of other evidence, such media claims construct danger for readers.

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[5] Loseke (2003:39) argues that scientists are at the top of the hierarchy of credibility because the ideal of science is it is an objective search for knowledge. However, she argues: "issues of moral evaluation *always* and *necessarily* lie behind any claims, including claims supported by scientific research."

Power is of paramount concern to constructionist theorists. Richard Quinney[6] (1970:277) insists that *crime is created* by the interests of the segments of society that have the power to shape public policy. He says: "the reaction of the public to crime is both a product of the social reality of crime and a source in the construction of conceptions of crime." On one hand, social reactions to crime are a consequence of the reality the public has constructed in regard to crime (reactions to criminal activity, enforcement and administration of the law). Without a social reality of crime, there would be no reaction to it. But, on the other hand, the reactions that are elicited in response to crime are at the same time shaping the social reality of crime (reactions create patterns for future responses). For example, Furstenberg (1971) found that discontent with changing social conditions was associated with high apprehension about the crime situation; more than forty percent of those most threatened by change ranked crime as the number one problem compared to nineteen percent of the respondents who were most committed to change.

Responses to crime are influenced by knowledge about crime and perceptions about the meaning of crime. How a person perceives crime provides a framework for their own understanding of and subsequent reaction to crime (Quinney, 1970:279). Quinney asserts that the most important agents in the diffusion of criminal conceptions are the media of mass communication: "Crime coverage in the newspapers, television, and movies affect a person's estimate of the frequency of crime as well as the

[6] Richard Quinney has been credited as being a major influence within the social constructionism perspective by demystifying the idea that the law was value-free. However, in later work, he went on to adopt the standpoint of Marxist social theory in order to further understand the historically based structural context in which power struggles occur (Pfohl, 1994:430). In 1991, his scholarship took yet another transition in order to understand the complexity of crime and crime control - Peacekeeping. He argues: "To eliminate crime – to end the construction and perpetuation of an existence that makes crime possible – requires a transformation of our human being. We as human beings must *be* peace if we are to live in a world free of crime, in a world of peace" (Quinney, 1991:11).

interpretations that he or she attaches to crime" (Quinney, 1970:281). Public opinions about crime tend to reflect trends in the amount of crime news rather than the actual crime rates. Coverage of crime in the newspapers creates a conceptual reality that is "meaningful to the public in spite of any other social reality of crime" (Quinney, 1970:282).

Because the mass media provide varying portrayals of crime, Quinney (1970) claims that the style and content of much of the media represent a continual preoccupation with crime. In Quinney's (1970:282) words, "one's construction of a conception of crime depends upon which newspaper he happens to read." When a conception of crime is presented in the mass media, that conception, diffused throughout society, becomes the basis for the public's view of reality. This does not mean that conceptions of crime or fear of crime do not change. Public alarm about crime fluctuates from one period to another and "crime waves" are manufactured, especially when specific interest groups have something to gain from constructing a reality that includes an aroused fear about crime. Both private and governmental groups have a vested interest in constructing particular criminal conceptions that instruct official policy (Quinney, 1970:304). To this end, Milakovick (1975) maintains that it is important to distinguish between the *problem* of crime and the *political issue* of crime. He sees the problem of crime as actual victimization, which elicits fear, whereas the political issue of crime is fear that is based on the statements of public officials, candidates for public office, and the media. Kappeler, Blumberg & Potter (2000:47) argue socially constructed fear is produced by the media, which stems from the "politicalization of crime." They argue that politicians create false fear in the media, as "explaining that

crime is less of a threat today than it was in 1973 would not justify expanding the criminal justice system." Based on these concepts, I address the socially constructed reality of crime that is produced in the media. Because those with power in society feel the need to partner with the mass media in order to gain legitimacy, certain questions are raised for this study: Does the newsmaking process attempt to shape public policy on crime? What official policies are being supported or challenged in the media discourse?

In order to further explore the constructing and changing nature of mass media communication, this study considers the work of Stanley Cohen. In *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, Cohen (1972) studies how certain people, in this case British youth subcultures, are perceived of and labelled as deviant. The assumed dangerousness of these "Folk Devils" led to the key social constructionist concept of the "moral panic:"

> Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible (Cohen, 1972:9).

His analysis shows that the mass media play a large role in creating what is considered normal versus what is considered deviant: "It informs us about right and wrong, about the boundaries beyond which one should not venture and about the shapes that the devil can assume" (Cohen, 1972:17). Because Cohen drew attention to the fact that the media does not simply reflect a consensual reality, but actively constructs meaning, his work is particularly useful to this thesis. Does the media operate as agents of moral indignation, thereby generating fear or panic? Do news accounts accentuate one

type of crime more than any other? Do news accounts stress urgency when defining a solution?

In sum, the previous concepts and ideas inherent to social constructionism guide this thesis. These views provide a framework that allow me to analyse the meaning that media attach to crime narratives, and how fear and danger are constructed out of this meaning. I analyse those who make "reality" claims in the media and the methods of rhetoric they employ in order to discover their underlying goals: to enforce rules, to change public policy, to stigmatize and assign deviant roles, or to shore up a particular ideology. Because people utilize the media to formulate their perceptions about the world, exposing its socially constructed nature is vital to this study.

Feminist Criminology

As an underlying framework, social constructionism contributes enormously to this thesis. However, as the focus of my work concerns gender, feminist criminology will help develop a more comprehensive analysis. The goal of feminist criminology is "not to push men out so as to bring women in, but rather to gender the study of crime" (Renzetti, 1993:232). Gelsthorpe (1998) argues because gender carries great social, economic, and political significance, theories that do not consider it are not only incomplete, but also are misleading. Similarly, Donna Haraway has reservations about the lack of an "objectively" defendable position from which to question existing structures of power within social constructionism. Consequently, she supplements social constructionists' theoretical claims with those of feminism, taking seriously the "embodied objectivity" or "experiential standpoint" of women and other disempowered groups (as cited in Pfohl, 1994:388). As Loseke (2004:x) asserts: "Different frameworks

simply pose questions about different aspects of life – to deny the importance of any theoretical framework is to limit our understandings." Such beliefs have convinced Miller & Holstein (1993:14) that "contemporary criticism are not organized as outright rejections of the constructionist perspective, but as attempts to relocate social constructionists' concerns and studies within perspectives that the critics argue are more comprehensive."

Historically, the study of criminology has been based on male experiences and perspectives. The rare mention of women was generally sexist, and based on inherent biological characteristics (Lombroso, 1895). Feminist criminology grew out of the sixties movements: women began to question social justice from their own viewpoint. Criminology's "androcentric" nature was recognized in "biased research and gatekeeping" (Moyer, 2001:243). Feminists called for research into women's criminality, as well as a feminist perspective in the construction of criminological theories (Einstadter & Henry, 1995:259-260). It was felt that this gender-sensitive criminology would serve as a way to rid male bias from the criminal justice system. As Caulfield & Wonders (1994) put it, feminist criminology should be "concerned with the social construction of difference, particularly the construction of masculinity and femininity as meaningful social categories" (as cited in Einstadter & Henry, 1995:260). Feminism recognizes the "importance of power in shaping social relations, has sensitivity to the way that the social context shapes human relations, and recognizes that all social reality must be understood as a process" (Gelsthorpe, 2002:135). Humans, therefore, are the product of socialization in gendered, historical and cultural contexts (Einstadter & Henry, 1995).

Feminist criminology sees gender as a central organizing principle. This belief makes feminist thought distinguishable from other types of social and political thought (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 2004[7]). In spite of holding similar viewpoints, feminist criminology is simultaneously fragmented offering a "diverse set of perspectives and agenda, each based on ... competing conceptions of the origins and mechanisms of gender inequality/oppression, and divergent strategies for its eradication" (Simpson, 1989:606). There are many different strands of feminist thought, and each of these feminisms pose different questions for criminology and genders criminology in quite different ways (Walklate, 1998:79).[8]

Most feminist criminologists would agree that macro structural conditions of society are important considerations in the analysis of men's power over women. Crime and criminality are linked to the social, political and economic organization of society. Although the "emancipation thesis" of the early 1970s was valuable in that it focused on female crime, it ignored the impact of power relations in a social structure that allows men to exercise control over women's labor and sexuality (Lilly, 2002:171). Sexual stratification in society now generates theoretical and research attention within feminist criminological theories.

Because of its insistence that gender is a fundamental construct, and it's underlying structural analysis, feminist criminology is particularly valuable for this thesis. I am able to examine how the media constructs and constitutes gender in relation

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[7] Daly & Chesney-Lind's article "Feminism and Criminology" was first published in *Justice Quarterly* in 1988.

[8] Liberal feminism is concerned with equal rights, and feels that discrimination can be overcome through legal reform; radical feminism sees the problem of oppression as a fundamental problem based on the appropriation and/or control of women's sexuality and bodies (Walby, 1990:3); Marxist feminism recognizes patriarchal structure but sees these rooted in class relations of production; and socialist feminism sees the importance of both production of goods and the construction of gender categories insisting that one should not be prioritized over the other (Einstadter & Henry, 1995, p. 265).

to fear and danger. This is important as of all the social characteristics typically considered in fear of crime research, gender is consistently the most important predictor and often twice as strong as other relevant variables (Ferraro, 1996).[9] Are women's experiences of crime represented in the media, or are men's experiences more central in the discourse? Ultimately, feminist criminology allows me to take into consideration the gendered nature of fear of crime in the media. As Walklate (2001) maintains, fear, risk and danger are gendered phenomena, and should be studied as such.

Key Ideas and Concepts of Feminist Criminology

Various ideas and concepts of feminist criminology, derived from gender-sensitive research, have impacted criminological research and theory. These writings questioned the absence of gender in criminology, and exposed the male bias inherent within the discipline. Many of these ideas, particularly from a "radical feminist" perspective,[10] inform my analysis of the representation of fear in media discourse.

The overriding premise for much feminist theory is that women's inequality is a result of the patriarchal structure that allows men to oppress and control women. Therefore, I take into consideration the concept of 'patriarchy' advanced by radical feminist criminologists. Messerschmidt (1986:x) defines patriarchy as a hierarchical system of power relations, providing control among men and of men over women. Walby

[9] With monotonous regularity, the finding that women are more fearful than men has been reported almost without fail (Clements & Kleiman, 1977; Dubow et al., 1979; Riger & Gordon, 1981; Ennis, 1967; Lebowitz, 1975; Garofalo, 1977; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; and Keane, 1992).

[10] The most influential feminist perspective on the subject of fear of crime has been that of radial feminism. Liberal feminist analysis downplays the extent of the threat of sexual violence as the basis on which fear is generated, insisting that the issue of sexual violence is a problem associated with a few psychologically deranged men whom women need to learn to identify and avoid. Postmodernist feminist analysis avoids universal statements about women's fear, arguing that the specificity and diversity of experiences of fear, make it necessary to distinguish the fears expressed by black women from those expressed by lesbian women or by white women, etc. (Walklate, 2001: 87). As well, radical feminist thought is most concerned with the victimization of women and male violence, and by doing so, has expanded feminist criminological theory to include both offenders and victims (Moyer, 2001:253).

(1990:2) claims: "The concept and theory of patriarchy is essential to capture the depth, pervasiveness and interconnectedness of different aspects of women's subordination." She asserts that patriarchy is structured through the state, male violence, sexuality, and cultural institutions such as the media.

Radical feminist criminologists place fear of crime within the context of patriarchy and male dominance, as inequality fosters the reaction of women to men's threatening, intimidating, coercive or violent behavior (Stanko, 1985:166). Stanko (1992:118) argues, in a patriarchal society, "it is largely women who carry the burden of anxiety about violence." Valentine (1989:385) characterizes women's fear as a "spatial expression of patriarchy," and Pain (1993) argues that women's fear of crime is a consequence of being at the "sharp end" of patriarchy (as cited in Stanko, 1995b:57). Such beliefs lead Stanko (1987:130) to assert: "women's fear of crime might also be read as women's fear of men.[11]" Therefore, the fear of crime of women is linked to their subordinate social, economic, and political status, and can only be understood in the context of broader social inequality (Pain, 2001). As Stanko (1995:58) suggests:

> The social context of women's fear of crime is such that unless women's autonomy is promoted – which, I advocate, must address women's freedom from sexual danger – it is unlikely that women's fear will be reduced. Good lighting, good transport, adequate child care, decent education, safe houses, and safe relationships – one without the others is inadequate to address women's needs and, by extension, women's fear of crime.

Ultimately, women's fear of crime is the "cost of negotiating subordination in everyday life" (Stanko, 1990:150). I examine this feminist concept by analyzing sexual inequality discourse in the media. Are media crime narratives socially, politically, or economically

[11] It is not that women think that every man is violent but rather women's inability to predict which men are violent and when the violence may occur that makes men intimidating to women (Stanko, 1985).

based? Do the media attribute criminal acts to social inequality? Are patriarchal systems of power acknowledged in the media?

The concept of "stranger danger" demonstrates the idea that women's fears are central to the reproduction of their unequal participation in society. In particular, Stanko's (1990) research attempts to discredit the myth that strangers are the main perpetrators of crime. She argues that the myth of the safe home and the continued focus on the dangerous stranger overshadows many people's own knowledge about personal safety:

> Danger, many of us believe, arises from the random action of strangers. Yet according to most people's experiences, reinforced by the statistics of academic researchers and police alike, danger and violence arise within our interpersonal relationships (Stanko, 1990:3).

The fear of stranger danger, normally associated with public danger, limits and restricts women's movements and activities. As Pain (1991:420) notes, "these social and lifestyle precautions are most costly in terms of personal freedom." Severe restrictions on women's mobility in public spaces have been crucial to the perpetuation of their subordination in western societies (Weaver et al., 2000:172). Additionally, Weaver et al. (2000) argue that the media focus on public sexual violence constructs 'the female body as a site of risk' and leads to women being irrationally fearful in public space while ignoring the much greater risks of private violence. As Madriz (1997:19) states, "fear of crime teaches women that some rights are reserved for men, such as the right to use public places." By focusing on stranger danger and public danger, patriarchal ideology of the traditional family unit upon which society is built is reinforced (Stanko, 1988a). I found these concepts to be useful in this media analysis. Do the media focus on public or

private discourses of danger? Is the stranger constituted as the most obvious and harmful source of crime?

Radical feminism sees patriarchy as rooted in male aggression and male domination, through the control of women's sexuality in both public and private domains (Einstadter & Henry, 1994:264). This concept is translated in some feminist work as a fundamental fear of sexual danger. Radical feminists document "ordinary fear" of sexual violence and argue that the fear of sexual danger is at the root of women's fear of crime (Stanko, 1990; Kelly, 1987), making rape a "master offence." Gordon & Riger (1989:2) contend that women's fear of rape instils "a sense that one must always be on guard, vigilant and alert, a feeling that causes a woman to tighten with anxiety." Kelly (1987:59) suggests that sexual violence in women's lives is a "continuum" and that "all women experience sexual violence at some point in their lives." Stanko (1985:17) claims that sexual violence is an ordinary experience: "to be a woman is to be potentially sexually and/or physically assaulted by men." The very nature of sexual assault makes it a particularly fear-provoking crime. Both Warr (2000) and Ferraro (1996) found that the fear of rape was not clearly separable in respondents' minds from their anxieties about other crimes. What for men is the perceived risk of robbery is for many women the perceived risk of robbery, plus rape, plus additional injury. To assess this concept of sexual violence, my analysis takes into consideration sexual danger discourse in the media. Is sexual assault routinely featured it in the media? Does media narrative allude to sexual danger even when the main focus is on crimes of a different nature?

It has also been argued that fear of crime is related to differences in the socialization process between males and females. In patriarchal societies, women are

socialized to care for others before themselves, and to accept the responsibility involved in educating and protecting children from danger (Pain, 1997). This reflects the traditional family division of labor according to gender roles and challenges the traditional notion that women's fear of crime is motivated by self-protection. Mesch (2000b:333) argues that women's fear of crime includes fear for the well-being of significant others. His survey's most salient finding is that "women's fear is influenced by their fear for their children's well-being." As such, I examine the concept of "altruistic fear" in media messages. Do women express fear of crime for others whose well-being they value? How prevalent is this type of fear? How do media narratives impart this type of fear?

Feminist criminologists also claim that patriarchy underlies the perceived consequences of social and physical vulnerability that are said to affect women's fear of crime. Skogan & Maxfield (1981:78) define physical vulnerability as openness to attack, powerlessness to resist, and exposure to significant physical and emotional consequences if attacked. Social vulnerability involves daily exposure to the threat of victimization and limited means for coping with the medical and economic consequences of victimization. As Stanko (1990:86) points out, as women are likely to be physically smaller than men, as well as economically dependent on them, they must bargain safety from a disadvantaged position. Warr (1984) asserts that women are more likely to judge potential victimisations as serious and hence even with the same objective level of risk as men they would be more fearful. As Hale (1996:99) puts it, "perceptions of serious consequences will make women more fearful." For this study, I examine the gender-based consequences of crime. Do the media address the consequences of crime that are

particularly salient to women? For example, are rape victims constructed as perceiving a "second assault" from the criminal justice system? Are consequences based on social or physical vulnerability?

Another important concept in feminist criminology is the belief in situated knowledges. For example, women have struggled to have sexual harassment recognized and redefined as an unacceptable behavior that "male-centred cultural norms" have long warranted (Pfohl, 1994:388). Such insights have led to an epistemological stance that states:

> What counts as knowledge must be grounded on experience. Human experience differs according to the kinds of activities and social relations in which humans engage. Women's experience systematically differs from the male experience upon which knowledge claims have been grounded. Thus the experience on which the prevailing claims to social and natural knowledge are founded is only partial human experience only partially understood (Harding, 1983:x).

This epistemology, or women's "ways of knowing," "women's experiences," or "women's knowledge," integrates women's knowledge and experiences into the criminological enterprise (Alcoff & Potter, 1993:1). Feminist criminology adds insight into the nature of fear as a dimension of experience. As Sparks (1992:2) puts it: "One would never guess when reading most criminological accounts of fear of crime that the authors had ever had any private perception or sensation about the matter in hand, at least prior to the intervention of feminist writers on the topic." Feminist research that treats women's experiential knowledge as 'expert' knowledge has increasingly documented that the common basis of fear for women is the endemic level of violence by men toward them (Walklate, 2001:86). For this study, I examine whether the media challenge the

assumptions upon which existing "knowledge" is based by expressing women's own experiences and voices in media narratives.

In addition to the concepts that evolve from patriarchy and situated knowledges, I draw on one of feminism's defining components: a standing and overt commitment to develop strategies of social change (Schram & Koons-Witt, 2004:83). According to Simpson (1989:606), feminism is best understood as "both a worldview and a social movement that encompasses assumptions and beliefs about the origins and consequences of gendered social organization as well as strategic directions for actions and social change." Feminist criminology strives to present a new vision of equality and social justice, and promoting women's safety and autonomy is at the top of the agenda in some places by way of public awareness campaigns, community safety audits, and delivery of social services (Stanko, 1995b:55). This raises important questions pertinent to this study: Do media narratives introduce strategies for social change inside and outside of the criminal justice enterprise? Do the media engage in discourses that challenge policymaking and evaluation?

In conclusion, the previous concepts and ideas fundamental to feminist criminology guide this thesis. They provide a means to further study the way in which the media constructs fear of crime for women. I examine media depictions of crime that inform women who to be afraid of, what crimes are deemed dangerous, where danger lurks, and consider how and why these representations are portrayed as gendered.

Media and Fear of Crime

Fear of crime has become a recurring theme in academic and policy discussions due to its perceived consequences and apparent paradoxes. Criminologists have

attempted to measure and theorize about this phenomenon for almost four decades. Yet, the range of explanations to understanding fear of crime seems to be inexhaustible. Hale (1996) suggests four broad dimensions to this study: vulnerability, victimization experiences, the environment, and psychological factors.

Firstly, being vulnerable is said to exacerbate one's fear of crime. Women (Stanko, 1985), the elderly (Fattah & Sacco, 1989), and the poor (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981) have all been identified as vulnerable groups. These groups have a higher "sensitivity to risk" due to perceived consequences, which is critical in producing fear (Warr & Stafford, 1983). Secondly, victimization experiences are associated with people's fear of crime, either directly (Skogan, 1987) or indirectly (Box et al., 1988). Thirdly, environmental cues, or "incivilities" are said to produce fear through social and physical signs of decay in one's neighbourhood (Lewis & Maxfield, 1980). Lastly, psychological factors influence the fear of crime. For example, Furstenburg (1972) argues that fear of crime is related to unease over the rate of social change, and Conklin (1975) cites a lack of interpersonal trust as being fundamental to the production of fear. While these dimensions are important, this thesis explores an additional dimension mainly that "levels of crime fear have always been putatively associated with coverage of crime in the mass media" (Ditton & Farrall, 2000).[12]

There is little doubt that fear can originate from relationships with family, friends and peers, or from institutions such as corporations, schools, and government agencies. However, the most accessible and pervasive potential site of fear is the mass media. As Surette (1998:7) asserts, "In modern, advanced, industrialized societies with strong

[12] The literature on fear of crime has become very extensive over the last forty years, therefore making a full review beyond the scope of this thesis. For a more thorough investigation, interested readers should refer to Warr (2000), Hale (1996), and Sparks (1992).

popular cultures, the mass media have emerged as a main engine in the social construction of reality process." Hall et al. (1981) insists that the media possess a "near monopoly" over social knowledge. Indeed, Graber's (1980:49) research noted that ninety-five percent of her respondents named the mass media as their primary source of crime knowledge. This raised questions about the accurate portrayal of crime, and the effects of these crime portrayals on audience members (Lowry et al., 2003).

First, the mass media have been shown to be susceptible to distortions and selective interpretation, misrepresenting "the social reality of crime" (Miethe, 1995; Barlow et al., 1995; Liska & Baccaglini, 1990; Ditton & Duffy, 1983; Graber, 1980). Media accounts of crime often differ from the official sources of public knowledge of crime. There is an overrepresentation of violent individual crimes within news accounts, as compared to the proportions of such crimes indicated in official crime data (Sherizen, 1978; Dussuyer, 1979; Graber, 1980; Ditton & Duffy, 1983; Liska & Baccaglini's, 1990; Barlow, 1995). Furthermore, the nature of newspaper coverage has altered considerably over the years. Twenty-five years ago, crime coverage mainly concerned murder, jewel thefts and petty crime. It now also encompasses terrorism, child abuse, rape, and mugging. In one newspaper, almost half (46 percent) of crime-related items mention violent crimes against the person (Schleslinger, et al., 1991). Surette (1994:131) argues that the crimes that dominate public consciousness and policy debates are not common crimes but the rarest ones: "The media define "criminality" as the acts of predator criminals." Voumvakis & Ericson (1984) claim that the source of crime knowledge also distorts media content. Media members will tend to position themselves so that they can have regular and routine access to the institutions that produce useful news items on a

fairly consistent basis; the ideal institution being the police who are prominent on their "hierarchy of credibility."

Second, the effects of these media crime portrayals on audience members have been documented. An important study by Garofalo (1977) analyzed the perceptions of crime trends in eight cities. He found that eight out of ten respondents shared the belief that crime in the United States had increased in the preceding year or two. Despite the extensive attention given to crime by the media, a sizable proportion of the respondents (40 percent) felt that crime is more serious than the newspapers and television say. About an equal number thought that the media give an accurate representation of crime, but very few (less than 10 percent) said that crime is less serious than reported in the media.

Baker et al. (1983) studied the possibility that such perceptions of crime can instill a sense of fear or danger in citizens. Their surveys showed that victimization item responses remained constant, but their data showed a marked increase in the percentage of residents who thought crime was on the rise. The researchers concluded that because victimization rates remained steady, public awareness could not have been due to aggregate personal experience, so they hypothesized that this effect was due to newspaper crime reports: the increase in media coverage brought about an increase in citizen fear, despite the fact that the "social reality of crime" remained the same. Similarly, attention to both televised news about crime (Chiricos, Padgett, & Gertz, 2000; O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987) and television reality crime programs (Fishman & Cavender, 1998; Schlesinger, Dobash, Dobash & Weaver, 1992; Cavender & Bond-Maupin, 1993) have been shown to nurture individual's fear of crime.

Also central to my analysis is the relationship between fear of crime and the media's content and/or claims. These are contextual characteristics that have been demonstrated, through experimental research, to influence viewers' reactions to crime. Therefore, of particular interest to this study are the recurring media presentations that have been found to be consistent in the generation of fear of crime: *the causes of crime, solutions to crime*, *randomness*, and *sensationalism*.

An over abundance of crime messages in the media provides audiences with an ability to discuss the *causes and solutions to the crime problem*. According to Sherizen (1978:204), the mass media provide citizens with a public awareness of crime, but this awareness is, at best, "based upon an information-rich and knowledge-poor foundation." In other words, the level of interest people have about crime is not matched by the level of knowledge about crime that they are able to obtain from the mass media. Anyone interested in learning about crime from the mass media is treated to examples, incidents, and scandals but at such a level of description that it is impossible for them to develop an analytical comprehension of crime (Sherizen, 1978). This lack of knowledge might lead to an exaggerated fear of victimization: when the imagery in crime news is of crime running rampant it appears as if the chances of becoming a victim are quite high. As Voumvakis & Ericson (1984:1) state: "Accounts of crime incidents seem to entertain, titillate, and disturb one's sense of order more than provide useful information or knowledge."

Similarly, in her extensive Toronto newspaper analysis, Dussuyer (1979:124) reported that crime news informs the public about specific events as they occur without attempting very much to foster a more general understanding of the overall phenomenon

of crime and its place in society. Likewise, Barlow et al. (1995:9) found that 82 percent of news articles were about crime and criminals, whereas only 17 percent were about criminal justice. As Marsh (1991:76) puts it, "the media provides information about crime events but rarely provides information about root causes of crime or the nature of the criminal, resulting in increased levels of fear."

I also take into consideration *randomness*, which has been shown to have a relationship with fear. Many crime messages portray arbitrary criminal acts that are void of meaning, and lack victim precipitation. The random nature of these messages suggests to audience members that no one is safe, including themselves. Bazelon (as cited in Surette, 1994:144) eloquently captures this idea:

> The true source of the public's anxiety is not, I believe, the problem of crime as such. People are afraid instead about their personal safety. It is not white-collar crime that causes us to lock our doors so firmly at night. It is not organized crime, which corrupts our politics and business life that causes us to lock them, either. Locking our doors against crimes of passions is, of course, like locking the fox 'inside' the chicken coop. What makes us fear for our safety are the random muggings and burglaries, the assaults on our sense of security and repose committed by people we don't know, for reasons we cannot fathom, let alone understand.

Heath (1984) analyzed the content of crime articles from 62 newspapers in 42 American cities, and conducted telephone interviews with residents of those cities concerning their media habits and perceptions of crime. She found that reports of crimes that lack rhyme or reason are frightening. If the victim apparently did nothing to precipitate the crime, then the reader can do nothing to avoid the crime. If on the other hand, the victim took some action that made him or her more vulnerable to the victimization, then the reader can avoid that action and presumably remain safe (Heath, 1984:275).

Sacco (1995) notes that the social distributional character of victimization is frequently ignored by news coverage that stresses the random character of victimization. While the best social science literature indicates that the risks of crime, like the risks of other misfortunes, are not equally shared, media images often convey a different message. For example, Brownstein's (1991) research shows that much of the coverage of drug issues in New York City between 1986 and 1990 emphasized a random character of drug violence even though police statistics indicated that the risks of such violence were extremely low. Sacco (1995) argues the fear that these random stories invoke serves the interests of both news workers and others who seek to frame crime problems. News stories about random crimes have great dramatic value for news workers, and advocates stress the random nature of victimization because particular forms of victimization are more urgent when everyone seems threatened (Sacco, 1995:150). As well, Liska & Baccaglini's (1990) content and survey analysis reveals that local, random news allows people to reduce their anxiety about local crime by allowing them to compare themselves with others who are seen as worse off. As Surette (1998:208) contends, random crime is frightening when close because it suggests loss of control, but reassuring when distant because it suggests that conditions in other places are worse and one has less to fear in one's own immediate, apparently less dangerous environment.

Media content that is *sensationalistic* is also considered in this thesis, as it has been argued to have a relationship with fear of crime. The media prefer to report the unusual, the bizarre, and the shocking, which are generally incidents of violence, rather than extremely common crimes that account for the preponderance of official statistics (Bortner, 1984). Heath (1984) reports that sensationalism does play a part in audience

members' fear of crime. Her media study illustrates that respondents who read newspapers that printed a high proportion of local crime news reported higher levels of fear if the crimes were predominantly sensational, whereas respondents whose newspapers printed a low proportion of local crime news reported lower levels of fear if the crimes were predominantly sensational. In a comparative analysis between broadsheet newspapers and low-market tabloids, Williams and Dickinson (1993) found support for their hypothesis that sensationalized reports increase fear of crime and raise estimates of the likelihood of crime.

In a British study by Schlesinger et al. (1992:55), women's fear of crime was measured with respect to sensationalistic television crime programmes, specifically *Crimewatch.* This programme's reporting style is fast-moving and visually varied, and encompasses crime reconstructions from the popular end of the market, with murder, armed robbery with violence, and sexual crime as the staple items of coverage. Two groups of women were interviewed; one group who experienced previous victimization and one group who did not. Over half of all participants said that the programme *Crimewatch* increased their fear of crime and, in both groups, one-third said that it made them feel afraid, although about a third said it had no effect.

Finally, in addressing discursive transformations in my thesis, I examine several explanations for these shifts, particularly against the background of wider political, social and economic ideologies that governed social control during the 1970s and 1980s. Several researchers have discovered a transformation in crime discourse related to the decline in welfarism and the subsequent rise of neo-liberalism and neo-conservativism (Garland, 2001, 1996; O'Malley, 1992; Rose, 1991). Garland (2001) argued that under

the welfare state, a "penal-welfare" system committed to rehabilitation, individualized treatment, indeterminate sentences, and criminological research was well established by the 1970s. The main goal of this system was a reform agenda, which supported rehabilitative interventions rather than negative, retributive punishments, and was possible due to social democratic politics, informal social controls, and favorable economic conditions. Soon after, however, welfarism was suddenly replaced with neo-liberalism, a strain of political thought based on individual responsibility and faith in the free market. It's basic axiom being if government intervention diminished profits, then the state should take a smaller role. In turn, penal-welfarism was criticized, and its policies eroded. Individuals, either as offenders, or as victims, became responsible for crime control.

According to Reiner, Livingstone, and Allen (2003:30), this increasing individualism has fundamentally transformed crime news narratives. They argued, "crime is now reported as a much greater risk than before ... because it is represented in much more highly charged, emotional terms as a serious threat to ordinary people." As a result, readers identified with individual victims, and saw offenders as "pathologically evil." As a result, their study demonstrated a shift in crime news from violating a generally respected law, to taking vengefulness against individual offenders.

Barlow et al. (1995:16) also argue that it is essential to look at crime news within particular historical contexts. As they put it, "if ideologies of crime are the critical link between conditions in the political economy and crime control policy, the news media are a particularly important site for exploring these linkages." Their main concern was that

crime news sustained neo-conservative criminal justice policies that supported institutions of authority, which ultimately did not have a significant impact on crime.

As an important component of this study is to elucidate why sudden discursive transformations occur in *Chatelaine* over the twenty-year period, I draw on the literature that suggests that the changing nature of crime news is related to economic, political and cultural changes. Such research will facilitate and guide my analysis in order to explain my findings.

In sum, the relationship between fear of crime and the media is complex. For example, Roshier (1973) finds that although the press do present a consistently biased impression of crime and criminals through their process of selection, he discovers little evidence to suggest that this is very influential on public perceptions of, and opinions about, these phenomena. On the other hand, Sheley (1985) argues that the media responds to and stimulates fears of crime and are probably the single greatest influence on public attitudes about the topic (as cited in Langworthy & Whitehead, 1986). However, both social constructionists and radical feminist criminologists see the mass media as particularly relevant when studying fear of crime, as the meaning and significance attached to a criminal event during its commission can be transformed entirely once it is communicated into society. As Sparks (1992:14) notes:

> The full social and personal consequences of fear and anxiety can never be deduced from the simple enumeration of risks. Like other human experiences they necessarily involve representation, communication and the attribution of significance, and it is for this reason that the understanding of the character and uses of mass media may be able not simply to help explain the distribution of expressed fears but also to illuminate their nature and implications.

The significance of this fear as it relates to culture needs to be taken in to consideration in order to understand the transformations commonly found in media narratives over time. In addition, a "lack of sensitivity to media-generated reality-constructing processes has serious real-world implications" (Surette, 1998a:271). Heavy crime coverage in the media can not only increase public fear, it can also direct much public discourse on the crime issue which leads to stereotypical views of crime and criminals, shapes certain crimes as social problems, and limits crime control options (Kappeler et al., 2000:44).

Conclusion

Working within the social constructionist paradigm, I argue that fear of crime is a social process rather than a social fact: reactions to crime are subjective and dynamic. Not only are these reactions based on the actions of certain social groups who have the power to set forth their own interests over others, and who employ "experts" to offer professional credibility to support their claims, but they are also based on dominant cultural ideologies. In turn, the media disseminates these "truth" claims as they see fit, creating a "conceptual reality" for public consumption. I consider this constructed reality and its relation to fear of crime by exploring: Who are constructed as deviant "outsiders?" What claims and claims-makers are central to the discourse? What preferred rules does the media maintain? Who is given the most voice to speak authoritatively? In the hierarchy of fears, what is the "master offence?" How do crime trends, patterns, and themes that are deemed worthy of discussion emerge, change and get framed over a twenty-year period? Does the news process embrace a moralistic tone? Due to the primacy of the media as a site of fear, this study also examines the content of media constructions. Are the specific causes of crime discussed? Do the crime messages

discuss possible solutions to crime? Are the crime messages sensationalistic? Are random crimes reported the most often? Do changing cultural ideologies affect media representations of crime?

According to radical feminist theorists, fear of crime is not only socially constructed, but is also a fundamentally gendered phenomenon. Therefore, this study explores the "social reality of crime" that is specifically constructed for female audiences: Do crime messages speak to, or ignore social inequality? Do crime messages speak first and foremost to sexual danger? Does the media take into consideration "women's ways of knowing" that is grounded in experience? Is the myth of "stranger danger" perpetuated? Is altruistic fear expressed as part of women's fear of crime?

Ultimately, my goal is to analyze how the media are constructed as sites of fear for women. I examine the degree to which crime messages signify fear of crime, including how the media define danger, and how they clarify meaning for the audience member. As such, I required certain methods of analysis. Through these methods, explicated in the next chapter, I will answer the relevant questions posed thus far concerning the socially constructed nature of fear of crime and the media.

- Chapter 3 -

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter elucidates what Maxfield & Babbie (2001:6) call "the science of finding out." I specify the research methods that are employed in this study along with a rationale for their use. First, I define and expand upon the quantitative component of this thesis: content analysis. I address the limitations and advantages of using content analysis for media research. My data source and sampling procedures are clarified with an explanation as to how these choices allowed me to examine the gendered construction of fear and danger in the media. I explain the coding procedures used to explicate the form and content of the data. Second, I expand on the qualitative component of this thesis, which focuses on textual analysis and interpretation of meaning, which originally developed out of my theoretical framework.

Quantitative Methods and Strategies

This thesis utilizes content analysis, a widely accepted measurement approach to social science research. This research design involves the systematic study of messages, which "seeks to show patterns or regularities in content through repetition" (Ericson, et al., 1991:50). Content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text. According to Neuman (2000), *content* refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated. The *text* is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication such as books, newspaper or magazine articles, advertisements, speeches, films, musical lyrics, or photographs. It can be traced back to the very beginning of the media coverage of crime and justice

including anecdotal observations in the press, systematic sampling, column inch counts, and official crime statistics as a point of comparison (Schlesinger et al., 1991). This makes content analysis an appropriate research method for this thesis, as I take into consideration an analysis of crime and the media. Specifically, I employ quantitative content analysis to examine the manifest content of texts through systematic counting and recording procedures. As a result of my theoretical structure and my understanding of previous research results, I coded for content by quantifying the number and percentages of crime messages over a twenty-year period; the type of crime message; types of crime discussed; the source of knowledge in the message; the number of sources per crime message; the author of the message; intimate versus stranger danger; personal versus property crime; mentions of sexual danger; and altruism. My goal was to find the form and content that crime messages took in order to analyze their particular constructions and representations of fear.

Limitations and Advantages of Content Analysis

Because methodological processes are so complex, I took into consideration the strengths and weaknesses of content analysis prior to my analysis. Dominick (1978:106) agues that it is beneficial to employ quantitative content analysis to study crime and the media, as "it provides for an objective and quantitative estimate of certain message attributes, hopefully free of the subjective bias of the reviewer." However, as Reiner (1997:192) contends, "whilst the categories used to quantify 'certain message attributes' may be free of 'subjective bias' they are neither randomly plucked out of thin air, nor do they miraculously reflect some singular structure of meaning objectively inherent in the texts analyzed." In other words, the researcher has some presuppositions about

significance and consequence. Therefore, Reiner (1997) argues that the 'objectivity' of traditional content analysis lies in the precision of the statistical manipulation of data, which ignores the fact that these numerical 'facts' are created by way of the researcher's own meanings, usually about likely consequences such as the fear of crime. Although complete objectivity, which Dantzker & Hunter (2000:25) define as "striving to prevent personal ideology or prejudices from influencing the research process," is difficult if not impossible, I am confident that this thesis accomplishes a high level of objectivity. By acknowledging my own preferences and judgments, I made a conscious attempt to remain free of personal bias and partiality during the research process. For example, this "self-critical awareness" (Buber-Agassi, 1974:310) was utilized while developing my content categories: I ensured that my content categories remained faithful to my theoretical framework and relevant literature, which helped control personal or arbitrary decision-making as much as possible.

There are a number of advantages to using content analysis. As Berger (2000:181) contends: "It is unobtrusive; it is relatively inexpensive; it can deal with current events, topics of present-day interest; it uses material that is relatively easy to obtain and work with; and it yields data that can be quantified." These advantages are applicable to my research on fear of crime. For example, because my data are representational, unlike other research methods such as interviews, I did not intrude on what was being studied and thus did not affect the outcome of my research. In addition, the data I collected were available to me at no cost from both the university library and the public library. Historical content analysis, which gives a dynamic perspective over time, also allowed me to deal with an issue that has become extremely controversial and

popular both socially and politically. Lastly, content analysis allows for numerical articulation, whereby I could systematically measure my data.

Data Source and Sampling Procedures

I chose to analyze a magazine as my primary data because it embodies many areas of social life, making it culturally significant. Magazines have proven to be a remarkably resilient and enduring medium: "no sooner has each new medium – motion pictures, radio, television, computer networks – arrived than the death of print has been predicted. Yet each has been accompanied by a swarm of magazines" (Sutherland, 1989:2). They have a relatively long shelf life, do not go out of date the day after publication, and have a user-friendly format that makes them easy to pick up and put down again (McLaughlin, 2000:xi). Magazines are useful research tools as they shed light on how Canadians discuss and respond to the issue of crime. Magazines give a less fragmented picture of the total crime phenomenon than say newspapers, and their documentary style gives a more elaborate perspective than the information oriented style of newspapers. As Rick Salutin (1998) comments, "I think magazines are the key way that society discusses itself. Newspapers are too fast, read too fast, and they are gone. Magazines sit around the house for a week or a month, and readers have a chance to linger over them" (as cited in Boychuk, 1998:2). Magazines provide time for consideration, are more visual and offer readers many more ways in which to enter stories and learn about the context of issues. In fact, when a magazine becomes a national cultural institution, its influence can change the world (Sutherland, 1989).

I chose to analyze *Chatelaine.* This decision was made for several reasons: a complete sample with no missing volumes was available for analysis, the magazine is

national in origin, widely circulated, and most importantly, a woman's magazine dedicated to an audience of women. First issued in 1928 by the Maclean Hunter Publishing Company, *Chatelaine* was created to increase the prominence of Maclean Hunter as a publisher of national magazines. By the 1960s it was the sole remaining women's magazine in Canada. While other magazines died owing to the domination of US magazines on newsstands and to the flow of Canadian advertising dollars south, *Chatelaine* survived by responding more rapidly than its US competitors to the concerns of women: articles on equal pay, child abuse, and the poverty of women. It became the biggest paid-circulation magazine in Canada ("Chatelaine," 2004). The magazine grew to boast an annual circulation of 960,094 in 1970 and reached 1,104,961 in 1985 (Ayer Directory of Publications). *Chatelaine* still remains Canada's largest magazine with a circulation rate of 716,727 (Gale Directory of Publication and Broadcast Media, 2005). Maclean Hunter could authoritatively state that *Chatelaine* addressed a vast, national audience of Canadian women (Korinek, 2000:37). Importantly, according to *Chatelaine* researcher Sylvia Fraser (1997:12), "*Chatelaine* accurately reflected Canadian women's lives: when Canada was ethnocentric and complacent, so was *Chatelaine*, but as the country grew more inclusive, so did the pages of *Chatelaine*." *Chatelaine* also incorporated their audience's own personal accounts and viewpoints: these readers did not always "passively accept the ideas, themes, suggestions for living, ideology, or entertainment aspects of the magazine" (Korinek, 2000:367). This allowed for a historical portrait of reader reaction. While research on this magazine has focused on employment (Robinson, 1983), traditionalism (Carter, 1999), feminist groundwork (Korinek, 2000), and consumerism (Scanlon, 1995; McCracken, 1993), I analyze this

magazine from a new approach: the study of women's fear of crime. Importantly, this magazine shows how crime messages present a 'social reality' depending on the source and the audience.

In order to conduct content analysis, both a sample parameter and a unit of analysis had to be established. I defined my sample time period as 1970 to 1990 due to the specific content of *Chatelaine* magazine. As my research is focused on gendered crime discourse, my sample needed to be inclusive of this. Prior to 1970, emerging crime issues that affected women in particular, such as family violence and rape, were rarely discussed within the pages of *Chatelaine*. With only a few exceptions, articles addressed to women were of a domestic nature, such as recipes and childcare. With the beginning of second-wave feminism in the 1970s, the then editor of *Chatelaine*, Doris Anderson, began to direct the magazine from a feminist perspective, which allowed for the issue of crime against women to be discussed and debated (Sutherland, 1989). A discourse of crime increased throughout the 1970s and was maintained under the editorial direction of Mildred Istona in the 1980s. Beginning in the early 1990s, however; crime dialogue became the exception rather than the rule, as the style of *Chatelaine* changed to accommodate an increase in discussions of fashion, beauty, and decorating rather than news and views. Today, *Chatelaine* can aptly be described as a glossy fashion/beauty periodical. This makes the years outside of the 1970s and 1980s less relevant as a source, and not as compelling to study. Therefore, this particular time frame provided me with the best means to produce a historical analysis of mass media representations of crime directed expressly toward women.

Crime messages are my unit of analysis, as my goal is to examine how fear and danger are constructed in the media. My objective was to acquire all of the crime messages within *Chatelaine* magazine over this twenty-year period. Using related studies on the media and crime (Altheide, 2002; Chermak, 1994; Sparks, 1992; Ericson et al., 1991; 1989; Graber, 1980; Dussuyer, 1979), I operationalized relevant crime messages as any item in the sample that in any way pertained to a crime or related matter. Not only does this include infractions of criminal law involving injury to persons and property, but also crime prevention, general discussions of the crime problem, policies to deal with crime, and the criminal justice system. These additional items were seen as an integral part of the total information on crime available to the public. This definition allowed for a broader understanding of the relationship between fear and crime.

Some crime messages were also necessarily excluded from my sample. Articles that appeared to have a crime theme, but didn't provide enough means for analysis were excluded. For example, one article entitled "Birth control is not a crime anymore" speaks to the issue of birth control rather than the dangers of crime, which makes this crime message marginal to my study (Chatelaine, September, 1974). In addition to the relevance of crime messages when decisions on exclusion were needed, the length of the message was also taken into consideration. Because a certain amount of information is needed to analyze text, I had to exclude certain crime messages. Following Ericson et al. (1991) and Graber, (1980), I excluded any messages that were less than three column inches (columns times inches), including headlines and photographs. In short, a total of 201 crime messages were located of which 37 were excluded due to length, and 9 were excluded due to relevance. This left a total sample of 155 crime messages.

Coding the Data

Before examining my crime messages, it was necessary to put them in an understandable and usable form. This measurement process meant that my raw data needed to be systematically reorganized so that all of my variable attributes, or categories, were assigned certain numbers. For example, during this coding procedure, I assigned any crime message involving a personal crime as 1, any message involving a property crime as 2, and any other message outside these definitional boundaries as 3. In addition, because this longitudinal study involved a time-series analysis, consecutive time periods were needed for comparison. Therefore, I divided my sample parameter, which consisted of two decades, into four separate five-year time frames: Interval A (1970-1974); Interval B (1975-1979); Interval C (1980-1984); and Interval D (1985-1989). Although any single year cut-off points were fairly arbitrary, these divisions provided me with a way to keep my large amount of data manageable, while providing me with a means to compare the beginning and end of each decade internally, and to one another. This decision took into consideration any pertinent changes in the magazine's format: when *Chatelaine* made any major revisions in its design, they were generally carried out during the beginning of a decade, or toward its close. Generally, these "milestones" occurred when any major contributors to *Chatelaine* deemed what the magazine's focus, attention and direction should consider next[13]. By keeping these shifts in content under one time frame, any trends over these periods become exposed, and therefore more readily observable. Resultantly, a codebook outlining the specific form that the crime messages took was created:

[13] For example, when Mildred Istona became the new editor in 1978, she "repositioned" *Chatelaine* so it would "not get caught in any one particular demographic segment. *Chatelaine* had been moving toward that with the women's movement under Doris Anderson" (Sutherland, 1989:296).

1) The number and percentages of crime messages over a twenty-year period. This quantification gave an overall picture of the crime dialogue covering 1970 through to 1990, which illuminated when and how much this dialogue appeared.

2) The format of crime message. By categorizing each crime message into its specific type, such as regular, editorial, feature, letter to the editor, and advertisement, the format of the crime message was established. This categorization, or organization, demonstrated how fear/danger was structurally framed within the magazine.

3) Type of crime topic. By coding all of the different types of crimes mentioned, the particular crimes that were considered relevant and worthy of discussion were identified. This crime specification process informed the "hierarchy of crimes;" that is, the crimes that were discussed the most, to the ones discussed the least. Where crime messages discuss more than one crime, coding follows the main thrust of the story. For example, one article could refer to rape prevention while including a discussion about a rapist's past history of burglary. To operationalize the main thrust of the story, I not only read the article a number of times for clarity, I also took into consideration the content of the article's headline, the subject matter of any accompanying pictures, and the conclusion of the article that tended to sum up the author's thoughts. Taken together, these elements justified my coding decisions with respect to the article's focus and objective.

4) The source of knowledge in the message. By coding the source of the message, which included journalists, government sources, private sector sources, personal accounts and unspecified sources, an examination of various claims-makers, or "experts," that were given a voice of authority were examined.

5) The number of sources per crime message. By coding the quantity of sources cited within each crime message, I was able to trace how many claims-makers were cited, which reflected the range of perspectives used to produce knowledge.

6) The author of the message. Those responsible for producing each crime message were coded under the category of journalist, reader, editor, other, or unspecified. This answered the question of who contributed to the crime dialogue.

7) Intimate versus stranger danger. I coded intimate danger as any crime committed against a victim who had an interpersonal relationship with the offender (i.e. partner, family member, friend, or acquaintance), and stranger danger as any crime committed against a victim who had no relationship with the offender.

8) Personal versus property crime. Crimes committed against the person were coded in comparison to crimes committed against property.

9) Mentions of sexual danger. The "shadow hypothesis" argues that women fear sexual assault during the commission of any other crime against them. Therefore, I coded how often the dangers of a sexual nature were addressed, regardless of the type of crime dealt with in each crime message.

10) Altruistic messages. As women's fear is considered to be affected by their fear for significant others, I coded the percentage of crime messages whereby women expressed concern and anxiety regarding the safety of known others.

In addition to the form of crime messages, coding for this study also included particular dimensions of crime narratives. As Heath's (1984) newspaper research has shown, the number of crime stories was not as important as the components of these crime reports on readers' perceptions of crime. She suggests that because not all crime

reports are equally fear provoking, researchers need to pay attention to aspects or components of crime reports, rather than treating crime news as a unidimensional entity. Therefore, I coded four aspects of presentation that have been found to be consistent in the generation of fear of crime:

1) The attention to possible causes of crime (Sherizen, 1978; Dussuyer, 1979; Graber, 1980; Marsh, 1991; and Barlow, 1995). Any discourse of causality was conceptualized as explanations as to the source of crime. I operationalized this aspect of presentation according to any indication of blame. This included: ineffective social and legal services; home life deficiencies; alcoholism/drug addiction; psychological instability; personal and home security; sexual inequality; and miscellaneous.

2) The attention to possible solutions to crime (Sherizen, 1978; Dussuyer, 1979; Graber, 1980; Marsh, 1991; and Barlow, 1995). This discourse was conceptualized as any action that assisted in managing or coping with crime before or after it occurred. I operationalized this according to any reference to crime remedies and/or prevention. This included: social and legal services reforms; family life improvements; self-help/advocacy group participation; criminal charges/civil suits/compensation; psychological/physical aid; increase sexual equality measures; personal and home security measures; and miscellaneous.

3) The randomness of the crime (Baker et al., 1983; Heath, 1984; Gordon & Riger, 1989; Liska & Baccaglini, 1990; Sacco, 1995). Randomness was conceptualized as an arbitrary criminal act that was presented as void of meaning. I operationalized this aspect of presentation as random if the crime message indicated the victim did not take any action that made him or her more vulnerable to criminal victimization. Victim precipitation

could come in the form of a victim in a dangerous place, engaged in a dangerous occupation, or taking a dangerous action. When articles discussed both random and non-random crime, they were coded by the tone and emphasis of the overall preferred reading offered by the author. Subsequently, any articles that were not framed to discuss randomness were not used in this analysis. For example, an article about rape discusses the legality of hospitals refusing to treat victims of rape, but does not frame the narrative to include the random nature of the crime (*Chatelaine*, October, 1976). Or, if the question of crime was not raised, randomness was not embedded in the narrative. For example, an article about juvenile delinquency does not discuss the crimes committed, but rather a demand that there should be a total overhaul of the present child welfare system and a reform of the Criminal Code, so that juvenile criminals are treated, not sent to prison (*Chatelaine*, August, 1975).

4) The amount of sensationalism used (Surette, 1994; Williams & Dickinson, 1993; Heath, 1984; Priyadarsini, 1984; Ditton & Duffy, 1983). *Sensationalism* was conceptualized as a highly graphic and dramatic picture of crime. I operationalized this aspect of presentation according to any startling sentence, phrase, metaphor, or picture that constituted or evoked violent or outrageous images. For example, an article about marital rape presents a picture of a husband turning into a teeth-baring wolf, (*Chatelaine*, March, 1972) while another article shows a little girl in pigtails, bows and a pretty dress about to be hit by a drunk driver, with the headline "Keep Killer Drunks off the Road" arranging the word "Killer" in big bold letters across the page (*Chatelaine*, December, 1982). As well, phrases like "reign of terror" and "horrific conclusion" that are used to describe a domestic murder (*Chatelaine*, April, 1985), or sentences like "Predicting the

behavior of men who have been violent is a dark area, and miscalculations lead to tragic results" (*Chatelaine*, January, 1989) were coded as sensationalistic. In operationalizing sensationalism, I took into consideration article content, headlines, and all photographs with one exception: I excluded photos that were simply "head shots" of journalists covering the story. For example, every editorial contained a picture of the editor in each issue of the magazine. These were excluded, as they had no meaning, essence, or relevance to the story.

Once the coding process was completed for causes, solutions, randomness and sensationalism, a quartile analysis, or detailed secondary analysis, was carried out. To accomplish this, I chose a "deep sample" from my "wide sample" of 155 crime messages by measuring the quantity of these four components in all one hundred and fifty five crime articles in this study[14]. I ranked the top 25 percent of articles that my analysis found to signify fear of crime, as well as those that showed an absence of fear of crime attributes: Each article was given a value of 0 (Very Low), 1 (Low), 2 (Medium), 3 (High), or 4 (Very High), depending on how many of the four components were present. For example, if an article was sensationalistic and of a random nature, included solutions to crime but not its causes, it was given a "3" and considered "High" on the fearfulness scale. By dividing crime articles on a fear scale, discursive characteristics of each "fear" quartile were examined and compared. This division allowed me to systematically evaluate each quartile's rhetorical strategies, claims making efforts, ideologies, and language use in order to understand the preferred meaning in the crime narratives. By comparing the techniques used to shape and limit crime narratives in each quartile, a

[14] For a good example of this type of research plan, please see Kathleen Daly's (1994) *Gender, Crime and Punishment*, whereby she employs statistical analysis of a wide sample, and a qualitative analysis of a "deep sample" within it.

deeper understanding of how fear was constructed and communicated by the media evolved. Therefore, this quartile analysis provided me with a means to examine how the media constituted the reader, the author, and the phenomenon under study leading to a preferred reading about gender-specific dangers.

Qualitative Methods and Strategies

Although quantitative content analysis is a valuable means of revealing patterns in media content, an additional research method is warranted for this thesis. As Ericson et al. (1991:51) argue, because quantitative content analysis is limited to what can be quantified, this leads to a "concentration on aspects that are simple, measurable, and subject to standardization ... magnification of the novel discovery gives way to standardization of the obvious category." Therefore, I also employ qualitative content analysis, which adds to the quantitative dimensions of this study by allowing me to draw meaningful inferences from messages, and to reveal latent dimensions of text by means of interpretation, which cannot always be accomplished with quantitative methods alone (Holsti, 1969). Qualitative research is defined as "the nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships" (Babbie, 1999:458), and encourages an exploration of the ways in which people experience and interpret their social world (Jupp et al., 2000:25). As Hall (1975) points out:

> [Qualitative content analysts] point, in detail, to the text on which an interpretation of latent meaning is based; they indicate more briefly the fuller supporting or contextual evidence which lies to hand; they take into account material which modifies or disproves the hypotheses which are emerging; and they *should* (they do not always) indicate in detail why one rather than another reading of the material seems to the analyst the most plausible way of understanding it ... [They use] recurrence as one critical dimension of significance though these recurring patterns may not be

> expressed in quantifiable terms ... These recurring patterns are taken as pointers to latent meanings from which inferences as to the sources can be drawn... [The qualitative content] analyst has another string to his bow; namely, strategies for noting and taking into account emphasis. Position, placing, treatment, tone, stylistic intensification, striking imagery, etc., are all ways of registering emphasis. The really significant item may not be the one which continually recurs, but the one which stands out as an exception from the general pattern – but which is *also* given, in its exceptional content, the greatest weight (as cited in Ericson et al., 1991:56).

Ultimately, these two methods are not always seen as completely separate, as qualitative content analysis can be incorporated within, or conducted simultaneously, with quantitative content analysis (Macnamara, 2003; Altheide, 1996), what Plummer (1983) defines as "the reflexive analysis of documents." Lazarsfeld & Barton (1951) argue that "qualitative and quantitative are not dichotomous attributes, but fall along a continuum" (as cited in Holsti, 1969:11), so both may be considered when answering the classic question of communications research: "Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?" (Maxfield & Babbie, 2001:329).

A detailed interpretation of my data adds to the qualitative richness of this study, as all narrative generates meaning. This type of consideration aids in rendering meaningful the content categories that I have framed. I accomplish this by providing discursive illustrations and examples extracted from crime messages, which allow me to understand and analyze tonality and language of discourse. For example, in discussing official crime prevention practices, was the tonality of discourse negative or positive, supportive or oppositional? Was it shaped by social, political, or economic convictions? This process also captures meaning in the language of discourse. For example, is "preventing crime" discourse the same as "preventing danger," or is one individualized while the other focuses on societal structures? If so, is fear of crime related to systems of

dominance founded within the structures of gender? In addition, looking at how language is used can capture latent meaning, which indicates any underlying ideology, or assumptions and beliefs, of the authors. How are these beliefs constituted? What rhetoric is in place that supports these claims? In other words, how does this media imagery construct its reality?

The methods I used for qualitatively analyzing texts include semiotic, rhetorical, and ideological analysis. Firstly, semiotics, or the science of signs, enables us to understand how it is that people find meaning in things. Symbols have enormous significance in our lives and play an important role in our thinking and behaviour (Berger, 2000). Thus, we can use semiotics to analyze and understand how meaning is generated in the mass media. Two concepts that are useful in making semiotic analysis are *denotation*, or "the literal meaning of a term or object," and *connotation*, "the cultural meanings that become attached to a term or object" (Berger, 2000:40). For example, a particular crime message about robbery would denote an unlawful act committed against someone's property. However, what it stands for could be fear of anarchy in a society without enough authoritarian rule. Secondly, rhetorical analysis is useful in analyzing text. Rhetorical analysis asks how creators of texts achieve their ends. Thus, this thesis can address how the claims-makers/authors of crime messages convince us of something or move us emotionally. As Berger (2000:68) contends:

> "It is our conceptual knowledges that enables us to move beyond simple description and make sense of what we are seeing. Thus, in media and communication research, rhetoric plays an important role because it enables us to understand how a text generates meaning and helps shape people's emotions and their behavior."

Thirdly, ideological criticism is another way I analyzed text. Claude Mueller (1973:101) defined ideologies as: "integrated belief systems which provide explanations for political reality and establish the collective goals of a class or group." The mass media has been accused of generating this false consciousness, especially as it applies to women. Feminist ideology then would argue that men assume that the power relationships they find in society (in which men are dominant) are natural and are unable to recognize the fact that women are subordinated (Berger, 2000). The representation of women in the media would therefore be shaped by male power, particularly by male sexuality. Thus, I address whether crime messages are representative of "phallocentric" domination.

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter addresses the research methods that can answer most adequately my research questions. Content analysis was chosen to ascertain the form and content of my data, which uses repetition as the most valuable indicator of significance. Qualitatively, a textual analysis was used to analyze text for meaning through interpretation. Both are needed for a complete understanding and discovery of media constructions of fear of crime. These methods provided me with the means to present my descriptive findings in the next chapter. These findings include the form and content of my media sample complemented by discursive illustrations and examples, which allows me to compare my findings to the existing literature. Importantly, these findings provide a foundation for a qualitative examination of the relationship between fear of crime and the media, which I employ in my final analysis.

- Chapter 4 -

Representing Fear in Crime Messages

Introduction

This chapter presents the form and content of crime coverage in my media sample. First, I illustrate the form that crime reporting took, which is evinced in the type of crime, the article's format and length, and the author type. Second, I discuss the sources of knowledge deployed in the news and how these sources produce meaning. Third, I explore the gendered nature of media crime depictions by examining intimate danger, sexual danger, sexual inequality and altruism in the texts. Fourth, I consider the relationship between fear of crime and media coverage including causes, solutions, randomness, and sensationalism in the narratives. My findings are presented in two ways: first the overall time frame, and then separate time intervals are deployed so as to allow trends and changes to be made over the twenty year period. Lastly, I present a quartile distribution of articles, ranked on a "representation of fear" scale. This ranking allowed me to capture different patterns of crime reporting by analyzing the discursive patterns of crime articles that are highly representative of fear, and those that represent the lowest levels of fear. I provide an additional understanding of the production of meaning attached to fear and safety in the media by examining and comparing how the context and presentation of crime articles were constructed in each of these distributions.

The Form of Crime Reporting

From 1970 to 1990, *Chatelaine* magazine represented a variety of crime narratives as "newsworthy." That is, *Chatelaine* found crime to be interesting or exciting

enough to attract and inform consumers, and therefore crime narratives were considered important elements when producing the news. Crime incidents were described in detail, commented on at length, and linked to wider societal conditions or individual responsibilities. Laws and law-makers were applauded and criticized. Personal accounts closely connected to crime were mobilized to provide an emotional connection for the reader through universal sentiments of hope, despair, and anxiety. Within such crime discourses the characteristics of fear and safety were constructed.

Table 1 illustrates the overall prevalence of various types of crime and criminal justice topics from 1970-1990, as well as their division into five-year time frames: Interval A (1970-1074); Interval B (1975-1979); Interval C (1980-1984); and Interval D (1985-1989). Of the 155 crime messages, sexual crimes received almost a third of the coverage (31%). This included crimes such as rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment/discrimination. The reporters often evinced the personal accounts of those who were victims. This added an emotional dimension to the narratives; bringing to the reader an "eyewitness" account, rather than an "objective" report of the facts. Child abuse, which included physical and emotional abuse, followed closely in frequency at (22.6%), while domestic violence (11.0%), and murder (11.0%) remained minor but persistent narratives. Magazine reporters also wrote about criminal justice issues such as the death penalty and victimology (5.8%). Crimes such as burglary (4.5%), juvenile delinquency (4.5%), and illicit drug use (3.9%) were infrequently in the news stories, and other crimes, such as fraud and kidnapping, were mentioned only once or twice in the entire twenty year period (5.8%).

Similar to the overall analysis, the first three time intervals reveal that the type of crime topic reported most often was sexual crimes. However, in Interval D the frequency of articles depicting sexual crimes decreased to (22%), making child abuse the most frequently cited crime in that interval (28.8%). Crimes such as incest, molestation, and abduction became more common news narratives. They were framed in legal terms or as cautionary tales to parents. The main goal was to provide knowledge on how to protect children from crime, particularly sexual crime. Not surprisingly, then, personal crimes (91.5%) were covered much more than property crimes (6.8%) (Table 2).

Each crime article evinced specific formats. Overall, approximately forty-eight percent were framed as feature articles, while 34.8 percent were incorporated into "regular sections" of the magazine. Feature articles were generally elaborate stories involving a range of topics and had an average length of 96 column inches. Regular section articles averaged 21 column inches, and recurred in columns such as "Hotline on Women," "Parenting," and "Health." Letters to the editor, averaging 4 column inches in length, accounted for 12.9 percent of the coverage, while editorials, with an average length of 18 inches, accounted for fewer than five percent of all news stories (3.9%) (Table 2). When you look at this pattern over time, features were the preferred format for crime articles. In Intervals C and D, they were the preferred format in 38.3 percent and 62.7 percent of the articles consecutively. However, regular section formats (45.5%) were used more so than features (39.4%) in Interval B, and in Interval A regular section and feature formats were used equally (37.5%). Interestingly, news reporting in Interval D had no editorials, while all other time frames contained editorial formats, albeit on a small scale (3% to 12.5%).

Overall, journalists (78.7%) accounted for the majority of stories written in the magazine (Table 2). Readers, however, produced 13.5 percent of all crime articles, followed by editors (3.9%) and unspecified authors (3.2%). Although journalists were the primary authors, readers were also important in the crime news production process: of the 65 authors who contributed to the crime discourse, 14.2 percent were readers. In addition, one lawyer, one journalist and one editor were especially active, producing 8.4 percent, 7.1 percent, and 5.2 percent of all the crime articles. Of all the authors, eighty-four percent were females. When examined over time, the majority of crime narratives in each time frame were also the products of journalists, and no more so than in Intervals B (81.8%) and D (88.1%). Readers as authors of the news increased in a linear fashion through Intervals A (13.5%), B (15.2%), and C (23.4%), and then declined to 5.1 percent in Interval D.

The characteristics of media coverage, such as discussion space, format, and crime types, are important indicators of newsworthiness. The increased frequency of crime narratives, and the increased variance of types of crime, such as the introduction of drunk driving, terrorism and elder abuse in the 1980s, indicates the progressive newsworthiness of crime in *Chatelaine*. The frequency of crime narratives in the1980s (68%) was notably higher than the 1970s (32%). However, this sequence was not linear: fluctuations and reversals did occur (see Table 1). This indicates the emergence of competing realities about crime as socially constructed by journalists.

News, Sources, and the Production of Meaning

Various sources of knowledge about crime, law and criminal justice were represented in the newsmaking process to create meaning. Although the number of

sources per article varied, approximately 42 percent of the total number of articles made use of only one news source (Table 3). This pattern was similar in all time frames with the exception of Interval A where 31.4 percent of articles used seven or more sources. On average, each article used three sources as illustrated below.

> "As reports of incest and child sexual abuse permeate the news, you may be concerned about teaching your child to differentiate between acceptable affection and unacceptable sexual contact. **Dr. Martin Solomon, chief of child psychiatry at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal**, says that in these situations, what's right and wrong depends on common sense, family and cultural habits, and the age of the child ... **Ellen Coolidge, a social worker with Ville Marie Social Services at Montreal Children's Hospital** who counsels sex abusers, their victims and their families, says that most sexual abuse is perpetrated by adults known to the children ... **The organizers of Parent Aid, a program designed by the Montessori Schools of Montreal to teach parents about sexual abuse prevention**, recommend that you and your child discuss scenarios in which someone tries to seduce a child" (*Chatelaine*, July, 1985).

There were five types of sources used by reporters to construct crime narratives (Table 4). First, government sources were cited in 51 percent of the crime articles. Government sources refer to crown institutions, their administrators, and the services that these bureaucratic institutions produce. Representatives of the criminal justice system, such as police, crown attorneys, lawyers, judges, and correctional officials, were used as sources in nearly one-third of all crime articles (31.6%). Consider the following:

> "Canadian courts do take a dim view of spouses cold-bloodedly finishing off their mate ... but most defendants will try to put their case in the most sympathetic light ... **Crown Attorney Bruce Affleck** puts it this way: "What is there to stop the defendant from manufacturing an excuse, particularly when in most of these cases there's no witness to what actually passed between husband and wife?" ... According to **Toronto police** about 18 of the 44 murders in Toronto last year were husband-wife situations and three quarters occurred in working-class districts. But as **Inspector George M. Sellar of the Toronto Homicide squad** pointed out, "You can't assume that these people are necessarily lower-income" (*Chatelaine*, July, 1975).

Almost one-quarter of government sources were public administration sources (23.2%), which included members of crown corporations, public inquiries, statistics departments, and legislative branches. Less frequently, other government agencies, such as social workers and child welfare/protection services were offered as knowledge sources by reporters (9%). As well, politicians, or elected officials, were occasionally used to supply knowledge (6.5%). For example:

> "It disturbs her [**Coline Campbell, Liberal MP for South Western Nova, N.S.**] that a woman shoplifter from her riding would have to serve sentence in the country's one federal prison for women, 1,000 miles away in Kingston, Ontario. She supports prison decentralization" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1978).

These government sources actively conferred social meanings to crime and criminal justice by employing rational, authoritative, and "objective" voices, while promoting and preserving the validity of "official" law and justice. They recruited ideological support for state regulation and social control as the proper way of dealing with crime: police advice to "swear out an information" or "press criminal charges" denoted the effectiveness of the justice system. This institutional framework provided readers with a sense of social stability, legitimacy, and order.

Second, although government sources prevailed in the coverage, private sector sources were not far behind in creating crime narratives: 49 percent of all articles included sources from the private sector (Table 4). Almost one-quarter of them (23.2%) used sources from community organizations, such as religious, charitable, and citizens' groups. Members of these formally organized groups were often united about a specific crime issue and provided recommendations for individual, neighbourhood, or state reforms. For example, "Mothers Against Drunk Drivers" vied for tougher legislation

against offenders. Another quarter of the narratives relied on health professional sources (23.2%), such as psychiatrists and physicians, and a further 12.9 percent were academics who supplied research-based observations about crime. Consider the following illustration:

> "We're not as safe on home ground as we used to be. Crimes against property increased 30 percent in Canada ... What lies behind these statistics? **Raymond Corrado, associate professor of criminology at Simon Fraser University** in Burnaby, B.C. points to highly visible wealth, including stereos, televisions and jewelry, that lies around most homes ... Some experts blame economic hard times, **but Patricia Brantingham disagrees. The SFU criminology professor** says property crime is statistically associated with boom economies, which explains why Western Canadian cities have been increasingly hit hard in recent years, while less prosperous Atlantic Canada has long had the lowest rates" (*Chatelaine*, January, 1983).

Occupational associations, such as labour unions and professional groups (6.5%) and the media (5.2%), via book and film analysis, rarely informed the crime narratives. When they were deployed it was done to buttress the journalist's preferred reading of the article by incorporating simple and straightforward facts or definitions. For example:

> "According to Susan Meyer, the director of the New York based **Working Women United Institute**, it is [sexual harassment] any repeated, unwanted sexual comment, look, suggestion or physical contact you find objectionable, offensive or discomfiting" (*Chatelaine*, August, 1978).

> "Mary Van Stolk in her **book**, *The Battered Child in Canada*, estimates that there are between 4,200 and 7,400 child-battering incidents annually in Canada" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1972).

Private corporations were also considered less valuable as sources and used in only 5.2 percent of the cases. As crime affecting the person accounts for the majority of the news narratives, sources from private corporations whose main concern was that of property crimes were infrequently used.

Private sector sources established their own preferred meaning about crime and criminal justice in the texts. Unlike government sources, crime was not simply a matter to be dealt with through state regulations. Private sector "experts," provided knowledge that was specific to their own interests rather than state interests: how to enforce the law was not as important to them as providing information and assistance to those affected by crime. Meaning was framed around the realities of crime victims at the community level. In doing so, private sector sources were mobilized to point out inconsistencies with more "official" versions of reality, thereby dismissing consensus:

> "To reassure Toronto women, police reported a slight decrease in the number of rapes for the first six months of the year. But the figures were far from reassuring: 82 rapes down *one* from the previous year. A spokeswoman from the **Toronto Rape Crisis Centre told a different story**. She reported more than 400 calls from rape victims in the first six months, up 100 from the previous year, attributing the discrepancy between police and crisis-centre figures to women's dread of the courtroom ordeal and rape's low conviction rate" (*Chatelaine*, September, 1982).

Understanding and interpreting crime and justice through private sector sources shaped an alternative sense of how to manage the complexities of crime. Members of community resources, such as workers at women's emergency shelters, rape crisis centres, and advocacy clinics, made more meaningful the need for a broader knowledge base regarding crime and criminal justice.

Third, 45.2 percent of knowledge sources were personal accounts, in which a description of a criminal event was given (Table 4). These stories were organized around a victimology discourse eliciting emotion and passion in words like "terrified," "trauma," "pain," "helpless" or "shock." These accounts were used to personalize crime by explaining how the criminal event had affected their lives and made them fearful or more

cautious. Personal accounts represented victims (18.1%), the accused/offenders (10.3), friends/families of victims (5.2%), friends/families of accused (1.9%), and witnesses (1.3%). Consider the narratives given by a victim and an offender:

> "There's one thing to be said about lying in your bed at night and suddenly hearing a strange man walk into your room: it sharpens your concentration and your memory in a most remarkable way." **Diana Bennet** was 18 years old when it happened to her. Fifteen minutes after going to bed she heard somebody climbing the stairs. For a few minutes she lay there, hearing his hand moving over the bedspread on the empty bed. She didn't want to scream, fearing that her mother, in the bedroom near the stairs, would come running out, straight into the path of the burglar. "Finally," she recalls, "I couldn't stand it anymore, so I jumped up and turned on the light. I saw his face. It was as terrified as mine." Then, he ran out of the house. "I was in absolute shock for the rest of the night. Just terrified." ... It was her first taste of undiluted fear (*Chatelaine*, February, 1982).

> "Though I swore I would never treat my own children as I had been treated, every time I was under stress I started abusing one of my daughters. Not both of them, just the one who reminded me of my own negative self-image" (**Jolly K.** – member of Mother's Anonymous) (*Chatelaine*, October, 1972).

Personal accounts were also embedded in citizen accounts not directly implicated in the event (11.6%). They were commonly reactions to previously reported stories, and were usually evinced in letters to the editor. Consider the following:

> "The other day I picked up the May issue of *Chatelaine* and, to my astonishment, read as sloppy an article as I have seen for many a year: 'What the Drug Experts Tell their Children about Drugs.' Poor Children! The facts of drug taking are simple: Young people who take drugs forbidden by law are committing a crime and therefore put themselves into the category of criminals and become the prey of hardened criminals. Drugs damage the brain, sometimes immediately, which lead to deterioration and death" (*Chatelaine*, September 1971).

Personal accounts had a crucial role in defining and shaping news agendas, and were made meaningful through reaction, criticism and emotion. Victims, as well as their friends and families, supplied personal anecdotes that described their distress over a

criminal event. This in depth story-telling added an emotional dimension to the crime discourse, as it placed the reader closer to those affected by crime. These source types captured an individual's "take" on crime and criminal justice, which promoted an impression of "what it would be like" to be involved with crime in news coverage. Rather than depicting "faceless" victims, personal accounts were structured to resemble friends, family and neighbours: meaning was developed through a sense of familiarity.

Fourth, journalists themselves were used as a source of knowledge in 16.8 percent of all crime articles (Table 4). They inserted their own statements in order to frame the article according to their own interpretations. Journalists sometimes took on the role of social activists by constructing a crime problem. They editorialized with an authoritative voice, lending credence to or challenging other claims-makers.

> "Using the well-worn defence of freedom of expression, Canadian newspapers are asking that judges, not sexual-assault victims, should determine whether victims' names can be published ... If Canadian newspapers win this case, women will lose both ways. They will either report and be harassed when their names become public, or not report, leaving themselves and other women vulnerable to more assaults. Don't be fooled by Canadian Newspapers' lofty claims about the public's right to know. **The public is not being served here**. Instead, women's freedom of security and expression as well as their right to equal access to the justice system are being placed in jeopardy. If Canadian newspapers get its way, you can count on a serious setback and **you will see sexual-assault victims retreat into despair and silence**" (*Chatelaine*, June, 1988).

> "One place where the women's movement doesn't seem to have made even the slightest dent is in the movies ... But **it seems to this movie fan, anyway,** that we could start by showing women who work effectively both in and out of the home, love men and children, are complex and capable of growth, and possess the ability to laugh at themselves. And until movies start growing up to the times we live in and start employing more women writers, producers, directors, as well as giving actresses gutsy roles instead of using them as emotional punching bags, perhaps **women should just stay away from these phony flicks in droves**" (*Chatelaine*, June, 1974).

Finally, crime articles sometimes used unspecified, or unnamed sources (2.6%) (Table 4). Typically these were framed in the language of what "observers," "authorities," "professionals," "experts," or "critics" said, and these sources were deployed to enhance a tone of legitimacy to the crime narratives.

> "Sexual harassment is not specifically mentioned in the human rights codes, so officers investigate charges as discrimination on the basis of sex. So far all cases have either been settled informally or dropped when charges didn't pan out. **Many experts** now recommend that women take legal action against harassment. **Many legal experts** feel a precedent-setting case at a commission's public board of enquiry is what's needed in Canada to give human rights officers more clout" (*Chatelaine*, August, 1978).

> "Although the majority of family violence victims are women and children, a number of counselors and others in the helping professions have encountered cases of husband abuse. **Researchers say** that in about 75 percent of husband-abuse incidents, the woman is defending herself against an abusive husband ... **Counselors and other professionals investigating the problem say** it's difficult to determine how many cases of husband battering occur; most incidents aren't reported" (*Chatelaine*, April, 1989).

When you look at the pattern of sources over time, private sector sources were used most frequently in both Intervals A and B at 56.3 percent and 66.7 percent consecutively (Table 4). However, in Interval C government sources and personal accounts were cited most frequently (48.9%), and in Interval D government sources prevailed even more so (55.9%). As a result, the crime messages changed from "community" based news sources in the 1970s, such as lobby and religious groups, to a more "official" discourse in the 1980s that relied more on bureaucratic agencies. With each passing time frame, the number of representatives of the criminal justice system, such as police, crown attorneys, and judges, increased as knowledge sources for

journalists, while community members from the private sector simultaneously declined as news sources for crime and criminal justice issues.

Overall, reporters used more than one perspective to create meaning. Some crime articles used these sources to provide conflicting accounts of crime and criminal justice, which competed for preferred meanings, while others were complementary, deploying several sources to construct one single reality. Consider the following illustrations:

> The Hempels [**victims**] applaud the new effort to give victims a voice [through victim impact statements] ... **Defense lawyers** fear such personal turmoil could introduce an unseemly emotionalism into courtroom procedures ... The very basis of criminal justice is that the accused is entitled to a fair and impartial trial on charges that are the Attorney General's, not the victim's ... a trial is not the victim's forum to seek revenge ... **Police Constable** Holmes says it's as if a missing link got put in place and connected the justice system" (Chatelaine, November, 1987).

> "**Members of Mothers Anonymous** seek help and support to build a loving home free of child abuse ... **Sherry** remembers being in a cot screaming while her mother beat her with steel coat hangers ... **Author Van Stolk** argues that exact figures of child abuse are impossible to obtain because of a gross unawareness of the Battered Child Syndrome on the part of pediatricians and general practitioners ... **Bill McFarland of the Children's Aid Society** agrees: It appears the problem of child abuse is growing, either that, or we are just beginning to recognize its true dimensions ... A **social worker** supports Mothers Anonymous' findings" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1972).

The changing nature of sourcing the news allowed for distinct systems of meanings to be constructed. These shifts in sources framed what could or could not be said, which was meant to alter the reader's interpretation and understanding of crime and danger. This made the socially constructed nature of news reporting undeniable.

Gender and Crime Narratives

Media crime depictions were consistently gendered and women's fear of crime was constantly constructed and reconstructed, as seen in Table 5. "Intimate danger" was

portrayed in 62.6 percent of the crime messages; "stranger danger" was highlighted in only 23.2 percent of the news stories and 14.2 percent of the narratives did not mention danger at all. In all time frames, intimate danger was more commonly constructed than was stranger danger. Intimate danger was present in over half of all articles in Interval A (56.3%). It increased to 63.6 percent in Intervals B and C, and decreased slightly to 62.7 percent in Interval D. Overwhelmingly, familiar and familial danger were most newsworthy as illustrated below:

> "In recent years we have been paying more attention to child-battering, the real physical violence against children which takes place in too many homes, but a wall of silence surround the subject of the sexual abuse of children. The fact that some parents not only have sexual feelings toward their children, but act them out, seems to arouse great repugnance, and articles on child molestation usually slide hastily over the fact that **most incidents of sexual interference with children take place in their own homes"** (*Chatelaine*, August, 1974).

> "In April 1984, in response to an urgent call that "a woman was being beaten up," two police officers rushed to a comfortable bungalow on a quiet residential street in London, Ontario ... Kathy Walker is typical of the estimated one woman in 10 across Canada – 500,000 women representing every socioeconomic group – who is **regularly beaten by her husband or lover** (*Chatelaine*, November 1986).

Sex was ultimately connected to danger in the media discourses with over half (51%) of all crime messages signifying it. The following are examples:

> "According to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, a woman is **raped** every 29 minutes in Canada. Somewhere, in this country, every six minutes, a woman is **sexually assaulted**. Since 1969 reported rapes have increased 125 percent. We all live in **Rape City**" (*Chatelaine*, September, 1981).

> "Dr. Solomon advises that you use honest simple language to teach your child to protect her/himself from **molesters**. Tell the child that no one should touch her private areas and that she should refuse to touch the private parts of someone else" (*Chatelaine*, July, 1985).

Over different time frames, sexual danger was present in 62.5 percent of articles in Interval A, decreased to 48.5 percent in Interval B, rose to 55.3 percent in Interval C, and decreased again to 45.8 percent of the news coverage in Interval D (Table 5).

Women's fear of crime was influenced by their fear for significant others, particularly for their children. Over one-third (37.4%) of crime articles indexed 'altruistic' fear in their texts (Table 5), as evinced by the following illustrations:

> "Abducted in 1973 by his own father, Steven was brought back to his mother in March 1876, only to be kidnapped again two months later. In Vancouver, his mother waits and hopes, helpless against the legal loopholes that favor the parent-kidnappers" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1977).

> "First of all, let's make it clear that not all abused wives are neurotic. More often than not, they are healthy souls who simply set struck. Vera, for example, sounds like a nice, warm, likable person who is trapped. Many other wives I've encountered are terrified into staying with an emotionally ill wife-beating husband who threatens to kill them or the children if they try to leave" (*Chatelaine*, January, 1976).

Over time, the percentage of crime messages that included altruistic fear was stable at 30 percent to 35 percent. However, in Interval D this figure increased to almost half (45.8%) of all crime articles (Table 5). Journalists in this time frame considered child abuse to be the most newsworthy crime. So, as the years passed, crime danger in the narratives centered less on intimate and sexual crimes against women, and more on those whom women cared about. Consider the following headlines:

> "Portrait of an **incestuous father**" (*Chatelaine*, April, 1985).
>
> "How well do our laws **protect children** against molesters?" (*Chatelaine*, June, 1985).
>
> "Why did Robert Noyes, the British Columbia **Child Molester**, escape justice so long? (*Chatelaine*, August, 1986).

"The Pryce **Family Massacre**" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1987).

"What can we do about the **abuse of the elderly**?" (*Chatelaine*, August, 1987).

"**Husband Abuse** – Some men are the victims of family violence" (*Chatelaine*, April 1989).

"When your **teen** has a brush with the law: Dealing with police, lawyers, and the court" (*Chatelaine*, June, 1989).

"**Abusive parents**: Forgive them or confront them?" (*Chatelaine*, September, 1989).

A discourse of sexual inequality in *Chatelaine* also contributed to the gendered nature of crime and fear. One-fifth (21.9%) of all crime articles connected sexual inequality to crime and danger (Table 5). This suggests that women's fear of crime was linked to their subordinate status, and can best be understood in the context of broader social inequalities. Journalists insisted that inequality cultivated women's fear of crime.

> Q: "Why is it that women are made to feel guilty of the crimes committed against them?"
> A: "Briefly, I would say that such guilt is a characteristic of all **oppressed groups**. One of the most sickening examples of this kind of twist is when a rape victim must have done something to bring on the rape. And our legal system helps her right along in this feel by submitting her to the most humiliating questioning if she goes to court. The implication is the same: she must have done something – maybe she walked suggestively, maybe she has "bad morals," and on and on. By some ingenious twist, women often seem to be made responsible for what men do to them. Here is a beautiful example from Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir: Once in cabinet we had to deal with the fact that there had been an outbreak of assaults on women at night. One minister suggested a curfew: women should stay at home after dark. I said, 'But it's the men who are attacking the women. If there's to be a curfew let the men stay at home, not the women'" (*Chatelaine*, June, 1972).

> "Is justice blind when it comes to women and sexual assaults? Judicial ideas of seemly behavior for women – as submissive and bound by the home – seem old-fashioned, but the law is a conservative profession and takes a long time to change. "**If true equality is going to be achieved**, judges are going to have to get over their cultural bias," says Kathleen Mahoney, associate law professor at the University of Calgary. "Since 1985 and the implementation of Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, **women have been trying to challenge laws and judgments that treat women as unequal**" (*Chatelaine*, September 1988).

The sexual inequality discourse was articulated in all four time frames. In Interval A, 37.5 percent of all crime articles illustrated sexual inequality. This decreased to 33.3 percent in Interval B, and then declined dramatically to 19.1 percent in Interval C, and 13.6 percent in Interval D (Table 5). In the first two time frames, phrases such as "all male jurors," "sexual roles and attitudes," "dominant male," "women's liberation," and "oppressed groups" had a stable presence as signifiers in the news, but these declined significantly in the last two time frames indicating that crime and criminal justice be disconnected from inequality between the sexes. New signifiers found in the crime articles were representative of individualism: criminals had "biological predisposition to violent behavior" and questionable "character" making "rehabilitation" difficult; victims had to deal with the "aftermath of sexual violence," which caused "crime related anxiety and stress" requiring "therapy," and "medical and social support;" women needed "practical street-smart advice" and children required "protection strategies;" and criminal justice would not occur until "cracks in the system" were fixed, and "police accountability" was ensured. So, signifiers that had any relevance to sexual inequality in the texts were replaced with ones outside of any wider social structure.

In sum, the media instructed women to be most fearful of people they knew in their own home, to fear crimes of a sexual nature first and foremost, and to fear for

themselves, but also for others. When the discourse took into account crimes that occurred in the public sphere, it did so in a rational manner emphasizing ideas about how women could defend themselves, or how they should get involved in community groups that emphasized crime prevention strategies and procedures. Consider the following illustrations:

> "The basic kick is one of your best lines of self-defence. But be decisive: aim for a specific part of your attacker's body and kick hard, as if you're going right through his body. First, bring one knee up as high as you comfortably can – no higher or you'll lose your balance. Keep your other foot flat on the ground. Make sure your toes are pulled back toward you; this automatically positions the ball of your foot – the payload in your kick – in line with your target. Kick out straight and hard; bring your knee back and quickly place your foot on the ground. Then run" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1981).

> "In June, the community struck back. "People had become completely fed up," says Arel Agnew. "We wanted to get rid of the [drug] problem, to be able to walk in our neighborhood and feel comfortable again ... A date was set for a small meeting to discuss the problem at the Community Recreation Centre across from the park ... Vocal community concern was just what Superintendent John Getty needed to get long-term action ... Today the streets are almost quiet again ... The groups of street drug dealers that remain have shrunk in size. The syringes have been swept up from the park and alleys, and the prostitutes have all but disappeared" (*Chatelaine*, April, 1989).

On the other hand, stories associated with private crime such as domestic violence were documented in detail describing the "terror" of being "trapped" in "unspeakable" situations. Stories of crime of a sexual nature added to the emotional nature of the discourse, as they deployed a language of personal devastation. Stories meticulously described the violent nature of sexual assault, and frequently used words like "guilt," "shame," "degradation," "responsibility," and "reputation" to show its lingering emotional scars. And, sexual inequality, once connected with crimes that occurred in both

private and public spheres, was challenged in the narratives creating fear and danger as an individual concern.

Fear of Crime and Media Coverage

As not all crime reports are equally fear provoking, particular dimensions of crime narratives were examined; namely, causality, solutions, randomness, and sensationalism. First, the causes of crime were discussed in half (50.3%) of all crime articles, giving the reader an opportunity to gain knowledge about the origins of specific crimes (Table 6). For those articles that included a causal discourse, explanations were varied as seen in Table 7. These included ineffective social and legal services (13.5%), home life deficiencies (13.5%), sexual inequality (11%), psychological instability (10.3%), alcohol/drug abuse (5.2%), lack of personal or home security (5.2%) and miscellaneous causes such as priestly celibacy, or political anarchy (3.9%). Overall, social/environmental causation prevailed in this discourse situating the lack of social and legal services or a prevailing ideology of patriarchy as being responsible for crime. Failures in "educational systems," "social work," "family intervention," "moral judgments," and "the law" were common. Consider the following news narrative:

> "Your article glossed over **the causes of parental neglect and child abuse**, like economic pressure and resultant frustration, and spent virtually all the article on symptoms. Licensing parents, sterilizing and otherwise victimizing people who are already victims of our social and economic system don't offer much hope. Better to attach some of the actual causes mentioned, like poverty, poor housing, racial and sexual discrimination. One half-baked effort at changing people's attitudes and otherwise punishing rotten parents will do little but leave the smug non-abusers with their wish for revenge fulfilled (*Chatelaine*, September, 1978).

A discourse of causality was present to varying degrees in all time frames (Table 6). It declined from 81.3 percent in Interval A to 75.8 percent in Interval B and then

dramatically to 48.9 percent in Interval C, and 28.8 percent in Interval D. Thus, the origins of crime became less newsworthy over time. Interestingly, the majority of articles in each time frame encompassed separate explanations for crime: in Interval A, home life deficiencies appeared most frequently (25%), in Interval B, ineffective social and legal services were prominent (30.3%), in Interval C, sexual inequality (14.9%) and ineffective social and legal services prevailed (14.9%), and in Interval D, psychological instability (11.9%) was dominant (see Table 7). Social/environmental causation was paramount up until Interval D, when "personal" failings became the prevalent causal narrative: socioeconomic causes were replaced by individual psychological disorder, making words and phrases like "character," "compulsion," "pattern of behavior," "uncontrollable temper," "psychopaths," and "not guilty by reason of insanity" more commonplace in the texts. Consider the following:

> "William Massey, a 28-year-old drifter from St. Peters, Mo., had been classified as criminally insane by Missouri authorities. He had served time for theft, misuse of firearms, attempted robbery, vehicle theft and assault and battery of another prisoner. Following release from a psychiatric institution, he was supposed to go to another institution for further supervision and treatment" (*Chatelaine*, February, 1988).

Second, as indicated in Table 6, solutions to crime were present in a large majority of crime articles (73.5%). These texts informed the reader on how to manage and cope with crime by providing remedies and prevention advice. Both individuals and institutions were indexed for the resolution of crime. In almost one-third (31.0%) of the narratives, solutions entailed social and legal reforms that relied on institutional transformations, such as increased employment opportunities or changes in legislation. Individual resolutions highlighted psychological and physical aid (16.1%), criminal charges, civil suits, and compensation (15.5%), self-help activists (14.2%), personal and

home security (11.0%) and family life improvements (5.2%). As seen in Table 7, the promotion of sexual equality measures were mentioned in only 2.6 percent of the news items, and miscellaneous solutions such as reducing media violence and giving victim impact statements were minor considerations in the news writing and accounted for 7.1 percent of all news items. Consider the solution-oriented narratives below:

> "Family violence, as the breeding ground for violence in society at large, remains an acute problem. A **wide array of solutions** has been proposed to strengthen family life. One of the more important is a recommendation that the federal government pay a prenatal child allowance to a pregnant woman, so that she has money to feed and care for herself properly during pregnancy so that he future physical and mental health of her unborn child is not endangered ... Other recommendations include expanding networks of day care ... A decrease in unemployment generally would also have beneficial effects on domestic violence, removing one major cause of severe stress on families ... Ultimately, however, those changes which are most needed to reduce domestic violence are changes which go beyond legislation or particular alterations in social policy. One major change, for example, would be to reduce the isolation of families in our society. Strengthened neighborhoods could reduce the number of isolated families ... A great change would be a widespread rethinking of the meaning of family life in general and the role of fathers in particular" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1981).

> "Alcohol is involved in about half of all roadway deaths ... **Some solutions to drunk driving** include: Raise the legal drinking age to 21 ... lower the legal impairment level to 50 milligrams ... increase police surveillance ... install ALERT devices in every traffic patrol car ... enforce the penalties already in law ... stiffen penalties for alcohol-traffic offences ... change the public attitude to drinking and driving (*Chatelaine,* December, 1982).

Looking at this pattern over time, solutions to crime were offered by journalists in the majority of articles in all time frames (Table 6). In Interval A, 68.8 percent of the articles incorporated a solution discourse. This rose to 90.9 percent in Interval B, fell to 76.6 percent in Interval C, and lowered yet again to 62.7 percent in Interval D. The majority of all crime articles in each time frame favoured social and legal services reforms as the

solution to crime (Table 7). This included changing both public policy as well as criminal laws to improve criminal justice as illustrated below:

> "Funding of children's aid societies, day-care centres and most **public agencies that give service to families** has been brutally cut in most places in Canada. But these are precisely the services that can prevent the poor parenting which, in a vicious circle, leads to costly court, hospital and police costs later on" (*Chatelaine*, July, 1978).

> "Unless the rest of Canada follows Quebec's example and **passes tougher laws**, many more helpless babies are going to suffer" (*Chatelaine*, March, 1975).

Third, the depictions of random crimes, or arbitrary criminal acts void of meaning, were present in only a minority of articles: approximately sixty-three percent of the articles presented crimes as non-random, while about one quarter (23.2%) of the crime messages were representative of indiscriminate acts (Table 6)[15]. Exemplars of randomness are illustrated below:

> "The murder of Barbara Schlifer sent waves of shock through the Toronto area. It seemed so meaningless, so gratuitous, an act of malice beyond the bounds of human motive. Barbara Schlifer was professional, intelligent, independent; if it could happen to her, **surely it could happen to anyone**" (*Chatelaine*, November, 1983).

> "Potentially, **any woman can be the victim of sexual assault**. Don't believe the prevailing myths that "nice girls don't get raped" and "only young, attractive seductive women get raped." A 1974 study by Dr. Sheldon Geller, a Toronto psychologist, rejects the theory that sexual offences are initiated by the victim: It appears that the male sex offender simply decides to assault the next female he sees, conditions permitting" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1986).

Overall, reports of non-random crime were the preferred narratives in *Chatelaine*. These reports did not stress a sense of urgency. Instead, rational consideration of legislation,

[15] As indicated in the previous chapter on page 52, only 86% of crime articles could be measured for randomness.

attitudes, and criminal justice were provided, where the article's main objection was to educate the reader. Consider the following:

> "Victims [of sexual harassment] are also advised to go to their provincial human rights agency, if only to inform the guilty party that his behavior won't be tolerated. Officers interview you, as the complainant, as well as the alleged harasser, your boss (often one and the same), and coworkers. It's done in strict confidence and the human rights codes protect you from reprisals at work" (*Chatelaine*, August, 1978).

> "According to Dr. Anderson, the incidence of father-daughter (or stepdaughter) incest is estimated to be anywhere between five per 1,000 population and one per million. Brother-sister incest (as adolescents) is apparently quite common, the doctor says, but largely unreported. Mother-son incest is rare" (*Chatelaine*, November, 1978).

Over time, however, the randomness of crime in the texts increased (Table 6). In Interval A, 18.8 percent of news stories reported crime as a random act, and in Interval B this dropped to 15.2 percent. By Interval C, the reporting of random crimes in the news increased dramatically to 23.4 percent, and to almost thirty percent (28.8%) by Interval D. These narratives about indiscriminate crimes that could "happen to anyone" were frequently framed with a stranger at night shattering the quiet lives of innocent victims and concluding with calls to "do something" about the ever increasing risk of crime; the goal being to raise moral consciousness. Consider the following demands put on the criminal justice system and its representatives as a consequence of random crimes:

> "While Krista's story has given way to other headlines, Toivo Sepp refuses to let the issue drop until another tragedy puts it back into the news. "The system [Young Offenders Act] is botch up right down the line, and I want all Canadians to understand what's going on because this is everybody's problem. **Something good has got to come out of my daughters' death"** (*Chatelaine*, August, 1989).

> "It is appalling that kids of any age can be kidnapped and that their parents will never know if they are alive and well or dead. The **police and government must do more** to help locate missing children" (*Chatelaine*, March, 1987).

Fourth, sensationalistic reporting styles were measured by exploring the dramatic value that was added to some of the crime stories by way of striking details and shocking visuals. Interestingly, two-thirds (67.1%) of all crime messages did not have sensationalistic features, such as startling or unusual language or visuals that evoked violent images, while one-third (32.9%) did (Table 6). With respect to headlines, only 5.8 percent of all the crime articles were sensationalistic; most did not rely on dramatization for effect (Table 6). However, consider the following headline present in one article[16]:

> Headline: "KEEP KILLER DRUNKS OFF THE ROAD." This headline has large bold lettering with the word "KILLER" stamped across it, as if it were written in blood (*Chatelaine*, December, 1982).

More visually, of the 49.7 percent of articles that contained a photo, 18.7 percent had characteristics of sensationalism, and 18.1 percent of crime articles were constructed using sensationalistic content (Table 6). Therefore, when sensationalism was present, this magazine relied on striking photographs/visuals or texts more so than headlines to keep its audience attention. Consider the lurid details of child abuse provided by one editor:

> "When dogs are beaten or starved they howl and neighbors report their condition to authorities. The owners are fined and sometimes go to jail. The Humane Society is vigilant in looking after abused or abandoned animals. But babies only whimper when they are beaten up by adults. They can't tell anyone about the terrible things that they have endured – about being thrown against walls, having their hand and feet burned. They can't tell anyone about being left for hours alone in the cold and dark, or about the screaming insults they have had flung at them from the very people they should be able to turn to for protection – their parents" (*Chatelaine*, March, 1975).

[16] For a visual image, see *Chatelaine*, December, 1982, page 61.

Within each time frame, reporters framed crime in a sensationalistic manner (Table 6). In Interval A, 43.8 percent of articles were constructed with some degree of sensationalism. This lowered to 24.2 percent in Interval B, and increased again in Intervals C (29.8%) and D (37.3%) respectively. Reporters utilized more sensational headlines in Interval A (12.5%) compared to Interval B (3%), C (4.3%), and D (6.8%). Journalists also applied sensationalistic photographs in an inconsistent manner: in Interval A, almost twenty percent (18.8%) of all photos/images were sensationalistic, decreasing to just over ten percent in Interval B (12.1%), but rising again (25.5%) in Interval C, and falling to 16.9 percent in Interval D. This was also true for sensationalistic content, which fluctuated from one interval to the next: Intervals A (25%), B (18.2%), C (12.8%) and D (20.3%) varied noticeably.

In sum, the crime reports in Chatelaine consistently supplied readers with the resources needed to understand and comprehend crime and danger, particularly on a social and environmental level. By explaining the source and foundations for crime, journalists did not leave readers asking "why." And by demonstrating how to cope with crime, audience members were given solutions that could ultimately be used to exert some control over their own lives. As a result, the news narratives presented crime as both avoidable and manageable. Crime accounts, furthermore, were presented in a manner that kept the audience informed about crime and criminal justice issues without relying on dramatic flair: lurid details and awful visuals were kept to a minimum, and this balanced concerns of safety and danger and put them in perspective. But a new trend in the discourse developed in the last half of the 1980s: crime articles "individualized" the

criminal more and more and stressed the random nature of crime events leaving readers to further question their own safety.

Representations of Fear and the Politics of Meaning

As previously discussed, addressing fear of crime in the media requires an assessment of causes of crime, solutions to crime, randomness and sensationalism. Therefore, in addition to a temporal analysis, I chose to carry out a quartile analysis ranked on a "representation of fear" scale to demonstrate different patterns of crime reporting (see chapter on methods). As illustrated in Table 8, of all the crime articles, 43.9 percent (N=68) were found in the "Low" level. This was followed by 25.8 percent (N=40) articles in the "Medium" level, 18.1 percent (N=28) in the "Very Low" level, and 12.3 percent (N=19) in the "High" level. No articles were found to be in the "Very High" level. Of the 155 crime articles, twenty-five percent were selected that represented both the highest level of fear and the lowest level of fear. The quartile that represented the highest level of fear consisted of 19 articles from the "High" level, and 20 randomly selected articles from the "Medium" level. The quartile that represented the lowest level of fear consisted of 28 articles from the "Very Low" level, and 11 randomly selected articles from the "Low" level. These articles offer a good sampling of media constituted preferred readings about gender-specific dangers.

Of the articles that represented the highest level of fear, or the top quartile, almost eighty percent (79.5%) did not exhibit any causal discourse (Table 9). Rather than conveying the reasons behind criminal behavior, journalists simply described the crime at hand answering questions such as "Who are the victims?" "Who is the offender?" and "What defensive strategies can you take?" As seen in Table 10, of the 20.5 percent of

crimes messages that did include a causal narrative, individuals were held accountable (15.4%) rather than underlying social causes (5.1%). Failing to properly secure your person or property, poor parenting, political associations, or walking alone in public were depicted as the main causes of crime. As these news stories were framed to provide information to individuals, rather than to provide a structural understanding of crime, journalists consistently judged causation irrelevant. These crime accounts continually constituted women at risk for criminal victimization, but did not attend to why this was so, as illustrated below:

> "On an unfrequented street at night, in an underground parking lot or in an elevator, a woman on her own is at risk" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1981).

> "Knowing the facts about rape and learning some practical measures to protect yourself against it are your best defences" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1986).

Over half of the articles in the top quartile did not incorporate solutions in the narratives (51.3%) (Table 9). Texts that were absent of solutions to crime simply described failed intimate relationships that ended in criminal acts, or the violent details of stranger attacks. The goal of such articles was to let the readers know "what happened." The other half of the narratives that did consist of solution-oriented discourses emphasized individualistic hues. Crime remedies and prevention narratives centered on self-defence techniques, restitution/compensation, victim counseling, offender treatment, and home security measures. Consider the following illustrations:

> "Walk briskly and appear strong ... always lock your car when parking and check the backseat before re-entering ... park close to the exit door ... be wary of elevators ... try to stay calm and act quickly" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1981).

> "If hurt, go to the nearest hospital. If you want to report it [rape] to the police do so as soon as possible. Tell someone it has happened (important

> for evidence in court). Do not wash, douche, or clean up in any way. Write down what has happened ... there is a centre that maintains a hotline 24 hours around the clock as well as providing counseling, community education, and someone to accompany you to the doctor or police should that be necessary" (*Chatelaine*, December, 1975).

> "Reports indicate some success with retraining violent sex offenders, but success is difficult to measure because few men are involved. Therapy requires that the rapist confess to his crime; he must also possess the willingness and will power to submit to intensive investigation. Not many do. Treatment is immensely labor-intensive and expensive" (*Chatelaine*, November, 1983).

Of the 90 percent of articles that differentiated between random and non-random crime, the majority of articles in the top quartile were reported as if crimes were naturally random (56.4%): rapists, burglars, abductors, parolees, and drug dealers attacked innocent women in public, broke into homes, abducted children, and took over communities (Table 9). The reporting of arbitrary criminal acts in the texts created an atmosphere that confirmed, "nothing can be done about crime," "victims have no control," "we must always fear the unknown," and "Why me?" Consider the arbitrary victim in the following narrative:

> "Ross William Evans had been in a Toronto Halfway house for just four days when he felt the old urges coming on again. He needed to violate. Homes. People. Anything. His rampage began at a home in Scarborough, Ont., on March 6, 1987. He broke into a house and stole four cartons of cigarettes. Running a few blocks, he chose another house. But this time, somebody was home – a 30-year-old mother with her year-old baby" (*Chatelaine*, January, 1989).

Just over sixty percent of crime articles in the top quartile were described as sensationalistic (61.5%). A combination of content, headlines, and visuals contributed to the dramatic quality of the discourse. These "attention grabbers" reinforced the preferred reading of the article. Of the 64.1 percent of articles that contained a photograph or image, fully forty percent (41.0%) were visuals of terrified women being attacked,

children being abducted or hurt, criminals in handcuffs, and graphic police action in drug-threatening neighborhoods (Table 9)[17]. Visually portraying crime on such an emotional and personal level allowed journalists to make a deeper connection with the reader, leading them to ask: "Am I in similar danger?" "Could there be drugs in my neighborhood?" "Could this missing child be my own daughter some day?" Although only used in under ten percent of the articles (7.7%), sensationalistic headlines highlighted words that evoked violent and extreme images, such as "MASSACRE," "HOSTAGE," and "SEX KILLER." These headlines tended to have very large script and were presented in bold letters, assuring that the reader would not overlook the associated article and its meaning. Sensationalistic content, present in 31 percent of these crime messages, also increased the vivid nature of crime accounts. Consider the reporting of the following diary of a sex killer:

> "I told her to pull her pants down. She did. I pulled mine, spread her legs and asked if she were a virgin. She said no...She also said she didn't want to get pregnant. I kept this in mind. I then ejaculated in her vagina....I took her to the other side of the car where I told her I had a present. I reached through the window under the seat and produced a small brick. She said, "oh, no" terrified-like. I said she wouldn't get pregnant this way. I hit her in the head with it, and she didn't fall to the ground, so I pushed her to the ground. I covered her mouth while she screamed...She said not to strangle her, so I picked up a brick and proceeded in hitting her head. It made a knocking noise. I then dropped it on her face. She started choking on blood, so I picked up a piece of wood and put it to her throat to strangle her...When I released, air was sucked in, and she started quivering. Neat, eh?" (*Chatelaine*, November, 1983).

Overall, crime narratives that represented fear to a high degree portrayed the hopelessness of victimization: "You will have an uphill and demoralizing fight [in court]" (*Chatelaine*, February, 1973), "Even the most street-smart among us can't prevent an attack" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1981), and "The sentence he receives from the court

[17] For a visual image, see *Chatelaine*, February, 1982, page 59.

may hardly be worth the effort of convicting him" (*Chatelaine*, February, 1982) and "The odds are against you [in court]" (Chatelaine, September, 1971). This type of narrative also provided cautionary tales to others, warning women to "realize the danger," and avoid "making the bad judgments that could put us in the wrong place at the wrong time" (*Chatelaine*, January, 1984). Rarely did they evoke a positive tone:

> Q: "My fiancé claims that a husband cannot be guilty of raping his wife. I say rape is rape. Can you settle this?
> A: As I understand the law, a woman can sue her husband for divorce if he rapes another woman – but not if she herself, is raped by him. Remember that, if you marry your fiancé" (*Chatelaine*, March, 1972).

In contrast to those that evinced the highest level of fear, articles that represented the lowest level of fear, or the lowest quartile, were consistently embedded with a causal discourse (84.6%) (Table 9). Explaining why the crime occurred was integral to the article's purpose: to inform the reader about the issues affecting crime and criminal justice. Contributory factors were rarely individualized. Rather an inadequate criminal justice system, poverty, poor housing, and patriarchy were offered as causal signifiers in this set of narratives (Table 10). Consider the illustrations below:

> "Some critics of Canada's young offender legislation argue that Krista's death was a result of deep-rooted problems in the child welfare and juvenile justice system – a system that focuses more on legal rights than individual needs, a system that, instead of treating and rehabilitating troubled kids, ends up, at best, warehousing and neglecting them, and, at worst, punishing them" (*Chatelaine*, August, 1989).

> "Most [abusive] parents we see come from poorer groups, both socially and economically. That may be because wealthier, better-educated parents have defense mechanisms – doctors and lawyers, the use of status. My observation is that those parents are less likely to abuse their children physically. They're more aware of the consequences and, perhaps they're verbally skilled, they have less need to hit out" (*Chatelaine*, July, 1978).

> "Marriage and the family are upheld as a social ideal; hence, wife battering is still regarded as a private matter rather than criminal assault.

> Police are reluctant to get involved in a domestic dispute and rarely lay charges" (*Chatelaine*, July, 1982).

Solutions to crime were present in every article in the lowest quartile (Table 9). Journalists utilized words like "prevention," "coping," and "protection" in this context. Although victims sometimes managed crime by seeking financial redress or counseling, the articles consistently promoted a discourse based on societal change and reform rather than individualistic resolution (Table 10). Social services, and law and criminal justice reform were repeated refrains as illustrated below:

> "In June, Brian Mulroney announced a commitment of $40 million, spread over four years, to deal with the "social tragedy" of wife battering. The capacity of transition houses across Canada will increase by 43 percent, and there will be new initiatives to educate and train professionals (lawyers, doctors, police, etc.) and the public about the problem" (*Chatelaine*, August, 1988).

> "Our Criminal Code is "at best a haphazard arrangement based on British precedent, historical accident and outdated mythology," as Conservative MP Eldon Woolliams phrased it during the debate on amending our rape laws. It's high time we overhauled these laws, to make them reflect current attitudes and understanding" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1976).

Almost eighty percent of the articles in the lowest quartile did not report crime as a random act (79.5%) (Table 9). These narratives stated that the offender/victim relationship was not arbitrary; there was purpose and meaning, or a sense of reason, embedded in the way relationships were encoded by the press. Consider the following employee/boss narrative as an example:

> "All TV anchorwoman Christine Craft wanted to do was report the news. When her Kansas City station fired her, claiming she was too old, too unattractive and not deferential enough to men, Craft sued her bosses for sex discrimination" (*Chatelaine*, April, 1988).

They conveyed the message that certain people were vulnerable to victimization, such as the wives of brutal men, or children of troubled parents. Walking down the street or

being at home did not qualify a person at risk for criminal victimization. Journalists did not portray criminals as predatory in these articles, and conveyed the message that women do possess some control over crime. The following was illustrative:

> "Kathy was introduced to London's multilevel services for the prevention of wife abuse. The first link in the network was the police, who immediately laid an assault charge against Ken ... A police consultant took Kathy to the hospital to document her injuries ... and social workers helped the abused wife restructure her life. Ken enrolled in a self-help group with regular therapy sessions ... At a U.N sponsored conference on violence in Milan, one of the speakers praised London for providing a model to the world for the prevention of wife abuse. You have a network of integrated services that simply doesn't exist elsewhere" (*Chatelaine*, November, 1986)

Almost ninety percent of the crime articles in the lowest quartile were not presented in a sensationalistic manner (89.7%) (Table 9). These crime messages did not rely on highly dramatic presentations. While almost half of them contained a visual marker (46.2%), images were either unremarkable, mundane pictures of smiling children or high school graduation photos, or sober symbols of justice such as judges, police officers, or the scales of justice.[18] Headlines like "Preventing Child Abuse" and "Wife Assault: No Joke" did not encode outrageous images, nor were they presented as "larger than life." In addition, 92 percent of these crime articles did not have sensationalistic content: a rational and balanced presentation of facts and opinion prevailed. The tone was circumspect and deliberate; answering legal questions and exploring criminal justice issues that affected Canadians. Consider the illustrations below:

> "Q: I understand that new provisions have been added to the Criminal Code protecting children from sexual molestation. What are these new laws and to whom do they apply?"(*Chatelaine*, October, 1988).

> "When police officers tell law-abiding parents that their son or daughter is suspected of committing a crime, the usual reaction is shock or disbelief ...

[18] For a visual image, see *Chatelaine*, March, 1986, page 48.

> Many parents, assuming their child must be guilty and that honesty is the best policy, advise their frightened teen to sign a statement for police ... But the parents' task is not to help the police get a conviction. It is to protect their child's rights, and if he is guilty, to help him take responsibility for his own mistake" (*Chatelaine*, June, 1989).

Overall, crime narratives that represented fear to a lesser degree evinced an optimistic tone that something could be done about crime: articles incorporated words like "victory," "positive," "lives happily," "potential to help," and "hope." As one reader put it: "I am convinced that through logic, reason, and knowledge, honesty, courage and integrity, we can break down the barriers [that initiate physical abuse]" (*Chatelaine*, December, 1978). By acknowledging the wider social causes of crime and providing solutions, the articles announced an agenda for change: women could take various forms of action against crime in order to strengthen criminal justice. These articles did not represent crime as random, nor did they exude a sensationalistic tone. Crimes affecting women were reported in a clear and logical fashion, guiding narratives on such issues as progressive judgments, sexual office politics, and legal advice.

Newsworthiness and Sources in Fear Distributions

In addition to differences in causes, solutions, randomness and sensationalism, I found that news stories from the top quartile reported sexual crimes (35.9%) most often followed by murder (20.5%) and child abuse (15.4%). News narratives represented in the lowest quartile reported sexual crimes (33.3%) and child abuse (33.3%) most often followed by domestic violence (15.4%) and juvenile delinquency (10.3%) (Table 11). Narratives that expressed fear for others was almost twice as high in the lowest quartile articles (46.2%), and also had the greatest frequency of sexual inequality discourse embedded in the texts (41.0%) (Table 12).

Despite these differences, there were numerous similarities between the articles that represented high levels of fear and those that represented low levels of fear. As seen in Table 13, the majority of articles in both quartiles reported on personal crimes (87.2% in top quartile and 94.9% in low quartile); property crimes were rarely newsworthy (12.8% in top quartile and 0% in low quartile). Whether a personal or a property crime, approximately half of all articles in both quartiles contained an element of sexual danger (Table 12). As well, the articles in both quartiles were evinced in features (51.3% in top quartile and 41.0% in low quartile) and regular sections (28.2% in top quartile and 35.9% in low quartile) most frequently, and were constructed by journalists more so than any other author (76.9% in top quartile and 74.4% in low quartile). On average, each article in both quartiles used three sources. Crime articles in the top quartile typically deployed government sources (48.7%), private sector sources (46.2%), and personal accounts (51.3%) most frequently, however, journalists as sources were used significantly less (17.9%). Similarly, crime articles in the lowest quartile typically deployed government sources (51.3%), private sector sources (51.3%), and personal accounts (43.6%) most frequently, and also used journalists as sources less often than other source types (10.3%) (Table 14). In both quartiles, the majority of government sources were representatives of the criminal justice system (35.9% in top quartile and 28.2% in low quartile), and the majority of private sector sources came from either community organizations (23.1% in top quartile and 23.1% in low quartile) or health professions (23.1% in top quartile and 23.1% in low quartile). Personal accounts differed slightly between the two quartiles: the victim (15.4%) and the offender/accused (15.4%) were sourced most frequently in the

articles that represented the highest level of fear, while citizen opinions (17.9%) were sourced most frequently in the articles that represented the lowest level of fear.

Overall, when causes, solutions, randomness and sensationalism were excluded from the reporting, stark differences were not apparent between the two quartiles. The crimes, the format, the authors, the size of the stories, and the sources deployed were similar.

Conclusion

In sum, crime and criminal justice was framed, in form and content, around an ideology of violence against women, which constructed a gendered nature of fear. This required sourcing the news in a specific manner in order to produce journalists' preferred meaning. For the most part, a central objective for journalists was to inform the audience about the broader social forces that influenced crime as it related to women: the criminal event was a means to educate the reader about the foundation of crime and its prevention. This produced crime narratives that were not highly representative of fear. However, these representations of fear and the meanings they produced were shaped and transformed over time paving the way for the development of fear in the texts, particularly in the last period of this study. In the next chapter, I use theoretical perspective to draw out the implications of different patterns of crime reporting on women's fear of crime and compare it to the findings of related literatures. I also offer explanations for the transformation that occurred in news coverage during the latter part of this study.

- Chapter 5 -

Understanding Fear in Crime News Reporting

Introduction

In this chapter, I employed a textual analysis to disclose the underlying ideology, myths, and assumptions about crime danger in news coverage. I accomplished this by drawing on a number of theoretical perspectives and academic literatures outlined in chapter two. First, I analyzed how news coverage was shaped to create a social reality of crime. Second, I examined how crime messages were constructed as gendered, and how this affected a fear discourse. Third, I discovered two different patterns of crime reporting, and explored how (de)contextualization and the presentation of crime news shaped readers' concepts of danger. This involved investigating news as a contested space by comparing and contrasting the dynamic nature of journalists' "preferred readings." Finally, I offered a tentative explanation for the discursive transformations found in *Chatelaine* crime texts over the twenty-year period.

News Production and the Social Reality of Crime

Constructing crime news begins with choosing which of all known events are to be presented to the public. This first filtering step initiates the subjective world of media reporting, in which crime is shaped into news. Whether determined by public interest, or the interests of owners, *Chatelaine* magazine considered crime to be more and more newsworthy as time passed. A discourse of fear, safety, and danger became a clear consequence in the production of news.

Similar to newspapers and television reporting, the types of crime most newsworthy for *Chatelaine* magazine were crimes against the person. I found that property crimes were rare in the texts, and business malfeasance effects on women were absent. The "master offence" represented was sexual crime and accounts of this type of offence were presented through seemingly endless channels: prevention, compensation, vendettas, medical advice, legal reforms and court dramas. These accounts aided in reproducing the preferred meanings of the journalists. As Lemert (1951) notes, this type of societal reaction is integral to the creation of crime and deviance. When deviants were portrayed as unknown to the victims, the narrative connoted predators, evil villains who were blamed, shamed, and punished as dangerous "outsiders." A "master status" of dangerous criminal was allocated and all other traits were overridden. The offending party in these accounts became the typical rapist, robber, or psychopath rather than the citizen, father, or employee. This type of offender portrayal did not emerge when conceptions of crime were based on structural deficiencies, such as sexual inequality or an ineffective social system, rather than individual pathology. In fact, the most newsworthy deviant in *Chatelaine* was one who knew his victim. He was represented by reporters as in need of correction.

> "The men were urged to examine their attitudes toward women ... From the discussions at 'Changing Ways,' Ken acquired a new awareness of the reasons for his abusive behavior and began to accept responsibility for his actions and learn techniques for controlling and cooling his behavior" (*Chatelaine*, November, 1986).

These types of narratives signified that crime was manageable if societal deficiencies could be changed and, not surprisingly, challenging official public policies was central to these crime messages. Consider the following illustration:

> "An Edmonton based organization called Mothers Against Abduction and Murder plans to take its members' concerns directly to M.P.'s and Cabinet ministers in Ottawa ... and will offer Parliamentarians first-hand advice on proposed legislation to protect Canadian children" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1986).

In other crime messages, claims such as "rape laws bound in sexual mysticism," "social reform needed to decrease crime," and "patriarchy prohibits sexual equality under the law" defined crime as structural in nature rather than individualistic.

Claims-makers attempted to shape public policy by operating as "moral entrepreneurs," crying out for societal changes. They framed crime danger around the necessity for societal reform, and exposed the harmful consequences of crime to women without such reform. These claims were then presented as the "truth," extending Becker's (1963:148) notion that moral entrepreneurs operate with an absolute ethic and without qualification. Consider the use of repetition to reinforce moralistic certitude:

> "However faddish is some respects, the trend [to victimology] is nonetheless a reflection of grim **reality**, and some sober thinking about that **reality**. The **reality**, for example, that there exist many more victims of crime than perpetrators of crime. The **reality** that many of these victims suffer damages far out of proportion of physical injury or financial loss. And the **reality** that victims of crime are not well served by society in general or by social agencies in particular – with the criminal justice system serving their interests least of all" (*Chatelaine*, February, 1982).

Moral judgments of right and wrong were framed through personal accounts, which bolstered each article's emotive tone and message. For example, one news story about the need to correct the Young Offender's Act (YOA) was supported by a personal account from a parent of a murdered teen by another teen. The grieving parent's belief that "the system is botched up right down the line" supported the view that the YOA needed reform in terms of a decrease in age restrictions to include those under twelve years of age, more rigid criteria for releasing offenders to group homes, and stiffer

penalties (*Chatelaine*, August, 1989). By using personal accounts in this way, a preferred version of morality was maintained in the articles. These accounts commonly used emotion to persuade and influence the reader to recognize and accept the article's plot line and narrative. Ultimately, such personal accounts were mobilized as symbols of injustice.

"Experts" were also regularly employed to create a particular social reality of crime in the news. Various sources from the public and private sectors provided knowledge that informed many articles. Interestingly, none of these types of sources emerged as the major definer of the news: legitimacy was afforded to many sources in the coverage of crime and criminal justice issues. This finding differs from newspaper analyses, where official government sources were overwhelmingly found to reign in the production of the news (Marsh, 1991). Indeed, Ericson, Baranek, & Chan's (1991) research showed that citizens had a minor place in the media representations of crime and criminal justice. Not so for *Chatelaine* magazine who continually mobilized citizens' accounts to rival the power of the state in defining the social reality of crime. So, crime narratives in this popular venue did not solely reflect "officialdom's" values and interests.

Overall, news coverage was shaped according to the journalists' particular conceptions of crime. Extensive and various sources merged to define crime danger, establishing a version of the social reality of crime that differed considerably from other mediums of knowledge. For example, a sense of societal responsibility to end violence against women often guided the newsmaking process, unlike the majority of mainstream newspaper and television crime reports that individualized the predator criminal (Surette, 1994). However, as we shall see, this meaning was contested over time in the reporting.

The Production of a Gendered Fear of Crime

A gendered discourse framed crime articles in *Chatelaine*, creating the conviction that "the representation of violence" was inseparable from the notion of gender (DeLauretis, 1987:33). Most notably, women's experiences were central in the discourse. Journalists typically treated women's knowledge as valuable knowledge and afforded it credibility. Similar to other research findings, these "reported experiences" conveyed that sexual violence was the most prevalent crime concern for women (Stanko, 1990; Gordon & Riger, 1989) confirming Walklate's (2001:86) observation that the common basis of fear for women was the endemic level of violence by men toward them, particularly sexual danger.

Placing personal accounts of violence in the context of patriarchy was an important part of the representation of crime in *Chatelaine*. The role of a male-dominated criminal justice system in controlling systematic violence against women was reported in the news:

> "At present, a man may legally rape his estranged wife until the final divorce decree, because our law maintains that rape is impossible within marriage. This anomaly dates back to ancient times, when a wife was considered as part of her husband's property" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1976).

Reporters presented words and language in a specific rhetorical form, so men's position of dominance and power in a patriarchal society could not be ignored. As one woman put it: "Why did they [husband and father] abuse me? They abused me because I was a woman" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1981). Berrington & Jones (2002) say that the media's gender-neutral approach to language obscures the social context of violence and the fact that domestic violence is predominantly a male crime. This was not so in the news production at *Chatelaine*. Consider the following exemplar that resists such denial:

> "A 37 year old married **man** in Toronto beat and forced oral sex on **his** 22 year old girlfriend; **his** buddy raped her ... [The judge] believed that the **man's** conduct was completely out of character, and accepted the **man's** drinking as an excuse" (*Chatelaine*, March, 1986).

This type of representation allowed the relationship between violence and patriarchy to be acknowledged in the texts as a system of power. According to Quinney (1970), such coverage has meaning for the readers, and can create a basis for a conceptual reality in spite of any other social reality of crime. As such, I found that journalists for the most part provided readers with a sense that crime was founded in gendered inequality, and that only through the elimination of such discrimination could women gain any control over it. This particular version of "reality" that reflected a power struggle between the sexes was central in the texts, and helped to deflect or trump other social realities of crime.

As noted, sexual assault was routinely featured in the narratives, and was not constituted as a sex crime, but as a violent crime. As one journalist put it: "Rape has come to be seen as a crime of violence, and its major motive as aggression and power rather than sex" (*Chatelaine*, September, 1988). This preferred reading lends support to Stanko's (1985) claim that sexual violence is an ordinary experience for women in a patriarchal society. Guided by women's own experiential knowledge, sexual danger was normalized as an expected occurrence in the news discourses. However, this did not mean that women were portrayed as passively accepting violent crime. Rather the news coverage was replete with ways to avoid sexual assault and defend oneself from harm.

Sexual crimes were situated within a socio-cultural context in order to generate an understanding of these events in the news. By contextualizing sexual violence in social structures, *Chatelaine* provided a focal point for serious media discussions of feminism

and equality: sexual equality and socio-legal reforms were highlighted more than personality considerations in the coverage. This discourse differed significantly from that found in newspaper analysis of sexual attacks which discovered that structural features contributing to sexual attacks were "minimal and sometimes discredited" by the press (Voumvakis & Ericson, 1984:71).

Sexual danger also appeared as a "shadow," or an add-on, to other crimes in the news reports. Ferraro (1996:676) found that women often contemplate the likelihood that sexual assault accompanies other face-to-face offences, and this, in turn, increases their fear of harm. In *Chatelaine*, personal accounts were reported as to suggest sexual danger even when the main focus of the story was of a different type of crime. Consider the following narrative that framed kidnapping with sexual assault:

> "Facing me, with a rifle in his hands, was a shaggy haired, bearded young man. The man had **robbed** the motel and was now leaving. I was to drive him to New Mexico ... **[kidnapping]** As I drove my car away from the motel with the man beside me, his gun pointing at me, fears of **rape** and **murder** filled my mind ... We drove in silence for a long time. Then, in the dark, I felt his hand on my thigh. He began to caress me and then kissed my cheek. "I've only been with one women in the past two years," he said, "and I want to feel how soft you are." "Please don't do that," I said meekly. "This is hard enough for me as it is, and you're making it so much harder" (*Chatelaine*, February, 1988).

News stories such as these advanced the idea of sexual assault as an outcome of any victimization. Becasue previous research has demonstrated that sexual assault operated as a master offence among women, these types of media representations signified a "double-dose" of danger for women (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Stanko, 1985).

As noted, sexual crimes were depicted as occurring between intimates in private settings rather than strangers in public places. This type of coverage legitimated violence by intimates, so that it could no longer be ignored. Signifiers of fear, therefore, were not

usually portrayed as anonymous others in "back alleys" or "dark pathways." Instead, the most obvious and harmful sources of crime were represented as spouses, parents, or known others in one's own life. This is an important finding, as media research conducted to date has found that "stranger danger" is by far the most frequent and dominant theme despite statistics to the contrary (Beckett & Sasson, 2004). So the *Chatelaine* texts indexed the image of 'danger' to include any one or any place.

The coverage in *Chatelaine* also portrayed an altruistic fear of crime, framing it as more newsworthy as the years passed. Women were not only represented as worrying for their own safety, but for others whose well-being they valued, such as children, sisters, friends, and women "as a whole." Consider the following news excerpts:

> Although they benefited the particular women in the cases, the judgments often left the law unchanged to ensnare other women (*Chatelaine*, March, 1986).
>
> See if other women have been subjected to it [sexual harassment] (*Chatelaine*, August, 1978).
>
> A bill promised this fall would protect all rape victims from the customary brutal smear tactics of the courtroom (*Chatelaine*, November, 1975).

Mesch (2000b) argued that women's fear of violent and sexual victimization of significant others had a significant effect on their perception of fear. In the present study, news stories that focused on children's victimizations, for example, effectively increased signifiers of danger and fear for women above and beyond personal harm.

The consequences of crime and criminal justice for all women were addressed in the news stories, which reinforced women's unique vulnerabilities. These were equated with "living in a patriarchal society," "financial dependency," and "physical and mental scars from sexual violence." A particular vulnerability that reporters considered time and

again newsworthy was the "second assault" that women endured when dealing with the criminal justice system. Consider the following illustrations:

> "**The trial procedures through which a rape victim must go are almost as much an ordeal as the crime itself**, Justice Minister Ron Basford acknowledged, as he explained the government's amendments to the Criminal Code that became law in March this year. Often it appears as if it's the victim who must stand trial rather than the accused" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1976).

> "If a woman is raped by a man and wants to lay charges, **she faces an ordeal which in its own way is another kind of rape – this one by our legal institution** ... The court considers a woman's reputation, so you'll be asked all kind of questions about your social life and sexual history ... you must prove you said no at the crucial moment ... you must show that you put up a physical struggle ... and you will almost surely face a male jury and a male judge" (*Chatelaine*, February, 1973).

Reporters pointed out that moral evaluations associated with gender were central in the criminal justice process, as illustrated below:

> "The maximum penalties for indecent assault is 10 years in jail if the victim is male, but only five years if the victim is female" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1976).

> "Male judges are quick to forgive the transgressions of men they see as pillars of the community and to judge victims of sexual assault more harshly than their attackers (*Chatelaine*, September, 1988).

Journalists were quick to criticize these evaluations based on gender as "out of place in criminal courtrooms" (*Chatelaine*, October, 1976). These narratives drew attention to the idea that women had more to fear from crime than men because the criminal justice system revictimized them. It reminded women that they couldn't turn to the criminal justice system to protect them from men's threatening and intimidating behaviour, confirming Stanko's (1985:94) suspicion that the criminal justice system functioned with a male understanding of violence against women, which contributed to women's fear of crime. Therefore, these stories signified that fear of crime operated above and beyond the

criminal event itself, to fear based on poor or inadequate treatment by the very system put into place to adjudicate and control such behaviour.

In sum, the crime accounts in *Chatelaine* had a definite feminist agenda: to acknowledge the obstacles and inequality inherent within law and criminal justice practices, and to support social and legal resolutions that eliminated male violence against women. By providing crime coverage from an experiential standpoint, and exposing myths commonly associated with women's fear of crime, journalists helped to reconstruct alternative crime news. *Chatelaine* resisted traditional attitudes towards crime and justice and put forth a discourse that challenged the patriarchal status quo: strategies for social change both within and outside of the criminal justice system were introduced that did not support official institutional beliefs and attitudes of power and authority. Readers were provided with a means to evaluate and calculate the dangers of crime from a feminist perspective, which granted them a point of view on fear that is mostly absent from other media accounts (Hale 1996).

News as a Contested Space

The changing nature of the production of crime news has been well documented in media analysis (Altheide, 2002; Barak, 1994). As such, I examine two distinct patterns of news reporting found in this study: a "dominant" and a "minor" reporting of the news. The dominant reading positioned the reader to favour the feminist values continuously emphasized in the crime articles, and their subtexts promoted the belief that these interpretations were valid and reasonable. This type of news reporting was in marked contrast to the research that accuses the media of decontextualizing crime, and increasing fear of it (Surette, 1998; Altheide, 2002). Often these *Chatelaine* reporters informed

readers of the wider contexts of crime and criminal justice issues. Consider the following exemplar of this type of story:

> "The critics gave The Warriors rave reviews, but many people are worried about its aftermath of teenage violence. There were three murders in the U.S related to the showing of the movie within the first two weeks of its release. And in New York City police reported a rise in crime after the movie opened, especially in the city's subways, which are the movie's venue. **At the same time, it must be noted that so far there have been no reported outbreaks of contingent teenage violence in Canada**" (*Chatelaine*, May, 1979).

These reporters also contextualized crime articles by providing additional information on statistics, laws, and related services in their articles:

> "A 1977 federal government report estimated there were **20,000 Canadian children** who are wards of children's aid agencies ... and 10,000 children were physically assaulted by their parents seriously enough to require medical attention ...The **law** does not spell out the rights of children ... those rights can be inferred from the law, an ambivalent protection at best ...get involved in a **local child-abuse committee** in your area" (*Chatelaine*, July, 1978).

Such news reporting attempted to assuage readers' fears about the likelihood of becoming a random victim. Readers need not "assume the worst" when informed perspectives about crime risks was a repeated refrain in the reporting (Warr, 2000).

Indeed, contextualizing crime accounts through a causal discourse was typical in this prevailing pattern of news reporting, and in marked contrast to Chermak's (1994) findings that only two percent of the crime stories ever examined the causes of crime, which, in turn, engendered an increased level of fear of victimization. As Barak (1994: 34) argues: "what is excluded from news discourse is, of course, as important as what is included." To be sure, causal context is difficult to capture in the media, as "a violent act is more amenable to dramatization than are the conditions and processes that shape its development ... the causes of crime are theoretical constructs, they cannot be checked and

verified by the established procedures of news reporting" (Chibnall, 1977:79). Yet, I found that reporters constructed crime news with a causal narrative and produced a critical account of some of the underlying social issues that affected women and crime. Furthermore, and unlike other media research (Voumvakis & Ericson, 1984; Graber, 1980; Sherizen, 1978; Marsh, 1991) the *Chatelaine* coverage related causes of crime to socioeconomic deficiencies not personal failures. These narratives signified that changes in social systems were needed, and an alternate conception of gendered justice was highlighted.

Unlike Graber (1980), who found that only three percent of the crime stories contained explicit discussions of remedies for crime, I discovered that alleviating crime problems received attention and consideration in seventy-four percent of the crime messages. Although reporters addressed short-term ways to manage crime such as laying criminal charges or receiving counseling, they mostly grounded their narratives in the inequalities of the market place and the structural patterns of male privilege. For example, one article advised women to take legal action against sexual harassers, while simultaneously defining this crime as having nothing to do with desire and everything to do with exercising male power (*Chatelaine*, August, 1987). When criminals and criminal events are emphasized in the news without potential solutions, the media usually enhances fear. As Altheide (2002:137) puts it: "helplessness promotes incredible anxiety and fear that something might happen about which little can be done." In the present study, however, journalists advanced the view that criminal justice was rehabilitative, not retributive, and therefore they decreased the signifiers of helplessness. Crime was constructed as manageable, and reporters acknowledged and advanced a feminist

ideology in terms of unequal laws or patriarchal attitudes that were seen as contributors to violence against women. For example, reporters argued that marital rape could be eliminated if outdated laws were reformed, and attitudes about the ownership of women in marriage were eroded (*Chatelaine*, October, 1976).

It has been argued that crime coverage that is presented with sensational characteristics also increases fear of victimization (Heath, 1984; Williams & Dickinson, 1993). I found, however, that in this overriding pattern of news reporting journalists did not normally adopt techniques and strategies that encouraged sensationalistic coverage. Crime reporting did not emphasize celebrity cases in the coverage. On the contrary, ordinary Canadian women were the face of crime in *Chatelaine*. Serious and sober depictions abounded. The goal of the texts was not usually to titillate, but to inform the reader about issues of safety and danger. As a result, these crime reports were structured to reduce oversimplification. Photographs and headlines were not designed to dramatize crime, or explore it in a voyeuristic manner. Reporters fashioned article content out of rational considerations of the law, sexism, violence, and the marketplace, which made news more understandable. Although this pattern of news reporting dealt with serious crimes such as sexual assault and child abuse, it did so without stirring up fear through excessive empathy: personal stories from victims were disclosed primarily to proffer broad ranging social solutions to crime. Indeed, this finding confirms Bortner's (1984:23) important insight that mediums that critique social structures often lack sensationalistic reporting. He argues that when media images promulgate values such as "individualization, consumption, atomization of responsibility, and privatization of social problems," they oversimplify major conflicts within society. This, in turn, anesthetizes

the public from any critique of their own lives. Sensationalized portrayals of violent crime provide an escape from the boredom and tedium of normal existence without providing genuine understanding of either context or consequence.

Many of these journalists who constructed crime news under the dominant form of reporting also contextualized the randomness of crime in news stories. When crimes of a random nature are addressed in the news, distortion and misinformation about the true nature of crime is often created (Surette, 1994). Senseless violence "that can happen to anyone at any time," however, was not a central theme in this pattern of news reporting in my study. Instead, reporters conveyed the message that all people did not equally share the risks of criminal victimization. Stories of violence against women by known men were frequently described by reporters to support the idea that crime was patterned rather than simple happenstance. Consider the following news story:

> "Generally, the violent husband exhibits four key characteristics: excessive jealousy, feelings of rejection, inability to express his feelings, and a 'blame the victim' mentality. Because of his low self-esteem, he often regards the most ordinary expression of interest by another man toward his wife as proof of her sexual infidelity. His jealousy often becomes magnified with the arrival of a baby when he has to share his wife's attention with the child. He suffers what he perceives to be insults in silence until his mounting anger explodes in violence. Then, he blames his wife: "If you had not disobeyed me, I wouldn't have become angry and beaten you" (*Chatelaine*, November, 1986).

Indeed, journalists did not engage in the rhetoric of "imminent danger to all women" and my study differs from Surette's (1994) finding that there is a single, unified conception of the criminal – the random predator. In fact, *Chatelaine* reporters constructed a social reality that defied "predation between strangers as a way of life." However, many of these representations of crime were contested through another pattern of news reporting.

This second pattern of news reporting was present over the twenty-year span of my study, although it was deployed less frequently and towards the end of my coverage period. The time interval analysis revealed that by the mid 1980s, this minor, less privileged type of reporting countered the dominant readings of the news, and resisted the "naturalized" feminist ideologies endorsed in the crime articles. In contrast to the dominant readings, these articles were highly representative of fear. In these few cases, reporters presented violence against women as episodic and isolated, and reinforced the idea that individual pathology was to blame for criminogenic behaviour. This discursive transformation began to marginalize previous causal and solution-oriented attributions and replaced them with an iconography of self-regulation images and texts. News articles now advised women to "follow certain defence strategies when confronted with a rapist" (*Chatelaine*, September, 1985). Reporters implied that it was a woman's individual responsibility to restrict and censure her activities so as to avoid becoming a victim of crime. Immediate security, rather than social security, became the central theme, and this, in turn, was bolstered by a symbolic imagery of anxiety and fear.

The texts began to reconfigure crime within what Bortner (1984:23) terms "the privatization of social problems." Once this "individualized" text became the focus of news writing, sexual crimes against women declined in newsworthiness, confirming Benedict's (1992:251) general observation that rape lost interest for the press in the 1980s. She argued that this lack of interest was related to the public's lack of concern about rape as a societal problem: funding and research that once supported rape crisis centers and training programs for police and doctors decreased dramatically during this time period. This lack of interest led reporters to raise different crime concerns that they

judged to be more significant to readers. *Chatelaine* reporters turned their attention toward the most innocent victim of all – the child, and to the new deviant – the child abuser. During the last time frame of my study (1985-1989), news coverage of child abuse doubled to account for almost thirty percent of all printed crime messages. Their narratives increasingly represented children as more physically and politically vulnerable than anyone, and therefore deserving of extended news coverage when they were exploited. A "moral panic" ensued as this new easily identifiable threat was produced and narrated in the media (Cohen, 1972). In these five years, news stories about sexual crimes against children (i.e. molestation and incest) were conveyed with moral urgency. Signifiers such as "record numbers," "widespread" and "alarmingly high" cases implied both novelty and the necessity for redress. Canadian laws and aid services that "need to be changed to give children better protection" (*Chatelaine*, June, 1985) was a regular refrain conveyed by official sources, especially lawyers, politicians and police. Sentences of increasing severity were urged because "the man who evades the law may well harm other children" (*Chatelaine*, April, 1985). This "perfect victim," the vulnerable child in a world where fear, danger and violence prevailed, was further supported in crime articles by way of journalists' silences: stories of juvenile delinquency, such as shoplifting or prostitution, were absent in the news during this time frame, as they were not conducive to the representation of a "pure" victim.

Individualizing crime in the 1980s had another consequence: an increase in "famous case" reportings. Consider the headlines that appeared in *Chatelaine* in 1988 alone:

> Inwood vs. Sedosova: An International Love Story that turned Sour [Wife Assault] (April).

Christine Croft: The Ugliest Woman in America [Sex Discrimination]" (April).

"The Kitchen Crusade of Alice Curtis to save her Son [manslaughter] (September).

Betty Frieden: Battered Wife (October).

Oprah Winfrey: Abused Child (October).

Margaret (Trudeau) Kemper Charged with Marijuana Possession (November).

These notorious cases, however, were not framed by a wider context of violence. News narratives did not call attention to issues of patriarchy or deficiencies in the social system. Instead, reporters depicted crimes as personal incidents, which separated criminogenic behaviour from broader structural forces. Similar to Chibnall's (1977) conclusion that sensationalistic news reporting diverted attention from social problems, my study revealed that focusing on individualized notorious crimes disallowed new meanings to be constructed that offered an understanding of crime from a structural perspective. Reporting the details of Oprah's abusive childhood simply provided news as entertainment; no knowledge was disseminated that would assuage the average readers' fears about serious crime in society. The "crime problem" was simply represented as a "personal problem" in the news coverage.

These individualistic narratives found in the minor reporting of the news were also reflected in citizens' opinions. Not only did the quantity of citizen opinions decrease from nineteen percent to five percent during the last time interval of this study, they also changed in substance. Now readers called for more police action, and held individuals responsible for their own victimization. Myths, once deconstructed by journalists, were being reconstructed, particularly those around "stranger danger" and "street-smarts." The

home was increasingly coded as a space of safety and refuge amidst a public world of faceless and harmful men, the opposite of the news narratives that warned women that the real dangers to them occurred in their own home and family contexts.

Crime narratives and statistics that tended to contextualize stories were either missing, or derived from single sources. Consider the following exemplars:

> "The Director of the Ontario Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse has logged a 600 percent increase in reported and verified child sex-abuse incidents since 1980" (*Chatelaine*, February, 1987).
>
> "According to a Statistics Canada report released last year, the recorded incidents of sexual assaults against women per 100,000 population increased 29 percent in a recent six-year period, from 1,828 in 1976 to 2,528 in 1982" (Chatelaine, May, 1986).

In the first story, the exact number of crime incidents was left out and the journalist did not establish the actual scope of child abuse, although the percentage supplied connotes an extreme increase in the phenomenon. In the second story the journalist supplied the exact numbers, but comparative sources were not supplied and this ensured that the official voice remained high in the "hierarchy of credibility." As, Benedict (1992:261) observed in her study of the media and sex crimes, it is important to gather information from local rape crisis centres as well as the police. Without this background information, the reader cannot accurately assess their risk of crime danger.

An overly simplistic "good versus evil" discourse was demarcated in this secondary pattern of news reporting: the reporting of victims and offenders drew no gray lines. Victims were innocent women and children in need of protection. Criminals were denoted as predators and almost never considered as possible victims themselves. This powerful and evocative reporting style was applied through stereotypes and labels. Compare the signifiers of moral character used in these types of texts: "sweet face,"

knitting booties," "grandmotherly image" (*Chatelaine*, June, 1984) versus "thugs," "scum," and "hoodlums" (*Chatelaine*, December, 1987). This dichotomy in the news reporting warranted more police powers and called for further punitive crime control measures:

> Adding more force to the police actions, Metro Council voted in 97 new officers and agree to allocate funds for stepped-up drug enforcement throughout Toronto (*Chatelaine*, April, 1989).
>
> Bill C-61 grants police the power to seize assets proven to be the proceeds of drug trafficking (*Chatelaine*, April, 1989).
>
> The police must do more (*Chatelaine*, March, 1987).
>
> Swifter, more efficient response to crime by police, crown prosecutors and child-welfare workers (*Chatelaine*, November, 1984).
>
> Changes in the law needed in order to define what the law considers to be pornographic and sexually abusive material (*Chatelaine*, January, 1985).

By demonstrating harm to "innocent" victims by "evil" offenders, this law and order viewpoint was justified and maintained in the news narratives, as crime was transformed into "a war being fought by semi-human monsters versus society" (Surette, 1994:145). To win this war, images of expanding social controls were well represented in the articles. This pattern of news reporting presented "evil" offenders as acting randomly and without meaning. Journalists outlined the crime problem as the need for protection against male strangers who chose their victims arbitrarily. Sexual assault, child abuse, abductions, and home burglaries, happened without cause or provocation. Crime lacked rhyme or reason and, of course, this contradicted an abundance of social science literature that suggested danger rests in the hands of non-strangers who actually produce clear and deliberate patterns of criminal behaviour (Sacco, 1995; Stanko, 1990).

Some journalists also utilized sensationalistic practices in this news reporting. They arranged iconic signs together - pictures and headlines - to amplify preferred meanings. These visual cues invited readers to "witness" criminal events. Photographs substituted as literal records "as they happened," providing immediacy, urgency, and apparent accuracy to the content of the articles (Hall, 1973:188). Taken together, the randomness and sensationalism distinctive of this pattern of crime reporting assured women readers that anyone unknown to them was a potential threat, and encouraged them to visualize themselves as the easy victim of this threat. Therefore, the representations of crime that were developed through this type of news reporting signified fears of crime based on distorted information about it.

In sum, two distinct patterns of news reporting were observed throughout this study. Both patterns communicated crime and criminal justice according to the journalists' "sense" of the issues: their preferred meanings, constructed through particular discursive arrangements, helped to construct different versions of the "reality" of crime risk. The dominant reporting style of the news in *Chatelaine* magazine promoted a feminist critique of women's fear of crime based on women's own experiences that downplayed indicators of fear and encouraged an informed understanding of the crime phenomenon. Rather than constructing random men as the source of danger, the "true" offenders were reported to be sexism, ineffective laws, and a criminal justice system that supported male violence against women. However, a minor and subordinate pattern of news reporting emerged that "mystified" the issue of crime and prohibited the consideration of contexts or alternatives. These constructions in the news coverage eventually reflected information and interpretations that supported official sources,

changing the underlying ideology of social reform to self-responsibilization for crime. As a result, these transformations of criminal events into news had more to do with reporters contesting and producing the social reality of the news than an accurate reflection of any "objective reality." In the next section, I attempt to explain why these discursive transformations occurred.

Chatelaine, Crime News, and the Influence of Culture

Typically, news reports that are examined over long periods of time are dynamic, rather than fixed and determined (Reiner et al., 2001; Barlow et al., 1995). Certainly, representations of crime and criminal justice did not remain static over the reporting years in the present study. To make sense of these findings I considered four models of explanation. First, I examined the internal organizational structure of *Chatelaine*. Were there major shifts in owners, editors, and reporters and their policies during the 1980s? If so, were these changes responsible for the changing content of crime news? Second, I considered the propaganda model. Whose interests were promoted in the texts, and did these interests change over time? Third, I considered a socio-legal inequality model, which examines the connection between news coverage and legal amendments, as well as the inequalities in the social structure responsible for crime against women. Were the law reforms sought after in the 1970s satisfied such that moral entrepreneurs no longer felt the need to demand changes to these laws? Was violent crime against women no longer a function of broad social structures? Or, did women achieve social justice equal to men, thereby silencing the need for a feminist critique? Finally, I considered changes that evolved in the state's approach to crime control and crime risk during the 1980s. Did a change in Canadian political economy affect crime and criminal justice reportings?

First, the activities of news workers and news organizations may be important in understanding changes in news content, as they invoke and apply norms about what is considered newsworthy (Tuchman, 1978). This entails understanding the rhythm, or routine, of the newsroom that is created in order to generate stories, including the adaptation of crime accounts to a chosen timetable and layout of a particular medium. It invokes bureaucratic chains of authority and their subsequent relationships as important contributors to changing news content (Voumvakis &Ericson, 1984; Tuchman, 1978). For example, journalists operate within the social organizational constraints of the news organization that employs them. Therefore, the relationship between the journalist, who selects newsworthy crime "knowledge" to report on, the editor, who filters this knowledge, and the owner, who ultimately controls this knowledge in order to ensure commercial viability is considered relevant to changing patterns of crime news. While I was unable to observe these daily micro processes of news production, I would de-emphasize this "internal production model" based on what I was able to access. First, I found that no changes occurred in the magazine's organizational arrangements during the 1980s. MacLean Hunter was the sole owner and operator of this magazine for the entire twenty-year time frame of the study. Second, there was no variation in editorial direction during the mid 1980s: Mildred Istona served as editor from 1978 to 1995. Under her leadership, the content of *Chatelaine* was positioned to balance controversial subjects, such as pornography, with domestic issues, such as home economics and childcare advice. This balance was maintained throughout her editorship, and was conducted with no drop in circulation rates in the mid to late 1980s (Sutherland, 1989:296). Third, there was no significant change in journalists during this period. New reporters were constantly

contributing to the crime discourse, and no one set of reporters dominated in any time frame. I concluded that the organizational structure of *Chatelaine* could not account for the changes in news reporting in the latter part of this study. As Surette (1994:140) notes, major transformations in news coverage cannot be understood by examining the internal workings of the media. Changes in the news, he insists, have interdependence with changes in social structures, particularly culture, which requires an examination of the external forces on news coverage.

Second, I took into account the claim that the mass media manage public opinion by mobilizing bias, which shapes the news over time. This "propaganda model" presents the argument that patterns of manipulation and bias are continually presented in the news as a non-violent means of control in democratic societies. Herman & Chompsky (1988) argue that this bias derives from five filters that all news must pass through: ownership, advertising, sources, pressure groups, and anticommunism. However, only the first three filters apply to this study, as I could not measure the effects of groups that accuse the media of bias, or communism as a "national religion and control mechanism."

The first filter concerns ownership and management. News becomes distorted when large profit-oriented corporations own media outlets. They have important common interests with other major corporations, banks, and government, and these, they say, often compromise the independence of news coverage. Maclean Hunter, the owner of *Chatelaine*, was certainly a large, diversified corporation in the 1970s, but it was a family based enterprise that owned fifty-one percent of the shares until Rogers Communications, a large multi-national conglomerate, acquired it in 1994, after the end of my study period. Indeed, until 1994, Maclean Hunter was a communication company without non-media

ownership (Sutherland, 1989:207). This allowed some autonomy from large institutional and individual investors, decreasing the possibility of pressure from special interests in the choice of news content.

The second filter concerns advertising. According to the propaganda model, the media are profit-oriented businesses, which means their number one priority is to connect readers to advertisers. Therefore, media outlets publish news that reflects the desires and values of the advertisers. Herman & Chompsky (1989:17) also argue that news producers will avoid stories of serious complexities or disturbing controversies that interfere with the "buying mood." In my study, however, the majority of the advertisements attempted to sell "domesticity" to readers: foodstuff, beauty products, crafts, linens, children's toys, and cookware were mainstays in the advertisements. This conflicted with the bulk of news content that reflected feminist ideals that tended to deconstruct women as domestic servants. These advertisements were also placed alongside complex stories that were controversial in nature, such as overhauling long-standing rape laws believed to be sexist or dealing with abusive parents.

The third filter suggests that the mass media maintain a relationship with powerful sources of information by "economic necessity and reciprocity of interest" (Herman & Chompsky, 1988:18). Priority is given to official sources, as these sources are easy to access, give credibility to the media outlet, and maintain an image of objectivity. This differs from the findings in the present study. *Chatelaine* deployed many different types of sources, did not retreat from controversial subjects that might produce "flak," and did not attempt to foster an "elusive objectivity." As a result, the propaganda model does not apply to this study. Although journalists actively sought to produce an account of crime

from a feminist perspective, they did so by producing a critical understanding through investigative techniques that did not promote the interests of corporations or government. What constituted the framework for news production were not elite interests, but the deconstruction of these interests. Journalists opened up a discourse about crime that countered the dominant myths associated with women and crime, and fear of violence. Ultimately, this did not result in distorting the news in favour of society's privileged few, contrasting the main argument of the propaganda model.

Third, I utilized the socio-legal inequality model to examine the discernible shift in the news coverage with respect to legal narratives, as well as violence against women in a broad social context. Situated in the crime discourse throughout the 1970s and early 1980s were "moral entrepreneurs" who called for legal reforms thought to prevent the exploitation of women by men, which would ultimately offer a better life for all women. The ways and means to establish these new laws were constant considerations in the news coverage. Consider the following exemplar:

> "To ensure a fair verdict rape juries should be, by law, half female ... the clause regarding married women must be removed from the rape law ... Section 134 of the Code, the judge's instruction on corroboration must also be removed or amended ... we must revise a court procedure that now permits irrelevant attack on the reputation of the rape complainant" (*Chatelaine*, September, 1971).

However, these crusades dwindled in the texts during the 1980s, and new rules that centered on individual punishment increased, as demonstrated below:

> "We insist on two things: justice and logic. Those who have savagely taken the life of an innocent person should be made to forfeit their own lives. There is no other appropriate punishment. And far too often, there is no other logical option for a judge passing sentence "(*Chatelaine*, November, 1987).

According to Becker (1963:153), when moral entrepreneurs are successful in getting new rules established, they are "out of a job" and may "discover something new to view with alarm, a new evil about which something ought to be done," which would explain sudden transformations in news coverage. However, the present study does not confirm Becker's notion. The legal reforms called for in the 1970s may have decreased in quantity and focus in the 1980s, but there was evidence in the texts that law reform was still needed to eradicate the exploitation of women. Phrases such as "judges rarely hand out lengthy sentences [when women charge their step/fathers with incest]" (*Chatelaine*, April, 1988), and "changes in the law have failed to modify the perceptions of some judges about sexual crime" (*Chatelaine*, September, 1988) attest to this. Legal narratives were not abandoned in the texts, but simply refashioned. Concerns about violence against women from a legal perspective were still reported, but were framed more as criticisms of the law rather than calls for law reform, which included the importance of holding offending individuals legally responsible.

In addition, crime news reporting was largely situated in a broad social context suggesting that violence against women could not be understood by simply examining the individual actors involved; patriarchy, poverty, and educational systems were also contributory. The discursive shift toward individual responsibility during the mid-1980s connotes an end to the social structures that had once negatively affected women. However, although headway has been made in assuring equality for all in Canadian society, an abundance of government and academic studies argue that structural inequality is far from being eliminated. For example, in its report, "Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality," the Status of Women Canada

(1995) outlines government contributions for solutions to societal inequality. They acknowledge that violence against women was rooted in "attitudinal, structural and systemic gender-based inequalities ... and that these inequalities "stubbornly persist," extending Stanko's (1990:154) notion that crime against women was based on patriarchy and misogyny, and "the challenge of the 1990s will be to find mechanisms to alleviate the dangers accompanying unequal power." As well, I found that signifiers in the news such as "social welfare," "equity and equality," and "social causes" were rare, but not completely absent in the late 1980s. Clearly, this "socio-legal inequality" model did not explain the changes in news reporting during the latter part of my study.

Lastly, as an explanation for the discursive transformations in the news reporting I examined the changes in economic and political arrangements that occurred during the 1980s. That is, were accounts of crime in the news reflections of a contemporary form of governance? Specific modes of governance are best understood by exploring Foucault's (1991) concept of "governmentality." He argued that between the 16th and 18th centuries changes in sovereign forms of power were needed due to ever-increasing population rates. Coercive power exercised from above was no longer effective, so a move to rational governmental power was considered necessary. New technologies would allow the problem of population to be manageable and knowable. This was based on the idea that the more something is known, the more controllable it becomes. In societies where tactics rather than laws are employed to guarantee security, power is decentered and individuals play an active role in their self-governance. Following Foucault, Rose & Miller (1991) argued that the change in governance from welfarism to neo-liberalism in the 1980s changed the way in which economics were governed: the best way to control

and advance a nation's economy was not in planned economies, but through economic entrepreneurship. Individuals, rather than the state, were more effective at maximizing their own quality of life. According to Garland (2001), this shift in governance affected strategies for crime control, as concerns for social justice that were dependent on the state were replaced with faith in the market. Increasing crime rates, and an overwhelmingly negative assessment of the penal-welfare system's ability to control crime further supported this shift.

Taking into consideration the discursive transformations found in the present study, I examined several shifts in crime control that emerged from these changes in governance during the 1980s. First, doubts about the efficacy of criminal justice agencies surfaced, eroding the myth that the state was capable of providing security to its citizens. This "nothing works" ideology was applied to the limitations of prisons, probation, corrections, sentencing measures, deterrent laws, and traditional policing. Therefore, the state shifted their attention to deal with the effects of crime – costs, and victims and fearful citizens – rather than its causes (Garland, 1996:447; O'Malley, 1992). My findings conveyed this idea. In the 1980s, journalists no longer considered causes of crime to be an important consideration in the production of news stories as they once had. Narratives about "cracks in the system" continued, but their main focus was now on the victims of crime who were effected by a lack of crime control. For example, a news story about an incestuous father demonstrated skepticism about the protection that the criminal justice system could offer families (*Chatelaine*, April, 1985). However, the reporter also depicted the tragedy of the event by focusing on the aftermath of the victimization. Consequently, journalists placed causes of crime secondary to victim

consequences during the 1980s. Therefore, an increase in the accounts of compensation (civil and criminal), restitution, and medical and emotional support, particularly the emotional aftermath of an abusive childhood or sexual assault, present in the crime articles was consistent with the decline and reliance on the welfare state to protect victims.

This sense of failure triggered another mode in governing crime in the 1980s, what Garland (1996:451) calls a "responsibilization strategy." He argued that because of the limited capacity of the state to provide security, it attempted to decentralize responsibility for crime prevention on to agencies, organizations and individuals. Instead of simply transforming the *deviant*, the responsibilization strategy served to change *everyone*. By raising consciousness and creating a sense of duty, governments sent a message to the private sector and to individual citizens that "they too have a responsibility in this regard, and must be persuaded to change their practices in order to reduce criminal opportunities and increase informal controls" (Garland, 1996:453). In the latter part of this study, this message of individualized responsibility was secured with an increase in the use of government claims-makers. Rose & Miller (1991:190) argue that these "experts" offer to teach individuals self-regulatory techniques that would "align their personal choices with the ends of government." This "governance-at-a-distance" was very common in the crime messages in my study, which explained my finding that self-regulation had expanded during the 1980s. News coverage was constructed to focus on immediate security, assigning responsibility on to victims of crime. Journalists no longer associated social change with a safe environment. Effectively, news reports

reflected the concept of individual responsibility in their crime messages that was established during the rise of neo-liberalism.

This rise in individualization during the 1980s best explains the development of a lack of connection between structural forces and crime in my study. In fact, O'Malley (1992) argues that this shift from "social actuarialism" to "individual prudentialism" cannot be understood without putting it in the context of neo-liberalism. Crimes once seen as wrongs against a social, legal or moral order became harms by individuals against other individuals (Reiner et al., 2001). While systemic deficiencies did not disappear in Canadian society, news accounts replaced them with a discourse of risk management involving the individual citizen. Crime news accounts were no longer linked to social justice, such as an agenda toward sexual equality. Rather, individuals were seen as the main source and control of risk. This explained why journalists more frequently reported on notorious cases involving famous people during the latter part of the 1980s: an in-depth evaluation of crime or criminal justice was no longer required in the crime discourse under a conservative agenda; "self-help" was the new motto.

A transformation in penal ideals was also initiated during the rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980s, which helped to explain my finding that crime news narratives were increasingly comprised of retributive language during this time frame. According to O'Malley (1992:265) elimination of cause from the discourse of crime restores individual responsibility and this has its effects on punishment. A punitive crime control stance under the rhetoric of 'law and order' and 'tough on crime' began, which Garland (1996:460) argues was related to the failure of the criminal justice agencies in controlling crime. As he puts it, "a show of punitive force against individuals is used to repress any

acknowledgement of the state's inability to control crime to acceptable levels. A willingness to deliver harsh punishments to convicted offenders magically compensates a failure to deliver security to the population at large." In the present study, signifiers such as calls for "stricter penalties" and "indefinite prison terms" constituted the ideology of punishment in the texts, which coincided with the decline of penal-welfarism. As a result, passionate calls to "prosecute malicious children and incompetent investigators" (*Chatelaine*, August, 1988) and to "reinstate capital punishment" (*Chatelaine*, November, 1987) were not uncommon refrains. Garland (2001:142) also asserted that this punitive turn in contemporary penality needs to be supported by a public audience, "for whom this process of condemnation and punishment serves as an expressive release of tension and a gratifying moment of unity in the face of crime and insecurity." Indeed, I found that this "expressive justice" was clearly articulated in my study. Crime accounts framed through citizen's opinions beginning in the mid 1980s lacked rehabilitative signifiers. Readers who once demonstrated their belief that controlling crime could only be accomplished by managing structural deficiencies now expressed more punitive measures. Crime control, according to this new public sentiment, was about controlling the offender and responsibilizing the victim, which explains the callous tone in the texts: there was no sympathy for the blameworthy, thereby supporting neo-liberal risk management policies. Consider the following citizen opinion directed at parents of an abducted child who organized a society on behalf of missing kids:

> "It seems to me that a parent who'd let a 6-year-old child walk home alone would later need to appease a guilty conscience. I hope the Murrells' efforts "after the fact" are making them feel better" (*Chatelaine*, March, 1987).

According to Garland (2001:11) after the decline of penal-welfarism, the victim is transformed through a new genre of criminological discourse. He observed that in the penal-welfare framework, individual victims are rarely featured. Reiner et al.'s (2001:187) media research in the Untied Kingdom extends this notion. They found that "victims increasingly moved from a shadowy and purely functional role in crime narratives to a pivotal position." Gradually, victims' interests and feelings were invoked to justify the new punitive measures indicative of the neo-liberal state. Although I found that victims' sentiments became more retributive in the news accounts during the mid 1980s, my findings differed with respect to the occurrence of the victim. That is, victims were regularly represented in the news coverage from 1970-1990, not just during the peak of neo-liberalist thinking. Most likely, this finding differs from Reiner et al. (2001) and Garland's (2001) observations because *Chatelaine* journalists continually treated women's experiences as valuable sources of knowledge, placing them high on the hierarchy of credibility.

Along with the shift toward punitive policies was a transformation in the characterization of the offender. The criminal was depicted as an "alien other" who lacked strong moral compass or any effective internal controls rather than as a rational opportunist, of little difference from his or her victim (Garland, 1996:461). The only practical and rational response to these "outsiders" was to have them removed from society. As Reiner et al. (2001) put it, "criminals were to be condemned and contained, not understood and changed." Garland (1996:461) argues that this "criminology of the other" was invoked "to demonize the criminal, to excite popular fears and hostilities, and to promote support for state punishment ... which now prevail over the traditions of

welfarism and social citizenship." This criminal characterization is consistent with the findings from the latter part of my study, in which reporters represented violent individuals as those who could not be "fixed." No connection was made between "them" and "us:" their "master status" became the criminal rather than the citizen. This helps to explain why "stranger danger" myths were once again being reconstructed in the news narratives: only "evil outsiders" would commit violent crimes. A heightened sensitivity to criminal risk, brought about during the rise of neo-liberalism, shaped journalists representations of crime and criminal justice to include those intrinsically different from them.

This concept of "criminology of the dangerous other," which "defies rational comprehension of the offender ... and puts them beyond reform and outside civil community" (Garland, 2001:184) was relevant to my study, as it helped to explain the appearance of a "moral panic" in the mid 1980s. Random predators became the icon for the dangerous criminal in news accounts, creating a new threat about which nothing could be done: "they" could not be cured. News reports cemented this view by increasingly deploying government sources that supported its principles. News accounts in the mid 1980s suddenly considered child abuse to be the most urgent crime, and in need of drastic measures for its eradication. Because children could not yet manage their own personal risk of crime, their concerns were elevated in the news. Similar to Reiner et al.'s (2003:26) study, I found that crime messages promoted this threat through "bad news in a tone of panic," and reflected individualism and responsibilization during the rise of neo-liberalism. As well, a rise in neo-conservativism reasserted absolute morality, which was framed around the ideologies of "family values, work, abstinence, and self-

control" (Garland, 2001:99). Combined, these concepts contributed to the idea that child abuse was a threat to the well-being of society itself.

In sum, a transformation in the representation of crime in news coverage was not the result of the internal organizational structure of *Chatelaine* itself. Instead, external forces better accounted for these changes. Journalist's preferred meanings were connected to cultural, political and economic ideologies, and their representations of crime and criminal justice were complex accounts that reflected the changing nature of social control. Crime narratives that signified self-regulation, punitive penal measures, and "otherness" echoed the shift from rehabilitative to retributive justice. Therefore, crime messages focused on simply managing threat, rather than understanding it. Ultimately, the fears and anxieties created out of this new system of crime control in the 1980s were well represented in the news narratives.

Summing Up and Looking to the Future

Ultimately, this thesis demonstrated the complex nature of media constructions of crime, and the signifiers of fear. Simple explanations for these constructions were not readily available. Media imagery was composed of hidden layers of meaning, extending Gamson et al.'s (1992:381) notion that "one cannot take texts at face-value since they contain subtexts." Therefore, the media did not reflect one reality. Crime was not a constant configuration, but the result of efforts by journalists to construct different realities, and present them in dissimilar styles, which, in turn, encouraged diverse signifiers of fear and safety. News producers actively shaped the symbolic reality of danger in *Chatelaine* and created different and distinct "social realities of crime" leaving

readers to make sense of crime and criminal justice out of competing interpretations. But there was form to the plurality of news production.

The dominant form of news reporting defined crimes against women as manageable. Fear was not fashioned as a fundamental by-product of crime. That is, signifiers of fear and danger did not dominate crime narratives. Rather, journalists provided ample information to readers that allowed them to understand and rationalize crime and criminal justice. As such, crime was addressed without employing rhetoric of imminent and inevitable personal victimization. Interestingly, this particular "reality" was contested over time. News narratives about social justice were replaced with individualized accounts of responsibility. Signifiers of fear in the crime messages were elevated to match the increasing unmanageability of crime thought to exist in the mid to late 1980s. The finding that crime control was structurally related to the conditions of late modernity greatly influenced these transformations in journalists' representations of crime as risk. What guaranteed the quantity and quality of a fear discourse was the social organization of society. Reporter's so-called objective "facts" and "truths" about crime were simply social constructs. Instead, news accounts were adaptations of changing political and cultural values. Consequently, the social reality of crime, and its ensuing fear, was shaped according to prevailing cultural agendas of social control. In the end, representations of danger and safety in the news narratives were part of a process that reflected the relationships between journalists, sources, readers, and society itself. This relationship effectively determined the degree to which crime messages signified fear, as well as proper citizen conduct to address this fear. This study, then, was a critical reminder to media consumers to take note of these "invisible relationships" when

evaluating the believability and importance of claims. After all, reality is a human creation. Yet, like all studies it could not cover every aspect of the topic and it behooves me to make several recommendations for future research, which I hope will be taken as an invitation for others to form new areas of analysis.

First, audience involvement in the research process is warranted to find out how crime stories are interpreted, as "texts may have a preferred meaning" which readers are invited to accept, but which many readers may actually decline (Gamson, et al., 1992). Future studies should measure how news consumers perceive and interpret the content of media accounts in order to observe the impact that crime news has on the public that reads it. As Ditton et al. (2004:607) argue, "the interpretation of media content as relevant to and by the consumer" is one of the most important measures for the understanding of the relationship between media and fear of crime. To show the impact of crime representations on perceptions of fear most effectively, longitudinal studies, particularly in the form of panel studies, should be utilized. This would allow researchers to measure the same people over time, which would control for conflicting interpretations of media content.

Second, the interpretations of news workers and owners of *Chatelaine* would provide further insight into the discursive transformations found in this study. I had limited access to information about those who played a part in the micro production of news, and I could not determine the full effects of *Chatelaine's* news production processes. By conducting detailed interviews with owners, editors, reporters, and cartoonists, future research could address several unanswered concerns about the rhythm of the news room, the power relationships between editors and journalists, the amount of

freedom that owners allow news workers with regard to "angle" or direction, and the market pressures that may influence the construction of the news. Such qualitative research into *Chatelaine's* internal processes through the people who formed the *Chatelaine* organization would elucidate the role these processes played in changing crime texts.

Third, the present study demonstrated the importance of considering constructions of crime fear and risk from a gendered point of view, and did so by exploring a popular "women's magazine." As the large majority of journalists in this study were women, it could be used as a basis for comparison in order to consider the differences in news reporting styles between male and female journalists. An analysis of crime news in a "men's magazine" comprised largely of male journalists would allow this comparison. By examining the representations of crime fear in both types of "popular culture" mediums a clearer understanding of how media signifiers of danger evolve and produce meaning for both sexes would result. Do male and female reporters frame crime differently? Do they draw on different sources? Are their dominant subtexts comparable?

Fourth, this study clarified those types of texts and reporting styles that signified fear of crime in media accounts. By expanding on this, future media research would inform and make recommendations to the press on how to take a more active role in reducing representations of crime fear. Because an elevated fear of victimization can have major consequences for the public, research that offers journalists systematic reforms about such issues as language use, contextualization and accuracy would alter the way in which readers perceive crime danger. Such research would remind those who

produce the news of their complicity in elevating misrepresentations of crime and their responsibility to reduce the ensuing signifiers of fear.

Lastly, this thesis demonstrated the influence of wider social forces on the representations of fear and danger in the news narratives. Future research might start from the opposite viewpoint. That is, are those who create and enforce the rules regarding criminal justice influenced by media representations? Do political actors rely on the media as a source of information that eventually informs criminal justice policy? Qualitative research could be conducted with politicians, police superintendents, criminal justice administrators and their advisors, which would uncover their preferred sources of news coverage and their ideologies about how the issue of crime should be addressed in our society. Interviews with these policy makers would contribute to the understanding of the correlation between media consumption patterns and the enactment of crime control policies.

In summary, by pursuing these research directions a greater understanding of the complex issues surrounding crime, fear, and the media will be advanced. Further knowledge about readers, news workers and policy makers will explicate the effects of gender, new production processes, and political influences on media images. Such multifaceted analyses serve to extend the understanding of crime news as a social construct.

Table 1 – Number and Percentages of Crime/Criminal Justice Topics

	Interval A (1970-1974)		Interval B (1975-1979)		Interval C (1980-1984)		Interval D (1985-1989)		Total
Crime	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N (%)
a) Sexual Crimes	8	50.0	12	36.4	15	31.9	13	22.0	48 (31.0)
b) Child Abuse	4	25.0	7	21.2	7	14.9	17	28.8	35 (22.6)
c) Illicit Drug Abuse	2	12.5	0	0	2	4.3	2	3.4	6 (3.9)
d) Domestic Violence	0	0	3	9.1	5	10.6	9	15.3	17 (11.0)
e) Juvenile Delinquency	0	0	5	15.2	2	4.3	0	0	7 (4.5)
f) Burglary	1	6.3	3	9.1	2	4.3	1	1.7	7 (4.5)
g) Murder	0	0	1	3.0	9	19.1	7	11.9	17 (11.0)
h) Criminal Justice System	0	0	1	3.0	3	6.4	5	8.5	9 (5.8)
i) Other	1	6.3	1	3.0	2	4.3	5	8.5	9 (5.8)
Total	16	10.3	33	21.3	47	30.3	59	38.1	155 (100)

Table 2 – Characteristics of Crime Article

	Overall (1970-1990)		Interval A (1970-1974)		Interval B (1975-1979)		Interval C (1980-1984)		Interval D (1985-1989)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Crime Type										
a) Personal	142	91.6	14	87.5	29	87.9	45	95.7	54	91.5
b) Property	11	7.1	2	12.5	3	9.1	2	4.3	4	6.8
c) Not Mentioned	2	1.3	0	0	3	9.1	0	0	1	1.7
2. Article Format										
a) Regular Section	54	34.8	6	37.5	15	45.5	14	29.8	19	32.2
b) Editorial	6	3.9	2	12.5	1	3.0	3	6.4	0	0
c) Feature	74	47.7	6	37.5	13	39.4	18	38.3	37	62.7
d) Letter to the Editor	20	12.9	2	12.5	4	12.1	11	23.4	3	5.1
e)Advertisement	1	.6	0	0	0	0	1	2.1	0	0
3. Author										
a) Journalist	122	78.7	11	68.8	27	81.8	32	68.1	52	88.1
b) Reader	21	13.5	2	12.5	5	15.2	11	23.4	3	5.1
c) Editor	6	3.9	2	12.5	1	3.0	3	6.4	0	0
d) Other	1	.6	0	0	0	0	1	2.1	0	0
e) Unspecified	5	3.2	1	6.3	0	0	0	0	4	6.8

Table 3 – Frequency of Sources Used by Article

	Overall (1970-1990)		Interval A (1970-1974)		Interval B (1975-1979)		Interval C (1980-1984)		Interval D (1985-1989)	
Number of Sources	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	65	41.9	5	31.3	13	39.4	24	51.1	23	39.0
2	29	18.7	2	12.5	8	24.2	8	17.0	11	18.6
3	14	9.0	2	12.5	0	0	5	10.6	7	11.9
4	11	7.1	1	6.3	3	9.1	0	0	7	11.9
5	8	5.2	0	0	2	6.1	1	2.1	4	6.8
6	8	5.2	0	0	3	9.1	3	6.4	2	3.4
7 or more	20	12.9	5	31.4	4	12.0	6	12.7	5	8.5

Table 4 – Characteristics of News Source Types

	Overall (1970-1990)		Interval A (1970-1974)		Interval B (1975-1979)		Interval C (1980-1984)		Interval D (1985-1989)	
Source Type	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Journalist	26	16.8	7	43.8	3	9.1	7	14.9	9	15.3
2. Government	79	51.0	7	43.8	16	48.5	23	48.9	33	55.9
a) Public Administration	36	23.2	3	18.1	9	27.3	13	27.7	11	19.6
b) Representatives of the CJS	49	31.6	3	18.8	8	24.2	16	34.0	22	37.3
c) Other Government Agencies	14	9.0	2	12.5	4	12.1	3	6.4	5	8.5
d) Politicians	10	6.5	1	6.3	2	6.1	1	2.1	6	10.2
3. Private Sector	76	49.0	9	56.3	22	66.7	21	44.7	24	40.7
a) Corporations	8	5.2	0	0	3	9.1	2	4.3	3	5.1
b) Occupational Associations	10	6.5	3	18.8	2	6.1	4	8.5	1	1.7
c) Community Organizations	36	23.2	5	31.3	7	21.2	10	21.3	14	23.7
d) Academics	20	12.9	5	31.3	1	3.0	6	12.8	8	13.6
e) Health Professionals	36	23.2	2	12.5	11	33.3	9	19.1	14	23.7
f) Media	8	5.2	2	12.5	4	12.1	2	4.3	0	0
4. Personal Accounts	70	45.2	7	43.8	15	45.5	23	48.9	25	42.4
a) Victim	28	18.1	4	25.0	7	21.2	8	17.0	9	15.3
b) Witness	2	1.3	1	6.3	0	0	0	0	1	1.7
c)Accused or Offender	16	10.3	1	6.3	3	9.1	3	6.4	9	15.3
d) Family/Friend of Victim	8	5.2	0	0	1	3.0	2	4.3	5	8.5
e) Family/Friend of Accused	3	1.9	0	0	0	0	2	4.3	1	1.7
f) Citizen Opinion	18	11.6	2	12.5	4	12.1	9	19.1	3	5.1
5. Unspecified	4	2.6	1	6.3	2	6.1	0	0	1	1.7

Table 5 – Characteristics of Gendered Narrative

	Overall (1970-1990)		Interval A (1970-1974)		Interval B (1975-1979)		Interval C (1980-1984)		Interval D (1985-1989)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Type of Danger										
a) Intimate	97	62.6	9	56.3	21	63.6	31	63.8	37	62.7
b) Stranger	36	23.2	3	18.8	5	15.2	11	23.4	17	28.2
c) Not Mentioned	22	14.2	4	25.0	7	21.1	6	12.8	5	8.5
2. Sexual Danger										
a) Not Present	76	49.0	6	37.5	17	51.5	21	44.7	32	54.2
b) Present	79	51.0	10	62.5	16	48.5	26	55.3	27	45.8
3. Fear for Others										
a) Not Present	97	62.6	11	68.8	21	63.6	33	70.2	32	54.2
b) Present	58	37.4	5	31.3	12	36.4	14	29.8	27	45.8
4. Sexual Inequality										
a) Not Present	121	78.1	10	62.5	22	66.7	38	80.9	51	86.4
b) Present	34	21.9	6	37.5	11	33.3	9	19.1	8	13.6

Table 6 – Frequency of Fear-Related Variables

	Overall (1970-1990)		Interval A (1970-1974)		Interval B (1975-1979)		Interval C (1980-1984)		Interval D (1985-1989)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Causal Narrative										
a) Not Present	77	49.7	3	18.8	8	24.2	24	51.1	42	71.2
b) Present	78	50.3	13	81.3	25	75.8	23	48.9	17	28.8
2. Solution Narrative										
a) Not Present	41	26.5	5	31.3	3	9.1	11	23.4	22	37.3
b) Present	114	73.5	11	68.8	30	90.9	36	76.6	37	62.7
3. Random Narrative										
a) Not Present	97	62.6	9	56.3	21	63.6	30	63.8	37	62.7
b) Present	36	23.2	3	18.8	5	15.2	11	23.4	17	28.8
c) Not mentioned	22	14.2	4	25.0	7	21.2	6	12.8	5	8.5
4.Sensational Articles										
a) Not Present	104	67.1	9	56.3	25	75.8	33	70.2	37	62.7
b) Present	51	32.9	7	43.8	8	24.2	14	29.8	22	37.3
5.Sensational Headlines										
a) Not Present	146	94.2	14	87.5	32	97.0	45	95.7	55	93.2
b) Present	9	5.8	2	12.5	1	3.0	2	4.3	4	6.8
6.Sensational Photographs										
a) Not Present	48	31.0	4	25.0	6	18.2	10	21.3	28	47.5
b) Present	29	18.7	3	18.8	4	12.1	12	25.5	10	16.9
7.Sensational Content										
a) Not Present	127	81.9	12	75.0	27	81.8	41	87.2	47	79.7
b) Present	28	18.1	4	25.0	6	18.2	6	12.8	12	20.3

Table 7 – Characteristics of Causes and Solutions

	Overall (1970-1990)		Interval A (1970-1974)		Interval B (1975-1979)		Interval C (1980-1984)		Interval D (1985-1989)	
1. Causes	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a) Ineffective Social & Legal Services	21	13.5	2	12.5	10	30.3	7	14.9	2	3.4
b) Home Life Deficiencies	21	13.5	4	25.0	6	18.2	5	10.6	6	10.2
c) Alcohol/Drug Abuse	8	5.2	1	6.3	4	12.1	1	2.1	2	3.4
d) Psychological Instability	16	10.3	2	12.5	4	12.1	3	6.4	7	11.9
e) Lack of Personal & Home Security	8	5.2	1	6.3	2	6.1	4	8.5	1	1.7
f) Sexual Inequality	17	11.0	3	18.8	6	18.2	7	14.9	1	1.7
g) Miscellaneous	6	3.9	2	12.5	1	3.0	1	2.1	2	3.4
2. Solutions										
a) Social & Legal Services	48	31.0	3	18.8	16	45.5	15	31.9	14	23.7
b) Family Life Improvements	8	5.2	2	12.5	3	9.1	1	2.1	2	3.4
c) Advocacy	22	14.2	2	12.5	6	18.2	7	14.9	7	11.9
d) Criminal Charges & Civil Suits	24	15.5	0	0	3	9.1	9	19.1	12	20.3
e) Psychological & Physical Aid	25	16.1	1	6.3	6	18.2	12	25.5	6	10.2
f) Sexual Equality Measures	4	2.6	0	0	2	6.1	2	4.3	0	0
g) Personal & Home Security	17	11.0	1	6.3	6	18.2	6	12.8	4	6.8
h) Miscellaneous	11	7.1	1	6.3	2	6.1	2	4.3	6	10.2

Table 8 – Quartile Distributions

Level Value	Level of Fear	All Messages	High 25%	Low 25%
4	Very High	0	0	0
3	High	19	19	0
2	Medium	40	20	0
1	Low	68	0	11
0	Very Low	28	0	28

Table 9 – Frequency of Fear-Related Variables in Quartiles

	Top Quartile		Lowest Quartile	
	N	%	N	%
1. Causal Narrative				
a) Not Present	31	79.5	6	15.4
b) Present	8	20.5	33	84.6
2. Solution Narrative				
a) Not Present	20	51.3	0	0
b) Present	19	48.7	39	100
3. Random Narrative				
a) Not Present	13	33.3	31	79.5
b) Present	22	56.4	1	2.6
c) Not mentioned	4	10.3	7	17.9
4.Sensational Articles				
a) Not Present	15	38.5	35	89.7
b) Present	24	61.5	4	10.3
5. Sensational Headlines				
a) Not Present	36	92.3	39	100
b) Present	3	7.7	0	0
6. Sensational Photographs				
a) Not Present	9	23.1	16	41.0
b) Present	16	41.0	2	5.1
7. Sensational Content				
a) Not Present	27	69	36	92
b) Present	12	31	3	8

Table 10 – Characteristics of Causal and Solution-Oriented Narrative in Quartiles

	Top Quartile		Lowest Quartile	
1. Causes	N	%	N	%
a) Ineffective Social & Legal Services	2	5.1	11	28.2
b) Home Life Deficiencies	0	0	11	28.2
c) Alcohol/Drug Abuse	0	0	1	2.6
d) Psychological Instability	3	7.7	4	10.3
e) Lack of Personal & Home Security	3	7.7	0	0
f) Sexual Inequality	0	0	9	23.1
g) Miscellaneous	1	2.6	4	10.3
2. Solutions				
a) Social & Legal Services	5	12.8	20	51.3
b) Family Life Improvements	1	2.6	3	7.7
c) Advocacy	3	7.7	7	17.9
d) Criminal Charges & Civil Suits	2	5.1	8	20.5
e) Psychological & Physical Aid	3	7.7	6	15.4
f) Sexual Equality Measures	1	2.6	2	5.1
g) Personal & Home Security	10	25.6	1	2.6
h) Miscellaneous	2	5.1	6	15.4

Table 11 – Frequency of Crime/Criminal Justice Topics by Quartile Distribution

	Top Quartile		Lowest Quartile	
Crime	N	%	N	%
a) Child Abuse	6	15.4	13	33.3
b) Sexual Crimes	14	35.9	13	33.3
c) Illicit Drug Abuse	2	5.1	0	0
d) Domestic Violence	0	0	6	15.4
e) Juvenile Delinquency	0	0	4	10.3
f) Burglary	3	7.7	0	0
g) Murder	8	20.5	1	2.6
h) Criminal Justice System	4	10.3	2	5.1
i) Other	2	5.1	0	0
Total	39	100	39	100

Table 12 – Characteristics of Gendered Narrative in Quartile Distribution

	Top Quartile		Lowest Quartile	
	N	%	N	%
1. Fear for Others				
a) Not Present	29	74.4	21	53.8
b) Present	10	25.6	18	46.2
2. Sexual Inequality				
a) Not Present	33	84.6	23	59.0
b) Present	6	15.4	16	41.0
3. Sexual Danger				
a) Not Present	17	43.6	20	51.3
b) Present	22	56.4	19	48.7

Table 13 – Characteristics of Crime Article by Quartile Distribution

	Top Quartile		Lowest Quartile	
	N	%	N	%
1. Crime Type				
a) Personal	34	87.2	37	94.9
b) Property	5	12.8	0	0
c) Not Mentioned	0	0	2	5.1
2. Article Format				
a) Regular Section	11	28.2	14	35.9
b) Editorial	1	2.6	2	5.1
c) Feature	20	51.3	16	41.0
d) Letter to the Editor	6	15.4	7	17.9
e) Advertisement	1	2.6	0	0
3. Author Type				
a) Journalist	30	76.9	29	74.4
b) Reader	7	17.9	7	17.9
c) Editor	1	2.6	2	5.1
d) Other	1	2.6	0	0
e) Unspecified	0	0	1	2.6

Table 14 – Characteristics of News Source Types by Quartile

	Top Quartile		Lowest Quartile	
Source Type	N	%	N	%
1. Journalist	7	17.9	4	10.3
2. Government	19	48.7	20	51.3
a) Public Administration	9	23.1	7	17.9
b) Representatives of the CJS	14	35.9	11	28.2
c) Other Government Agencies	2	5.1	2	5.1
d) Politicians	3	7.7	4	10.3
3. Private Sector	18	46.2	20	51.3
a) Corporations	6	15.4	0	0
b) Occupational Associations	1	2.6	4	10.3
c) Community Organizations	9	23.1	9	23.1
d) Academics	6	15.4	2	5.1
e) Health Professionals	9	23.1	9	23.1
f) Media	1	2.6	4	10.3
4. Personal Accounts	20	51.3	17	43.6
a) Victim	6	15.4	4	10.3
b) Witness	1	2.6	0	0
c) Accused/Offender	6	15.4	3	7.7
d) Family/Friend of Victim	2	5.1	2	5.1
e) Family/Friend of Accused	1	2.6	1	2.6
f) Citizen Opinion	5	12.8	7	17.9
5. Unspecified	1	2.6	2	5.1

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