

Femicide Depictions in the Media:
A Content Analysis

Submitted by
Allison K. Mercer

Criminal Justice & Sociology

To
The Honors College
Oakland University

In partial fulfillment of the
requirement to graduate from
The Honors College

Mentor: Wendi Johnson, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work & Criminal Justice
Oakland University

March 31st, 2019

Abstract

This thesis project aimed to discover new information regarding femicide reports in the media. A majority of young adults today stay up to date on current news through online sources, which is why understanding how media plays a pivotal role in shaping society's perceptions is pivotal. Drawing on feminist and rational choice theories, I examined three online sources from different political backgrounds to examine what key demographic terms were used to describe femicide and look for evidence of victim-blaming by using a mixed methods approach. Findings indicate the conservative source, *The Washington Times*, published two articles with indirect victim-blaming verbiage compared to zero found within the other two sources. As the media holds the power to influence viewers opinions, this research discusses how accurate reporting without bias can assist in bringing the social issue of femicide to the forefront.

Keywords

femicide, intimate partner violence, homicide, demographics

Introduction

The media plays a significant role in modern day society as they dictate what issues will be publicized and what information will be shared. This thesis investigated the extent of femicide reports among three varying media sources. The purpose of this study is to analyze media portrayal of femicide to identify probable differences between portrayal based on victims and offender demographics. Text analysis of demographic characteristics of those involved will be taken into account, to recognize probable media differences among sources across the political spectrum. This study builds on prior work that examined media reports in specific cities, by gathering data from national news sources. This work contributes to femicide research, by studying reports framed by gender and how this intersects with other demographic categories. This research will take a step forward by comparing media sources depictions of femicide in addition to demographics, to identify the role media plays in shaping society's perceptions. According to data records, in the United States on average, 16,000 people are victims of homicides annually. Of these individuals, the majority are male victims, however one fourth of these crimes are perpetrated against women (Taylor & Jasinski, 2011). Compared to men at 3%, women are murdered by an intimate partner one third of the time (Fox & Zawitz, 2007). Though extensive research is devoted to homicide and gendered relationships, there is little recent literature on the media's portrayal beyond this sole demographic. Victim blaming offers another perspective into this research, identified as placing blame on the females themselves for their situations or outcomes, to help determine whether sources report without bias.

The first section of this analysis provides an overview of the current research on femicide. Discussion of past studies regarding femicide data, findings and prior conclusions will be stated. The gaps in femicide research will be made evident, to understand why this study is necessary and will attempt to fill said gaps. After a summary of previous literature, the purpose

of this study and why this issue needs further research is addressed. Following this section, the research questions will be stated. Next, I begin by breaking down the current study's design followed by the data collection process. The theoretical framework will provide two opposing theories, which will be defined to offer more than one perspective on the data. Data analysis will follow, breaking down both the quantitative and qualitative findings. A discussion will bring forth the current interventions aimed at reducing femicide and whether they are successful or not. The limitations of this research will assist in proposing future research recommendations, concluding with an overview of the study.

Prior Research on Femicide

Almost four decades have passed since the term femicide originated in 1976. Femicide is defined as “the killing of a woman by a male intimate partner” (Dawson & Gartner, 1998, p.338). For years, researchers have focused on intimate partner violence as a trail of evidence that can lead to homicide of women. By analyzing domestic violence death reports, literature has found a vast majority of intimate partner killings could be considered predictable and therefore preventable with appropriate interventions (Dawson, 2017). As protective measures and formal interventions have been shown to help lower femicide rates and reduce domestic violence, they are worth studying. For the purpose of this study, new sources will be analyzed to identify whether they sufficiently highlight the victim and perpetrator relationship to identify whether they minimize intimate partner femicide or not. Understanding intimate partner violence does carry weight when looking into reasons behind the murder of women, therefore analysis of this phenomenon will assist in the literature.

Prominent research throughout the past decade has mainly focused on the act of femicide and the violence involved, rather than how it is portrayed through media sources. Within these selected media sources obtained via Sociological Abstracts and SAGE Publications, those of

which discuss media, some focus on murder-suicide (Nikunin, 2011) and femicide relations to domestic violence (Gillespie et al., 2013) rather than demographic characteristics of those involved. Richards et al. (2013) viewed how cases and their news coverage were defined within the media outlets. Though this research filled previous gaps in literature regarding media portrayal and victim perpetrator relationship, it didn't delve into those involved and their characteristics, leaving much more to explore. The following research will attempt to analyze media portrayals of femicide, as well as how these sources describe the perpetrators and victims based on demographics, including sex, marital status, race/ethnicity, age, perpetrator relationship to victim and parental status, To continue the path on this type of research one must discuss race and gender, in correlation to maternal status within media portrayal. This information is valuable as it shapes public awareness of social issues, transforms perceptions of the victims and offenders, and influences policy making.

One can analyze the data based on these defining traits to understand the social phenomenon of femicide and learn how to protect women through prevention and awareness. By specifically viewing these variables, a pursuit to fill the gap in literature of studying victim and perpetrator demographics on femicide will be attempted. The impact of this research will influence the sociological perceptions of the term femicide within the criminal justice field, as well as reflecting on whether media outlets are able to interpret their overall accuracy of these publicized events and the influence it has on their followers. A societal benefit can be predicted, as this new knowledge and understanding will enlighten the public and those affected by these crimes to define them correctly and those involved with dignity. This new knowledge will lead to further research of this issue within the United States, expanding the field beyond what is currently known.

Purpose of the Current Study

Many argue the media helps shape peoples' views of the world, affecting "what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil" (Kellner, 1995 p. 24). With the prevalence of media and technology in everyday life, many people rely on media sources to gather their information about national events, which unknowingly shapes their perception of people and events. The purpose of the study is to analyze how female homicides (as their referred to in articles; ie. femicide) are presented to the public within three different media sources. History has shown women are often portrayed as subordinate to men, representing hierarchal gender roles as discussed in feminist theories. This diminishes the importance of such an issue, often placing blame on the female themselves for their situations, known as victim blaming. Unfortunately, "the media send a clear message to consumers that violence against women is not a serious crime, that women are responsible (or partly responsible) for their victimization, or both" (Richards, Gillespie & Smith 2011, p. 179). As law enforcement is the gatekeeper to criminal incidents, the media is the story-teller of what people hear. Word choice alone can greatly affect how someone interprets an event, who is to blame and how one should feel. Framing femicide as an individual issue rather than public concern contributes to diminishing the importance of paying attention to such an issue. To contribute to the lack of research concerning femicide depiction in the media, this study will analyze articles from three different news sources from January 1st, 2018- August 31st, 2019. The following research questions were used to interpret the findings:

Research Question 1: Did different sources vary in terms of their portrayal of femicide?

Research Question 2: Did news coverage vary among sources for what types of demographics were reported?

Research Question 3: Did news coverage use direct or indirect victim-blaming language?

Theoretical Framework

Feminist Theory

A feminist lens attempts to explain violence against women based on structured relationships. This theory considers gendered social arrangements, male-dominated culture, power and gender when explaining violence towards women (Taylor & Jasinski, 2011). This theoretical perspective offers insight to the results from this study, in an effort to explain why femicide is the seventh leading cause of death among women and how gendered power dynamics can help explain this statistic (Taylor & Jasinski, 2011). Few studies on femicide have used the feminist perspective to interpret their findings. Feminist theory has helped inform previous work by identifying both direct and indirect victim-blaming as a variable in literature involving crime and social issues. In two previous news articles, victim blaming often minimizes the issue of femicide to an individual rather than a societal issue (Meyers 1994). Direct victim-blaming comes in a variety of forms, such as commenting on what the victim was wearing at the time, whether they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs and/or their previous sexual history. Indirect victim-blaming can be identified in a variety of forms as well; excusing the offender, blaming a victim's surroundings or occupation, normalizing the event, using victim/offender relationship to lessen the crime or suggesting another social problem as the blame (Gillespie et al., 2013). Current researchers provide evidence in their studies to identify this as an ongoing issue almost two decades later. Feminist theory additionally focuses on the relationship between the ideology of male dominance and the structural forces impeding women's access to resources (Taylor & Jasinski, 2011). Though both men and women can be victims of intimate partner , for this research one could justify focusing on women. Research shows that women tend to perpetrate IPV at higher rates than men but much of this violence is minor. When we consider the most serious forms of IPV, women are more likely to be victims of homicide (Johnson et al., 2019). Supplementary, femicide research has shown often a history of domestic violence in

intimate partner violence cases resulting in murder. Finally, “A feminist perspective would argue that advances in gender equity, therefore, should decrease the risk for femicide as men lose the ability to control women” (Taylor, 2011 p. 346).

Rational Choice Theory

A key element of rational choice theory is the notion that humans are rational actors, who make decisions following consideration of the potential costs and rewards. As evident in the label, this theory assumes humans use rational choice on how to act when posed with a question. This multi-level theory is complex, though the concept of both individual values and structural elements affecting an individual’s actions can be used to interpret femicide research (Hetcher & Kanazawa, 1997). Due to the difficulty of measuring individual values, structural restraints offer better data to analyze due to them existing externally. Critics argue rational choice is not relevant to gender distinctions. Some studies, however, have shown rational choices are made based on gender in the workforce, education system, income status and victims of crime, just to name a few. For the purposes of the current study, rational choice can be broken down into a reward and punishment agenda. This theory is used to explain criminal behavior by standing behind a maximize reward or profit and minimize consequences or the risk associated. Due to the lack of protective measures sought out by female victims of IPV, offenders may rationalize these crimes as having a low risk associated since only an estimated 30% of these IPV incidents are formally reported to police (Broidy, Albright & Denman, 2016). When looking at protective orders, offenders may continue to be violent if they haven’t received a repercussion for their direct experience and actions, known as punishment avoidance. It is argued that this concept may cause an increase in the IPV severity level, which can lead to homicide, since past illegal activity has gone without punishment creating the idea that the offender may be immune to punishment.

Method

Design

In order to carry out this research and improve on prior literature, a content analysis was used to analyze newspaper coverage on reported homicides within the set time frame. A mixed methods approach assisted in improving the study, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Previous research follows a similar design, as a content analysis is convenient for “identifying, organizing, indexing, and retrieving data” (Berg, 2004 p. 225). Quantitatively, this allows the research to both identify demographic reporting types among different sources and identify possible victim-blaming verbiage. An analysis of word choice and victim and offender descriptions within each article assists in underlying the latent content involved in each incident. The different political skews are used to help take account for the possible variance in articles reported or what characteristics are identified by each media source in an attempt to decrease the limitations to the study.

Data Collection

Initially, the data was gathered via publicly available online national media sources, one of conservative background, one liberal and one moderate skew; *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times* and *ABC News*. Analysis of these three sources was conducted over an eight-month time frame, January 1st, 2018 through August 31st, 2018. The next step was to exclude all cases that could not be identified as femicides. This includes school shooting incidents, though a female could’ve been killed these are classified under a different label and therefore do not offer assistance in the purpose of this research study. It is noted how important the research of school shootings is in present day however, due to these incidents containing their own complexities with multiple victims and varying motives, they do not assist this current research study. The homicides of female children is also excluded, as the cases do not fit the identified region of this study with females ages 18+. The final sample of incidents classified as femicide cases consisted

of 40 total articles; 9 cases in *The New York Times*, 20 cases in *ABC News* and 11 cases in *The Washington Times*. When eliminating overlap articles, or news reports on the same incident, 35 articles of different cases remain. When deciding which overlap article to keep for the overall data collection, the source that reported the most demographic variables were selected. When separating the sources and analyzing qualitative findings, overlap articles were included as they offer different data compared to the media outlet. Two of these cases were published by each of the three sources, though all contained differences in what demographics were published, which one can continue to see when comparing the sources to each other.

Records were kept on the amount of reports regarding femicide and were noted along with demographic characteristics of both the victim and perpetrator in an Excel spreadsheet based on date of the incident. These demographics were separated by sex (male, female), marital status (married, single, and widowed), race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic African-American, Hispanic, Other, Not Reported), age (18-25 as young adult, 25+ for adult), perpetrator relationship to victim (husband, ex-boyfriend, son, other known, not reported) and parental status (kids, no kids or unknown and type of crime). Additionally, distinctions were made between homicides involving a single female victim, homicides involving multiple victims with at least one female victim, and incidents involving murder-suicide which is identified as at least one female victim followed by offender suicide. A record of the total number of femicide reports per source will be itemized along with the demographics. Data will be compiled of femicide reports among all cases found total, while comparisons will be made across each source. Once quantitative data is collected, qualitative analysis examining the underlying themes will follow noting common themes and words in another spreadsheet, separated by source. This section will include insight into whether any of the sources used direct or indirect victim-blaming

language. Following all the data collection and analysis a discussion and conclusion section will discuss possible implications and identify areas for future research.

Analysis

Quantitative Results

As seen by Table 1, of the 35 different incidents reported, the majority 45.7% of the femicides involved one female victim. The second form included murder-suicide, where all incidents contained at least one female victim followed by the perpetrators suicide at 11.5%. All four of these cases were reported by *ABC News*, with each incident containing more than one victim. The remaining category was a classification of femicide with additional homicides included, which can mean additional victims of either gender, adult or children at 42.8%. An overview of the characteristics of femicides reported among all cases is provided below in Table 2. Following research collection, it became evident parental status and marital status of the offender and victim was not reported enough in all of the sources to offer a combined analysis. In reference to race/ethnicity, *The Washington Times* tended to opt out of reporting this demographic when publishing their articles, which can be proposed to be due to their skewed conservative political affiliation. This source chose not to report race/ethnicity of either the victim or the preparator in a majority of the articles, with the exception of the one incident that was reported to be racially motivated.

When analyzing the sources individually, a few different markers tend to stand out. *The Washington Times* in particular only offers short articles regarding information of female homicide. Each article obtained includes no more than 15 sentences, truly focusing on reporting minimal information relevant to the crime rather than personal information associated with each case. Of the 11 articles obtained from this source, all contained offender(s) and

victim(s) age and gender. Occasionally, this source would identify victim/offender relationship, while rarely suggesting marital status of either. Key terms used within each article included death, dead or killed when referring to the victim(s).

Compared to the previous source, *ABC News* offered the most information of each article in regard to demographics. This source reported the most articles within the data collection time frame (n= 20). *ABC News* reported on race/ethnicity consistently compared to the other two media sources analyzed. Parental status was identified frequently for both victims and offenders, or it would report it as unknown rather than not speaking on the topic at all. This source is the only one to comment on domestic violence involved in the crimes or previous mental health issues of the offender and/or victim. These publishing's tended to refer to the victim(s) using words of "loss," "unbelievable" or "tragic death." This source writes stories on these crimes, using descriptive adjectives, interviewing close family or neighbors and showing visual images of the victims and/or crime scene. Of all the sources *ABC News* offers the most complete stories of these incidents, from what life was like for the victims before the homicide to how those close the victims reacted.

The New York Times tended to fall in the middle of the other two sources. It reported race and age among victims and offenders, while offering more information than *The Washington Post*, but less than *ABC News*. *The New York Times* was the only sources to report an incident involving a transgender woman, which can suggest neglect by the other two sources, showing marginalization of transgender femicides. Victim/offender relationship, marital status and parental status were all reported intermittently, while offender and victim race/ethnicity was reported in 5 of 9 varying articles. Though this source tends to write a medium amount of information on each article compared to the other two sources, these writers will share a few photos of victim or offender, but exclude testimonies from outside sources such as police,

investigators or bystanders. When describing these crimes, they refer to victims as killed, offenders as convicted and while occasionally use the term abused when applicable to certain incidents.

Table 1. Distribution of Types of Incident Reported Among All Sources

Types of Femicide (n = 3)	Percent of Articles (n = 35)
Femicide (One Female Victim)	45.7
Femicide/ Perpetrator Suicide	11.5
Femicide with Additional Homicide Victims	42.8

Table 2. Characteristics of Femicides in the Sample

Case Characteristic	Percent (n = 35)
Age of Victim	
18- 25	32.7
25+	32.7
Not Reported	34.5
Race/ Ethnicity of Victim	
Non-Hispanic White	9.1
Non- Hispanic African American	10.9
Hispanic	7.2
Other	5.7
Not Reported	67
Race/Ethnicity of Perpetrator	
Non-Hispanic White	12.5
Non-Hispanic African American	12.5
Hispanic	5
Not Reported	70

Perpetrator Relationship to Victim	
Husband	7.5
Ex-Boyfriend	2.5
Son	15
Acquaintance	22.5
Stranger	15
Not Reported	37.5

Qualitative Results: Victim Blaming

Within the data analyzed for this research, direct victim-blaming language did not appear in any of the three sources. As the media tends to be many people's present-day source of information on events, it is positive to see that none of the media sources the author analyzed in this study appeared to use direct victim-blaming vocabulary. A few examples of indirect victim-blaming could be identified in two separate articles. Per feminist theory insight, victim-blaming language has shown to diminish the importance of violence against women and causes revictimization. One article published by *The Washington Times* didn't directly blame the victim herself, but rather the fact that she was "alone by choice," on the golf course playing a round of golf to get ready for a college tournament. This indirect verbiage makes readers question the victim and why she chose to be alone. Rather than blame the offender for his actions, viewers now are thinking about how the victim could've made safer choices and how she may be partly responsible for her own victimization. Additionally, the end of the article referenced how she was killed by a homeless man, then addressed the growing social issue of the homeless population. This shifted the focus of the article away from femicide to another social issue, again reducing the importance of this phenomenon.

Another article by *The Washington Times* identified the female victims' profession, as a prostitute. Though this is just presenting a fact, the article briefly discussed the "danger" of working in such a profession. As no other article by this source discussed the victim's

occupation, this comment constitutes as a form of indirect victim-blaming. This is an example of minimizing the offenders' action by focusing on the victim's choice of employment. Regardless of the possible scenarios, personal choices or life events that may have caused someone to hold this occupation, readers now hold their personal biases of prostitution against the victim. This article indirectly made it seem that the victims chose this profession, knowing the possible dangers, so therefore she is partially to blame for her death. This choice in words once again frames femicide as an individual issue, rather than a societal concern.

Discussion

Victim Services

In studies conducted by Brody, Albright & Denman (2016) and Messing et al. (2017), deadly violence against women cases have been analyzed in risk assessment models, showing those murdered by an intimate partner often showed warning signs prior to the homicide. By identifying the severity and frequency of prior violence in the relationship, researchers have found femicide to often be predictable, therefore preventable (Johnson et al., 2019). As a variety of crimes take a prevention approach, including domestic violence and intimate partner violence for preventing future victimization, formal sanctions are used as a deterrent. Service for victims may be widely used if victims often knew where to turn or were guided to the next step. Often, victims find it difficult to know what step should be taken next or how to complete it properly. Dependent on the type of domestic violence, one can turn to shelters, receive Sexual Assault Response Team assistance for medical exams, or speak to a victim advocate in their area. Too often, services are unknown to the communities who need them most, which is why awareness is pivotal to these organizations to assist more victims.

Protective Orders

When looking solely at intimate partner violence cases involving women, a variety of formal intervention options are available. According to Broidy et al. (2016), arrests in domestic violence cases have shown deterrent effects, though they decrease overtime. Civil protection orders are dependent on the level of order received, whether temporary or extended. When looking at these two formal interventions combined some studies have found no difference, though police intervention data appears largely inconclusive in past research. As states vary in the types of orders or levels they can enforce, this makes it difficult to compare exact types within certain states. Diving deeper into these orders, a variety of provisions may be added and possibly protect more than just the direct victim. Additionally, judges are given some discretion when deciding cases, which makes data subjective and difficult to analyze. Politically, protection orders tend to stay out of the spotlight. Domestic violence, in contrast, is something that has swayed back and forth in public opinion polls throughout time. Identifying and resolving systemic problems in the procedures for service and enforcement of protection orders needs to be made a priority. According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2003), “economic consequences include eight million missed days of work, a loss of 32,000 full-time jobs, and a loss of 5.6 million days of household productivity as a direct result of domestic violence.” This issue is not isolated to just direct victims and their family, but rather the U.S. economy as a whole.

Protective orders were created as a tool available to domestic violence victims to reduce the likelihood of future abuse or intimate partner violence murders (Zeoli, Frattaroli, Roskam & Herrera, 2019). Often, these offenders show forms of physical violence prior than the murder. In an effort to reduce the rate of prevalence, an exponential growth in formal interventions has occurred over the past 40 years. As stated, approximately 7 million people are assaulted by an intimate partner annually. Within this population, only an estimated 30% of these incidents are

formally reported to police and 42-50% of men who have protective orders against them, violate them (Messing, O'Sullivan, Cavanaugh, Webster & Campbell, 2017). If more victims of domestic violence reported the incidents and sought out a formal intervention such as a protective order, one can hypothesize a decrease in the rates of IPV femicide, with the subjective factor of violations. Future research needs to analyze why a majority of those who are victims of domestic violence don't seek out legal protection. To further understand, data on the legal system structure needs to identify the strengths and weaknesses of protective orders. The goal of protective orders is to protect the victims and advocate for their needs to keep themselves and their families safe. Research shows initially these orders offer protection however, it deteriorates over time. The long-term goal needs to be life-long protection for victims to decrease both violence against women and femicide.

Intervention with Violent Offenders

Men are far more likely to commit violent crimes than women, as identified within the field of crime prevention and the prevalence of research towards interventions within male populations. Posick, Lasko & Tremblay (2018) identified strategies that offer successful violence prevention. Short-term solutions tend to focus on problematic youth, but only offers momentary solutions rather than life-long assistance. More recently, significant pushes have been made to decrease IPV by advancing policy and program efforts directed at perpetrators. Currently, new programs have become a "key component in the adjudication process for perpetrators" (Morrison, Burke, Cluss, Hawker, Miller, George, Bicehouse, Fleming, Wright, & Chang, 2018), referred to as batterer intervention programs (BIP's). The goal of these programs is rehabilitation via psycho-educational and therapeutic approaches to decrease IPV recidivism. Though studies have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs, quantitative research tends to report both mixed reports or little evidence of decreased recidivism rates. Qualitative literature

tends to show more promising results, when studying behavioral changes among perpetrators, intergroup dynamics and perspectives on what IPV really is. Following the findings from Morrison et al. (2018), perpetrators in their study reported recognizing their manipulation with their partners, understanding the varying forms of IPV and internalizing the knowledge they gained within their batterer intervention program.

In recent years, with the assistance of advocates in the women's movement, domestic violence has become more accepted as a widespread issue. With increased recognition came new developments of intervention programs, demonstrating the importance of reducing offenders from continued offending. That being said, male offender intervention programs lack the funding in comparison to those who serve to assist women and children. Similar to other forms of treatment, interventions which specifically match the needs of the individual offender tend to be more effective (Day, Chung, O'Leary, Carson, 2009). When looking into male domestic violence offender groups, those who start the program, but do not finish are left with a higher-risk of re-offending, compared to those who do not start. Continuing with Day et al., (2009) results, the longer time it takes for an offender to receive a sentence and begin the program varies by correctional services, which greatly effects the success rates of those who enter the program. In regards to femicide, decreasing recidivism on IPV offenders can be hypothesized to decrease the overall amount of femicides within the U.S., placing importance on interventions and rehabilitation programs available to violent offenders.

Study Limitations

The current study has certain limitations that should be noted. First, the lack of overall reporting from the three national news sources of the murder of females makes it difficult to use this research as a generalization for femicide patterns nationwide. Further analysis of a wider

time frame to include more cases can increase data reliability and help determine what factors contribute to certain cases being included in publishing's of these three sources.

Another limitation is based on the current research using data solely from newspaper sources. The writers of these articles may decide what information they choose to include for publication and how their personal viewpoint may reflect certain perspectives of crime. Future research on the topic of media and femicide may decide to compare police report information to that published on the same case, to analyze how the information transformed from a report to an article and what was excluded. The intention of this study was not to generalize towards all newspaper sources, but rather identify how victims and the offenders of femicides are portrayed to the public with consideration to political affiliations of each source.

Conclusion

The media plays a pivotal role in how people understand and perceive each other, societal events and social issues. Regardless of the news sources political affiliation, these stories must be published without bias, allowing citizens to determine their own thoughts on events. An accurate depiction of cases, without victim blaming language, will assist in bringing to light the importance of femicide as a social issue, rather than an individual's circumstance. The media occupies a specific influence in raising awareness for issues nationwide. Ideally, coverage of femicide in the media would utilize expert perspectives in the field, in an effort to decrease errors in the way it is contextualized to the public. It is hoped that this research will shed light on the importance of training journalists to properly report violence against women in the media, while encouraging awareness on this social issue to guide future policy.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Wendi Johnson, for offering up her time and expertise to mentor this thesis. Additionally, to all her professors at Oakland University, she is forever grateful to have been taught by such a dedicated, inspiring and passionate faculty.

Biographical Note

Allison K. Mercer is a student in her Senior year at Oakland University, where she is currently a double major in Criminal Justice and Sociology. She transferred to Oakland University in the fall of 2016, receiving the Phi Theta Kappa and Distinguish Transfer scholarships. Her research interests include a wide array of subjects within Criminology, with a minor focus in sociological aspects. Her interests include children within the criminal justice system as she held an internship and holds current employment as a family and victim advocate with the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County, along with human trafficking, recidivism and femicide. She is a role model within the community, as she coached a varsity high school dance team outside of being a full-time student all four years, taking them to Nationals twice. Her passion for the field of criminal justice holds true, as she understands the importance of kids in society keeping a clean record, exemplifying this herself in all areas. She has previously held a teaching apprenticeship under Dr. Paino, for Computer Application Statistics, as well as a similar position under Dr. Murphy for the Sociology of Mental Illness. She was selected to be a Peer Adviser in 2018, serving on the first committee established in the Honors College at Oakland University. She was also inducted into the International Sociology Honor Society, Alpha Kappa Delta, as well as Golden Key, placing her within the top 15% of her class. She received the student paper award nominated by her departments' faculty review board, The Honors College Scholarship for 2018 and is currently the President of Sociology Club on campus, serving since fall 2017. Her most recent accomplishment is receiving the Donald Warren Outstanding Student Award selected by Oakland University's Committee in Spring 2019.

References

- Berg, B. L. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Broidy, L., Albright, D., & Denman, K. (2016). Deterring future incidents of intimate partner violence: Does type of formal intervention matter? *Violence Against Women, 22*(9), 1113-1133.
- Vives-Cases, J. T.-D.-D. (2009). The effect of television news items on intimate partner violence murders. *European Journal of Public Health, Volume 19, Issue 6*, Pages 592-596.
- Dawson, M., Gartner, R. (1998). Differences in the characteristics of intimate femicides: The role of relationship state and status. *Homicide Studies, 2*, 378-399.
- Dawson, M. (Ed.). (2017). *Domestic homicides and death reviews: An international perspective*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Day, A., Chung, D., O'Leary, P., Carson E. (2009). Programs for Men who Perpetrate Domestic Violence: An Examination of the Issues Underlying the Effectiveness of Intervention Programs. *Journal of Family Violence, 24*(3), 203-212.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2011). *Crime in the United States, 2010* (Calculated from data in Expanded Homicide Data Tables 2 and 10). Washington, DC: *U.S. Department of Justice*. Retrieved from <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/tables/10shrtbl02.xls>
- Fox, J. A., & Zawitz, M. W. (2007). *Homicide trends in the U.S.* Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Gillespie, L. K., Richards, T. N., Givens, E. M., & Dwayne Smith, M. (2013). Framing deadly domestic violence: Why the Media's spin matters in newspaper coverage of femicide. *Violence Against Women, 19*(2), 222-245.

- Hechter, M., & Kanazawa, S. (1997). Sociological Rational Choice Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, 191-214.
- Johnson C., Eriksson E., Mazerolle P. & Wortley R. (2019). Intimate Femicide: The Role of Coercive Control. *Feminist Criminology*, 14(1) 3-23.
- Kellner, D. (1995). Cultural studies, multiculturalism, and media culture. In G. Dines & J. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, race, and class in media: A text reader* (pp. 9-20). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Messing, J. T., O'Sullivan, C. S., Cavanaugh, C. E., Webster, D. W., & Campbell, J. (2017). Are abused Women's protective actions associated with reduced threats, stalking, and violence perpetrated by their male intimate partners? *Violence Against Women*, 23(3), 263-286.
- Meyers, M. (1994). News of battering. *Journal of Communications*, 44(2), 47-63.
- Morrison, P., Burke, J., Cluss, P., Hawker L., Miller, E., George, D., Bicehouse, T., Fleming, R., Wright, K. & Chang J. (2018). The influence of batterer intervention programs on male perpetrators of intimate partner violence: Reports of change in beliefs and behaviors, *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 57:5, 311-329.
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2003). Costs of intimate partner violence against women in the United States. Atlanta, GA: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.
- Posick, C., Lasko, E. & Tremblay R. (2018) On the Need for a Biopsychosocial Victimology: A Foundational Model for Focusing Violence Prevention on Women and Children, *Victims & Offenders*, 13:7, 938-954.
- Richards, T. N., Lane, K. G., & Dwayne Smith, M. (2011). Exploring news coverage of femicide: Does reporting the news add insult to injury? *Feminist Criminology*, 6(3), 178-202.

- Richards, T. N., Lane, K. G., & Dwayne Smith, M. (2014). An examination of the media portrayal of Femicide–Suicides: An exploratory frame analysis. *Feminist Criminology*, 9(1), 24-44.
- Stafford, M. C., & Warr, M. (1993). A Reconceptualization of General and Specific Deterrence. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 30(2), 123–135.
- Taylor, R. (2009). Slain and slandered: A content analysis of the portrayal of femicide in crime news. *Homicide Studies*, 13(1), 21-49.
- Taylor, R., & Jasinski, J. L. (2011). Femicide and the Feminist Perspective. *Homicide Studies*, 15(4), 341–362.
- Vasquez, P. T. (2009, January; 2017/12). What is femicide? 2009, 46+.
- Weil, S. (2017). The advantages of qualitative research in femicide. *Qualitative Sociology Review* 13 (3)
- Zeoli, A. M., Frattaroli, S., Roskam, K., & Herrera, A. K. (2019). Removing firearms from those prohibited from possession by domestic violence restraining orders: A survey and analysis of state laws. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 20(1), 114-125.