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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: AN ANALYSIS
OF PRESS IMAGES OF CRIME AND JUSTICE

by

Brian James Fair

B.A., Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. 1978

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF ARTS (CRIMINOLOGY)

in the Department

of

Criminology

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The Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System:

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this thesis is to conduct a content analysis of crime and justice news in the printed media.

Underlying this analysis is the premise that crime news provides the public with information relating to the legal ramifications of deviant behavior. Such information is seen to illustrate the extent to which the printed media communicate deterrent messages to the public.

A conceptual analysis of the role that perception has in relation to deterrence theory serves to exemplify the importance that crime information, as portrayed by the press, may have in influencing one's perceptions of the consequences for criminal behavior. Within this context, deterrence theory is used to develop a perspective from which to assess crime and justice news.

A review of the literature reveals the extent to which crime news has previously been examined. Studies fall into two categories: those indexing the total volume of crime news reported on a daily basis, and those comparing crime news to measures of official crime. Findings from these studies indicate a relatively low proportion of total news space to be devoted to crime. More specifically, crime news is seen to overemphasize crimes of violence, and to be unrepresentative of less serious crime. Little research was found to be directed towards the investigation of the portrayed effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system.

The methodology employed in the present study, is a content analysis of the press coverage given to crime and justice news in the Vancouver Sun for a period of one year (January 1 - December 31, 1980).

The findings, in part, are comparable to those of related research efforts. Although the press portray the police to be very effective at apprehending offenders, they generally neglect to report other forms of legal processing. In this sense, press crime information is seen to provide the public with little information regarding the legal consequences of criminal behavior. The discussion concludes with a consideration of some of the implications which this research has for the study of mass media crime news.

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DEDICATION

To my mother

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I. INTRODUCTION

Our system of criminal justice is predicated upon the assumed deterrability of criminal behavior. However, the vast body of deterrence research is equivocal with respect to many key issues. One common analytic approach to these issues has been to make centrally problematic the "subjective" rather than upon the "objective" reality of crime. That is, attention has frequently focused upon the "subjective" nature of decisions to commit or abstain from crime rather than external "objective" criteria. Such approaches have been concerned with the interaction between the degree of perceived certainty and severity of punishment and the perceived risk of punishment.

However, despite increasing criminological interest in the subjective aspects of deterrence processes, relatively little research has been centered on the source of knowledge of legal sanctions.

This is unfortunate since an adequate understanding of the dynamics of deterrence processes necessitates a comprehensive examination of images of legal penalties to which societal members are exposed. One obvious and important source which urgently requires consideration in this regard is the printed

media.¹ It has been generally shown that the printed media provide the public with information relating to the legal ramifications of deviant behavior. Thus, it can be argued that news information about police arrests and criminal trials may significantly influence conceptions of crime and thus the effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

This thesis examines the nature and scope of crime news reported by the printed media. More specifically, in the context of deterrence theory, it investigates the extent to which legal sanctions and apprehension successes are reported by the printed media. Quite obviously, the content analytic procedures utilized in this study do not permit any direct test of the deterrent effects of this information. They do, however, bring data to bear upon questions which are logically prior to those which relate to such effects. It should be made clear at the outset that underlying this study is the assumption that media play influential roles in the development of public conceptions of crime and justice.

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter II examines the role of perception in deterrence theory. To illustrate the importance of this perspective, an in-depth discussion of deterrence, its communicative function, and the printed media's portrayal of legal sanctions is presented.

¹Printed media is defined and referred to in this thesis as that media source which expressly publishes news information in a newspaper.

Chapter III will examine the body of empirical literature which expressly analyzes crime as it is portrayed by the press. The studies conducted in this area are divided into two types: (1) Research which indexes the total volume of crime news reported daily. And (2) research which compares press images of crime to the profiles provided by police and other official agency data. The major criticisms characteristic to each type of study are also discussed.

Chapter IV outlines the research design and methodology utilized in this study. Special attention is devoted to content analysis as a data collection procedure. The reasons for adopting this particular methodology are made evident in a detailed account of this procedure's strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter V will present the findings of a one year content analysis of the Vancouver Sun's portrayal of crime and justice. Three sections are identified and analyzed. Each section is assessed in relation to the extent to which the content directly conveys the problem of crime, and the systems attempt to exert effective social control.

Chapter VI promotes a summary of the findings of this study and presents some observations regarding both the empirical limitations and the possible implications of research of this type.

II. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

It can be argued that the decision to engage in criminal behavior rests, in large part, on perceptions of the consequences of that behavior. Underlying this argument is the assumption that,

Man constructs his own reality. And with the help of others, he creates a social world. The construction of his world is related to the knowledge man develops, the ideas to which he is exposed, and the manner in which he selects and interprets information to fit the world he is shaping. Man behaves then, in reference to his conception of reality (Quinney, 1970:270).

Attention has for too long only been given to that knowledge which is thought to reflect some "objective reality".¹ However, people construct and negotiate images of reality, and any subsequent reactions to that reality are the result of such perceptions.² Moreover, the consequences which result from those actions may to some degree impact upon those "objective" realities.

¹Objective reality will be regarded as those existing structural facts that are outside and independent of personal feelings. Subjective reality on the other hand will relate to those personally constructed conceptions which develop within one's mind and are subject to perceptual change (Henshel and Silverman, 1975).

²For the purpose of this chapter, perception will be defined simply as the way in which people consciously recognize and give meaning to objects and conditions in their environment (Quinney, 1970; Henshel and Silverman, 1975).

Perceptions of crime and justice significantly shape actions with respect to criminal laws (Sutherland, 1939). Decisions and actions people must make when confronted with a deviant situation, are in part, influenced by their perception of the likely enforcement and administration of law. In this context, the manner in which people construct "social reality" impacts decisions to proceed or abstain from committing an offence.

Conceptions of deviant behavior are based on the information to which one is exposed. In contemporary society such information is likely to be of vicarious origin (Meyer, 1976).

Attitudes to crime and criminals then vary, not so much in terms of the intrinsic nature of the criminal act, but in terms of the likelihood of the act being an established part of the observer's own social world. Crime is in the last analysis what the other person does. What I do, if it is against the law, is susceptible to redefinition through rationalization. Even if the observer is unlikely to commit the particular crime in question, his attitude to it will be conditioned by a degree of modification which may result in either a lenient tolerance or a punitive rejection, depending upon how far the crime threatens the observer, or the group to which they belong (Morris, 1966:33-34).

In this sense, criminal conceptions are continually being reconstructed according to one's interpretation and understanding of the given information.

The Deterrence Concept

Empirical investigations of legal sanctions and deterrence have traditionally compared official crime rates to the "objective" properties of legal punishments (i.e., the relation between the number of arrests or convictions for a particular offense to the number of offences reported to the police). The essential weakness of these studies is the failure to recognize the subjective nature of the deterrence process---that is that deterrence is more a state of mind than an "objective property", and that "the immediate determinate of criminal behavior is the perceived risk and severity of punishment rather than the actual risk and severity" (Geerkin and Gove, 1975:499). As Henshel and Carney point out, [if a person]

...holds no cognition relative to the punitive sanction (i.e., it has not been heard of, believed in or felt applicable), then the objective existence of sanctions with specified levels of severity, certainty and swiftness is of no consequence---deterrence in this instance cannot exist for this person, but not because deterrence does not exist (Henshel and Carey, 1975:57).

Deterrence research, then, must be more than simply an examination of the actions of legal agencies and the behavior of official crime rates. "Objective properties" do not deter by themselves. Such outcomes are dependent upon the manner in which they are perceived by the general audience (Erickson et. al., 1977):

Until recently, there have been relatively few studies conducted with the explicit intention of examining the link

between the "objective" and "subjective" properties of legal punishment (Andenaes, 1975; Gibbs, 1975; Parker and Grasmick, 1979; Teevan, 1976; Baily and Lott, 1976; Jensen, 1969; Jensen et al. 1978). The results of these studies, however, remain inconclusive and provide little substantive evidence either supporting or disproving the relationship between objective and subjective properties of punishment.

In general, it is argued that legal penalties enhance moral influence by educating the public about social notions of right and wrong. As indicated by Zimring and Hawkins (1973:78), "punishment is a ritualistic device designed to influence persons by intimating symbolically society's moral condemnation, and penal provisions may be seen as symbolizing cherished values". From this perspective, the threat of punishment through legal sanctions has an educative function. It serves to develop perceptions of the legal consequences of criminality. Any perceived association between socially forbidden behavior and unpleasant consequences may lead people to regard the condemned behavior as bad. The belief that the state will punish those who contravene laws, reinforces the illegality of these acts (Zimring and Hawkins, 1973).

In this way the threat of punishment can also be said to reinforce the ability of the legal institution to maintain order. If, however, prevailing imagery suggests an impotent system of social control then people may not feel threatened by any form of legal punishment. One could go so far as to argue

that any form of portrayed impunity could very well affect the respect that people have for a given system of justice. In this sense, then, it seems only reasonable that most people who continually watch criminals set free will feel deceived. They feel this way because when someone escapes from justice "every member of the community feels he was wronged" (Alexander and Staub, 1953:213). Criminals who go unpunished issue a direct challenge to authority to maintain a sense of justice. Consequently, the validity of the criminal justice system is based on its ability to demonstrate that criminal behavior will not be tolerated and that offenders will face punitive consequences.

Deterrence as a communication process

Almost three decades ago Ball (1955:351) stated that "the deterrent effect of the law obviously depends upon the individuals knowledge of the law and the punishment prescribed...the same is the case with respect to particular penalties". His observation, in this regard, may be interpreted as emphasizing the extent to which deterrence theories are theories of a communication process.

By considering deterrence as a communication mechanism, one can highlight the informational processes which nurture perception of crime. It is in this sense that one can begin to determine those distinctive characteristics which govern the

effectiveness of a deterrent message.

Consider first the basic composition of a system of deterrence. A successful deterrent message must inform the potential offender of a high probability of detection, as well as conviction for committing a criminal act. It must also convey the severity of the penalty if it is to deter criminal action. The message must be conveyed in a way that is clear and understandable to its audience. Consequently, "the success of any deterrence process will be determined by the degree to which this message is successfully transmitted to the population of potential offenders" (Geerkin and Gove, 1975:499). In other words, the individual must perceive the message in the context that the original communicator meant it to be conveyed.

Deterrent messages can be divided into two categories: messages communicated at a formal level of interaction and messages communicated at an informal level of interaction. At the formal level, official agencies disseminate information about the existing legal risks and predefined legal sanctions that will be encountered if the codified rules or laws are broken. At the informal level, messages are transmitted through interpersonal communication. Information received at this level underlies attitudes and values that develop through daily living experiences. This is not to say that formal and informal levels of communication work independently of one another, but rather that they are interconnected and thus interdependent. Katz (1957) describes this combination of messages as a "two-step"

flow of communication. Messages about crime, in this sense, may be communicated by the media to informal and influential group leaders, and then from those leaders to other people with whom they have contact. Media conceptions and presentations about crime may be mediated by family and friends before they have any type of influence on the individual.

This means that legal threats may be issued and received in communication environments characterized by high levels of contradictory information. The communication of legal threats is "analogous to the advertising function in that it must compete for attention, must convey information, and must, if it is to serve its purpose, persuade" (Zimring and Hawkins, 1973:156).

According to Andenaes (1975:355), people develop perceptions of the certainty and severity of punishment from "knowledge about crimes which have and have not been solved..." and that "most people probably get their knowledge through the reporting of criminal cases in the news media". However there is an implied assumption that people unconsciously determine the percentage of reported unsolved crimes to those crimes which have ended in arrest and/or conviction. Yet Andenaes provides no evidence to indicate that crime news is even portrayed in this fashion. What he does indicate through an examination of Uniform Crime Reports, is that of the one in three burglaries reported to the police, only "about twenty percent of the reported burglaries are cleared by arrest, and that for adult offenders about half of the arrest's lead to conviction" (Andenaes,

1975:355).

However, except for the few times a year that uniform crime reports are summarized and reported in the newspapers, the average person does not have uniform crime information readily at his or her disposal (Jones, 1976). Furthermore, most people would not likely be concerned with average risks over and above the risk he or she faces. In other words, people generally tend to set themselves outside the "normal" or "average" risk of apprehension when confronted with an illegal situation. Besides, what may be perceived to be a risk of punishment for one person, will not necessarily be considered applicable to the person committing the crime.³

The fact still remains, however, that people may derive their knowledge about crime and justice from the media. Now we recognize that prior experiences, values, attitudes, goals, and expectations will influence our perception of a particular deviant behavior. However, we cannot begin to understand the potential effect that deterrent messages may have on people, until we analyze the type of crime news information that is currently being made available for public consumption. It is precisely this form of information that this thesis will empirically investigate. By examining information of this nature, it is possible to determine those discrepancies which

³It would seem plausible to assume that the way in which one perceives a particular deviant behavior, may be indicative of whether or not he himself will be persuaded by a deterrent message which is contrary to the ratification of another's behavior.

may lead to distorted conceptions of the criminal justice system, and in turn, the possible deterribility of criminal behavior.*

Although there is no necessary relation between publicity about prosecution of criminals and the actual probability of apprehension, there are four general "stimuli" which may condition an audience's perception of legal threats. First, the publicity about the apprehension and conviction of criminals allows the public to indirectly observe legal punishment administered to those individuals who allegedly break the law. Press reports on specific crimes, such as drug distribution or prostitution, indirectly provide the public with insight as to the ability of the criminal justice system to prosecute offenders. Second, publicity about new enforcement methods inform the public regarding the determination of criminal justice system officials to develop new methods of detecting crime, and in essence, maintain law and order. An example of this would be the instigation of computer technology to provide a more efficient method of dealing with crime. A third stimuli is the visibility of police enforcement. Witnessing or hearing (by word of mouth) accounts of police methods of dealing with

*The reason for analyzing the printed media, complies with the fact that the press publish a high percentage of existing crime news available for public consumption (Graber, 1980). Therefore as a prominent source of crime information, consideration must be given to those newspaper reports which continually exemplify the strengths or weaknesses of the criminal justice system. Reports which may conceivably form the basis of one's conceptions of crime and justice.

crime may enhance the credibility of legal threats. Finally, direct personal encounters with the criminal justice system can contribute to the development of perceptions consistent with the goals of those charged with the responsibility of crime control.

Most citizens, however, have had little personal experience with the criminal justice system, and rely heavily on secondary sources of information for their impressions of criminal law enforcement (Andenaes, 1966; Parker and Grasmick, 1979; Zimring and Hawkins, 1973). Hence, "in an area where the crime rate is low and examples of undetected crime are not widely known, the facade of enforcement may be able to establish permanent impressions of threat credibility in excess of actual clearance rates " (Zimring and Hawkins, 1973:166).

The media as a source of deterrence information

Although the nature and magnitude of media effects upon perception and behavior remain unresolved issues, it has been persuasively argued that media reports of crime plays a significant role in facilitating the construction of criminal conceptions (Hovland, Janis and Kelly, 1964; Quinney, 1970). Given this understanding, and the central role that perception plays in human decision making, it becomes necessary to examine the style and substance of crime imagery in mass media.

Yet it is not fully understood as to how this information portrays the routine nature of the criminal justice system.

Consequently, those conceptions that are constructed on the basis of media reports, may not necessarily reflect the "reality" of crime or social control. They may reflect instead the media's varying and divergent representation of events which have been defined as newsworthy.

Thus the frequently heard charge that the media are "preoccupied" with sensational types of crime, encourages the conclusion that the coverage of crime in the media is largely a distortion of the general performance of the criminal justice system. In this sense, facts about crime found in the media limit rather than educate the public (Sherizan, 1978).

Summary

This chapter has attempted to develop a perspective from which to analyze press images of crime and justice. A discussion of the role of perception in deterrence theory serves to exemplify this perspective. More specifically, an in-depth discussion of deterrence, its communication function, and the printed media's portrayal of legal sanctions were presented.

Central to this examination was the important role that information processes such as the printed media have in relaying threats of punishment to potential offenders. From this examination, information was seen to be an important component in the construction of criminal conceptions, and in turn, an influential factor in decisions and actions.

The perspective developed in this chapter, is intended to demonstrate the interrelationship between deterrent messages and the printed media.

In the next chapter the body of research literature focusing on crime and the media is examined.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In chapter II, it was argued that there is value in the conceptualization of deterrence processes as communication processes. The present chapter pursues this theme through an examination of the empirical research relating to the portrayal of crime information in the press.¹ These studies can be divided into two distinct categories. One category incorporates those attempts to determine the extent to which crime news is reported in the newspaper. Such investigations have been concerned with indexing the total volume of crime news that is reported daily. Generally, these types of studies have either measured the proportion of total news space devoted to crime articles, or the proportion of total news items concerned with crime. The second body of research, in a very general sense, compares reported crime news to the actual amount of crime officially reported by the police. Studies in this category attempt to document the lack of association between the amount of crime news reported and the actual amount of crime occurring. More specifically, they examine the image that crime news portrays, by questioning the newspaper's accuracy in depicting crime.

¹That body of literature which concerns itself with the portrayal of violence and aggression on television and its popular hypothesized effects will not be examined in this review. There is a lengthy body of literature which deals with questions of this nature and is thoroughly dealt with by Kitross and Harwood (1970), and Gillmor (1966).

The research technique employed by the following studies is that of content analysis. This form of analysis allows the researcher to study and analyze crime news in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring certain message variables. The strengths and weaknesses associated with this type of methodology will be discussed in the next chapter. At this stage it is sufficient to recognize content analysis as the means by which data for the following studies were collected.

Three principle criticisms characteristic to this form of research will be discussed subsequent to the review of literature. The criticisms raised will reflect those problems related to the selection of crime news, the limitations of police generated information, and the use of official crime statistics.

Amount of crime news

An early study by Harris (1932) content analyzed three Minneapolis newspapers over three time periods (1890, 1904-5, 1921) with the intention of examining the amount of crime that was reported during each time period. By employing column inches as a means of measurement, Harris found crime to account for approximately 4% of total news space. Local crime was found to account for approximately half of the reported crime news. What is interesting to note here is that local crime news space

compared to total reading material, was seen to decrease over the same period of time.

The low percentage of news space allocated to crime was subsequently reported by several similar studies. Stempl (1962), for instance, found almost identical results to those of Harris (1932). His sample of Michigan newspapers revealed approximately 5% of their available news space was devoted to criminal events.

In a similar fashion, Otto's (1962) research of violent news revealed 5% of the content of ten major dailies sampled, to focus on news involving crime incidents.

More recently, this form of "volume crime news indexing" was elaborated by Ryan and Owen (1976). An examination of the coverage given to nine social issues enabled the researchers to determine the amount of space generally devoted to crime. Eight daily metropolitan newspapers were analyzed, and crime news was revealed to be the most prominent social issue, accounting for approximately 3% of the total newspace.

However, not all crime news research has found such consistently low percentages of reported crime. Deutschman (1959), for example, coded crime stories under several different categories, and found a thirty day sample of New York and Ohio daily newspapers to devote 10 to 15% of their available newspace to crime. Moreover, he found the New York newspapers to show considerable variability in their respective coverage of crime.

But such diversity in crime news reporting is not surprising. Newspapers need to maintain their readers interests,

and according to Rarick and Hartman (1966), competition among rival newspapers generally accounts for more space being allocated to crime news stories, disasters, and human interest stories. Geographical differences may also account for news variability. Cohen's (1975) content analysis of major newspapers in Detroit and Atlanta, for instance, revealed the city of Detroit (which has a much higher crime rate than Atlanta), to devote considerably more newspaper space to crime. Therefore, the considerably high percentage of crime reporting found by Deutschman, and the lower percentages of crime news found by other studies, is understandable.

What the findings of these early studies provide, then, is an indication as to the approximate percentage (5 to 15%) of newspace that a typical metropolitan newspaper will devote to the phenomenon of crime. They do not, however, provide information as to the types of offences reported, or the characteristics of victims or offenders or the portrayal of criminal justice effectiveness.

Reported crime news versus actual crime

Research providing more detailed accounts of newspaper crime coverage has attempted to determine the accuracy of crime reports as well as the extent to which the press can presumably affect the development of social problems---as is popularly believed (Garafalo, 1981; Hall et. al., 1978). The majority of

such studies suggests substantial discrepancies between official counts of criminal activity and press reports of crime.

In an early study conducted by Davis (1952), the incidence of actual crime rates was compared to the amount of crime reported by the press. Davis (1952) content analyzed crime news in four Colorado newspapers. A sample was taken from every sixth newspaper over a 31 month period. Public opinion about crime trends was also solicited, in an effort to determine whether opinions about crime reflected trends in the amount of newspaper coverage, or variation in the actual Colorado crime rates. Davis concluded that there was no relationship between the amount of crime news reported by the press, and the amount of crime occurring in the state.

The frequency and distribution of crime news were also investigated by Antunes and Hurely (1977). They hypothesized that "the criteria of newsworthiness will result in a distribution of news stories which is inversely related to the distribution of crimes known to the police" (Antunes and Hurely, 1977:758). To test their hypothesis, two metropolitan newspapers were content analyzed for crime news and compared to official crime reports corresponding to the same time period.

Their analysis indicated negative correlations between crimes known to the police and crimes reported by the press. Consequently, they concluded "that generalizations about crime in the community based on press reports would be opposite of the picture of local crime based on crimes reported to the police"

(Antunes and Hurely, 1977:759).

In a comparable but more specific analysis, Humphries (1981) drew similar conclusions. This research focused upon the coverage of "serious crime" and changes in the style and amount of coverage during the post war period. A core sample of New York crime stories were content analyzed for the years 1951 and 1968. The analysis confirmed that 45% of crime stories in both samples were devoted to serious crime. Furthermore, there was an increase over time of those crime stories reporting lethal violence. "Thus, the news about serious crime portrays it as increasingly lethal in the postwar period" (Humphries, 1981:196). According to Humphries, however, police statistics for the same years, suggested that the newspaper distorted the character and incidence of serious crime. "In both 1951 and 1968, serious crime represented only about 20% of the offences known to the police, and violent and lethal crime a still smaller proportion" (Humphries, 1981:196). Humphries' findings of the inaccuracy of crime reporting and the bias with which the press report crime news, helps support the contention that the media characteristically overestimate crime (Graber, 1980; Humphries, 1981).

In another study conducted by Roshier (1973), attempts were made to link crime content in the press to public perceptions of crime. Roshier content analyzed all of the crime news reported in three daily newspapers during one month periods in 1938, 1955, and 1967. A postal questionnaire was also distributed to a

random sample of Newcastle citizens. This measure was used to determine the relation between public perceptions of crime and those variables measured in the content analysis. Finally, for comparative purposes, official statistics were used to assess the relation that both questionnaire responses and content analysis findings had with official crime rates.

Roshier's findings were supportive of earlier studies. Similar to Davis (1952), Roshier not only found crime news to account for a small proportion of available news space, but he also found reporting of crime to be inconsistent with official rates of crime.

Further crime news research was conducted by Hauge (1965). Here again, an attempt was made to describe the way in which the press specifically cover criminal activity. Four Scandinavian newspapers were analyzed over a one month period. The results were then compared to those crimes reported to the police and dealt with by the courts over the same time period.

Analysis of the data revealed a clear over representation of serious crimes---particularly crimes of violence. Furthermore, there was also an indication that both older and higher social status individuals were over represented as offenders. Such findings led Hauge to conclude that the newspapers ignore minor crimes in spite of the fact that they predominate at both the police stage and trial stage.

Ditton and Duffy (1983) found similar results. Their analysis of six Scottish newspapers over a one month period

attempted to assess whether or not the newspaper coverage was selective in reporting crime. Their findings were consistent with previous research. Not only were crimes of violence over-represented, but crime in general was found to account for 6.5% of available newspace. Moreover, they found that the papers over reported crimes involving sex. This finding is inconsistent with those of North American researchers (Cumberbatch and Beardsworth, 1976). The investigators account for this unusual finding by suggesting that it may reflect Scottish cultural factors.

In a study conducted by Terrance Jones (1976), the research question was asked again as to the extent to which the press monitor crime in a large metropolitan area. Jones randomly sampled dailies from two major St Louis newspapers over a one year period and content analyzed those stories which dealt strictly with crime occurrences. Investigation or trial stories were excluded from the analysis. A comparison was then made between the amount of press coverage given to specific crimes, and the "actual incidence" of those crimes according to Uniform Crime Reports.

The results indicated that serious but infrequent violent crimes such as murder, robbery, and rape, were reported thirty five times more often than less serious crimes. Yet, "readers would be mistaken if they thought that the more attention given to murders (or any other major crime) in either St Louis newspaper, the more frequently that crime must be occurring in

the St Louis area" (Jones, 1976:243). Therefore, the results of this study confirm those earlier findings showing newspapers' distortion of the occurrence of criminal events (Davis, 1952; Roshier, 1973; Antunes and Hurely, 1977).

Generally speaking, relatively few studies actually attempt to systematically analyze the specific make up of crime news and the image that such news portrays to the public. Most of the foregoing studies have simply concerned themselves with either determining how much crime is presented in the press on a daily basis, or assessing the association between reported crime and the actual occurrence of that crime in society. There are two studies, however, which more comprehensively investigate the composition of crime news.

The first of these two studies was conducted by Sanford Sherizan in 1978. This research is based on a content analysis of crime information reported in four Colorado newspapers in 1975. The final edition of each daily paper was chosen over a sampled four month period.

Similar to results of earlier research, Sherizan found crimes reported in the newspaper to clearly over represent those same crimes found in either official statistics, or victimization surveys. Furthermore, the majority of the offences reported were serious crimes. Consequently, Sherizan adopted the view of earlier researchers: the more prevalent the crime, the less likely it would be reported by the press. It is not surprising, then, that Sherizan's research revealed crime news

as primarily "dangerous", even though such incidents rarely occurred. "For an individual reader who absorbs this imagery, crime appears to be violent, probably rampant, out of control and likely to strike physically at any moment" (Sherizan, 1978:215).

According to Sherizan, press treatment of crime was likely to include reports of the crime incident itself, the arrest, capture, suspect follow-up, and any charges placed against the suspect. Suspects were seldom described in detail, and the victims were rarely identified. Little, if any mention at all, was made of the number of crimes solved or the number of offenders processed through the Criminal Justice System.

However, because of the high percentage of arrests reported, newspaper reports gave the impression that the police were doing a good job arresting criminals, "but nothing else was happening in the Criminal Justice System to back the police up and make the streets safe" (Sherizan, 1978:217).

Aside from analyzing the basic content of a given crime article, Sherizan also attempted to assess the "attentiveness" of crime articles in terms of the degree to which each is prominently featured. Both story length and location in the paper were used to index attentiveness. These measurements revealed that crime receives considerable attention by the press. Over 50% of crime articles in the sample appeared on the first three pages, with the majority of crime news appearing in the most important sections of the paper.

Perhaps the most detailed and comprehensive crime news study conducted thus far was undertaken recently by Doris Graber (1980). Here Graber analyzed four metropolitan newspapers and the broadcasts from five television news stations "over the period of one year, on a daily basis, to determine the precise nature of news coverage" (Graber, 1980:1). Furthermore, four separate panels of 196 respondents were utilized to assess the relationship between media crime information and the public's perceptions of this information.

Graber identified crime and justice news to include items about courts, crime statistics, terrorism, criminal justice reform, and specific crimes. The three newspapers examined showed uncharacteristically high percentages of crime news: 22 to 28% of available news space was found to be taken up by reports of crime. However, when the crime news was analyzed in detail, only 37% of the stories were found to account for specific crimes - a finding which could be considered supportive of earlier research.

Graber's analysis revealed street crimes to exceed all other types of crime reported. Violent and serious crimes, such as murder, rape, and robbery were found to account for approximately 46% of the specific crimes mentioned, while lesser crimes such as property theft and larceny accounted for less than 6% of specific crimes.

In a detailed account of these reported crimes, Graber found sex and racial distribution of offenders to be closely

associated with official arrest statistics. Press reports of offenders did, however, tend to over represent older and higher status persons.

Further analysis found the press to provide little information regarding postdispositional processes of the criminal justice system. Moreover, when such information was published, it was found to be an inaccurate depiction of reality. Further, little emphasis was placed upon the causes or remedies to crime problems. Generally, the crime article would simply mention the crime in brief accounts of the particular event.

Consequently, it was Graber's over-all contention that crime news portrays an image which threatens "a legitimate social system and its institutions", while providing very little evaluation or analytical information to help generate an informed public perspective.

Selection of crime news

A major factor which must be taken into consideration when evaluating the aforementioned studies is the fact that crime news is not a random selection of all available news. The press is very selective in reporting news (Cumberbatch and Beardsworth, 1976). The selective filtering process that news undergoes before reaching print, "presents the public with a small sample of crime events which are specifically selected for

publication on the basis of criteria which make them unusual and different from the preponderance of local street crime" (Antunes and Hurely, 1977:760).

Crime stories which are considered newsworthy generally feature shocking behavior or violence, prominent individuals who have committed crimes, or crimes which provide the reader with mystery and suspense (Brown, 1957). The editor of a newspaper, therefore, tries to estimate what will interest his readers by looking "for the presence in each event of certain elements which he believes to be interesting" (Bush, 1970:34). Consequently, crime stories presented to the community generally make for interesting reading, but they also make "the community seem much more dangerous than it really is, which may induce a number of deleterious citizen reaction" (Antunes and Hurely, 1977:760).

However, the effort made by the press to interest their readers in unusual happenings and at the same time inform them of the situation, is paradoxical. The dilemma is best described by Terrance Jones; "For to the extent that reporters are encouraged to find the unique, it will be more difficult for the reader to estimate the typical" (Jones, 1976:244).

Limitations of police generated information

Although crime reporters have several potential persons who can provide them with information, they are somewhat limited as to where crime information can be gathered, and the credibility that this information will be given. Thus the police have traditionally been the crime reporters' primary source of news (Graber, 1980; Cumberbatch and Beardsworth, 1976; Sherizan, 1978; Chibnall, 1977; Fishman, 1981). Unlike other fact sources, the police meet the reporters' need to obtain considerably objective, credible and cheap sources of information. "Facts" supplied by the police are, therefore, the basis upon which crime news is written. However, there are limitations to police generated information which should be identified.

First, crime information is usually supplied to reporters by lower ranking officers since they are most likely to arrive early at crime scenes (Chibnall, 1977). The information they provide customarily consists of the basic elements of the crime incident, the arrest, and any superficial preliminary information about the victims and offenders (Sherizan, 1978; Graber, 1980). Rarely does a crime story report on "the offender in court or in prison, except in the case of unique crimes, personages, or circumstances which make the case of interest" (Sherizan, 1978:213). To obtain post arrest information, the reporter must deal with the bureaucratic control of the police department. The procedure for releasing information at this

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stage of the process makes it very difficult for the reporter to obtain further facts on the incident in question (Fishman, 1981; Sherizan, 1978).

Hence, the police have what some call a "monopoly" on their relationship with reporters (Fishman, 1981). They are the ones who make crime occurrences available to the press, and in turn have the power to influence the creation and limitation of published criminal events (Fishman, 1981; Chibnall, 1977).

Crime news should therefore not be considered merely a reflection of some "objective reality", but rather a creation by others such that "...what passes for crime news is an ideological construct; that which is constructed out of the power of official versions of crime" (Sherizan, 1978:213).

Problems with official crime statistics

As indicated, comparisons of media presentations of crime with official police and court records have formed the basis for a number of studies. As Graber (1980) has argued, "Police data are the major source for media crime stories and thus are the standard by which the accuracy of media reporting must be judged" (Graber, 1980:38). However, the accuracy of police crime statistics is open to criticism and the results of those studies employing such statistics should be regarded with caution (Sellin and Wolfgang, 1964; Skogan, 1974).

It is well documented by social scientists that the volume and distribution of crime as portrayed by official crime statistics is not representative of the "actual" crime situation (Sellin and Wolfgang, 1964; Quinney, 1970; Skogan, 1974). Consequently, it is not necessary to recite all of the problems inherent to official crime statistics. However, in considering the feasibility of those media studies employing such measures, it is important to briefly mention some of the principle problems which characterize the use of such statistics.

For instance, the fact that many crimes are not reported to the police for one reason or another, suggests that there is an unknown proportion of reported crimes to the total number of crimes actually occurring (Jones, 1976; Quinney, 1970). Different crimes have different likelihoods of being reported to public authorities. Crimes occurring within families or among acquaintances for instance, are a good example of those offences which are characteristically under-reported (Skogan, 1974). Other offences more conspicuous to the public are more likely to be acted upon by the police, and thus receive official attention.

Officially recorded criminal events are therefore not necessarily the best instrument or device for measuring criminality. "Police statistics are shaped by citizens, who must classify and record them, and by bureaucracies which must store and retrieve them and live with their political consequences" (Skogan, 1974:29). Therefore, because some studies rely on

official crime data, while ignoring the "dark figure" of crime, their results may reflect a bias inherent in the use of what may be an inappropriate criterion of the actual amount of crime.

Summary

After examining the literature on newspaper presentations of crime, it becomes evident that studies have generally neglected to investigate the portrayal of the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. The relatively low proportion of total news space actually devoted to crime, has been well documented by early research (Harris, 1932; Deutschman, 1959; Cohen, 1975; Stempl, 1962; Ryan and Owen, 1976; Hauge, 1965). Furthermore, there is no question that newspaper coverage of crime is in some way biased. Research has conclusively shown an over-emphasis of crimes of violence, and a lack of association between the amount of crime news reported and the actual amount of crime occurring (Davis, 1952; Roshier, 1973; Jones, 1976; Humphries, 1981; Antunes and Hurely, 1977; Jaehnig et al., 1981). However as we have seen, only Sherizan (1978) and Graber (1980) make systematic attempts to specifically examine the extent to which the press depict the mechanics of the criminal justice process and its relative effectiveness in exerting social control.

According to Geerkin and Gove (1975), such a portrayal of effectiveness is essential to the fundamental function of a

system of deterrence. Threats of punishment communicated through crimes stories in the press may be one of a number of alternative sources of information which may or may not help facilitate the delivery of deterrence messages to the public. However, it is not fully understood whether the media actually communicate severe threats of punishment (which would begin to satisfy the basis of a deterrent concept), or whether the risk of punishment is being conveyed at all? Consequently, the manner in which the press portray the effectiveness of the criminal justice system may or may not detract from any deterrent message informing potential offenders of negative sanctions for violating the law. Yet, social scientists must have a rudimentary understanding of the way in which punishment and justice is communicated to the public in order to render such distinction comprehensible.

The following chapter will provide a detailed description of the research design and methodology utilized for collecting data in this study.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Analyzing the content of a given communication provides researchers with knowledge of the most "basic form of human interaction" (Holsti, 1969). It is with this understanding, that the research technique of content analysis was adopted to collect data for this study. By virtue of this technique, it was possible to systematically analyze those images of crime that are publicly expressed through the printed media. The systematic and objective identification of informational characteristics readily lends itself to strengthening those inferences made in regards to public awareness of criminal justice effectiveness. It is the purpose of the present chapter, therefore, to examine the technique of content analysis (its strengths and weaknesses) and to demonstrate how it was utilized as the major tool of inquiry in this thesis.

What should be made evident at this point, is that content analysis is an "unobtrusive" or "nonreactive" research technique which "was developed specifically for investigating any problem in which the content of communication serves a basis of inferences" (Holsti, 1969:2). Content analysis enables a researcher to sort through massive amounts of materials, while objectively and systematically selecting data for analysis (Berelson, 1954; Carney, 1972). Attention is focused on a fixed set of questions which produce countable results. Therefore,

because newspapers were chosen as the principle source of data information, content analysis was considered the most plausible technique for studying the press's portrayal of crime and justice.

Through time, the definition of content analysis has been both modified and elaborated in order to comply with the particular problem being analyzed (Berelson, 1954; Holsti, 1969). An examination of several varied definitions do, however, serve to identify a number of key characteristics most commonly used in defining content analysis. Consider the following definitions:

Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson, 1952:18).

We propose to use the terms content analysis and coding interchangeably to refer to the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of any symbolic behavior (Cartwright, 1953:424).

The term content analysis is used to mean the scientific analysis of communications messages....The method is broadly speaking the scientific method, and while being catholic in nature, it requires that the analysis be rigorous and systematic (Barcus, 1959:8).

Content analysis may be defined as referring to any technique a) for the classification of the sign-vehicles, b) which relies solely upon the judgements (which theoretically, may range from perceptual discriminations to sheer guesses) of an analyst or group of analysts as to which sign-vehicles fall into which categories, c) on the basis of explicitly formulated rules, d) provided that the analyst's judgements are regarded as the reports of a scientific observer (Janis, 1943:429).

The above definitions all reflect distinguishable characteristics which depict a basic definition of content

analysis. However, because the drawing of inferences is a major concern to the present research, we have decided to adopt the definition put forth by Carney (1972). His supposition stems from the logic that one must draw inferences from a communication in order to argue about its effects. Hence the definition:

Content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Carney, 1972:5).

Central to any given definition of content analysis are the requirements of objectivity, system, and generality. All three of these requirements serve to enhance the precise measurement of any given content. For instance, the requisite of objectivity demands that each step in the research process must conform to explicit rules and procedures (Berelson, 1954; Carney, 1972; Holsti, 1969). The rationale for this is to minimize the coder's subjective predispositions, and provide a true indication of the content of the material under analysis. Moreover, if the researchers procedure and criteria for selecting data cannot be clearly followed by other analysts to find similar conclusions, the researcher will fail to fulfill the requirement of reliability.

In the same respect, it is also necessary to be systematic when collecting data. Inclusion and exclusion of content is done according to consistently applied rules in order to eliminate the chances of collecting data which will only support the researcher's hypotheses. Categories must therefore be defined in

such a way that they can be consistently applied to data (Holsti, 1969).

Finally, the requirement of generality demands that findings have theoretical relevance. Results must take on meaning when compared to other documents or it is of little value (Bérelson, 1954; Holsti, 1969). According to Holsti (1969), "a datum about communication content is meaningless until it is related to at least one other datum. The link between these is represented by some form of theory. Thus all content analysis is concerned with comparison, the type of comparison being dictated by the investigator's theory" (Holsti, 1969:5).

The nature of the present research required a quantification procedure of content analysis which would measure the frequency of crime factors appearing in predefined categories.¹ Unlike qualitative analysis, which has a less formulized categorization than the relative frequency format of quantitative analysis, quantification facilitates the achievement of greater precision. (Berelson, 1954; Holsti, 1969; Carney, 1972).

Implicit in the procedure of content analysis, is an attempt to alleviate the discriminatory capacities of the analyst. The systematic recording of details, allows the analyst to determine what is emphasized and what is not only after all

¹This mode of assessment permits frequency counts to form the basis from which conclusions can be made, and inferences drawn. See Appendix

of the data have been coded. This serves to decrease any bias the coder may have when collecting data, and thus help to ensure some degree of validity. Moreover, because content analysis demands explicit systematic structure, anyone can verify the facts that were obtained, as well as the manner in which the analysis was conducted. This then serves to satisfy the requirements of a reliable procedure of analysis: "repeated measures with the same instrument on a given sample of data should yield similar results" (Holsti, 1969:135).

In order to utilize this form of analysis to its fullest capacity, however, it is important to appreciate some of its limitations and weaknesses. For instance, although the content analyst claims that the procedure is capable of achieving a high degree of objectivity, critics argue that complete objectivity is not possible, and, therefore validity is not anymore attainable by content analysis than by any other form of content inspection.

This of necessity raises the problem of reliability. In that "if research is to satisfy the requirement of objectivity, measures and procedures must be reliable; i.e., repeated measures with the same instrument on a given sample of data should yield similar results" (Holsti, 1969:135). To address this problem sufficiently, content analysis is dependent upon two kinds of consistency: "(1) consistency among analysts-that is, different coders should produce the same results when they apply the same set of categories to the same content; and

(2) consistency through time—that is, a single coder or group of coders should produce the same results when they apply the same set of categories to the same content but at different times" (Berelson, 1954:514).

Yet the question still remains as to whether someone else doing the counting would assign the same things to the same categories or units. This becomes most evident when one considers the inherent bias of the original researcher who had developed the procedure of content analysis in order to answer a subjectively formulated question. People do interpret or perceive information differently according to their given disposition (Quinney, 1970). Consequently, many critics argue that subjectivity is inevitable no matter what kind of precautions the researcher takes to reduce discriminatory or biased inclinations.

In this sense then, analysis can be only as 'objective' as the subject matter and the questions to be posed will permit. In practice, the best analysis of a given document is that analysis which is as rigorous as circumstances allow. The trick is to know just how much objectivity circumstances allow" (Carney, 1972:14).

The most common criticism directed towards content analysis, relates to validity. In this regard, it has been critically argued that there is in content analysis an inherent uncertainty relative to the coding procedures which are employed to categorize the content data.

At this point it should be noted, that inferences drawn from the technique of content analysis require corroboration by independent evidence (Holsti, 1969). Moreover, one must remember that the goal of content analysis is not so much to analyze the latent meanings of a document, as it is to "present a systematic and objective description of the attributes of communication" (Holsti, 1969:127). This is not to dispute the well debated contention that content analysis is limited to analyzing manifest content (surface meaning of the information). But rather, indicates that the nature of this technique is one of recording those details appearing in the data content. Anything beyond this, can be argued to be part of the interpretation and inference stage of the methodology.²

Data and methodology of the study

The research instrument adopted by this study, was formerly developed by Doris Graber (1980) in her study of crime in the press. Graber's intent to determine the precise nature of crime news coverage through content analysis produced a variety of complex coding designs, one of which was utilized to collect

²The question of whether or not content analysis is limited to analyzing manifest content rather than latent content is a contentious issue and is well debated. See Holsti (1969). However, for the purposes adopted in this thesis content analysis has been employed as a means to systematically and objectively describe those manifest attributes found in newspaper crime stories. Hence, it is only through interpretation and inference that we will analyze the latent meaning of the data collected.

data for the present investigation. Although there were a variety of changes and amendments made to meet the objectives of the present study, the basic coding format stayed the same.

To adequately assess the extent to which the printed media portray an effective criminal justice system, a one year content analysis of crime articles reported in the early edition of the Vancouver Sun was undertaken. During the one year period between January 1, 1980 to December 31, 1980, 2,027 crime stories were coded and analyzed according to Graber's (1980) coding scheme. Through content analysis an effort was made to determine the precise nature of press reported crime news supplied to the public. More specifically, this technique was used to investigate the extent to which legal sanctions and apprehension successes were reported by the printed media. Inferences could then be made as to the implications and consequences that the printed media have for public perceptions of crime and justice. It is fully understood that any inferences made here, should not be considered self-validating solely on the basis of messages drawn from the content data. Ultimately, methods would have to be developed which would directly test the inference itself, and subsequently provide corroborating evidence from independent non-content data.

For the purpose of the present study, "crime" was defined as any reported legal infraction, regardless of the stage of criminal law procedure. In this sense then, it was not necessary for a crime story to mention that legal probes resulted in

indictments. All crime stories reported to have been committed in North America were coded.

A clear distinction was made between routine crime stories (hard crime news) reporting a particular crime, and those editorials, letters to the editor and features which simply report on the crime phenomenon (non-hard crime news). Such a distinction was necessary to determine the precise nature of press reported crime.

The basic counting unit employed in this analysis was that of the single crime story. To permit an indepth analysis for each story, all hard crime news stories were coded on the basis of fifty five variables.³ Every itemized piece of information collected from these stories was systematically catalogued on coding sheets and then key punched. To ensure comprehensiveness, triple coding was permitted with respect to the following variables:

- a. the nature of the alleged crime
- b. the causes of crime
- c. motives triggering crime incidents
- d. criminals and victims occupation

Although all the crimes reported were coded, only twelve were selected to be presented in the findings. These twelve crimes were selected to conform with the catagorization procedures contained in those crimes utilized in the 1980 Canada Crime and Traffic Enforcement Statistics. The crimes chosen were

³See Appendix

thus representative of three levels of seriousness:

1. Serious
 - a. Murder
 - b. Manslaughter
 - c. Rape
 - d. Other sex offences
 - e. Aggravated assault
 - f. Other assault
2. Less serious
 - a. Robbery
 - b. Larceny
 - c. Breaking and entering
 - d. Motor vehicle theft
3. Least serious
 - a. Drug offences
 - b. Gambling

The dimensions of the itemized coding scheme permitted all items of crime news to be specifically categorized according to three identifiable areas. First, those general characteristics surrounding crime incidents and the criminals reported sex, age, race, and occupation, were coded to illustrate the extent to which general characteristics made up crime stories. Second, those characteristics which specifically indicate the implied effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system were examined. These characteristics were investigated through an analysis of the following areas:

1. the location of the crime reported by the press
2. the type of crimes most often reported
3. a comparative frequency of mention of index crimes by Canada crime statistics and the Vancouver Sun
4. a comparative frequency of apprehension success of index crimes by Canada crime statistics and the Vancouver Sun
5. reported prison sentences
6. performance ratings for crime fighting
7. discussions of prison sentences

The characteristics coded for each of these areas, were considered to be reflective of the extent to which the press portray images of deterrence.

Finally, the preferential coverage given to those crime stories conveying apprehension success or legal sanctions was considered. In so doing, an attempt was made to determine the emphasis that the press gives to those crime stories portraying an effective criminal justice system.

Frequency distributions were run on the fifty five coded variables, which in turn provided explicit quantitative information as to the newspapers portrayal of crime. By constructing frequency distributions, percentage computations were calculated for those crime variables belonging to the three areas of investigation. These variables were then presented in the form of percentages indicating the extent to which the Vancouver Sun portrays crime and the criminal justice system.

The fact that the Sun used six columns of news space on its newspaper pages, allowed for headline size and story length to be measured by multiplying column width and length in inches. Picture size on the other hand, was simply calculated by multiplying width in inches by length in inches. This form of measurement analysis provided the study with an illustration of the preferential news display given to various crime stories.

Canada official crime statistics were utilized to facilitate comparisons between press illustrations of crime and official reports of crime. Attention was focused on those stories highlighting attributes about criminals, the crime, and any subsequent police and court action. The comparison between the two data bases provided the opportunity to make explicit quantitative assessments as to the degree in which the press portray the criminal justice system as effectively dealing with crime at the pre-trial level.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology and research design utilized in this study. An examination of several definitions of content analysis revealed some important characteristics which are viewed as centrally relevant to this procedure. Specifically, the precise measurement of content data may be said to derive from the objective systematic and generalizable approach of content analysis.

A review of the strengths and weaknesses of this form of analysis reveals the degree to which the findings of this study may be considered a valid measure of press images of crime and justice. Moreover, it becomes apparent that the systematic and objective identification of informational characteristics, lends itself to strengthening the inferences made in regards to public awareness of criminal justice effectiveness.

The reliability for the coding methods adopted, hopefully satisfy the requirements of consistent objective measures and procedures. Although the data here was principally collected by one individual coder, it is believed that the rigid categories designed by Graber (1980) would reduce judgemental biases, and thus maintain consistent clarity of categories.

It was noted here, that the itemized coding scheme of fifty five variables permitted crime news to be categorized into three identifiable areas: (1) Those general characteristics surrounding crime incidents and the offenders reported sex, age, race, and occupation. (2) Those crime news characteristics which portray the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. (3) The preferential coverage given to those crime stories conveying apprehension success or legal sanctions.

As noted, the analysis will focus upon press presentations of twelve specific offences which are intended to be representative of differing levels of crime seriousness.

V. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Considering that the press is a substantially pervasive means of communicating messages to a particularly vast audience, it is not surprising that the print media have been the focus of many extensive investigations. While there are many people who would argue both for and against printed media's contribution to public perception of crime, it has already been noted that researchers have ignored the more specific role which the press plays in the portrayal of criminal justice effectiveness. (Garafalo, 1981; Geerkin and Gove, 1975). With this specific issue as a focus, the present chapter offers an examination of the substantive content of crime news as portrayed in the Vancouver Sun. The findings are presented in three sections.

Firstly, general characteristics which report facts surrounding the offenders sex, age, race, occupation and crime incident, were examined to provide a general overview of the nature and scope of press reported crime news. What general characteristics make up the basis of a crime story? Attention was then focused on those areas which specifically indicate the implied effectiveness of the criminal justice system. To what extent are specific characteristics of crime and justice effectiveness reported by the press? Finally consideration was given to the preferential coverage given to those crime stories conveying the relative effectiveness of the legal process. What

emphasis, if any does the press give to those crime stories reporting an effective or ineffective criminal justice system?

General characteristics of crime stories

As indicated earlier, a distinction was made for analytical purposes between crime articles which reported actual crime incidents and those articles such as editorials, letters to the editor, and any other story expressing particular views on related criminal matter.¹

As indicated by table 1, 77.9% of all crime articles were coded as hard crime news, while only 22.1% were classified as non-hard crime news. This large difference may reflect a tendency to emphasize the the reporting of particular events rather than analytical or interpretive items (Graber, 1980; Sherizan, 1978; Roshier, 1973). Possible support for this explanation can be seen in table 2, in which 96.8% of hard crime news reported specific crimes. The articles tend to be more descriptive of current events reporting on specific individual crime incidents rather than providing detailed perspectives on the crime and its consequences. Basic facts surrounding the crime incident are generally reported, much the same as what one might encounter in a police file (Fishman, 1981). These facts include the victims and offenders name, age, occupation, facts

¹Given the nature of this thesis, hard crime news articles were considered solely as the principle data base.

Table 1

Type of crime story published
by the press
(N=2207; in percentages)

Type of story	
Hard crime news	77.9
Non-hard crime news	22.1

Table 2

Nature of crime story published
by the press
(N=1580; in percentages)

Nature of story	
General discussion of crime	0.1
Specific crime	96.8
General and specific discussion	0.1
Mafia	0.1
Juvenile delinquency	0.1
Biography of criminals-unsuccessful	0.1
Police activities-favorable	0.1
Police activities-unfavorable	0.3
Criminal Justice Process	0.1
Prison escape or attempt to escape	1.8
Prison riot	0.4
Criminal law changes-proposed/actual	0.1

about the crime and any work done by the police.² As indicated

²The exception would be highly publicized cases such as Clifford Olson. The exceptional unusualness of such a criminal, drew overwhelming media attention which resulted in considerable lengthy stories on the heinous crimes committed.

by table 3 and 4, the majority of crime articles provide little in the way of detailed information.

Table 3

Percentage of Vancouver Sun crime articles mentioning details about various aspects of crime (N=1580; in percentages)

News topic	
Extent of injuries	39.3
Crime execution	83.0
Criminal(s) apprehension	32.4
Pretrial legal procedures	9.2
Courtroom procedures	35.7

Table 4

Percentage of Vancouver Sun crime stories containing three or more sentences about various aspects of crime

News topic		N
Extent of injuries	26.2%	621
Crime execution details	40.1	1311
Criminal(s) apprehension	32.2	701
Pretrial legal procedures	7.6	145
Courtroom procedures	48.6	564

For example, in table 3, 83% of all the hard crime news articles discussed the execution of the crime. Yet as is shown in table 4, only 40.1% of those articles discussed the crime execution in more than three sentences. Moreover, table 5 demonstrates that the majority of stories reported are new and, therefore, cannot

be considered to have omitted details because of earlier reporting.

Table 5

Degree of novelty of crime stories
(N=1580; in percentages)

Novelty of stories	
New story	71.4
Update of existing story-no major developments	21.3
Update of existing story-major or new developments	7.3

The type of information reported on offenders, is generally brief demographic depictions. In each descriptive category, offenders were described more often than victims. The most frequently reported descriptive characteristic found was sex. Table 6 illustrates that the sex of the offender was mentioned in well over two thirds of the cases reported, followed by age, occupation, and race. Cases mentioning sex, portrayed men as offenders almost 87% of the time, while women were reportedly offenders only 10.9% of the time. However, this image is congruent with official crime data which show males committing an overwhelming proportion of crime in society (Crime and Traffic Enforcement Statistics, 1980).

Ages for offenders were found to be indicated in approximately 50% of all crime stories. Of these stories, the majority of offenders were found to be older adults over the age

Table 6

Criminals' racial, age, sex, and occupational designations
 (N=1580 for race, N=149 for relative frequency of race, N=1580 for age, N=777 for relative frequency of age, N=1580 for sex, N=1383 for relative frequency of sex, N=1580 for occupation, N=616 for relative frequency of occupation; in percentages)

Race	9.4
White	38.2
Black	9.4
Oriental	10.1
Canadian Indian	4.0
East Indian	9.4
Jewish	0.7
Southern European	15.4
Other	10.7
Mixed	2.0
Age	49.2
Under 25	38.4
25-35	30.0
Over 35	31.6
Sex	87.5
Male	86.7
Female	8.9
Both	4.3
Occupation	39.0
Professional/technical	19.5
Business managers/union officials	11.5
Politicians/police/clergy/career army	22.5
Clerical/sales	2.4
Skilled workers/trades/farmers	6.6
Non-skilled workers	7.0
Students	4.7
Convict	19.7
Homemaker	1.4
Unemployed	4.2

of twenty five. Those offenders under the age of 25, only accounted for 37.5% of the reported age population. Consequently, the depiction of older adult offenders is inconsistent with the popularly believed conception that crime is predominately committed by young people. However, one must take into consideration that Canadian law prohibits the media from publishing particulars on juvenile offenders, and that in 50% of crime stories no age is reported at all.³

A third characterization which is found in press descriptions of offenders is occupation. 39% of all crime stories included information regarding an offenders occupational designation. The imagery portrayed here, deliniates primarily middle to upper class persons committing the majority of crimes in society.⁴ Almost two thirds of the stories reporting occupation, showed persons holding what could be considered middle or upper class professions to have committed crimes. Such findings are not consistent with the public's wide held belief that most crime is committed by the lower class (Graber, 1980).

However, this may be explained in terms of either news selection, or the fact that in over 60% of the stories coded

³This may be due to a number of reasons, one of which is that a good portion of crimes committed do not result in arrest, leaving one with nothing more than to speculate on the age of the offender.

⁴A strict definition of social class was not used here, but rather a broad category of lower class consisting of non-skilled workers, students, homemakers and unemployed. Anyone not falling into these categories would be considered middle or upper class.

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occupation was never mentioned. It might, therefore, be sufficient to say that unless the offender had a well recognized job, the occupation status may not be deemed to be important and therefore not be mentioned. Thus indicating a class bias on the part of the newspaper not to clearly define offenders' occupations, unless they occupy middle or upperclass professions.

As far as the descriptive characteristic of ethnicity is concerned, ethnic composition was only mentioned in 11.3% of all crime stories. Offenders were characteristically described as white almost three times more often than any other ethnic group. However, simply because white anglo saxons tend to be represented more often than other ethnic groups is not necessarily as representative a finding as might first be expected, since race is only mentioned in 11% of crime stories. This may indicate that journalists feel race is not an important descriptive characterization of offenders, or that it does not provide the same kinds of descriptive information which one might expect in another country.⁵

Nevertheless, a general overview of table 6 indicates that the Vancouver Sun tends to identify offenders as predominately white male older adults.⁶ Consequently, contrary to many widely

⁵It is suspected that race may be more of a key inferential indicator in the United States, where ethnic minorities are much more prevelant and racial tensions are frequently a major public issue.

⁶These percentages are based on the relative ffrequencies of each catagory within themselves.

held beliefs that offenders stereotypically are made up of young, lower class minorities, these findings do not suggest that the press exaggerate the extent of youthful crime nor suggest that lower class minorities dominate criminal activity.

One final general characteristic found present in most crime articles, is the site in which the crime is reported to have taken place. As illustrated by table 7, close to 80% of all crime stories mention the site of the crime. Although no particular crime site was found to be dominant, private homes were reported most frequently, followed closely by the street, outdoors and prison. These four area's accounted for more than 50% of the crime sites reported by the press.

Criminal Justice Effectiveness

The findings presented thus far, have merely overviewed the general nature and scope of press reported crime news. The substantive content of crime news which specifically portrays the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, will be examined in the following manner. First, an examination of the various distortions eminent in crime news coverage will provide an appreciation of the extent to which the press represents reported crime. Second, an analysis of reported apprehension success, prison sentences, and performance ratings for crime fighting, will provide an indication of the press's image of the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. Finally, a look at

Table 7
 Sites of crime and victimization
 (N=1580 for total sites of crime,
 N=1123 for relative frequency of
 site of crime; in percentages)

Site of crime	79.4
School and schoolyard	1.4
Church	0.3
Home	18.8
Street or alley	13.6
Outdoors-parks	11.0
Factory	0.3
Store-restaraunt	9.0
Government building	3.8
Transport facility/car/truck	6.1
Mixed	0.1
Prison	9.7
Tavern	2.9
Shopping center	0.9
Public housing	0.1
High rise- >7 stories	1.9
Apartment- flats to 6 stories	0.6
Office building	1.7
Warehouse and storage	0.5
Sports facility	0.4
Banks/brinks	5.6
Hotel/transient facility	6.7
Retirement home	0.1
Gas station	0.2
Museum/theatre	1.9
Hospital	1.5
Parking lot	1.1
Lake/ocean	0.1
Vacant building	0.2

discussions of prison sanctions will indicate the type of penalty information being published by the printed media.

The first and most obvious distortion of crime presented by the press, is found in a comparison of those locations in which crime is reported to have occurred. For example, roughly 60% of

all crime reported by the Vancouver Sun, occurred in the Province of British Columbia (see table 8).

Table 8

Location of crime reported by the press
(N=1580; in percentages)

Lowermainland	39.9
British Columbia	21.2
Western Canada	2.3
Eastern Canada	10.4
United States	26.2

Two thirds of this total was reported to be local lower mainland crime. At first glance, this result portrays the image that crime occurs three times more frequently in B.C. than in any other part of the country. To maintain such a perception may lead one to speculate on the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system in British Columbia to control or eliminate crime. However, one must consider the fact that Vancouver has a crime problem not unlike any other large Canadian metropolis, and it is one of the principle objectives of a large metropolitan newspaper like the Sun to inform the public of local crime stories.⁷

The type of crimes most often reported by the press are illustrated in table 9. Twelve offences ranging from murder to

⁷The selection of crime news process may play an integral role in explaining this phenomenon. See Roshier's (1973) study of the selection of crime news for a more complete explanation of this process.

gambling were utilized to indicate the frequency of mention by the press.⁸ The coverage given to murder far exceeds that of any other criminal offence. Murder was reported in approximately 26% of all crime news articles. However, this high percentage is by no means reflective of its actual occurrence in society. In fact, none of the twelve specified crimes were found to be indicative of their actual occurrence. Table 10, for example, illustrates a comparative frequency of index crimes in Canada crime statistics and the Vancouver Sun. Here, serious crimes such as murder, manslaughter, robbery, and rape can be seen to constitute 1.8% of the officially recorded crimes listed in the table.⁹ The newspaper on the other hand, present these same four crimes in 57% of the crimes listed in the table. Thus, murder, manslaughter, robbery, and rape are portrayed as occurring more frequently than any of the other crimes. An offence such as larceny is officially 1,541 times more likely to occur than murder. Yet the latter offence is reported by the press four times more often. The same can be said about breaking and entering, and motor vehicle theft. Such official high rankings are, therefore, clearly uncharacteristic of the manner in which these crimes are portrayed by the press.

⁸These twelve offences are representative of offences published annually by Canada crime statistics.

⁹Canada Crime and Traffic Enforcement Statistics (1980) were compared to crimes reported to have occurred strictly in Canada. The fact that these crimes may have been reported more than once, is not considered to be as significant as the particular image of crime that is being portrayed through a multitude of specific crime stories.

Table 9

Nature of alleged crimes reported in the
Vancouver Sun
 (N=1580; in percentages)

Murder	26.1
Robbery	10.0
Drug offences	5.5
Aggravated assault	4.4
Larceny	4.2
Breaking and entering	2.9
Manslaughter	2.5
Other assaults	2.4
Rape	2.1
Gambling	0.9
Other sex offences	0.8
Motor vehicle theft	0.6

This trend may be accounted for in a number of ways. First, the selection of crime news naturally dictates that not all crime events found in official statistics, (or for that matter simply recognized by the police) will be published in the news (Roshier, 1973). In this respect, there is a distinct reduction of crime incidents that ultimately get reported by the press. Illustrative of this reduction, is the striking number of officially reported crimes that do not appear in the paper (see table 10). Here, there is some indication to suggest the most frequently committed crimes are the least likely to be reported by the press. Frequent offences which were presented more often than expected, may have simply be considered by the editor as humorous or unusual enough to attract public interest. Again,

Table 10

Comparative frequency of mention of index crimes in Canada Crime and Traffic Enforcement Statistics and the Vancouver Sun, 1980 for Canada (N=1,520,566 for Statistics Index Crimes; N=764 for Vancouver Sun Index Crimes)

	Statistics index crimes		Sun Index crimes	
	N	%	N	%
Murder	496	0.03	263	34.40
Manslaughter	97	0.01	35	4.60
Robbery	24,581	1.62	106	13.90
Rape	2,315	0.15	31	4.10
Drug offences	74,196	4.88	76	7.90
Aggravated assault	117,111	7.70	68	8.90
Larceny	764,085	50.25	65	8.50
Breaking and entering	349,694	22.99	41	5.40
Other assaults	80,896	5.32	39	5.10
Gambling	2,695	0.18	11	1.40
Other sex offences	10,472	0.69	18	2.40
Motor Vehicle Theft	93,928	6.18	11	1.40

this may possibly explain why one particularly common offence like breaking and entering ends up being publicized by the press.

Crime news presented by the Sun, therefore, distorts the realities of crime occurrence by disproportionately emphasizing relatively seldom committed violent crimes, and underrepresenting frequently committed less serious crimes.

However, the crime itself is not the only detail to be consistently misrepresented by the press. The reported apprehension success of offenders, is another information detail

which is misrepresented. For instance, over 76% of crime stories reported that the police had apprehended the offender of a particular crime. Moreover, as illustrated by table 11, victimless crimes were seen to have the highest percentage of apprehension success reported in their stories. This is not surprising considering that the only time an offence of this nature is officially recorded by the police, is when an arrest is made. Nevertheless, almost all of the other selected crimes reported very high apprehension successes. Thus presenting the image that most offenders are caught by the police.

Table 11
Reported apprehension successes
in the Vancouver Sun, 1980.

	N	%
Murder	263	71.9
Robbery	106	56.6
Drug offences	76	98.7
Aggravated assault	68	79.4
Larceny	65	64.6
Breaking and entering	41	56.1
Manslaughter	35	91.4
Other assault	39	87.2
Rape	31	64.5
Gambling	11	100.0
Other sex offences	18	72.2
Motor Vehicle Theft	11	90.9

More important, however, is the extent to which crime stories distort official apprehension successes. In table 12 a comparison is made between apprehension successes reported in the 1980 Canada Crime and Traffic Enforcement Statistics, and

the apprehension successes reported in the Vancouver Sun, 1980.

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In the case of homicide, the press clearly under-represents the chances of an offender being apprehended. Yet, in all of the other crime categories, except for aggravated assault (which showed the same apprehension percentage in either index), the paper portrayed offenders as having relatively high chances of being caught by the police. Hence, contrary to those figures presented by official statistics, the press portrayed less serious offenders as being more likely to be apprehended than the more serious offenders. For example, police made official arrests in 20.9% of all reported larceny offences. Out of those larcenies reported by the press, apprehension of offenders is mentioned in almost 65% of the cases. Similar distortions can be found in reported motor vehicle thefts, and gambling offences.

A plausible explanation for this may be found in terms of news selection. The frequency that gambling, motor vehicle theft and larceny is committed, is illustrative of the fact that only those cases reporting something unusual or of public interest will be printed by the press.

Regardless of this explanation, however, is the fact that the press portray the police to be highly successful at

*Only crimes reported to have been committed in Canada were used so that comparisons could be made to official Canada crime statistics. Percentages were determined within each respective crime category. Consequently, the percentage of either index is reflective of the frequency of apprehension regardless of the actual number of crimes.

Table 12

Comparative frequency of apprehension success of index crimes in Canada Crime and Traffic Enforcement Statistics, and the Vancouver Sun, 1980.

	Official Index Crimes		Sun Index Crimes	
	N	%	N	%
Murder	496	84.3	263	71.9
Robbery	24,581	31.3	106	56.6
Drug offences	74,196	91.9	76	98.7
Aggravated assault	117,111	79.4	68	79.4
Larceny	764,085	20.9	65	64.6
Breaking and entering	349,694	23.6	41	56.1
Manslaughter	97	100.0	35	91.4
Other assaults	80,896	79.0	39	87.2
Rape	2,315	59.9	31	64.5
Gambling	2,695	94.6	11	100.0
Other sex offences	10,472	57.8	18	72.2
Motor vehicle theft	93,928	25.1	11	90.9

apprehending offenders. Thus the arrest stage of the criminal justice system is portrayed by the press as very effective. In the context of deterrence theory, this image can be seen to communicate a message that offenders are consistently and assuredly apprehended by the police.

However, the assurance of the application of legal penalties is not portrayed by the press as successful. Here, unlike that image of the police, table 13 shows that little, if anything, was usually mentioned by the press about the final sentence disposition of the offender. Only 23% of all crime articles mentioned some type of sentence disposition, and of

Table 13

Sentences in crime cases reported by the press
(N=1580 for total sentence disposition, N=360 for
relative frequency of sentence disposition; in
percentages)

Sentence Disposition	23.0
Dismissal-innocent	14.4
Dismissal-insufficient evidence	3.3
Dismissal-technicalities	1.1
Guilty-no penalties	2.7
Prison-less than one year	8.3
Prison-one to ten years	24.4
Prison-eleven or more years	3.3
Prison-indeterminate	0.3
Fine-less than \$100	1.0
Fine-\$100 to \$10,000	9.1
Fine-over \$10,000	2.5
Low prison and medium fine	2.7
Low prison and high fine	1.1
Medium prison and medium fine	1.0
Medium prison and high fine	0.2
High prison and high fine	0.8
Other penalties	2.5
Mistrial	1.1
Death penalty	1.3
Innocent on appeal	2.5
Guilty on appeal	1.6
Death penalty considered	1.9
Innocent by insanity	1.4
Life-twenty five years	7.5
Suspended sentence	0.9
Stay of proceedings	2.2

that approximately 68% mentioned some type of penalty. In other words, the press was portraying the state as taking punitive measures against offenders in a mere 15.2% of all press reported crimes.

Table 14 illustrates the extent to which specific crimes reported by the press receive mention of punitive legal sanctions. Each of the specified crimes received very little mention of the final sentence that the offender would receive. The majority of stories simply mentioned that the case was still pending a final outcome.¹¹

Of the selected crimes, rape was found to have the highest percentage of offenders being placed behind bars, with the least number of cases still pending an outcome. This was followed by manslaughter, other sex offences, drug offences, breaking and entering, larceny, robbery, murder, motor vehicle theft, other assault, and aggravated assault.

One explanation for this may be the fact that there is very little follow up done on most crime stories. As indicated earlier in table 5, most crime stories are reported once, and generally do not warrant the type of coverage necessary to report on the post arrest outcome for a particular crime.

Consequently, newspaper crime stories do not consistently portray the criminal justice system as punishing offenders for their crimes. Such a factor is essential for a system of deterrence to be functional.

In addition to the infrequent reporting of sentence dispositions, the press was also seen to be reluctant to specify the maximum or minimum penalties associated with specific

¹¹Those stories mentioning an offenders apprehension but not mentioning any type of sentence disposition, were considered to be pending a trial outcome.

Table 14

Relative frequency of sentence dispositions for selected crimes in percentages

	N	Fine	Prison	Pending
Murder	410	---	10.2	54.8
Robbery	158	0.6	11.9	37.1
Drug offences	99	---	17.2	63.6
Aggravated assault	100	1.0	5.0	57.0
Larceny	94	4.3	13.8	41.5
Breaking and entering	54	3.7	14.8	42.6
Manslaughter	47	---	23.4	40.4
Other assault	48	2.1	6.3	68.8
Rape	41	---	26.8	34.1
Gambling	14	21.4	---	64.3
Other sex offences	23	---	21.7	39.1
Motor vehicle theft	13	---	7.7	69.2

offences. As indicated by table 15, less than 4% of crime articles made any mention of maximum or minimum penalties.¹² Not unlike the information reported for sentence dispositions, crime stories were found to report little detailed information of the extent to which the "State" is capable of punishing offenders.

Further assessments of the performance of the criminal justice system, were sought in those stories which contain explicit evaluations of the police, courts, and correctional system. It was found, however, that only a very small percentage of crime stories actually made explicit evaluations on any of

¹²Only those penalties that were not mentioned in articles discussing sentence disposition, were accounted for in this table.

Table 15

Discussion of legal penalties in Vancouver
Sun crime stories
(N=1580 for total discussion of penalties,
N=57 for relative frequency of penalties
discussed; in percentages)

Discussion of penalties	3.7
Maximum sentence	38.6
Minimum sentence	1.8
Maximum fine	1.7
Minimum fine and maximum sentence	28.1
Any penalty	29.8

the given systems (police=3.6 percent, courts=1.3 percent, corrections=1.1 percent).¹³ Table 16 provides a detailed percentage breakdown of the relative evaluations found for each agency. Although the police were found to receive slightly more consideration than the other agencies, the evaluations generally showed no significant trend or bias.

Hence, evaluative assessments made of the criminal justice system are more often than not going to be made implicitly rather than explicitly through brief mentions of the systems ability to apprehend, convict and punish offenders.

¹³The small percentage of explicit evaluations is not surprising considering that only hard crime news articles were analyzed. It would be expected that non-hard crime news articles would be more likely to contain explicit evaluations of the criminal justice system.

Table 16

Evaluation of the police, courts, and correctional system
(N=56 for police, 19 for courts, and 21 for correctional system; in percentages)

	Improving	Stable	Declining	Mixed
Police	12.5	66.0	5.8	16.1
Courts	5.3	52.6	26.3	15.8
Correctional system	4.8	38.1	28.6	23.7

Preferential coverage of crime stories

The preferential coverage that some crime stories are given over others, may be indicative of the attention they receive from the newspaper audience. An assessment of the coverage that each particular crime story received, provides a clear indication as to which crimes were considered to be most important by the press and possibly the most likely to influence public perceptions. In consideration of this, it was important to determine whether any preferential coverage was given to those crime stories mentioning apprehension or legal sanctions, and those stories that did not. For example, it was mentioned earlier that the majority of crime stories portray police as being very successful in apprehending offenders. But does such an image of an effective pre-trial justice system also receive preferential news coverage? To answer this question, the

relative placement, along with story length, headline size, and presence of pictures of the twelve previously selected crimes were analyzed.

Table 17

Prominence of selected crime stories
appearing on the front page of the Sun
(N=57; in percentages)

Murder	47.3
Robbery	15.7
Drug offences	8.7
Aggravated assault	7.0
Gambling	0
Other assault	0
Larceny	8.7
Breaking and entering	3.5
Manslaughter	7.0
Motor vehicle theft	0
Rape	0
Other sex offences	1.7

The findings of this measurement analysis are examined in the following manner. First, as indicated by table 17, preference of front page news display was found to be clearly dominated by murder stories.

This is not surprising given what we know about crime news selection and the general frequency of mention that serious crimes generally receive. But what is of interest here, is the preferential treatment given to those crimes mentioning apprehension success or prison sentences.

As illustrated by table 18, there was an overall tendency for stories mentioning apprehension to receive preferential news

display.¹⁴

Table 18

Prominence of selected crimes mentioning
apprehension status

	Apprehension	No apprehension	
Placement Measures (in percentages)			N

Stories appearing as the first crime item on any given page	64.3	35.7	143
Stories appearing on the first three pages of the newspaper	67.2	32.8	329
Stories appearing in section A of the news- paper	73.0	27.0	810
Stories appearing with a picture	51.7	48.2	29
Headline and story measurements (in inches)			

Average headline size	0.7"	0.6"	986
Average story length	10.2"	9.1"	986

Those stories mentioning apprehension were consistently longer and appeared more frequently on the most preferential reading sections of the paper than those that made no mention of apprehension. However, the same type of prominence was not found in those stories that made reference to prison sanctions. In

¹⁴Average headline size and story length measured in inches.

fact, in this instance the results were the opposite. Stories not mentioning prison sentences were found to be given preferential news positioning over those mentioning prison sentences.¹⁵ (See table 19)

Table 19.

Prominence of selected crimes mentioning prison sentence status

	Prison sentence	No prison sentence	N
Placement Measures (in percentages)			
Stories appearing as the first crime item on any given page	15.4	84.6	143
Stories appearing on the first three pages of the newspaper	41.6	58.4	329
Stories appearing in section A of the newspaper	14.2	85.8	810
Stories appearing with a picture	----	100.0	29
Headline and story measurements (in inches)			
Average headline size	0.7"	0.8"	986
Average story length	10.1"	9.8"	986

¹⁵Speculation leads one to suspect that most crime stories indicating apprehension, are probably "breaking" news items which have just occurred and are therefore worthy of prominence over those older stories which have been around long enough to benefit discussion of prison sentences.

In practical terms, these findings shed light on the phenomenon that the press portray the police as being relatively successful at apprehending offenders. But illustrative of the findings, little else is being done by the rest of the criminal justice system to maintain law and order (Sherizan, 1978).

The type of crime being given this preferential news display, were generally found to be the most serious offences. Table 20 through table 24. reveal the extent to which serious crimes, less serious crimes, and least serious crimes were considered worthy of varying degrees of prominence.

Table 20

Prominence of selected serious crimes mentioning
prison sentence status

	Prison sentence	No prison sentence	N
Placement Measures (in percentages)			

Stories appearing as the first crime item on any given page	11.6	88.4	86
Stories appearing on the first three pages of the newspaper	12.2	87.8	197
Stories appearing in section A of the news- paper	12.3	87.7	480
Stories appearing with a picture	----	100.0	23
Headline and story measurements (in inches)			

Average headline size	0.6"	0.7"	581
Average story length	7.9"	11.2"	581

Table 21

Prominence of selected less serious crimes mentioning prison sentence status

	Prison sentence	No prison sentence	N
<hr/>			
Placement Measures (in percentages)			

Stories appearing as the first crime item on any given page	21.7	78.3	46
Stories appearing on the first three pages of the newspaper	15.4	84.6	104
Stories appearing in section A of the news- paper	16.5	83.5	242
Stories appearing with a picture	----	100.0	4
<hr/>			
Headline and story measurements (in inches)			

Average headline size	0.7"	0.6"	292
Average story length	13.1"	6.8"	292

Table 22

Prominence of selected least serious crimes mentioning
prison sentence status

	Prison sentence	No prison sentence	N
<hr/>			
Placement Measures (in percentages)			

Stories appearing as the first crime item on any given page	18.2	81.8	11
Stories appearing on the first three pages of the newspaper	10.7	89.3	28
Stories appearing in section A of the news- paper	18.2	81.8	88
Stories appearing with a picture	-----	100.0	2
Headline and story measurements (in inches)			

Average headline size	0.7"	0.7"	113
Average story length	10.4"	9.9"	113
<hr/>			

Table 23

Prominence of selected serious crimes mentioning
apprehension status

	Apprehension	No apprehension	
Placement Measures (in percentages)			N

Stories appearing as the first crime item on any given page	69.8	30.2	86
Stories appearing on the first three pages of the newspaper	70.6	29.4	197
Stories appearing in section A of the news- paper	75.6	24.4	480
Stories appearing with a picture	52.2	91.7	23
Headline and story measurements (in inches)			

Average headline size	0.7"	0.7"	581
Average story length	10.5"	11.9"	581

Table 24

Prominence of selected less serious crimes mentioning apprehension status

	Apprehension	No apprehension	
Placement Measures (in percentages)			N

Stories appearing as the first crime item on any given page	47.8	52.2	46
Stories appearing on the first three pages of the newspaper	53.8	46.2	104
Stories appearing in section A of the news- paper	59.9	40.1	242
Stories appearing with a picture	25.0	75.0	4
Headline and story measurements (in inches)			

Average headline size	0.7"	0.5"	292
Average story length	9.3"	5.8"	292

Table 25

Prominence of selected least serious crimes mentioning apprehension status

	Apprehension	No apprehension	
Placement Measures (in percentages)			N

Stories appearing as the first crime item on any given page	90.9	9.1	11
Stories appearing on the first three pages of the newspaper	92.9	7.1	28
Stories appearing in section A of the news- paper	94.3	5.7	88
Stories appearing with a picture	100.0	---	2
Headline and story measurements (in inches)			

Average headline size	0.7"	0.6"	113
Average story length	10.1"	12.2"	113

In each of the three seriousness categories, serious crime stories which reported successful apprehension, and did not report prison sanctions, were distinctively shown to be given preferential treatment over those crime stories which were of a less serious nature. Thus, the press was found to emphasize the

image of an effective pre-trial justice system, in which the most serious criminals were generally caught by the police, but were rarely seen to be punished for their crime.

Discussion

The general observations and conclusions that can be drawn from the foregoing findings, are reflective of results found in earlier studies (Davis, 1952; Antunes and Hurely, 1977; Jones, 1976; Humphries, 1981; Graber, 1980). Crimes reported by the press were found to clearly overemphasize crimes of violence, and to be unrepresentative of less serious crime. Unlike Roshier's (1973) findings, however, the present study did not find a bias towards over reporting of prison sentences. Instead, the high percentages of arrests and general neglect to report other forms of legal processing, support the findings of Sherizan (1978) and Graber (1980). Consequently, the data sustain the premise that the press provide the public with little information regarding the legal consequences of criminal behavior.

An examination of the various distortions in crime news coverage reveals the extent to which the press portray the criminal justice system to be effective in arresting offenders, while at the same time ineffective at punishing them. By implication, therefore, the printed media are somewhat successful at transmitting a deterrence message to the public.

They not only portray offenders as being continually apprehended, but also accentuate capture with preferential news display. However, by not consistently and assuredly informing the public (through implied legal sanctions) that the criminal act is not worth the cost, the press unsuccessfully contribute to a complete deterrent message. In other words, by not portraying a completely effective criminal justice system, the press fail to communicate deterrent messages. As noted by Geerkin and Gove; "A system of deterrence will fail to the degree there is any condition in the society which undermines the successful transmission of the deterrence message" (Geerkin and Gove, 1975:500).

The results of this study are indicative of the fact that most crime stories report specific individual crime incidents, providing little in the way of detailed perspectives on crime and its consequences.

VI. CONCLUSION

The scope of this thesis has been structured on the premise that our criminal justice system assumes the deterrability of criminal behavior. It illustrates through an examination of press images of crime, the relevance that portrayed legal ramifications have to deterrence theory. Moreover, by conceptualizing deterrence as a subjective phenomena it develops a perspective from which to consider the interrelationship between deterrent messages and the printed media.

This study began with a conceptual analysis of the role of perception in deterrence theory. Here, it was argued that the decision to engage in criminal behavior rests in large part, on perceptions of the consequences for that behavior. For deterrence to be effective, punitive consequences must be perceived to be certain, swift and severe enough to outweigh any gain that might be achieved illegally (Geerkin and Gove, 1975).

Within this context, information was considered to be an important component in the construction of criminal conceptions and in turn, an influential factor in decisions and actions. From this perspective, we were able to comprehend the importance that information processes have in relaying threats of punishment to potential offenders. The printed media and its portrayal of crime and justice served to illustrate this role.

Having introduced a perspective from which to approach the media's portrayal of crime, a review of the literature analyzing crime news in the printed media was undertaken. Research of this nature, was found to be made up of two distinct bodies of literature. Here, studies were classified as either investigating the total volume of crime news reported, or comparing crime news to officially reported crime.

The results of these studies revealed a relatively low proportion of total newspace to be devoted to crime. Moreover, research had conclusively shown an overemphasis on crimes of violence, and a lack of association between the amount of crime news reported and the "actual" amount of crime occurring. Only two studies were found to make any attempt to specifically examine the extent to which the press depict the mechanics of the criminal justice system. For the most part, their findings revealed crime news to consist of the crime incident itself, the arrest, capture, suspect follow-up, and or any charges placed against the suspect. Very little information was provided in the way of postdispositional processes of the criminal justice system.

From this review of literature came an appreciation for the research method of content analysis. It was by virtue of this technique, that crime and justice news was systematically analyzed in the Vancouver Sun for a period of one year. The explicit systematic structure inherent in this form of methodology, aided in the alleviation the discriminatory

capacities of the analyst (Holsti, 1969). Such systematic and objective identification tactics it may be argued, minimized the coders subjective disposition and provided a true indication of the content under analysis (Berelson, 1954; Babbie, 1983). Hence, the reliability of this research design may be seen to be reflective of the coding scheme's capability to sufficiently measure crime and justice in the printed media.

The research design adopted by this study, was one which was formerly developed and tested by Doris Graber (1980). Here, a number of changes and amendments were made to meet the original objectives set in this thesis. At this point, it was also noted that the itemized coding scheme of fifty five variables permitted all items of crime news to be specifically categorized according to three identifiable areas: (1) Those general characteristics surrounding crime incidents and the criminals reported sex, age, race, and occupation. (2) The substantive content of crime news which conceivably depicts the portrayed effectiveness of the criminal justice system. (3) The preferential coverage given to those crime stories conveying apprehension success or legal sanctions. Despite the fact that all crimes reported in North America were coded, only twelve were selected and presented in the final findings. Here, the twelve crimes were categorized to conform with those crimes published in Canadian official crime statistics.

By using these three categories and twelve specified crimes as a framework from which to analyze the printed media, it was

possible to identify the nature of the newspapers portrayal of crime and justice. Not unlike the findings of other studies, the data revealed the press to portray an image of crime which was not representative of the "official" crime picture (Davis, 1952; Roshier, 1973; Jaehnig, et.al., 1981):

Further examination of the general characteristics making up the basis of a crime story, was also seen to support the findings earlier research. Here, similar to Roshier (1973), Sherizan (1978), and Graber (1980), the analysis revealed most stories to be specific in nature, reporting particular events rather than analytical or interpretive sorts of information. Although most of these specified crime accounts were found to report the crime execution, less than half of them reported it in more than three sentences. Of these same articles, offenders were found to be reported more often than victims, and they were generally reported as white, male, older adults holding what could be considered middle or upper class occupations. It is interesting to note here, that this finding is supported by the results of those earlier studies conducted by Roshier (1973), Sherizan (1978) and Graber (1980). Consequently, contrary to many wide held beliefs that offenders are stereotypically young, lower class minorities, we can conclude that the press does not support this contention by exaggerating the extent of youthful crime or suggesting that lower class or racial or cultural minorities dominate criminal activity.

Having examined the general characteristics making up the basis of a crime story, the analysis then turned to a more specific examination of press images of crime and justice effectiveness. Analysis of the various distortions eminent in crime news coverage served to provide an appreciation of the extent to which the press represents official crime reports.

Here, the type of crimes most often reported by the press were compared to those index crimes reported by Statistics Canada. Of the twelve specified crimes utilized, none were found to be representative of their officially recorded counterparts. Consequently, not unlike the findings of Humphries (1981), Roshier (1973) and Jones (1976), crime news was seen to distort the realities of officially recorded crime by disproportionately emphasizing seldomly committed serious crimes, and under representing frequently committed less serious crimes.

It was at this point that an attempt was made to determine the extent to which the press portray an effective criminal justice system. More specifically, an attempt was made to investigate the extent to which deterrent messages are presented by the press. Here, threats of punishment were considered to be relayed to potential offenders through reported apprehension successes, prison sentences, and criminal justice performance ratings.

With specific reference to twelve selected crimes, it was noted that over 76% of crime stories reported that the police had apprehended the offender. Similar to the findings of

Sherizan (1978) and Graber (1980), this image that most offenders are caught by the police was found to be a distortion of official apprehension successes. Contrary to those figures presented by official statistics, the press portrayed most offenders, with the exception of those committing homicide and aggravated assault, as having relatively high chances of being caught by the police. The "actual" chances of being caught, therefore, were considerably less than that which was being portrayed by the newspaper.

Such a delineation of consistent and assured apprehension, satisfies the initial requisite for communicating a message of deterrence: certainty of apprehension. According to deterrence theory, it is this affirmation of one's chances of getting caught that will, in part, serve to stop an individual from committing a particular crime (Gibbs, 1975).

Aside from the certainty of apprehension, however, deterrence theory demands that the certainty of punishment also be realized by potential offenders. Moreover, the severity of punishment and speed with which it is administered, must be perceived to be great enough to offset any gain that might be achieved illegally (Andenaes, 1974; Geerkin and Gove, 1975; Gibbs, 1975). Hence, in conjunction with reported apprehension successes, press reporting of legal penalties was considered to be a further indicator of the press's communication of deterrent messages.

It was at this point that the analysis examined the extent to which legal sanctions were portrayed by the press. Again, similar to the findings of Sherizan (1978) and Graber (1980), little if anything was found to be mentioned about the final sentence disposition of the offender. It was noted here, that only 23% of all crime articles mentioned some type of sentence disposition. Of these articles, only 68% mentioned some type of penalty. The majority of stories simply mentioned that the case was still pending a final outcome. Consequently, the press was found to portray the state as taking punitive measures against offenders in a mere 15.2% of all press reported crime news.

Further to this finding, and comparable to the results of Graber's (1980) study, only a very small percentage of crime stories were found to make any kind of explicit evaluation of the criminal justice system. Those evaluations that were made, were found to show no significant trend or bias.

It was further noted, that only 4% of crime stories made any kind of effort to explicitly discuss the maximum or minimum penalties for crimes. Such a finding could be considered indicative of the little penalty information that the press provide to the public.

Further to discussing the press's portrayal of deterrent messages, was an examination of the preferential news display that the press would give to particular crime articles. What was of interest here, was the type of crime article that the press considered most important, and for our purposes possibly the

most likely to influence public perceptions. It was, therefore, important to determine whether any preferential coverage was given to those crime stories mentioning apprehension or legal sanctions, and those stories that did not.

From this analysis, the press were seen to clearly emphasize the image of an effective pre-trial justice system, in which the most serious criminals were generally caught by the police, but rarely seen to be punished for their crime. Serious stories which reported successful apprehension, and did not report prison sanctions, were shown to be given preferential treatment over those crime stories which were of a less serious nature.

Therefore, similar to the findings of both Sherizan (1978) and Graber (1980), it can be concluded from these results that newspaper crime stories do not portray the criminal justice system to be effective at punishing offenders. Granted, the press portray the police to be successful at apprehending offenders, but little, if anything, is being presented to assure potential offenders that they will be punished for committing a crime. In this sense, the press provide the public with little information (through implied legal sanctions) regarding the legal consequences of criminal behavior. Information such as this is necessary to the communication of any deterrent message. The printed media, therefore, fail to delineate deterrent messages through their daily reporting of crime and justice news.

Limitations of study

The limitations inherent to this study, are characteristic of those weaknesses found in most crime news research (Garafalo, 1981). Central to these weaknesses, is the fact that this study only examined one component of knowledge providing public information about the possible legal ramifications of criminal behavior. The printed media is only one of a variety of sources of information from which people may derive their perceptions of crime and justice.

Further limiting this study is the underlying assumption that media play influential roles in the development of public conceptions of crime and justice. Here, critics argue that crime news research has shown the media to be poor indicators of audience perceptions and beliefs (Cumberbatch and Beardsworth, 1976).

However, it should be noted, that those studies conducted on audience perceptions of crime news suffer from many methodological problems. Content analysis for instance, does not always reflect media content as it is perceived by average readers (Howitt and Cumberbatch, 1974). Further research is required to isolate media effects from each other, as well as from those other information stimuli that may influence one's perception. Moreover, there will always be certain groups of people more sensitive to media presentations of crime than

others. Crime news in this respect, may act as a "sensitizing agent" serving to enhance the perceptions of those people willing to accept those media messages presented (Hall et al., 1978; Becker, 1963)..

Although the findings of this study have brought evidence to bear on the media's role in communicating deterrent messages to the public, it must be realized that this information is the product of a manipulative crime news selection process. Crime news is not a random selection of all available news. (Roshier, 1973; Fishman, 1981). What may be considered newsworthy by one newspaper may not be by another. There is a selective filtering process which determines what crime event will become news (Sherizan, 1978).

The source from which the media receive their information may also affect the significance of our findings. Here, one must consider the fact that most news stories are the product of police generated information (Chibnall, 1977; Sherizan, 1978; Graber, 1980). In this sense, it is not surprising that the findings rarely revealed crime stories to report on offenders in court or prison. More important, however, is that the findings revealed the police to be doing a superior job at apprehending offenders.

Considering the role that police generated information has in informing the media, leads one to speculate that the findings of apprehension success may be simply reflective of the control that the police have in structuring information. The findings,

therefore, should not be merely considered a reflection of what reporters want to dictate to us (as the crime news selection process indicates), but also what powerful sources such as the police want us to hear (Fishman, 1984).

Consideration must also be given to the reliability of using official statistics to measure the "actual" occurrence of crime in society. In the case of this study, official statistics were employed as a standard by which to judge the press's accuracy in reporting crime and apprehension success. However, by doing so, the findings are open to criticism. Official statistics are simply not representative of the "actual" crime situation (Skogan, 1974; Fattah, 1976). Different crimes have different likelihoods of being reported to the public authorities. Crimes occurring within families or among acquaintances for instance, are a good example of those offences which are characteristically under-reported (Skogan, 1974). For what ever reason, these types of crimes are less visible to police and are, therefore, less likely to enter official statistics.

Official statistics are also sensitive to changes in the recording of crime by police. Because of varying discretions and human error, different recorders of criminal events make comparisons difficult and measurements inaccurate. The specific findings presented in this study, therefore, should only be considered representative of how the printed media portray officially reported crime, and not the "actual" crime occurring

in society.

Compounding the weaknesses of this study even further, are those limitations inherent in the research technique of content analysis. Critics claim that because of the subjective discretion found in any form of decision making, it is very difficult for data collected by this technique to be free of subjective bias (Berelson, 1954). Moreover, this technique has been questioned by researchers as to the validity of its measurements. Here, critics argue that there will always be the question as to whether the values used to collect content data are actually a valid measure of the communication being analyzed (Babbie, 1983).

Consequently, not unlike most empirical research conducted in this field, the findings produced by this study are subject to many limitations. The fact remains, however, that the research conducted here has brought evidence to bear on the type of crime and justice news which is currently being presented to the public.

Theoretical Considerations

What has become evident throughout the course of this study, is the obvious routine consistency with which the press report certain types of crime news to the public. The printed media's consistent reporting of specific crime information, characteristically assumes an ideological role by reinforcing

some forms of social knowledge, while excluding others. Although the findings of this study do not reveal strict evidence as to the theoretical relationship between the printed media and crime news, they do suggest that theoretical consideration be given to the ideological role that the printed media play in structuring the content of crime news. What may for instance, typically be seen as the simple reporting of crime events on a daily basis, has contentious underlying theoretical implications reflecting media news production practices.

In an attempt to explain this rationale, one must first realize that news production requires a set procedure to schedule news. Without procedure, the media would be unable to routinely process large quantities of information and schedule unexpected events into news information (Tuchman, 1978).

To adhere to the complexities of processing large quantities of news, journalists gather information from institutions which provide "... a useful volume of reportable activity at regular intervals" (Hall et. al., 1978:57). However, this process of gathering information lends itself to the bias and bureaucratic control of the institutions supplying the information (Knight, 1982). More importantly, it has the potential for news content to be structured according to politically bias definitions of social reality (Tuchman, 1978).

For instance, what the media know about crime is generally provided to them by law enforcement agencies (Fishman, 1978). This reliance on enforcement agencies for information

significantly contributes to journalists conveying "...an image of crime wholly in accord with the police departments notions of serious crime and social disorder" (Fishman, 1981:387).

Journalists will not know what the police do not provide for them. Hence, it is not surprising that crime news emphasizes the image of an effective pre-trial justice system. As in the case of this study, the most serious offenders were seen to be usually caught by the police even though the actual chances of being apprehended were considerably less.

Information sources are not the only components contributing to the ideological production of crime news. Theoretical consideration must also be given to the ideology of professional journalism. More specifically, to how reporting of crime news is subject to the journalists attempt to maintain a semblance of "objectivity" and "newsworthiness".

For example, although the journalists standards of objectivity should ideally reflect impartial and balanced accounts of news items, media reports clearly attempt to provide credible information based on statements taken from 'accredited' sources (Tuchman, 1978; Hall et. al., 1978). The same 'accredited' sources, which are, as was mentioned earlier, representative of professional experts and powerful bureaucratic institutions (Knight, 1982). Hence, news information which does not come from an 'accredited' source, will not likely be included in the final media report.

A further element contributing to the ideology of professional journalism, and in turn, the type of crime news found to be consistently reported, pertains to the type of information which journalists consider to be "newsorthy". Although newsworthiness cannot be specifically defined, journalists do identify certain aspects of "controversy" and "extraordinariness" as principal criteria for news items (Knight, 1982). Consequently, the fact that this study revealed crime news to distort the realities of officially recorded crime by disproportionately emphasizing seldomly committed serious crimes, and under-representing frequently committed less serious crimes, is not surprising.

This general tendency by the media to focus attention upon the "extraordinary", is sometimes referred to as "bad news" (The Glasgow University Media Group, 1976). However, "bad news" is not explicitly created by the media. The substance of "bad news" is fundamentally determined by the basic features of what some theorists call the "dominant ideology" (Knight, 1982). In more specific terms, the media does not create "bad news", but rather, reaffirms those "dominant" ideologies which identify them as such.

The ideological character of crime news is further affected by the media's emphasis upon "immediacy" and "actuality" (Knight, 1982). Here, the need to personalize news events and report them as fast as possible, satisfy the media's commercial demands of intensifying an audience's interests with the most up

to date news information. However, by doing so, it also contributes to the abstract and ideological character of the news which is being reported. The emphasis upon "immediacy" and "actuality" has audiences taking "...as a given that news is ahistorical, atheoretical accounts of daily happenings in specific institutions, and that it employs the logic of the concrete" (Tuchman, 1978:196). What this amounts to, is a fragmented conception of the world, "...in which actuality is conveyed in uncontaminated, pristine form from actor to reader" (Knight, 1982:31). The media's superficial presentation of news events, then, serve to explain why most crime stories are specific in nature, reporting particular events rather than analytical or interpretive sorts of information. The emphasis upon "immediacy" and "actuality" do not permit journalists the luxury to spend time reporting on the post dispositional processes of the criminal justice system. Rather, they end up reporting crime stories which consist of the crime incident itself, the arrest, capture, suspect follow-up, and or any charges placed against the accused.

In terms of the media's news production, it becomes apparent that there are a number of journalistic practices which contribute to the ideological character of crime news. The structured journalistic procedure required to meet the demands of news gathering, provide for a systematic production of news definitions which are inherently held by powerful institutions. This, combined with the journalists attempt to provide

"objective", "newsworthy" information, while at the same time emphasizing "immediacy" and "actuality", result in a fundamental ideology of news accounts which are more likely to reaffirm than challenge those values and interests held by the established social system.

Implications for future research

For politicians, as well as authorities within the criminal justice system, the mass media can serve as a powerful tool from which to communicate messages to the public. Although the question of media effects upon behavior remain unresolved, media content cannot be taken for granted. Perhaps future research could devise ways in which the media could be utilized to promote an effective criminal justice system. Given an understanding of deterrence theory, the creation of high perception of risk and severity of punishment through mass media publicity tactics may possibly enhance the justice systems ability to effectively control crime; possibly it may not. Only future research in this area will provide evidence to this effect.

APPENDIX

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
1	Date	1-2	01-31	Day of Month
2	Month	3-4	01-12	January - December
3	Year	5	0	Code last numeral only: 1980
4	Legation	6		Part of the country which the crime had occurred: Lower Mainland B.C. Western Canada - Everything East of B.C. to Manitoba Eastern Canada - Everything East of Manitoba United States
5	Story Number	7-8	01-99	
6	Page Number	9-10	01-99	When a story appears on more than one page, or when the headline appears on the front page and the main body elsewhere, code the page number on which the main body appears.
7	Section Number	11-12	01-99	Code by section numbers provided by the paper. If no section numbers are given, assign section numbers consecutively A-Z.

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
8	Picture Size	13		Picture size will be measured by multiplying width in inches by length in inches. Code according to one of the following categories:
			01	No picture
			02	3 square inches or smaller
			03	3.1 through 12.0 square inches
			04	12.1 through 24.0 square inches
			05	24.1 through 40.0 square inches
			06	40.1 through 60.0 square inches
			07	60.1 square inches or larger
				When a story is accompanied by one or more pictures or drawings indicate the picture size by combining the sizes of the individual pictures. Exclude words that explain a picture in measuring picture size. In some columns the picture of the columnist is attached to the column's name or included in a box together with the column's name. In these cases code the picture as part of the headline, not as a picture. However, if the columnist's picture appears distinctly apart from the column name, code it as a picture, not as part of the headline.
9	Headline Size	14-16	01-99	Headline size and story length are coded by multiplying the column width by length in inches.

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
10	Story Length	17-20	0001-9999	Story length is coded by multiplying the column width by length in inches.
11	Nature of Story	21-22		Each story will be categorized according to its major emphasis. Use narrowest applicable category.
			01	General discussion of crime.
			02	Specific Crime(s)
			03	Combination of general discussion and specific discussion of crime.
			04	Crime fighting in general (includes crime statistics stories).
			05	Crime prevention.
			06	Mafia.
			07	Crime syndicate.
			08	Gang violence.
			09	Juvenile delinquency.
			10	Confidence games.
			11	Biography of criminals - predominantly successful (Do not code crime incidents separately)
			12	Biography of criminals - predominantly unsuccessful
			13	Biography of criminals - mixed success.
			14	Free press - Fair trial - general discussion (or both pro/con).
			15	Free press - Fair trial - Pro.
			16	Free press - Fair trial - Con.

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
17				Police Activities - general (or both favorable and unfavorable) exclude personnel activities such as pay, hiring, union activities except when specifically related to crime fighting activities.
18				Police Activities - favorable appraisal.
19				Police Activities - unfavorable appraisal.
20				Prison Reform - Pro.
21				Prison Reform - Con.
22				Prison reform - Mixed.
23				Criminal justice process, other than police activities.
24				Prison escape or attempted escape
25				Prison riot.
26				Terrorism.
27				Court reform.
28				Criminal law changes. Proposed and actual.
29				Non-specific, general discussion of pretrial or trial procedures.
30				Police violation of civil rights of citizens.
31				Support of victims of crime.
32				Prison conditions.
33				Victims of crime - specific incidents.
12	Nature of	23-24		Three crimes may be coded selected in
13	alleged	25-26		order of emphasis. when more than two

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
14		27-28		crimes are mentioned to some extent, use columns 23-24 for combination codes.
			01	Murder, non-negligent manslaughter (A)
			02	Negligent manslaughter (A)
			03	Rape (A)
			04	Assassination attempt (A)
			05	Robbery (A)
			06	Aggravated assault/battery (A)
			07	Burglary, breaking and entering (B)
			08	Larceny - theft (B)
			09	Motor vehicle theft (B)
			10	Kidnapping (A)
			11	Piracy/hijacking (B)
			12	Extortion (C)
			13	Other assault (C)
			14	Arson (C)
			15	Forgery and counterfeiting (C)
			16	Fraud/Consumer deceit/Disservice (C)
			17	Embezzlement (C)
			18	Bribery/kick backs/payoffs (C)
			19	Corrupt practices (deals) (C)
			20	Dealing in stolen property (C)
			21	Vandalism/wilful damage (C)
			22	Weapons violations (C)
			23	Escape from custody (C)
			24	Parole violation (C)
			25	Illegal wiretapping (C)
			26	Prostitution commercial vice (D)
			27	Other sex offences (D)
			28	Illegal drug offences (D)

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation	
29				Gambling	(D)
30				Tax cheating	(D)
31				Welfare cheating	(D)
32				Contributing to minor's delinquency	(E)
33				Child abuse	(E)
34				Drinking driving	(E)
35				Drunkenness, liquor law violations	(C)
36				Disturbing the peace, vagrancy, unlawful assembly	(C)
37				False fire alarms	(C)
38				Contempt of court (Criminal or Civil)	(C)
39				Perjury	(C)
40				Obstruction of justice	(C)
41				Inciting to riot	(C)
42				Homosexuality	(C)
43				Official misconduct - police generally	(C)
44				Witchcraft	(C)
45				Traffic offences	(C)
46				Resisting arrest	(C)
47				Criminal pollution	(C)
48				Group A + B	(C)
49				Group A + C	(C)
50				Group B + C	(C)
51				Group B + D + E	(C)
52				Group A + D + E	(C)
53				Specific nature of crime not clear	(C)
54				Other	(C)
55				No other crimes mentioned	(C)

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
			56	Unlawful confinement (C)
			57	Conspiracy (B)
			58	Trespass (C)
			59	Attempted murder (A)
			60	Criminal negligence (B)
			61	Prisoners take hostages in prison (B)
			62	Not applicable
			63	Hostage taking (B)
			64	Abduction (B)
			65	Failing to blow (C)
15	Causes of Crime	29-30		Up to three causes may be coded.
16		31-32		Select in order of emphasis delineated explicitly in the story.
17		33-34	01	Hereditry, genetic factors (includes race)
			02	Methods of child rearing, includes permissiveness
			03	Poor home life, includes parental absence, illness, poverty, marital strife, alcoholism, rejection.
			04	Adolescent stresses
			05	Religious deficiencies
			06	Materialism
			07	Economic stress, unemployment
			08	Slum/Ghetto conditions
			09	Inefficient Police - Criminal Justice System
			10	Judicial leniency
			11	Prison conditions/recidivism
			12	Alcohol/drugs
			13	Abuse of Political Power

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
			14	Welfare state mentality (Somebody owes me a living)
			15	Influence of mass media: movies TV/radio
			16	Moral bankruptcy
			17	Racism
			18	Faulty coordination between judicial and legislating branches
			19	Other
			20	Availability of guns
			21	Nothing mentioned
			22	Nothing else mentioned
			23	Not applicable.
18	Motives Triggering Incidents	35-36		Up to three may be coded. Select in order of emphasis delineated explicitly in the story
19		37-38		
20		39-40		
			01	Fight among strangers - argument
			02	Fight among acquaintances - argument
			03	Family fight/argument
			04	Racial/ethnic incident
			05	Gang violence
			06	Sex (Rivalry, infidelity, promiscuity, and the like)
			07	Labor/union problems
			08	Political differences (partisan strife, radicalism, left-right clashes and the like)
			09	Mental derangement/going beserk
			10	Prison inmate strife

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation			
21	Criminal(s) Knowledge of Illegality of Crime(s) Committed	41	11	Prison inmate authority strife			
			12	Opportunity			
			13	Intimidating Potential Witness			
			14	Robbery			
			15	Rape			
			16	Protecting national security			
			17	Drugs/alcohol			
			18	Influence of mass media:Movies/TV/radio			
			19	Money			
			20	Religious cults			
			21	Kicks			
			22	Other			
			23	Nothing mentioned			
			24	Nothing else mentioned			
			25	Not applicable.			
			22	Criminal(s) Sex/Identity	42	01	Nothing mentioned
						02	Had no knowledge of illegality of the offense
						03	Was unsure
						04	Was well aware of the legal ramifications
						05	Not applicable.
						01	Male
						02	Female
						03	Both
						04	Institution acting through agent
						05	Unknown - not mentioned/unidentified
06	Not applicable						

APPENDIX (Continued).

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
			07	Institution + individual Note: When story involves individual Participant in collective crime, code only for individuals to which story pertains.
23	Victim's sex/ Identity	43	1-7	See Variable 20
24	Criminal(s) Age group at Time of crime	44-45		(May be inferred from clear picture if not in story) Young Child - (0-7) Preteen - (8-12) Young Teen - (13-16) Juvenile - (17-21) Young Adult - (22-25) Premiddle Age - (26-35) Middle Age - (36-65) Seniors - (66 + over) Members of 13-25 Group (3+4+5) Members of 13-25 Group + 26-65 Group (3,4,5+6,7) Members of 26-65 Group + over 65 group (6,7,+8) Other Combinations Private institutions, companies, corporations Public institutions Combination private + Public institutions (13+14) Named individuals + institutions

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
25	Victim(s) age At time of Crime	46-47	17	Unidentified/not given
			18	Not applicable
26	Number of Criminals	48-49	1-17	See variable 24
			01-90	Use actual number or estimate when ranges are given use midpoint.
			92	Unknown
			91 99	More than 90 Indeterminate number (use this category when criminal or victim is an institution)
27	Number of Victims	50-51	93	Not applicable
			01-99	See variable 26
28	Criminal(s) Ethnic/Racial/ Religious Tag	52-53	01	Use narrowest identification. If name, address, or organizational identification is an obvious one, identify accordingly.
			02	White
			03	Black
			04	Oriental
			05	Canadian Indian
			06	East Indian
			07	Jewish
			08	Southern European (Italian, Greek, etc.)
			09	
			10	

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
29	Victim(s) Ethnic/Racial/ Religious Tag	54-55	08	Other
			09	Mixed
			10	No identity tags or nothing mentioned.
			11	Institution
			12	Not applicable.
30 109	Criminal(s) Occupation	56-57 58-59 60-61	01-12	See variable 28
			01	Three occupations may be coded. Retired people should be coded for most prominent past occupation. Code only one occupation per person. Professional/technical (college degree required, generally) Business-managers/union officials Politician/bureaucrat/police, clergy, career army
			02	Clerical/sales
			03	Skilled workers/trades/farmers/military personnel
			04	Nonskilled workers/ex-taxi drivers
			05	Students
			06	Blank
			07	Not identified
			08	Conflict
			09	Homemaker
			10	Unemployed
			11	
12				

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
33	Victim(s) Occupation	62-63		
		64-65		
		66-67	0-9	See variables 30, 31, 32
36	Previous crime Record	68		Code only fact of mention. Do not code details of previous alleged offences.
			01	None
			02	Some mention (1-3 sentences)
			03	A lot (4 or more sentences)
			04	Mention as recidivist - some
			05	Mention as recidivist - a lot
			06	Mention as on parole - some
			07	Mention as on parole - a lot
			08	Nothing mentioned
			09	Not applicable
37	Crime Neighborhood	69		Note: Use discretion on sentence measures. One very long, packed with detail sentence may be counted as two normal sentences. Two very brief, sparsely descriptive sentences may be counted as one.
			01	Code smallest identifiable source.
			02	City
			03	Suburb
			04	Nonurban
			05	Downtown
				Rim of city core - Roughly to midpoint between core and boundary.
				Out rim of city - midpoint to boundary (from 40,000 outward in Vancouver)

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
38	Site of Crime	70-71	07	Mixed
			08	Not identified
			09	Not applicable
			01	School and schoolyard
			02	Church
			03	Home
			04	Street or alley
			05	Outdoors, parks, fields
			06	Factory
			07	Store/restaurant
			08	Government building
			09	Transportation facility, car, truck
			10	Mixed
			11	Not identified
			12	Prison/other correctional facility
			13	Tavern
			14	Shopping center (if labelled)
			15	Public housing
			16	High rise - flats to 6 stores
			17	Office building
			18	Warehouse and storage
			19	Sports facility
			20	Bank/currency exchange/Brinks
			21	Hotel/motel/transient facility
			22	Retirement home
			23	Gas station
			24	Museum/theater
			25	Hospital
			26	Parking lot

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
39	Details of Injuries	72	27	Lake/ocean
			28	Apartment building, 7+ stories
			29	Vacant building
			30	Not applicable
			31	Other
40	Details of Crime execution	73	01	None
			02	Some mention (1-3 sentences)
			03	A lot (more than 3 sentences)
			04	Not applicable. (See note for variable 36)
41	Details of Apprehension Measures/arrest	74	01	Refers to who did what, where, with what tools.
			02	None
			03	Some mention (1-3 sentences)
			04	A lot (more than 3 sentences) Not applicable (See note for variable 36)
41	Details of Apprehension Measures/arrest	74	01	Code only if there is description of specific actions taken to bring about arrest, regardless of success or failure
			02	None
			03	Some mention (1-3 sentences)
			04	A lot (more than 3 sentences) (See note for variable 36) Blank

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
42	Apprehension Success rate	75	01	No arrests, bookings, preliminary charges
			02	Arrests, bookings, preliminary charges for some suspects
			03	Arrests, bookings, preliminary charges for all suspects
			04	Arrests and so forth and release pending trial - some suspects
			05	Arrests and so forth and release pending trial - all suspects
			06	Mixture - No suspects released
			07	Mixture - some suspects released
			08	Suspect detained but not charged
			09	Suspect deceased or in hospital
			10	Nothing mentioned.
	Details of Pretrial Action	76		Code for discussion of such matters as indictments, grand jury action, pretrial detention, jury selection, bail question, trial delays, lawyers motions, and so on.
			01	None
			02	Some mention (1-3 sentences)
			03	A lot (more than 3 sentences) (See note for variable 36)
			04	Not applicable.
44	Civil Rights of accused	77-78		Code only if specifically mentioned (for example, double jeopardy, effective council, speedy trial, and so on).

APPENDIX (continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
			01	Police violation charged
			02	Police Protection claimed
			03	Police -mixed action
			04	Court violation charged
			05	Court protection claimed
			06	Court - mixed action
			07	Prison violation charged
			08	Prison protection claimed
			09	Prison - mixed action
			10	Combination - violation charged
			11	Combination - protection claimed
			12	Combination - mixed action
			13	Mass media violation charged
			14	Mass media protection claimed
			15	Mass media - mixed action
			16	Prosecution violation charged
			17	Prosecution - mixed action
			18	Blank
45	Discussion of Courtroom Procedures	79	01	None
			02	Some mention (1-3 sentences)
			03	A lot (more than 3 sentences) (See note for variable 36)
46	Sentence Disposition	80-81	01	Dismissal - innocent/acquitted
			02	Dismissal - insufficient evidence
			03	Dismissal - Technical details (i.e., unfit to stand trial)
			04	Guilty - no penalties (or penalties already served) absolute discharge

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
05				Prison - less than one year (L)
06				Prison - 1-10 years (M)
07				Prison - 11 or more years (H)
08				Prison - indeterminate
09				Hospital commitment/criminally insane
10				Fine - less than \$100 (L)
11				Fine - \$100 - \$10,000 (M)
12				Fine - more than \$10,000 (H)
13				Combinations for individual - low
14				Prison, low fine
15				Combinations for individual - low
16				Prison, medium fine
17				Combinations for individual - low
18				Prison, high fine
19				Combinations for individual - medium
20				Prison, low fine
21				Combinations for individual - medium
22				Prison, medium fine
23				Combinations for individual - medium
				Prison, high fine
				Combinations for individual - high
				Prison, low fine
				Combinations for individual - high
				Prison medium fine
				Combinations for individual - high
				Prison high fine
				Group combinations - low and medium
				Prison
				Group combinations - medium and high
				Prison

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
			24	Group combinations - low and high prison
			25	Group combinations - low and medium prison + any fine
			26	Group combinations - medium and high prison + any fine
			27	Group combinations - low and high prison + any fine
			28	Parole after serving part of sentence
			29	Other penalties - probation, etc.
			30	Mistrial declare
			31	Death penalty
			32	Not identified - convicted, but sentence was not identified
			33	Not given, but on appeal
			34	Retrial ordered
			35	Appeal denied
			36	Freed after serving sentence
			37	Pardon requested
			38	Pardon granted
			39	Appeal denied for some, granted for others
			40	Parole denied
			41	Retrial under consideration
			42	Innocent on appeal
			43	Guilty on Appeal
			44	Sentence commutation considered
			45	Death penalty considered
			46	Case has yet to go to trial - pending/or trial is still going on
			47	Innocent by way of insanity
			48	Blank

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation		
47	Overall Evaluation of Police system of Mentioned in Article (not necessarily reflecting the papers point of view)	82-83	49	Life (25 years)		
			50	Suspended Sentence		
			51	Stay of Proceedings		
						Code only if specific evaluations are made
					01	Good job - stable
					02	Bad job - stable
					03	Mixed - stable
					04	Good job - declining
					05	Good job - improving
					06	Mixed - declining
					07	Mixed - improving
					08	Mixed - mixed
					09	Bad job - declining
			10	Bad job - improving		
			11	Bad job - mixed		
			12	Blank		
48	Overall Evaluation of Court System as Mentioned in the Article	84-85		Code only if specific evaluation are made		
			01	Good job - stable		
			02	Bad job - stable		
			03	Mixed - stable		
			04	Good job - declining		
			05	Good job - improving		
			06	Mixed - declining		
			07	Mixed - improving		
			08	Mixed - mixed		
			09	Bad job - declining		

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
49	Overall Evaluation of Correctional System as Mentioned	86-87	10	Bad job - improving.
			11	Bad job - mixed
			12	Blank
				Code only if specific evaluations are made
			01	Good job - stable
			02	Bad job - stable
			03	Mixed - stable
			04	Good job- declining
			05	Good job - improving
			06	Mixed - declining
			07	Mixed - improving
			08	Mixed - mixed
09	Bad job - declining			
10	Bad job - improving			
11	Bad job - mixed			
12	Blank			
	When juvenile correctional system is involved (without mention of general court system), use the following subcategories:			
13	Good job - stable			
14	Bad job - stable			
15	Mixed - stable			
16	Good job - declining			
17	Good job - improving			
18	Mixed - declining			
19	Mixed - improving			
20	Mixed - mixed			

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
50	Overall Evaluation of Crime Danger	88-89	21	Bad job - declining
			22	Bad job - improving
			23	Bad job - mixed
			01	Code only if specifically mentioned or if statistics are given, indicating trends
			02	Serious crime (A,B,C) on increase
			03	Serious crime (A,B,C) on decrease
			04	Serious crime (A,B,C) stable
			05	Serious crime (A,B,C) mixed change
			06	All crime on increase
			07	All crime on decrease
			08	All crime stable
			09	All crime, mixed change
			10	Lesser crime (D,E) on increase
			11	Lesser crime (D,E) on decrease
			12	Lesser crime (D,E) stable
13	Lesser crime (D,E) mixed change			
51	Discussion of Crime Prevention Devices	90-91	14	Serious crime on rise, lesser crime on decline
			15	Serious crime decreasing, lesser crime rising
				Nothing mentioned, or blank
			01	General Discussion
			02	Specific how to advice for citizens
			03	Societal programs - to remedy economic causes of crime
			04	Societal programs involving high crime

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
			05	potential population (for example summer jobs, recreational facilities, job training) Stress on penalties/danger of crime commission
			06	Witness protection
			07	Citizen watch groups
			08	Nothing mentioned
			09	Other
52	Discussion of Criminal Justice Policies	92-93	01	Code "mixed" if no evaluation is provided, or if both positive and negative evaluations are given
			02	Gun control - pro
			03	Gun control - con
			04	Gun control - mixed
			05	Death penalty - pro
			06	Death penalty - con
			07	Death penalty - mixed
			08	Fixed sentences - pro
			09	Fixed sentences - con
			10	Fixed sentences - mixed
			11	Parole reform - pro
			12	Parole reform - con
			13	Parole reform - mixed
			14	Plea bargaining - pro
			15	Plea bargaining - con
			16	Plea bargaining - mixed
			17	Marijuana decriminalization - pro
			18	Marijuana decriminalization - con
				Marijuana decriminalization - mixed

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
19				Prostitution decriminalization - pro
20				Prostitution decriminalization - con
21				Prostitution decriminalization - mixed
22				Granting repeat continuances - pro
23				Granting repeat continuances - con
24				Granting repeat continuances - mixed
25				Granting immunity from prosecution - pro
26				Granting immunity from prosecution - con
27				Granting immunity from prosecution - mixed
28				Free press/fair trial - pro
29				Free press/fair trial - con
30				Free press/fair trial - mixed
31				Prison reform - pro
32				Prison reform - con
33				Prison reform - mixed
34				Use of detector tests - pro
35				Use of detector tests - con
36				Use of detector tests - mixed
37				Change in criminal law - greater
38				Change in criminal law - less
39				Change in criminal law - mixed
40				Compensation for crime victims - pro
41				Compensation for crime victims - con
42				Compensation for crime victims - mixed
43				Right of wife to prosecute husband for "attack" - pro
44				Right of wife to prosecute husband for "attack" - con

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
			45	Right of wife to prosecute husband for "attack" - mixed
			46	Rape laws/prosecution reform - pro
			47	Rape laws/prosecution reform - mixed
			48	Rape laws/prosecution reform - con
			49	Nothing mentioned or blank
53	Novelty of story	94		Use this category to indicate an unfolding story of specific crimes and court cases. Do not use it to indicate repeat discussions of policy issues such as free press - fair trial, death penalty merits, and so on, unless they are discussed in connection with a specific case. New story (to coder's best knowledge) Update of existing story - no major new developments Update of existing story - major new developments
			01	Maximum sentence
			02	Minimum sentence
			03	Maximum fine
			04	Minimum fine
			05	Maximum fine plus maximum sentence
			06	Minimum fine plus minimum sentence
			07	Any kind of penalty mentioned - no reference made to maximum or minimum
			08	Nothing mentioned
54	Discussion of possible penalties that might be imposed if the defendant is found guilty	95		

APPENDIX (Continued)

Variable	Name	Column	Code	Explanation
			09	Blank - use if penalty was mentioned in variable 46
55	Type of Story	96	01	Hard crime news article
			02	Non-hard crime news article

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