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South Africa online media coverage of intimate femicide: a content analysis comparing coverage between 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 November 2016 to 30 April 2017

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Research Title: South Africa online media coverage of intimate femicide: a content analysis comparing coverage between 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 November 2016 to 30 April 2017

A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Public Health

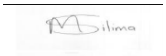
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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____**_____Date: _07/06/2019_**

Abstract

Background: South Africa has one of the highest femicide rates in the world and it is the leading cause of death amongst South African women. The media is key in shaping how people in society think and the manner in which the media reports on issues of femicide has an impact in the way in which society deals with it. Although extreme cases of physical violence such as femicide often make it on the news, it is media coverage of other forms of VAW that are the topic of published research, therefore content analysis on femicide coverage in particular contributes to the gap in the current literature.

Aim: The overall aim of the study was to describe and compare South African online media coverage of Femicide during the periods 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 November 2016 and 30 April 2017.

Methods: A descriptive study utilizing content analysis was carried out. All online news articles available through the Media Monitoring Africa database during the period 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 November 2016 to 30 April 2017 were eligible for inclusion in the study. All articles discussing femicide or making mention of the phenomenon from the two periods were analysed with the aim of ensuring that there was the greatest possible representation during that particular period. Online articles were captured and coded for the 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 periods using Media Monitoring Africa software, Dexter. The content for analysis derived from each item was descriptive and frequency tables and graphs were used to show the frequency and the proportions of the content.

Results: A total of 291 and 141 articles during the 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 period respectively reported on femicide stories. The frequency of femicide coverage in South Africa over the period was very low with majority of the stories in both periods coming from the metropolitan areas and focusing on a handful of key femicide cases that dominated coverage. Two of the dominant stories were of husbands hiring hit men to kill their wives, where the one ended in conviction whilst the other was acquitted for the crime. The quality of reporting across both periods was found to be sub-standard in all indicators under study, lacking critical investigation and provision of context which would place intimate femicide as part of a broader social issue. In terms of how the perpetrators and victims were portrayed results found that there was very limited victim blaming and exonerating the perpetrator for his actions. Consistent with previous research the most widely accessed sources to provide information on the femicide case were from the criminal justice and law enforcement system, and majority of these were male.

Conclusion: This study has shown that although South Africa has excessive rates of intimate femicide the issue is not taken seriously in the media. The research has highlighted that overall coverage of femicide is overly-simplistic, inadequate and portrays distorted representations of the extent and nature of the problem. Societal reactions in particular those of policy makers based on inaccurate media portrayals have the potential to result misguided interventions and strategies in addressing intimate femicide, therefore it is imperative that media portrayal of violence against women represents the true nature of the issue.

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Abbreviations

CSO-Civil Society Organization

GBV - Gender based violence:

GMMP- Global Media Monitoring Project

IWMF - International Women's Media Foundation

IPV-Intimate partner violence

MMA-Media Monitoring Africa

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's

RICADV- Rhodes Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence

SADC- Southern African Development Community

VAW-Violence against women

WHO-World Health Organization

USA-United States of America

Definitions of Terms

1. **Femicide:** the intentional murder of women because they are women. It is also known as female homicide (1)
2. **Gender Based violence**: "any harm that is perpetrated against a person's will that has a negative impact on their physical or psychological health, development and identity of the person because of their gender." The type of violence has its roots in gendered power inequities (2)
3. **Violence against Women:** any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life (2)
4. **Intimate femicide:** "The killing of a woman by an intimate partner. This could be the woman's husband, boyfriend (whether dating or cohabiting), ex-husband (divorced or separated) or ex-boyfriend, same sex partner or a rejected would be-lover (3)
5. **Intimate partner violence:** physical, emotional psychological and sexual abuse inflicted on a female partner either by a current or former male partner (2)
6. **Non-intimate femicide:** killing of a women by a non-partner (stranger/acquaintance/family member) (3)

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) and particularly violence against women (VAW) is extremely widespread globally and is recognized as a public health problem due to its physical and mental impact (4). According to Krantz and Moreno, GBV is defined as "any harm that is perpetrated against a person's will that has a negative impact on their physical or psychological health, development and identity of the person because of their gender" (2). As noted in the definition, GBV does not only refer to physical violence but also psychological violence, including threats and actual acts of physical, sexual or psychological harm (5-7). This type of violence has its roots in gendered power inequities between women and men (2).

Although the focus of GBV is often on women, this is not to say that men are not victims of GBV as well. However greater emphasis is placed on women because they are disproportionately affected and it is often the case that patriarchal societies are structured in ways that often normalize men's power over women (6, 8). Due to the broad definition of GBV, for the purpose of this study we will use the term VAW, in discussing the violence perpetuated against women by virtue of them being women.

A variety of studies have reported on the pervasiveness of VAW and intimate partner violence (IPV) in Africa (8-10). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) intimate partner violence has been reported as one of the most common forms of violence against women (7). The study conducted by Devries and colleagues which looked at data from 141 studies from 81 countries found that a third of women above the age of 15 had experienced IPV in their lifetime (11). The African continent is reported to have some of the highest rates of physical and sexual intimate partner violence in the world, with statistics reporting that 45% of women have experienced one or more episodes of violence (12). The 2013 World Health Organization (WHO) report states that South Africa has one of the highest rates of VAW in the world (3, 8). In South Africa half of the women murdered are said to be killed by their intimate partner (12). Intimate partner violence is described by Gordon (2016) as South Africa's silent public health epidemic despite the progressive reforms, from the legal system to the implementation of the Victim Empowerment Programme (13). One of the major problems of VAW in South Africa is that not only is it normalized in society but also extremely underreported. Survivors of VAW often fear

reporting to the police and other service providers such as doctors and nurses due to the fear of stigma and secondary victimization (12).

As mentioned above IPV is a major public health issue in South Africa. A study conducted by Gender Links found that over 50% of women in Gauteng who had been sampled had experienced some form of GBV at least once in their lifetime (14). Emotional abuse occurred most frequently with 43.7% of women reporting that they had been emotionally abused and 65.2% of men reporting to be perpetrators of emotional abuse. Physical violence was experienced by 33.1% of women and 50.5% of men reporting that they had been perpetrators of physical violence in their lifetime (15).

The role of the media

Media plays a key role in influencing how people think about an array of issues, such as GBV, VAW and intimate partner violence (10). The media is critical in bringing society's attention to issues. Information presented by the media often acts as the point of reference from which society makes sense of issues (10). The media also possesses the power to decide on issues that are worth publicising and being reported on (10). In this way, mass media not only reflects society and the issues therein, but also shapes society by choosing what deserves the public's attention and scrutiny and how those issues are framed. Furthermore it is often the media that shapes public perception, influences public policies and inevitably creates changes in broader society (16). The role of media in behavioural and societal change therefore cannot be emphasized enough.

The manner in which the media covers issues is often influenced by a number of factors such as age, race, gender and class of the people being reported on, but also the dynamics within the newsroom such as taking decisions about which stories are newsworthy, which journalist is assigned the story as well as the volume of resources available to cover the story i.e. a brief piece or in-depth coverage (16). To this end, Taylor argues that the way in which the media reports is evidence that crimes against certain victims are more newsworthy and deserving of attention than others (17) Researchers argue that the unequal treatment of women in the media is a direct reflection of the unequal status of women in society and that the media merely mirrors the reality of society (16). The latter assumes that the limited reporting on issues of VAW reflects the lack of importance placed on issues directly affecting women. Although there has been some research on how the media portrays violence against women broadly, there has been very little published research on how the media covers stories and

issues of femicide and in particular intimate femicide, and how victims and perpetrators of femicide are portrayed in South Africa particularly (18-20). For the purpose of this study we have defined intimate femicide as "the killing of a woman by an intimate partner. This could be the woman's husband, boyfriend (whether dating or cohabiting), ex-husband (divorced or separated) or ex-boyfriend, same sex partner or a rejected would be-lover" (3) [pg1].

This study therefore aimed to close this gap in the literature by comparing online media coverage of intimate femicide in South Africa between two pivotal time periods: 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 November 2016 to 30 April 2017. The first time period was chosen specifically because the trial of the famous Paralympian Oscar Pistorius who murdered his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, in 2013 ended in September 2014. Given that this was perhaps the most notorious trial in recent history and the fact that the trial had live coverage provided an opportunity to shine light on and examine how intimate femicide might be reported, this study chose to examine whether there were any major shifts in coverage of femicide issues in the year that followed. The second time period was selected for comparison. It was important that both time periods included the 16 Days of Activism against VAW as media coverage is thought to be higher during this period. Furthermore, the 16 Days of Activism was included in both periods because journalists often look for stories on GBV during the 16 Days of Activism which had the potential to increase the number of stories for the weeks over 16 Days therefore to ensure a fair comparison it is was imperative to include this in both periods.

The word media is derived from the word medium, meaning something that is designed to reach a large audience (21). Initially the term referred only to newspapers and magazines, however over the years the definition has expanded to radio, television and the internet (21). For the purpose of this study only online mass mainstream news media that adhere or seek to adhere to accepted standards of journalism were analysed, which excludes news on social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

1.2. Literature Review

The global literature on media coverage of intimate femicide and intimate partner violence is vast in other countries, however in South Africa it remains very limited, more especially coverage on intimate femicide. In order to set the scene it is important to understand the public health significance of intimate femicide, thus a brief review on this has been provided.

Thereafter a brief background on the role of the media and the extent of patriarchy in the media broadly and in particular in South Africa is discussed. The latter will then lead to a discussion on the role of media in perpetuating gender norms which often underlie GBV and the role that media can play in intimate femicide prevention. The literature review will also attempt to unpack how media advocacy and media as educational tools can be used as social and behavioural change approaches. Thereafter an understanding of how the media cover intimate femicide looking at key aspects of framing is presented as well as the extent of femicide coverage. The literature thereafter concludes with what a public health perspective on what media coverage on femicide would look like.

1.2.1 Public health significance of femicide

Research has consistently demonstrated that violence perpetrated by current or ex-boyfriends and husbands, is a pervasive public health issue (4, 22, 23). The frequency of GBV and in particular VAW perpetuated by their intimate partners has documented physical, emotional and psychological consequences (10, 23). VAW affects women's health and well-being at all levels (24). These effects include women's sexual and reproductive health including the increased risk of transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (5, 24). It has also been reported that women who experience intimate partner violence experience higher rates of unintended pregnancies, abortions, miscarriages and other complications with giving birth (13). Some of the latter complications include increased risk of giving birth to infants with low birth weight, pre-term birth and perinatal death (25). Furthermore, mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder are common amongst abused women (25). In relation to everyday functioning, women who experience violence particularly from their intimate partners are severely impacted, be it work or at home as well as parenting behaviour whereby the abused parent may take out their frustrations on the child (13). Furthermore, the effects of IPV are also apparent on the children living in abusive households, whereby children who are either physically abused or witness the abuse have been found more likely to experience behaviour difficulties such as hyperactivity, conduct disorder, and emotional problems (26).

In relation to intimate femicide, whereby a women is killed by her intimate partner, this is often categorized as the most extreme consequence of intimate partner violence perpetuated against women (IPV) because as mentioned above, victims of intimate femicide more often than not have a long history of intimate partner violence (4). The World Health Organization

states that globally 38% of all murders of women are committed by their intimate partners (8).

In the context of intimate heterosexual relationships, intimate femicide is one of the most common forms of violence and a leading cause of death among South African women (3). In South Africa, intimate femicide rates are six times higher than the global average (1). A study conducted in 2009 which compared results to the 1999 data showed a decrease in overall homicide but showed slower decline in intimate partner femicide, evidently emphasizing the extent of the issue (4). Although the rates of intimate femicide in South Africa are reported as one of the highest, there is reason to believe that in fact these statistics are still under-represented. It is worth noting that one of the main reasons that intimate femicide is underreported is that routine data sources in South Africa do not allow for murder to be studied in terms of victim-perpetrator relationship. This is despite there being this type of category for murder under the Domestic Violence Act (1, 4) .

The high rates of intimate femicide in South Africa can be linked to the overall high prevelance of IPV and all forms of homicide (27). Understanding the underlying dynamics of intimate femicide requires us to look into the root causes of the behaviour. A study conducted by Mathews et al. looked at how men's psychological characteristics intersect with their social circumstances to influence their intimate relationships (27). Many of the men who were convicted of killing their intimate partners suffered from jealousy and their need to control their partners, and the killing was the final attempt to exert power over their partners (27). This need to control their partners was further exacerbated by their fear of abandonment (24). Furthermore the social dynamics of South Africa, more specifically the structural inequalities made it difficult for the men to attain what is seen as "successful" masculinity, the men were not able to adequately provide for their families thus leading to emotional insecurities and in turn leading them to turn to crime, violence and often gangs to reaffirm their manliness which they had lost in other aspects of their lives (24). In this context it was through the use of violence that these men were able to reaffirm their masculinity in their personal lives, and the violence extended towards their intimate relationships (24). The intimate relationships were riddled with jealousy and insecurities, and for the men to feel secure it was important that women be obedient, and submissive. Their manliness was affirmed through their partners and in a situation where this masculinity is challenged

violence was the only way to regain control (24). From the research it was found that act of men killing their intimate partners was a way of them taking back the control that they feel they lost over their female partners (24). To understand the underlying dynamics of intimate femicide it is important to understand the role of the the social norms regarding gendered positioning of men and women, men's perceived threat to their manlihood is often the trigger to violence in their intimate relationships. Although the pscyhology underlying intimate femicide is not sufficient we cannot undermine the importance of the gendered nature of the act (24).

Consequences of intimate femicide

The consequences of intimate femicide are wide reaching and go beyond the individual victim. Some of the consequences of intimate femicide specifically on their children include the children having to deal with the loss of their mother, and witnessing the violence that precedes her death. The effects of being an eye witness to these events are then also compounded by the loss of their father or father figure, either to prison or, in some cases, to death by suicide (22). The children of intimate femicide victims also often experience post-traumatic stress symptoms such as emotional detachment, anxiety, poor concentration and weak academic performance, depression, aggression and passive behaviours (22).

The family structure is also often affected whereby the children can be forced to move school and move from their homes after the incident and frequently have to live with extended family members (22). This change often requires both the new caregivers and the child to adjust to this new way of life. Furthermore, the new caregiver is also confronted with new parenting and economic role changes (22). The study conducted by Hardesty and colleagues with ten American families who had experienced intimate femicide found that financial strains were very common as the children were often looked after by their grandparents who in most cases were pensioners (22).

From a national perspective, intimate femicide also has a fundamental impact on the development of the country's economy. According to findings from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) 2012 Report on Gender Equality in Education and Employment, the participation of women in the labour force results in faster economic growth (28).

As discussed above, intimate femicide has an impact at the individual, the interpersonal/family as well as the community and societal levels. This emphasizes the public

health significance of the issue and a need for us to have a deeper understanding of this phenomenon and potentially identify ways in which we can reduce the prevalence.

1.2.2. About the Media

Background on South African media

It is important to understand the context and background of the South African media before we can dive into the influence it is has on social issues such as intimate femicide. In the 1980s in South Africa there was major censorship of the news, whereby the successive state of emergencies and increased government clampdown saw many channels of reporting banned from covering the growing public resistance to Apartheid (4). Fast forward to the introduction of democracy in 1994, there was a dramatic change in the media landscape whereby the new Constitution actively protected freedom of expression of citizens as well as sought to protect freedom of information and the press (4). South Africa's Constitution, in Section 16 of the Bill of Rights states that "everyone has the right to freedom of expression" including "freedom of the press and other media"(4). This is because of freedom of expression and freedom to information is seen as a fundamental pillar to the establishment and development of any functioning democracy.

The news plays a vital role in providing information to individuals of a country about the state of that nation and it is therefore imperative for news media to accurately reflect the realities on the ground. According to the South African Audience Research Foundation, in South Africa 31% of adult South Africans read the daily newspapers, while majority of South Africans access news via radio or television (29). In relation to electronic news media, South Africa is said to be among the best countries in terms of providing its citizens with internet access (29). The local media houses have news websites that are able to compete with some of the best in the world in relation to both speed and breadth (29). However, because of the high data costs, access to news on the internet remains a hindrance to most South Africans (29). Nonetheless a significant number of people do have access to digital media. According to an article published by News24 in the recent years there has been rapid changes in how readers consume information and we are fast approaching a new era from print media to digital (29). A study conducted by "We are Social Digital" found that on average South African's spend more time on the internet than any other medium (30).

Role of media in society

Vast amount of literature and theories exist on the role of media in society (21, 31). The media is important for a variety of reasons. As a starting point, it keeps people informed, entertained and acts as an education tool and creates overall awareness in society (31). Furthermore it is also argued that the media facilitates the development of communities by ensuring that people have access to a wide range of information to better equip them to come to informed conclusions and opinions about societal issues. Every aspect of society is largely influenced by the media, ranging from politics to the broader economy (21).

According to Christians and colleagues, we can analyse the role of the media in society by looking at it in relation to the structures of power in society, more specifically the political and economic structures of power which inevitably lead to the different roles that the media can assume (32). These roles include: the monitoring role, facilitative role, radical role and collaborative role (32). According to Christians and colleagues the monitoring role refers to the media as neutral observers of society, reporting objectively about the world (32). It is, however, argued that because often the sources accessed by the media are those that are at the centre of power, this means that the media agenda is often set by the current power system therefore making the neutral observer narrative an apparent fallacy (32). The facilitative role is one where the media sees itself as providing citizens with a platform to express themselves openly and freely, and more recently this involves the move towards citizen journalism (32). A number of definitions on citizen journalism exist; in fact various researchers have suggested that there is a lack of clarity and conceptualization in the term. For the purpose of this study we have defined citizen journalism as news content that is produced by non-professionals (33). The third role that the media can assume is a radical role, which involves an oppositional approach to the structures of power and questioning the status quo (32). Journalism in the radical role makes every effort to ensure that any form of injustice is not tolerated and that power structures are openly tested and defied (32). The last role is a collaborative role whereby the media is at the mercy of those in power and is there to serve the interests of those in power (32). Understanding the different roles that the media can play in society helps us in understanding how and why issues such as intimate femicide are reported in the way they are. With this frame, we are able to link the nature of the coverage to the role that the media plays. For example, if the media may assume a monitoring role where intimate femicide cases are based on “just the facts” or alternatively could adopt a radical role.

Patriarchy in the global media

Central to this study is the extent of patriarchy in the media. Research has shown that although globally there has been an increase in the number of women in the news, women are still treated significantly differently and unequally to their male counterparts (34-36). Despite the advancement of female journalists in news media, women still remain under-represented in the newsroom (35). According to the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)globally between 1995 and 2005 there was a 12% increase in relation to the number of female journalists from 25% to 37% (37, 38). However, the percentage remained stagnant till the year 2015 where women still made up only 37% of the professional employees in the newsrooms (37, 38). Furthermore a 2010 global study conducted by International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) on the status of women in the news media found that 73% of the top management jobs were occupied by men in comparison to 27% which were occupied by women (39). Although this is an improvement from the Gallagher study in 1995 which showed that women only occupied 12% of management positions across 239 countries, the representation of women is still fairly low (39). Furthermore this is evidence that there seems to be very slow progress in the advancement of women into senior positions in the newsrooms and reflects the evident glass ceiling. A glass ceiling is defined as an invisible but real barrier that hinders the advancement of women in the workplace (40). Some of these barriers and blockages include sexism, sexual harassment policies and patriarchal views in hiring and/or promoting individuals (41). Patriarchy in the media has a potential impact on the content of the stories that are told, and the angle in which stories are told, which is often in favour of men (42). It has been reported that newspapers that were led by a female editors or editorial boards which consisted primarily of women had more exposure of women in newspaper sections than male editors and male dominated editorial boards (42).

The existence of a patriarchal culture in the media is likely to create a situation where issues such as intimate femicide are either not prioritized or in some cases reported in ways that are skewed, or without context showing an incomplete and often inaccurate picture of the issue as a whole. The GMMP 2010 study found that in the SADC region 57% of male journalists reported on GBV in comparison to 43% of female journalists showing an under-representation of female voices even in and on issues that affect them the most (38)

This inequity in the newsrooms has led to women having less opportunity and authority to exercise their power in shaping the news. Desmond and Danilwiez reiterated the above sentiments where findings from their research reflected how the gender of the journalist made a fundamental difference in the topics and the stories that were reported (43). Newspapers that were led by a female editor have also shown to be more likely to have stories that are more relatable to women (43). Furthermore according to GMMP 2015 research, stories that were reported by female journalists had 29% of female sources in comparison to 26% of the female sources accessed by male journalist (44). With regards to the latter, the research found that gender differences had a significant impact on the sources accessed and therefore narrowing the gap between male and female journalists would clearly go a long way in attaining equity in media coverage (44). Importantly, the under-representation of women in media can lead to a false portrayal of society through a gendered lens (45). Understanding the extent of patriarchal influence in the media can help us better understand how this could potentially impact coverage of issues which directly impact on women. It must mentioned that although increasing the number of women journalists in the newsroom is a move in the right direction, what is equally important is the complete transformation of the patriarchal culture in the media. This is discussed further below.

Patriarchy in the South African media

South Africa has been crowned as having one of the most gender progressive Constitutions globally (46). Policies such as the Employment Equity Act sets out specific targets for companies in terms of recruitment of black females, which if not met companies are given a fine by the Department of Labour (47). Introduction of the latter policy in relation to the media industry aimed to ensure that if the newsroom was more representative of the South African society as a whole this would inevitably mean that media content would be more diverse and mirror reality more accurately. However this is not the case as we consistently see that media content often mirrors patriarchal views.

Research that has been conducted in South Africa, although not extensive, provides insight into the situation and eminent challenges. The State of the Newsroom 2013 and GMMP South Africa study reported that in South Africa women made up to 49% of the labour force in the newsroom (44). Based on the latter South Africa has been deemed as one of the leading African countries regarding gender equity in the newsroom due to affirmative action (47). However, despite this it has been found that women are still grossly under-represented in

senior and managerial positions (47). The state of the newsroom South Africa: Disruptions Accelerated found that women made up only 28% of editors of newspapers nationally (48). Despite the progressive policies, transformation has not managed to occur on all levels i.e. senior and top management (48).

Daniels' study which looked at the glass ceiling for women in the South African newsrooms found that majority of the journalists interviewed felt that sexism and harmful female stereotypes were still very dominant in the industry (40). The challenges and struggles experienced by South African female journalists are said to mirror the challenges of female journalists globally, where patriarchal structures and the need to balance work and family are the order of the day and inhibit them from climbing the corporate ladder (47). Buiten argues that the South African media sector largely reflects the same patriarchal attitudes that characterised the sector during Apartheid and today women have merely been included in this untransformed industry where they have very little influence in comparison to their male counterparts (49).

The patriarchal culture of the newsroom has a major influence on the content that is produced. It has an influence on what stories dominate the news, and whose voices are heard. The predominance of one gender over another in the newsrooms creates the danger of reporting a skewed view of the world which is contradictory to actual reality. Often this view is from a male dominated perspective.

1.2.3. How is intimate femicide framed in the media?

Various tactics are used by the media to portray different social issues. Framing refers to how a message is presented and these narratives have the power to shape public perception of that particular issue (50). There is a dearth of research on how the media frames intimate femicide cases in the South African media. Majority of the studies analysing media coverage of intimate partner violence and intimate femicide are mostly based in the United States, Australia and the UK (51). The studies that have been conducted elsewhere focusing on media representations of intimate femicide can assist us in analysing the South African media framing of intimate femicide (16, 52, 53). Richards and colleagues state that media framing is based on three main components, specifically sources, language and context (54). We will look at these three components in greater detail in the following section.

Sources

Richards et al. argue that one of the easiest ways of establishing who has power in stories and whose views are thought to be important is by analysing who (group or individual) is most widely sourced in the coverage of a particular issue (54). A plethora of research has found that men and law enforcement individuals are often the primary sources in intimate femicide stories (54-56) . Bullock found in her study that often news coverage in the USA relied significantly on information from criminal justice sources such as police, legal professionals and court documents (55). According to Bullock , this type of reporting can be identified as a "police frame", which is coverage that relies exclusively on factual information from law enforcement professionals (55). The fact that law enforcement individuals are often the first point of information for context (history of domestic violence, date, time, location and parties involved in the incident) can be limiting because domestic violence incidences often go unreported. As a result, this leads to a false perception of the context and/or extent of intimate femicide (54)**.** Bullock also argues that this over-reliance on law enforcement individuals has the impact of providing feedback that is only about the "facts" of the murder, which is mostly concerned about who was murdered, how the murder occurred and when it occurred rather than providing readers with a deeper understanding about the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, which is important in understanding the context in which the event occurred (55). This context can be better provided by friends, family, domestic violence experts and researchers, but these individuals are often completely left out in coverage (16, 55, 57). Wozniak and McCloskey argue that this side-lining of other sources has the potential of actually removing the human face of the violence and serves to dehumanize the crime because individuals who have known the victim have been completely left out in telling the story (57). Furthermore, readers are also not given the opportunity to access the different voices and ideas on the topic to allow them to have an informed opinion about the subject matter.

The sources cited by the media often indicate who the media regard as having an authoritative stance on a topic. This can be linked to Surette's concept of the "authorized knowers" and these are the sources that are given power to explain and frame an event (56). Relying on these kinds of sources (highlighted above) implies that police and court accounts

of domestic violence murders are the important ones and as a result reinforce the perception that these social institutions have more authority over others. (56) .

Furthermore Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) shows how women are continually under-represented in South African media, regardless of issues discussed (53). They go on to argue that the over-accessing of male sources reflects the hierarchical nature of gender relations in our society whereby men's opinions are prioritized over women's (58). The consequence of prioritising the men's voice over women is that this perpetuates the perception that men are superior in society which in turn impacts on gender roles and behaviours.

From a more practical side, it has also been argued that it is not always out of malicious intent that journalists choose the sources that they do. Sometimes the sources that are chosen are those who are easily accessible and available and can cater to journalists' tight deadlines and schedules (55, 59).

Having a diverse representation of sources in media coverage of intimate femicide and stories on violence against women has been found to be important in that different sources are able to provide context that could potentially help readers to make sense of this complex issue. Sources have the potential to also influence news content as they provide insight and perspectives against which other information is evaluated (55). The context that is provided therefore has the potential to mould the views of the reader on social problems and potential solutions to these problems (55).

Language

Taylor argues that the way in which language is used plays an important role in how the individuals in the story are perceived by the readers (16). To this end content analysis research has shown that often perpetrators of femicide are defined in ways that rids them of any blame or responsibility, while the women involved are described using negative adjectives words (16). Research has also shown how sexist vocabulary in the media can often promote and perpetuate traditional stereotypes of women and men (60). Benedict argues that how women are portrayed in the media is not only a consequence of the sexist language used and the perpetuation of harmful myths and stereotypes but also that these portrayals mirror how the media view women generally (60). The way in which language is used in media coverage is also important in the provision of context. Bullock and Cubert found in their research that often times journalists failed to distinguish between homicide that was perpetrated by an intimate partner versus one perpetrated by a stranger. This is a fundamental

distinction which speaks to two markedly different issues that require different interventions. This distinction also provides valuable information about the frequency of intimate partner femicide (rather than female homicide) and thus indicates the extent of the problem (52). Taylor argues that the bias nature of language is not only in the way the story is written but also evident in titles of news articles whereby the media will portray the perpetrator as blameless and void of any responsibility for his actions. For instance the title of an article, "Tragedy after wife left", as found in work that she analysed directly places the blame of the intimate femicide and violence on the wife for leaving (16). Evidently there is power in language and how it is used to frame social issues. It is therefore imperative that we interrogate words and their connotations as they describe certain victims and perpetrators in comparison to others.

Context

Despite evidence of the pervasiveness of intimate femicide, the media continues to portray the issue as an individualized problem instead of placing it within the context of a widespread social issue (61). The media has often been accused of failing to promote a transformative understanding of violence against women by perpetuating stereotypes of women which often impacts the way in which society engages with this phenomena and the implementation of possible solutions (10, 18, 20). A plethora of researchers globally agree that the media have a tendency to report violence against women as an isolated event without any context (23, 51, 52, 55, 62). Important context that is often excluded include possible patterns of abuse violence against women as a broader social problem and where the issue is not positioned as being deeply entrenched in the social phenomenon of gender inequality (51, 63). Ensuring that the pattern of abuse is sufficiently reported means not omitting information on whether the victim grew up in an abusive home, or whether they had been involved in an abusive relationship or other relevant historical information of both the perpetrator and victim (55). Research conducted by Bullock and Cubert on 230 articles looking at how the media portrays domestic violence fatalities found that even in instances where the case was clearly a domestic violence case, the story was not explicitly labelled as a domestic violence one (52). Sonke Gender Justice, a South African based NGO dealing with issues of gender equality, developed a resource manual for journalists and editors looking at best practices on reporting on Gender Based Violence (63). In this manual they state that providing context on domestic violence and intimate femicide is more than providing information on the "where, what and how" of the incident (63). Over and above the description of the individual case it is equally

important to provide information on the underlying drivers of GBV which often leads to intimate femicide (64). In particular these drivers of GBV inter alia would include patriarchal gender norms, and/or substance abuse of both perpetrator and victim (64). Failure to position intimate femicide in the broader context of IPV creates the perception that it is a once off occurrence and not the end point of a long history of abuse that has occurred over time, which is often the case in most intimate femicide cases. Part of understanding intimate femicide in the broader context is portraying it as a social problem. This would mean covering other intimate femicide cases either than the primary one being reported on, quoting domestic violence experts, providing up to date statistics and also including domestic violence help-lines (55).

Other studies which have looked at media trends in reporting VAW found that the stories often lacked critical investigation (10). Research conducted by Soul City and MMA reported that the media often reported intimate femicide in extreme gruesome detail and rather than providing explanations for perpetrator's actions as part of a larger societal context, men's actions were presented as irrational and acting out of emotion (65). Furthermore, most stories of intimate femicide omit the fact that women who were killed most often were those who chose to leave or were in the process of leaving their abusers (58). The disadvantage of media reports that are devoid of context is that it leads to inaccurate understandings of the issue that does not match the reality of the issue on the ground.

1.2.4. The role of the media in intimate femicide prevention

The media plays a key role in shaping social norms in society, and it is also responsible for perpetuating various social gender norms which have been found to underlie intimate femicide. Given that the media reflects power dynamics in society, how the media portrays men and women has a direct impact on the way different groups of people are treated by others as well as the ways in which these dynamics play out in reality. The media is therefore an important role player in both reproducing culture which often includes gendered relations in society (58), but is also a critical element in shaping and changing such discourses.

Extensive research over the years has been conducted looking at how the media represents women and men (37, 38, 45, 66). As evidence of this, Media Monitoring Africa found that South African media do not expose men to alternative forms of masculinity but rather that they reiterate how men's power is often linked to possession of money and physical strength and once these are challenged, men often turn to violence to reinforce this power (58). The

use of physical strength to reinforce power by men is often portrayed in the media, and it can be argued that this is "modelled" behaviour (67). In terms of female representation, the media often portrays the female body as a sexual object (51). In most cases, women are portrayed as home makers or as sexual objects which is reflective of patriarchal values and when women challenge these stereotypes, they become more vulnerable to violence (58, 68, 69).

The root cause of intimate femicide is found in gender inequality and discriminatory patriarchal values and practices which place men as superior over women with the media playing a significant role in the perpetuation of these values (9). Mathews rightly states that it is social norms and gender relationships that contribute to the prevailing notions of what it means to "be a man", and these ideals of dominance contribute to the subordination of women in society and their inevitable oppression and violation (23).

The media can play a key role in preventing or reducing intimate femicide and VAW perpetuated by portraying equitable relationships between men and women and by reporting in ways that do not reinforce gender roles and norms based on patriarchal views. According to the agenda setting theory, often social issues that people debate, talk about and act on are issues that have been reported on in mass media. Therefore the assertion made by this theory is that it is the media that prioritizes issues in society that deserve discussion and action (70). The fact that media has the power to get certain issues to be prioritized also opens the window of opportunity for media advocacy as well as media as an educational tool.

Changes in behaviour sometimes have to be tackled from a policy and structural level. Prevention efforts of intimate femicide can be attained by ensuring that there is zero tolerance for GBV in the socio-political environment and some of the ways that this can be done is by enforcing laws and policies over and above tackling harmful gender norms and stereotypes. The Academy for Educational Development defines media advocacy as strategic use of news media to influence public opinion, and mobilize activists and to influence decision makers to create changes in policy (71). Advocacy is an important approach in influencing social and behavioural determinants of health. In this case the media could play a role in influencing policy makers to enforce policies related to intimate femicide by shedding light on the magnitude as well as the determinants of intimate femicide and its public health impact. To this end, in Australia the media has been identified in National policy documents as a key priority area for action on the prevention of violence against women (51). Improving how the

media engages on the issues was one of the key objectives in the 2013-2016 Second Action Plan to reduce violence against women and children in Australia (51).

As much as media helps shape and frame key issues as a tool for democracy, it also serves to inform and educate people (31). Having inaccurate or incomplete news coverage of intimate femicide not only marginalises the issue but it may also lead to people having false views and unable to identify possible solutions (59). Although there is no clearly established causal link between media reporting and behaviour, the media does however have an opportunity to dispel myths and reinforce information about the extent and nature of the problem (59).

1.2.5 The extent of intimate femicide coverage in South Africa

Understanding the extent to which the media covers key issues such as intimate femicide gives us insight into the priorities of those who hold power in our society. Analysing the coverage can thus help us understand not only how much or how little the issue is a priority, but it can also give us insight into understanding and revealing what those power dynamics look like. The extent of media coverage refers to the frequency of coverage in relation to how often media reported on intimate femicide cases or intimate femicide as a societal problem. Researchers have found some disparity in the number of actual crimes that are presented in the news media, and the number of actual crimes in reality more especially in relation to homicides. In relation to this, de Kock describes VAW perpetuated by intimate partners as an issue that is on-going but only covered in the media sporadically (69). This alludes to the fact that media often creates a hype around certain instances of violence and that despite VAW being a persistent reality, the coverage or hype dies down after a certain time (72). Therefore, often when the media increases reporting on intimate femicide it appears as though there has been a drastic increase in such incidences when in actual fact the incidence has always been high but the reportage has merely increased during that particular period. Brodie who at the time of this research was working on her PHD looking at data on media coverage of intimate femicide in SA found in her preliminary analysis that reporting of intimate femicide cases almost doubles during certain periods in comparison to the other months (56). These differences in coverage are commonly based on who the perpetrator or victim was, or the brutality of the killing (72). This inadequate and partial coverage of intimate femicide cases in the media therefore dramatically under-represents the extent of this problem to the public.

1.2.6. Reporting on intimate femicide from a public health perspective

As explained above, it is evident that intimate femicide is a grave public health problem. Research has shown, however, that intimate femicide is not generally reported from this perspective (57). Rodgers and Thorson's research looked at violent crime broadly and whether there is a public health perspective in the way that it has been reported (57). Although they focussed on violent crime generally, the findings from their research can be generalized to intimate femicide as it is also a violent crime. As has already been discussed, the media often reports on intimate femicide cases as an isolated event. Iyengar argues that event-focussed reporting distracts people from seeing the bigger picture of the issue and how it can be controlled or solved (73).

In the context of intimate femicide it can be said that the relationship between domestic violence and intimate femicide is not presented enough as well as other risk and causal factors that place women at risk of domestic violence and inevitably intimate femicide (4, 57). Intimate femicide is a complex issue with multiple associated and mediating factors and ignoring these presents a great problem in dealing with the issue (57). Reporting from a public health perspective would aim to treat crimes such as intimate femicide as an epidemic requiring the same prevention and control efforts as any other epidemic such as HIV/AIDS (57). The media would need to report on the complex set of causes and consequences of the murder, consequences for the families of perpetrators and victims, including economic and psychological effects (57). Furthermore a public health perspective calls for reporting on the methods that can be developed to prevent the violence and how successful these interventions have been in other contexts (57). Providing this level of context can also be empowering to readers and lead them to develop their own solutions on how to deal with the epidemic.

1.3. Problem Statement

South Africa has one of the highest femicide rates in the world, i.e. six times the global average (1). Intimate femicide is the most extreme consequence of intimate partner violence and monitoring this problem provides important insight on the impact of laws, policies and VAW programmes. The media shapes the way people think and how the media reports on issues such as intimate femicide, and this impacts on how society deals with it (16). Understanding how the media covers issues as important as intimate femicide can help in terms of holding the media accountable for more responsible reporting and media coverage as

a whole. Improved media coverage can also be used for advocacy purposes to hold the powerful accountable to changing these extreme levels of violence against women and children. Taylor argues that how the media reports on intimate partner violence will have an impact on the measures put into place by society to deal with the issue (16). Effective communication of intimate femicide in particular is key in breaking the silence and myths surrounding the issues.

1.4. Justification

Although there has been some research on how the media portrays violence against women broadly, there has been very little research on how the media portrays victims and perpetrators of intimate femicide in South Africa (10, 19, 20). More research is required in order to understand how intimate femicide is presented to society and in turn how society interprets and responds to it. Some of the research that has been conducted on media coverage of GBV and sexual violence examined the trends of GBV in mainstream print media and media constructions of violence against women perpetrated by men (10, 19, 20). Although extreme cases of physical violence such as intimate femicide are often the instances that make it on the news, it is media coverage of VAW broadly that are the topic of published research. Furthermore, South African media is the sector of analysis here because of its paradoxical nature. On the one hand, while reporting on information gender and sexuality is supported by the Constitution and is said to be promoted by society, analysis of VAW reporting shows how women remain marginalized and stereotypes remain unchallenged (74). The specific choice of the two time periods 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 has been chosen to have a large enough gap between two periods to be able to compare if there have been any significant changes in quality of intimate femicide coverage over time. Specifically, the November and December periods were added into the analysis to capture reporting during 16 Days of No Violence Against Women and Children campaign. Furthermore, after the famous Paralympian Oscar Pistorius murdered his girlfriend in 2013 the live coverage of the trial provided an opportunity to generate more awareness and attention on the issue of intimate femicide. This study therefore aimed to examine whether there were any major shifts in coverage of intimate femicide issues in the years that followed.

This research will add to the studies that have been conducted on media coverage of intimate partner violence against women but at the same time fill in an important gap in the literature on intimate femicide coverage in South African mainstream media.

1.5. The study aim and objectives

1.5.1. Research Question: Are there are any differences in the South African online media coverage of intimate femicide between the periods of 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 November 2016 to 30 April 2017

1.5.2. Overall aim:

This study aims to describe and compare South African online media coverage of intimate femicide during the periods 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 April 2016 to 30.

1.5.2. Specific objectives:

1. To describe the extent of South African online media coverage of intimate femicide between 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 April 2016 to 30 November 2017
2. To compare how the victims and perpetrators of intimate femicide are portrayed in online media articles from the two time periods
3. To compare the quality of the articles on intimate femicide from the two periods
4. To compare how intimate femicide is framed over the two periods.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the methodology that has been used in this study to meet the objectives of the research as stated in Chapter 1.

2.2. Study Design

In order to understand how South African online media have covered intimate femicide over the two periods (2014/2015 and 2016/2017), the researcher employed two cross-sectional surveys for each of the periods under study. Furthermore, a descriptive study utilizing content analysis was carried out which involved collecting data about media content such as the broad focus areas of the news articles, key messages identified from the articles, sources quoted in the articles and making sense of other information provided in the stories in relation to the research question.

2.3. Population

All online news articles available through the MMA database during the period 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2015 and 1 November 2016 to 30 April 2017 were eligible for inclusion in the study. Twenty-four South African online news media websites (see table 2.1 below) with publications produced only in English were accessed. These news media were selected as they represent publications from South Africa's four biggest mainstream media outlets (News24, IOL, Caxton and Tiso Blackstar (formerly Times Media Group) and their subsidiaries as well as the public broadcaster (SABC online).

News stories and opinion pieces were included in the analysis to ensure maximum variation in the stories that were retrieved. The difference between the two is that news articles are those stories that are often about a particular event or happening. The story is often recent and largely factual and multiple perspectives on what happened (from eye witnesses, experts or representatives) are sought (75). Opinion pieces differ from news items in that they are usually about an issue and attempt to make a comment about an issue in the news. This view, while often backed up by evidence, generally reflects the perspective of the expert or specialist who is writing the story.

Table 2.1 Online news media where femicide articles were retrieved

Media Title	Website Address
IOL	https://www.iol.co.za
News24	https://www.news24.com
The Citizen	https://citizen.co.za
SABCOnline News	https://www.sabcnews.com
eNCA Online	https://www.enca.com
City Press	https://city-press.news24.com
Cape Times	https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news
Daily Dispatch	https://www.dispatchlive.co.za
Daily Maverick	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za
M&G	https://mg.co.za
Middelburg Observer	https://mobserver.co.za
Eyewitness News	https://Ewn.co.za
The Times	https://www.timeslive.co.za
The Star	https://www.iol.co.za/the-star
Daily Sun	https://www.dailysun.co.za
The Herald	https://heraldlive.co.za
The New Age	https://www.thenewage.co.za [1]
ANN7	https://www.ann7.com
Sowetan	https://www.sowetanlive.co.za
The Daily Vox	https://www.thedailyvox.co.za
Polokwane Observer	https://www.observer.co.za
Limpopo Mirror	https://www.limpopomirror.co.za
Moneyweb	https://www.moneyweb.co.za

2.4. Study Sample

There were three main steps in sampling for content analysis: the selection of the different media forms and genre; the selection of issues or dates, and the sampling of relevant content from within each media (76). A census was undertaken where all items in the sampling frame were included (76). In the study, all articles discussing intimate femicide or making mention of the phenomenon from the two periods were analysed with the aim of ensuring that there was the greatest possible representation during that particular period. Any articles that did not explicitly make mention or describe the phenomena were not analysed. The exact method for

[1] At the time of this analysis this publication was still known as The New Age. It then changed its name to Afro Voice and as of July 2018, the publication closed down entirely.

identifying suitable articles is explained below. From the pool of retrieved articles, there were a total of 291 articles during the 2014/2015 period and 141 during the 2016/2017 period reporting on intimate femicide.

2.5. Data Collection

We captured and coded articles that were published online during the 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 period. These were then stored in the Dexter database and were then extracted for analysis by the researcher which was conducted over a two-month period (January 2018 to February 2018). Dexter is a tool, developed by MMA[2], that identifies all online media content from pre-selected South African online media websites and stores the articles in a database that can be downloaded into an excel spread sheet for analysis. A graphic representation of Dexter can be seen in Appendix A**.** Within the database of stories from the specified monitoring period above, the researcher ran keyword searches for intimate femicide. The keyword searches included: "murder", "femicide", "domestic violence" and "intimate partner violence" for both periods. Although Dexter has been optimized to identify articles based on the keyword search, some articles are extracted erroneously. For purposes of quality control, the researcher then sifted through all articles and ensured that all items were relevant to the research topic. This meant that articles which did not specifically report on cases of intimate femicide or the issue of intimate femicide broadly were not included. Articles excluded from the capturing and coding were those discussing broader domestic violence issues such as physical violence not resulting in death, sexual and emotional violence, and death not as a result of an intimate partner. The results obtained were then used as the dataset for this research study.

2.6. Data coding

Dexter was used in the retrieval and collection of stories as well as for initial coding of certain items per story. The researcher was then responsible for reading, further coding and correcting some of the data in the news articles. Therefore, the actual identification of the relevant articles was a manual process conducted by the researcher with assistance from a specially trained employee of MMA and the research supervisors.

Basic article details

Once all intimate femicide stories had been identified and recorded, specific elements of interest were captured for each article. These included: (1) name, type and origin of the publication, 2) title/headline of the article, 3) main topic/broad focus of the story (from the pre-existing list as per Appendix B) and 4) the identity of quoted sources which included their name, race, gender and affiliation. The topic/broad focus of the story is the central theme of each of the article and only one topic was selected for each article. For instance, a story which covered the court proceedings of an intimate femicide case such as the article "Unclear if Dewani will take the stand" published by IOL on 02 November 2014[3] was allocated "Justice System" as a topic. It was important for us to understand the central topic of each of the articles because this provides insight on to the most common ways in which issues such as intimate femicide are put forward to the public i.e. whether it is mainly crime stories, or justice stories etc.

Source Codes

We then also coded every source in each of the articles. Sources refer to the people that the media either directly or indirectly access for more information on the story. The sources that are often used by the news media have potential to impact on how issues such as intimate femicide are reported. For instance an emphasis on law enforcement sources such as police often leads to the issues being reported on with only the "facts" in mind without placing the issue within the broader social context. Furthermore by analysing the sources we were able to understand who the media views as having power in stories and whose views are considered important. Furthermore the frequency in which certain sources were accessed provided insight regarding the groups that contribute the most to the narrative. The sources were specifically coded for gender, race, affiliation (e.g. SAPS, Justice System, and Department of Health etc.) and their specific role (e.g. representative, expert).

Quality of articles

The study also looked at the quality of articles provided, and this was assessed by identifying whether the following elements were included in each item: a) basic consequences in the story, b) the root causes of intimate femicide c) solutions and self-help offered to victims of

[3] http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/unclear-if-dewani-will-take-the-stand-1.1774110

abuse in danger of intimate femicide and d) relevant policies mentioned. The level of quality of an article was dependent on how many of the above elements were included in the article. For instance an article with none or only one or two of the aforementioned elements was considered low in quality, whereas an article with three elements was good and an article with all four elements was the ideal. The criteria for judging the quality of the articles, although can be said to be subjective was based on the criteria that MMA has been using.

Key messages

The researcher also coded for key messages for each of the articles (Appendix C). The key or underlying messages identified in the articles are those that an article will put forward without necessarily stating it outright. The key messages in this context often alluded to or implied how or why the instance or pattern of intimate femicide took place, i.e. the victim was to blame for her fate; the justice system failed the victim etc. The list of key messages were expressed as phrases or words e.g. "the victim is portrayed as good" and "the victim is portrayed as bad or responsible". It was also equally important to ensure that all the positive messages that were identified had the corresponding negative form and vice versa to ensure balance. Therefore, in the above example we analysed for whether the victim was portrayed as either good or bad. McNamara cautions researchers that the validity of the study can be significantly compromised should the researcher not analyse oppositional messages (76). By analysing these key messages, we were also able to better unpack how these articles are framed and this helped us to better understand the media's narrative and agenda around such events. Each article was allocated as many key messages as necessary to fully describe some of the sub-themes being put forward.

To develop the list of key messages we used a deductive as well as an inductive approach. A deductive approach is when the researcher determines all the variables, the measurements, codes before the observation, whereas an inductive approach is based on developing the variables, measurement and codes after the observation (76). The key messages were set up with the assistance of a trained media monitoring expert and the research supervisors. The first step in the process of developing the key messages for this study was to read a sub sample of the media content and thereby determine some of the commonly emerging key issues. A total of 10 articles were read to determine the set of key messages that emerged from the articles.

The key messages were also developed based on past research and theories on intimate femicide reporting in the media. The importance of the latter process is further emphasized by McNamara who states that it is imperative to do exploratory work before the final list of issues and messages of the study are developed in order to ensure that the content analysis accurately answers the research question (76). The development of this list was therefore also an iterative process whereby the researcher and research supervisors continued to add key messages that were emerging from other news articles during the data collection and data analysis process. Once all articles had been coded, the researcher then went through all the articles again to ensure that all possible key messages were recorded using the final list.

Once the researcher had captured all the fields for each story on Dexter, the researcher then went through all the articles to ensure that the inputs were accurate and made the necessary changes. After the quality control was complete, the data are exported from the Dexter software into Excel for tabulation and results were calculated using pivot tables.

2.7. Data Management

Often in media content analysis computer programs are used at two basic levels (76). The first is for the storing, analysing and reporting of the research data such as coding and notations by researchers which includes developing tables, charts and graphs (76, 77). The second level computer programmes used in media content analysis is the highly automated processes which includes the automatic scanning of texts and identification of codes in the text (76, 77). For the purpose of this study the researcher used both the first and second level for data management and analysis, whereby the graphs and tables were developed in Excel using pivot tables and for level two the articles that Dexter had already scanned and pre-identified as intimate femicide articles were retrieved by the researcher. The coded data are imported from Dexter to Excel. Once in Excel, the data are checked for errors and missing data. For instance, if an article was found to not have been assigned a topic or information on a particular source in the story was left out, the researcher went back to Dexter to add the missing information. Furthermore, a backup copy of the original imported data was created in a separate workbook.

2.8. Analysis

According to MacNamara content analysis is described as “a research technique based on measuring the amount of something, whether it is violence, negative portrayals of women etc., in a representative sampling of some mass-media” (p.2) (76). Media content analysis is the most common methodology used in examining crime in the news media (76). Media content analysis was introduced by Laswell as a systemic method to study mass media in order to understand propaganda in the media (76). It is important in understanding that media can play a critical role in swaying public opinion, and for the purpose of this report, it can also be used to evaluate the primary messages put forward in the media in relation to intimate femicide. One of the main strengths of quantitative content analysis is that it can conform to the scientific method and produce reliable findings (76).

The analysis was descriptive and frequency tables and graphs were used to show the frequency and the proportions of the content. The different media covering issues of femicide, the number of femicide articles from the different periods, sources accessed the portrayal of victims and perpetrators in the news were imperative in the analysis in order to achieve the objectives set out at the beginning of the research. The table 2.2. below represents how the data was analysed in order to meet the objectives of the study. All analysis was conducted in Excel.

2.9. Validity and reliability

To ensure that the researcher collected all possible articles between the two periods from the selected South African online media, the media monitoring expert and one of the research supervisors did a physical search on the news websites that had shown to have low numbers of intimate femicide articles on Dexter. From this exercise, four articles were found on the actual websites that had not been identified by Dexter. Given the high volume of stories retrieved from Dexter initially, the addition of only four stories speaks to the credibility of Dexter’s automated extraction process.

Furthermore, in terms of the extent to which the results in this study can be applied to the total South African online mass media pool, it was imperative to ensure that the media

content sourced from both periods was an exhaustive sample of all the articles that could be identified using the key words. However, for feasibility purposes the key word search had to be kept to the most succinct ones (“murder”, “femicide”, “domestic violence” and “intimate partner violence) to avoid having too many articles to code, examine and review.

Furthermore, for reliability purposes a sub-set of the news articles was coded by the researcher and supervisors together so that there would be consistency when the researcher coded the rest of the articles. The results would not only be of the researcher’s subjective judgement. It was also equally important for the researcher to engage in a process of re-reading the articles to ensure that the articles met the inclusion criteria as stipulated in the description of the sample above.

2.10. Ethical considerations

Permission to use Dexter was granted by the Director of MMA. A copy of this letter is included in Appendix C. The study did not involve human participants or human records and all analysed online media articles were already available in the public domain. However ethical clearance was obtained from the Wits Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics protocol number M180138).

Table 2.2. Data Analysis

Specific objectives	**Data analysis**
1.To describe the extent of South African online media coverage of femicide between 1 January to 30 September 2015 and 1 January to 30 September 2017	The proportion of articles were calculated for: (1) geographical distribution/ origin of the articles (national, regional,), (2) total number of articles per two period, (2) total number of articles per medium. The proportion of femicide articles per period the patterns of reporting of femicide during the different times of the year was also analysed.
2.To compare how the victims and perpetrators of femicide are portrayed in online media articles from the two time periods	The proportion of articles was calculated for different themes such as: (1) responsibility of the perpetrator, (2) good girl versus bad girl dichotomy, and (3) whether the perpetrator was an ex- partner or current partner, (4) the description or lack thereof of the gruesome details of the victims.
3.To compare the quality of the articles on femicide from the two periods	Aspects of a good quality story were coded per article and presented as proportions**.**
4.To compare how femicide is framed over the two periods in reporting femicide over the two time periods	A list of sources was compared from the different periods and presented as proportions. The reporting of context of femicide as a broader social issue was represented as a proportion from the two periods.

Chapter 3 Results

3.1. Sampling Results

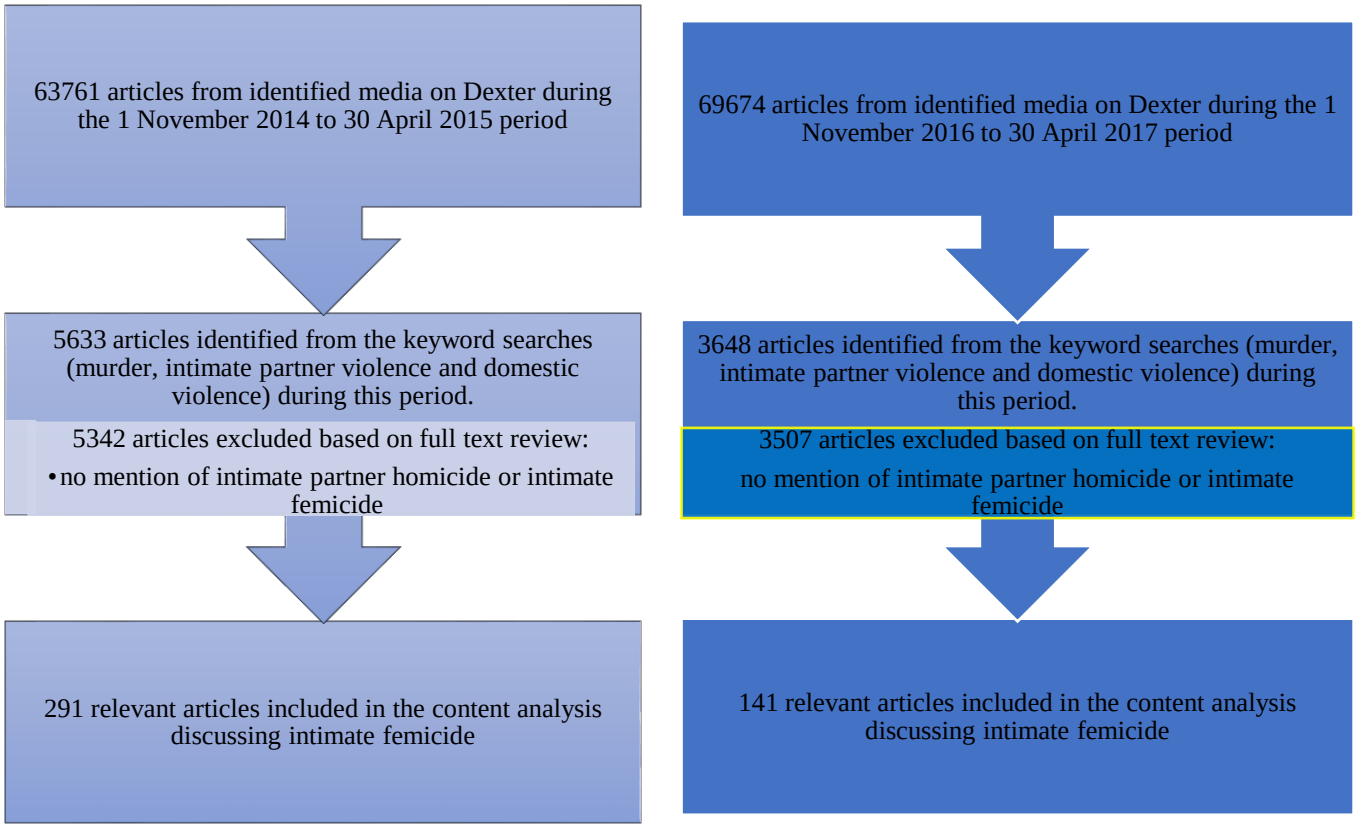


Figure 2.1.Flow diagram representing data collection process for the two periods under study

3.2. Extent of intimate femicide articles in electronic media

Between November 2014 to April 2015 the total number of articles on Dexter was 63761 for the specified media. Of these articles, 5633 articles were generated from the keyword searches: "femicide" "murder", "intimate partner violence" and "domestic violence". From the 5633 articles, 291 articles specifically focussed on issues of intimate femicide, as shown in Table 3.1. Therefore in the period 2014/2015, 0.4% of the stories covered in the media were intimate femicide stories.

Between November 2016 to April 2017 there were a total of 69674 articles in the Dexter database, during this period the key word searches "femicide", "murder", "intimate partner violence" and "domestic violence" generated a total of 3648 articles and 141 of the articles specifically discussed intimate femicide issues. Table 3.1. depicts the total number of

intimate femicide articles that were generated from each keyword search. Therefore in the period 2016/2017, 0.2% of the stories covered in the media were intimate femicide cases.

Table 3.1.: Total number of *femicide* articles *by* keyword *used in the search*

Keyword	Total intimate femicide articles between 2014/2015 period (n)	Total intimate femicide articles between 2016/2017 period (n)
Femicide	6	5
Murder	280	103
Intimate partner violence	0	1
Domestic violence	5	32
Total	291	141

3.3. Origin of stories

Intimate femicide that was reported occurred in all nine provinces but to varying degrees (see figure 3.1). For both periods, the majority of the stories were events that occurred in the metropolitan provinces specifically: Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, and Western Cape. The overwhelming majority of the stories in 2014/2015 occurred in the Western Cape (79%) and in the 2016/2017 period most of the stories were reported in the Eastern Cape (24%). The pattern maps onto the two cases which received a substantial proportion of the coverage which is presented in section 3.5. Furthermore there appears to be a more even spread of stories during the 2016/2017 period across the provinces. During the 2014/2015 period, no cases of intimate femicide were reported from Mpumalanga and Limpopo. In terms of the national and international stories these were stories that did not focus on a particular province but looked at the issue of intimate femicide from either a global perspective or the national perspective i.e. South Africa as a whole. The results show that only 1% of the stories reported on the global perspective of intimate femicide, which was during the 2016/2017 period. In terms of the issue from a national perspective during the 2014/2015 period only 1% of articles reported in this way, whereas during the 2016/2017 period 5% of the articles spoke about intimate femicide broadly from a national perspective.

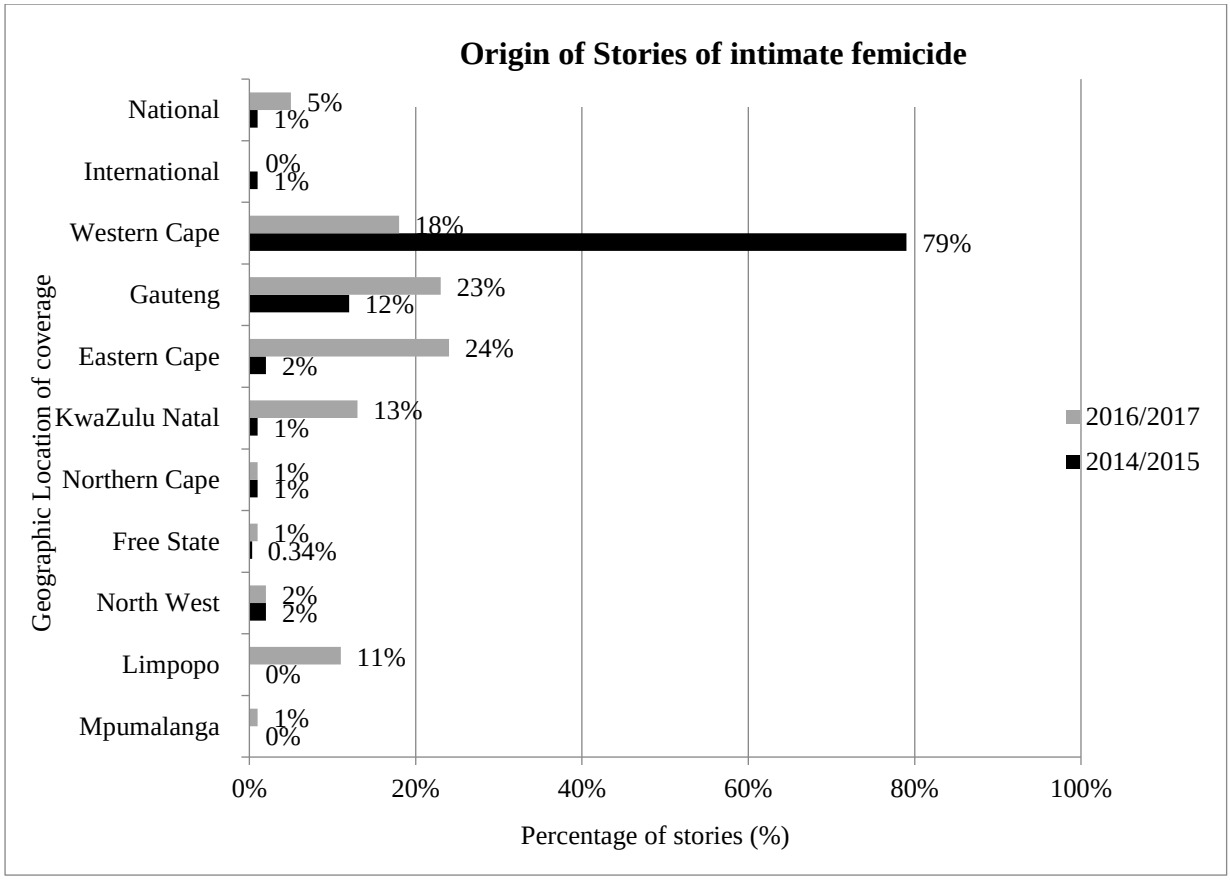


Figure 3.1Total number of intimate femicide stories reported per province

3.4. Media reporting on intimate femicide

During the two periods, there were twenty-one online South African media covering issues of intimate femicide. The medium and the number of articles covered during the two periods is represented in figure 3.2. For both periods, IOL and News24 covered the most stories on intimate femicide. The New Age, Daily Vox, Polokwane Observer, Limpopo Mirror and The Star only reported on intimate femicide in the 2016/2017 period (see figure 3.2). The following media: SABC online news, Middleburg Observer, Mail and Gaurdian and the Daily Maverick only reported on intimate femicide during the 2014/2015 period.

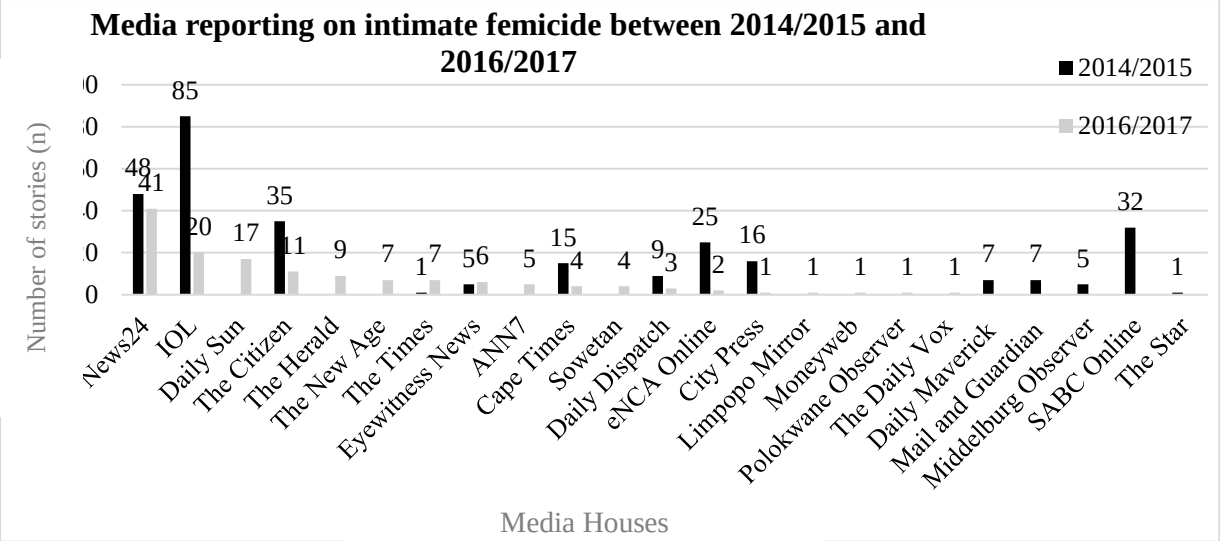


Figure 3.2.Number of stories per media on intimate femicide between 214/2015 and 2016/2017 periods

3.5. Patterns of reporting on intimate femicide over the two time periods

Timing of reporting for issues such as intimate femicide is very important because in South Africa the 16 Days of No Violence Against Women and Children campaign begins on the 25th November until 10th December every year (78). This is a campaign period that focuses on preventing violence against women, and it is therefore particularly relevant to understand if there are any differences in reporting over certain time periods. For both periods, reporting on intimate femicide peaked during the month of November (see figure 3.3) with 61% and 26% of all articles in the 2014/2015 period and 2016 /2017 period respectively. For the 2016/2017 period, the reporting plateaued from December 2016 to April 2017 whereas for the 2014/2015 period there was a sharp decline in reporting December 2014 to April 2015.

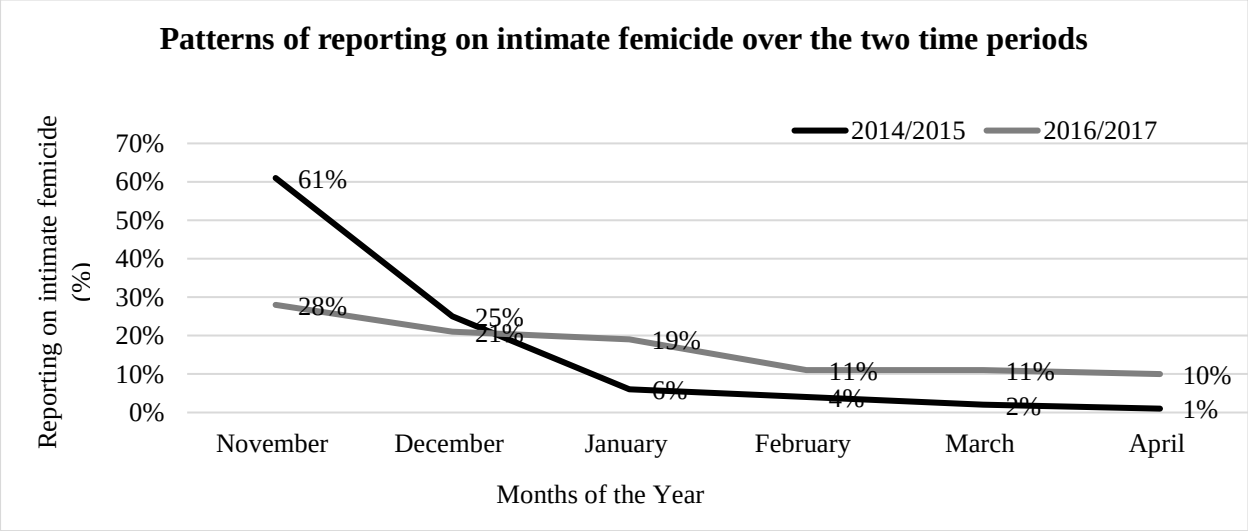


Figure 3.3 Percentage of patterns of reporting on intimate femicide over the two time periods.

3.6. Main topics of the articles on femicide

Figure 3.4 depicts the central focus of the articles on femicide. Overall the topics reported in stories about intimate femicide were about "crime and violence", the justice system, awareness and education pieces on gender-based violence, and demonstration and protests stories. "Crime and violence" stories discussed crime statistics as well as highlighted issues of violence and femicide as part of a broader crime issue. The AfroVoice article on 11 December 2016 titled "Cops clamp down on sexual violence"[4] is an example of a crime story. This article provided information on the number of arrests that were made and how the criminal justice system is working to deal with the issue. Justice system stories were related to judicial hearings of the intimate femicide cases which specifically looked at the trials of the victims and sentencing of the perpetrators. An example of this was the story covered by News24 titled, "Chatsworth dad gets 3 life sentences for bludgeoning family to death"[5] on 28th February 2017. This article is about a man from Chatsworth who had been sentenced to three life sentences for killing his wife and teenage children. The story covered the court proceedings and how the judge came to his final decision.

Awareness pieces provided information on intimate femicide and/or gender based violence broadly. An example of an awareness piece would be the story which was covered by the Sowetan on the 03 December 2016 titled, "And Speak out if you see abuse: Zuma"[6] where South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma was speaking at the launch of the National Dialogues on Violence Against Women and Children. The article discussed the convention and discussed the issue of violence against women and children and the prevalence of the problem as well as provided information on where victims of abuse could seek help. In his address the former president made mention of the fact that many South African women are being killed not by strangers but by their intimate partners, people that they know. "Demonstration and protest" stories were articles which focussed broadly on marches, protests and demonstrations highlighting issues around intimate femicide and/or gender based violence. The story covered by Daily Sun on the 1st November 2017 titled "Police march against abuse"[7] on the Police March against abuse during the 16 Days of No Violence Against Women and Children campaign is an example of such a story. The story made

[4] http://www.afroworldview.com/cops-clamp-down-on-sexual-violence/
[5] http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/p3-chatsworth-dad-gets-3-life-sentences-for-bludgeoning-family-to-death-20170228
[6] http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2016/11/25/love -don't-hurt-your-woman/
[7] http://www.dailysun.co.za/News/National/police-march-against-abuse-20161210

mention of intimate femicide and the cautioned women about the dangers of remaining in an abusive relationship. A quotation from the articles reads “If you remain in an abusive relationship, that person won’t stop abusing you until you are dead,” they also mentioned “many women died at the hands of their abusers because they were turned away by the police”. Both the awareness pieces and demonstaration and protest pieces were included in the analysis if they made mention of intimate femicide, and in both cases the articles discussed women being killed by their intimate partners.

For the 2014/2015 period, 80% of the stories were classified as justice system stories (n=234). During the 2016/2017 period, the majority of the articles were a combination of ‘crime and violence” stories (47%) and the justice system (43%). It must be noted that in each time period, there was one news story that dominated the coverage. In 2014/2015, a single case that dominated the news: the Anni Ninna Dewani case was featured 234 times (80%) over the six month period. Anni Nina Dewani was a Swedish woman who was murdered while on honeymoon in Western Cape, South Africa after the taxi in which she and her husband were travelling was allegedly hijacked. Anni’s husband, Shrien Dewani, was implicated in the crime whereby he was alleged to have conspired and planned the murder of his wife. The coverage predominately focussed on the details trial of the murder. In 2016/2017, the majority of the justice stories were on the murder of Jayde Panyayiotou (n=26). Jayde Panyayiotou was a 28-year-old school teacher who was found murdered in 2015 in Kwanobuhle near Uitenhage**.** Her husband was found guilty of organizing the hit on her life. The coverage of the latter case also specifically focussed on the trial and who was responsible for her death. Perhaps the reasons that these two cases dominated the media above other stories is due to the drama surrounding these deaths which would be of particular interest to readers i.e. the fact both of the murders included hitmen is compelling to many readers. In the Dewani case we postulate that it may have dominated the media due to the fact that Anni Dewani and Shrien Dewani were not South African therefore the story became a story that was not only of local interest but also sparked international interest.

During the 2014/2015 period there were other stories that were reported on more than once although not as frequently as the Anni Dewani case. Some other notable stories include fifteen articles on the famous paralympian, Oscar Pistorius who murdered his girlfriend on 14 February 2013 and five articles of a man who shot dead his wife in a police station before turning the gun on himself. Most of the cases in the 2016/2017 period in which there were multiple articles featured less than the twenty-six articles. Some notable stories which

featured more than four times during the 2016/2017 period included the story of the former ANC youth league leader Patrick Wisani who beat his partner to death with a sjambok. The coverage also mainly focussed on the trial. This story was featured eight times over the period. Another case covered five times was about a woman from Paarl who was murdered by her husband and her body was found in his back yard, as with the other stories, it was the details of the trial that were mostly covered.

Of particular interest is the extent to which the Dewani case dominated coverage in the time period. When this case is removed from the sample, we found that the 2014/2015 period had significantly fewer intimate femicide articles than the 2016/2017 period. This specifically meant that 80% (234) of intimate femicide articles from 2014/2015 period were about Anni Dewani and only 20% (57) were other intimate femicide stories. In contrast, in 2016/2017 Jayde Panyayioutou made up 20% (26) of the stories and other intimate femicide stories made up the other 80% (115).

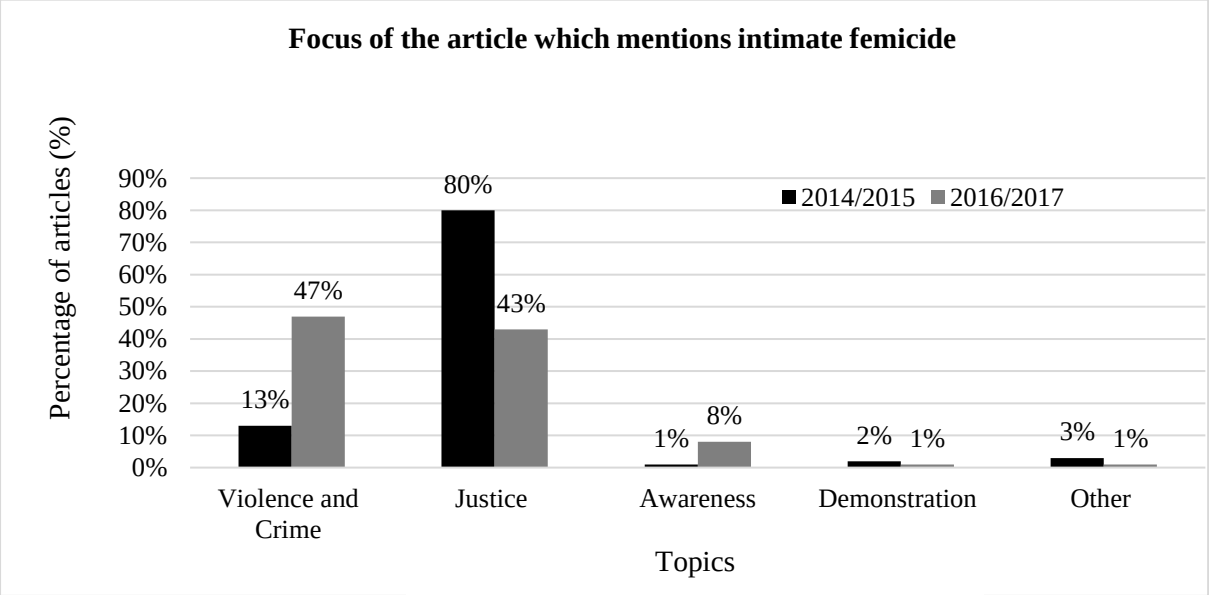


Figure 3.4 Broad Focus of the intimate femicide articles

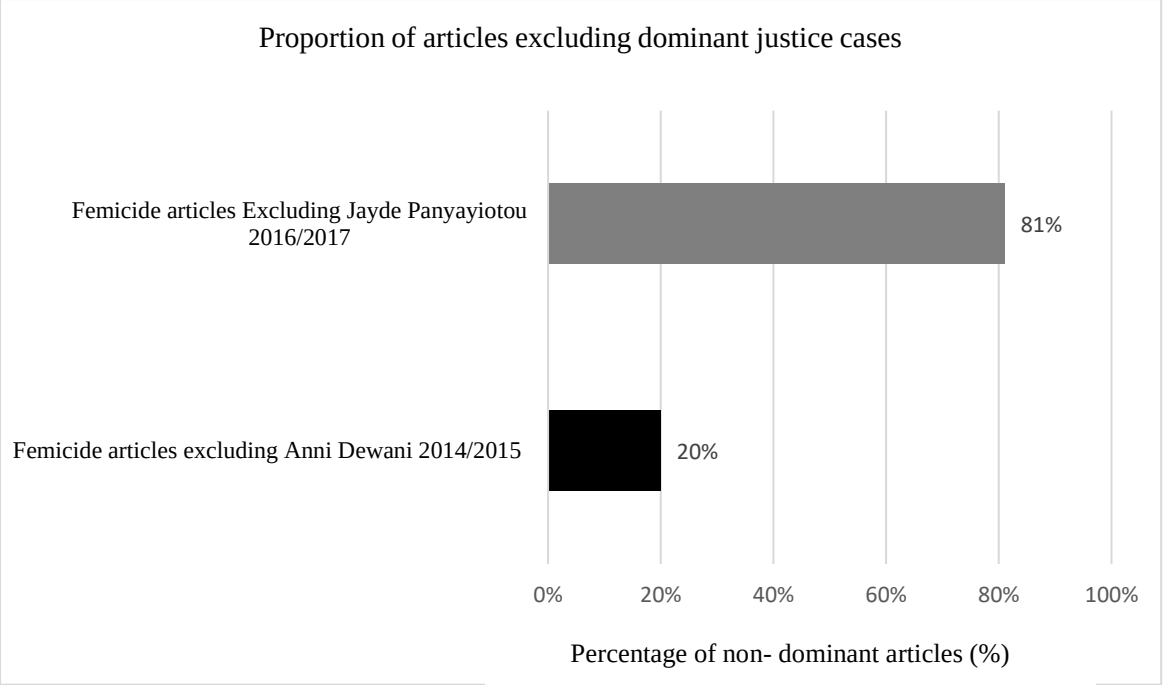


Figure 3.5.Proportion of intimate femicide articles excluding dominant femicide cases in each period.

3.7. Key Messages identified in intimate femicide articles

In addition to the primary topic of each story, the underlying messages about intimate femicide were also assessed. These key messages are those put forward in the articles without stating it outright. The key messages found during the two periods are presented in Table 3.2. The main messages that were carried in the media for both periods were: “intimate femicide is treated as homicide” and “families affected by the death of the victim”. In most instances, intimate femicide was reported simply as a homicide story rather than as a broader gender, human rights or widespread social issue. Over the two periods a total of 365 (84%) articles reported on intimate femicide as a homicide issue, in comparison to nine (2%) and eleven (3%) articles reporting on intimate femicide as a gender and a systemic issue respectively. Furthermore, a total of 121 (28%) articles across both periods depicted how severely the families were impacted, both emotionally and financially, by the death of the victim.

The key message of intimate femicide as a result of a history of continued domestic violence only appeared in 13% of the articles across both periods. Some stories (15% across both time periods) placed the death in the context of other violent acts such as abduction, and rape and there being a history of violence. Key messages around accountability and responsibility also emerged and this was largely in respect to which social structures should be held responsible

for the death of the victim and who should be held to account for putting an end to the deaths. Of the total articles over both periods, only 23 (5%) articles stated that police are doing their best, ten (2%) articles stated that the government should be taking action, and six (1%) articles reported that it is the responsibility of both men and women to end intimate femicide. Furthermore 15 (3%) articles reported that women need to be protected, and this number can be linked back to the conceptualisation of the deaths as homicide rather than a gendered issue.

Table 3.2. : Key messages identified in femicide stories for both time periods

Key Messages	Total (n)	Total %	2014/2015		2016/2017	
			n	n=291 %	n	n=141 %
Intimate femicide should be treated as homicide	365	84.49	261	89.6	104	74.76
Families are affected by intimate femicide	121	28.01	71	24.3	50	35.46
Intimate femicide linked to other forms of violence eg. abduction, rape	65	15.04	42	14.43	23	16.31
Intimate femicide results from history of domestic violence	55	12.73	10	3.44	45	31.91
Police are doing their best	23	5.32	7	2.41	16	11.35
The rate of intimate femicide is increasing	19	4.40	7	2.41	12	8.51
Women need to be protected	15	3.47	3	1.03	12	8.51
Sentencing is sufficient	11	2.55	3	1.03	8	5.67
Intimate femicide is a systemic problem	11	2.54	8	2.75	3	2.13
Government needs to take action	10	2.31	2	0.69	8	5.67
Intimate femicide occurs in the context of family murders	9	2.08	3	1.03	6	4.25
Intimate femicide should be treated as a gender issue	9	2.08	5	1.72	4	2.84
Activism campaigns are ineffective	7	1.62	1	0.34	6	4.25
It is responsibility of men, women to end intimate femicide	6	1.39	3	1.03	3	2.13
Intimate femicide is linked to substance abuse of victim	4	0.93	2	0.69	2	1.42
Conviction rates of perpetrators are sufficient	3	0.69	1	0.34	2	1.42
Intimate femicide linked to substance abuse of perpetrator	3	0.69	1	0.34	2	1.42

3.8. Relationship of the perpetrator to the victim

The relationship of the perpetrator to the victim is an important aspect in understanding how the media portrays cases of intimate femicide because in essence, the definition of intimate femicide relates to a killing of women by their intimate partner. The results show that for both periods the perpetrators in the overwhelming majority of the intimate femicide cases were current partners of the victim and not ex partners, 99% and 88% for 2014/2015 period and 2016/2017 period respectively.

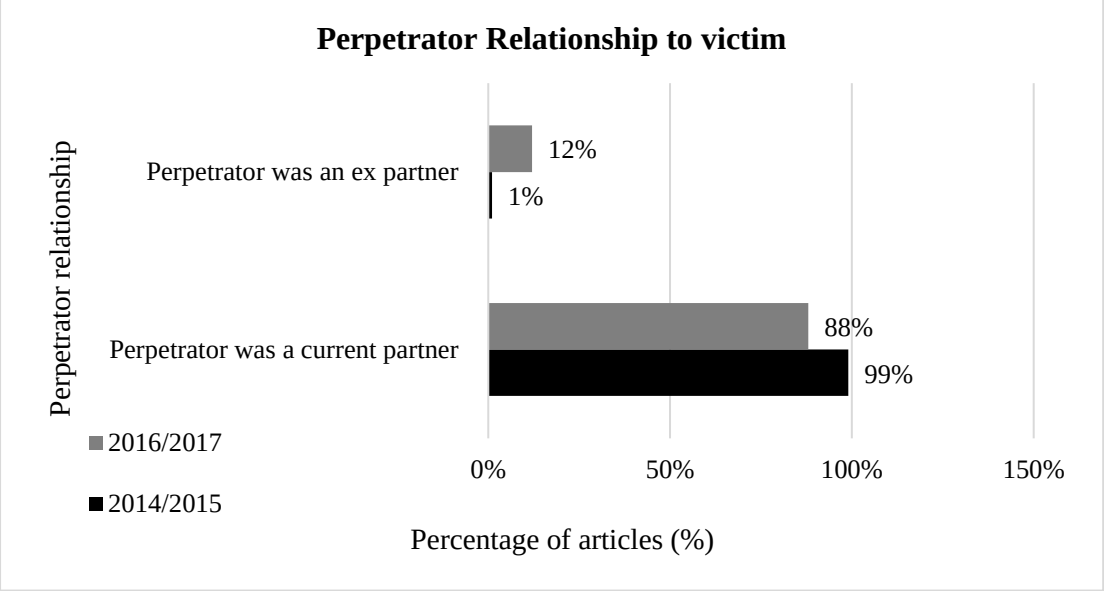


Figure 3.6.The relationship of the perpetrator to the victim in femicide stories.

3.9. Representation of perpetrators and victims

An analysis of how the perpetrators and victims were represented during the two periods was critical in this analysis. In previous intimate femicide research, perpetrators are often represented as not being responsible for their actions or for being exonerated through victim blaming tactics. The use of drugs and/or alcohol as well as mental health of either the victim or the perpetrator sometimes used by the media to exonerate the perpetrator.

How is the Perpetrator Portrayed?

The total number of perpetrators discussed in the articles during the 2014/2015 period was 280/291(total number of perpetrator/total number of stories) and during the 2016/2017 period a total of 116/141 perpetrators (total number of perpetrator/ total number of stories). The other articles were broader and did not discuss specific cases or individuals. Over both periods more than 60% of the perpetrators were reported as being responsible for their actions (see table 3.3) and none of the perpetrators were portrayed in a positive light across either time period. During the 2014/2015 period, most (60%) of the articles portrayed perpetrators in fairly neutral terms, whereas in 2016/2017 there was a fairly equal distribution, where 51% of the perpetrators were portrayed as villains and 49% in neutral terms. A perpetrator that was defined as a villain during analysis was based on how he was described in the article. Often such perpetrators were portrayed as not being remorseful and the death being pre-meditated.

Table 3.3: How is the perpetrator portrayed in femicide stories?

	2014/2015		**2016/2017**	
	n	*n=280 %*	*n*	*n=116 %*
Perpetrator is not responsible for his actions	103	37	34	29
Perpetrator is responsible for his actions	177	63	82	71
The perpetrator is portrayed as a villain	95	34	61	51
The perpetrator is portrayed in a positive light	0	0	0	0
The perpetrator is portrayed in neutral terms	185	66	55	49

How is the victim portrayed?

There is often a tendency in media reporting to blame victims either directly or indirectly for their fate (16). It was therefore imperative to analyse whether this would be the case in South African coverage. The total number of victims discussed in the articles during the 2014/2015 period was 280/291 and during the 2016/2017 period a total of 120/141 victims were discussed in the articles. For both periods majority of the articles, portrayed the victims in a neutral manner (See table 3.4). In such instances there was no evidence of victim blaming, whereby the victim was portrayed as though she in some way contributed to her own death. Furthermore, in both periods the victim was more often portrayed as "good" rather than

"bad" and/or responsible for their own death. The victims, when portrayed as "good" were described in adjectives such as "sweet", "caring" and "bubbly". During the 2014/2015 period, 14% of the articles portrayed victims as good and during the 2016/2017 period 24% of victims were portrayed as good. Very few (3% both periods) of the victims were portrayed as responsible for their own deaths. In the few instances where victims were portrayed as responsible for their own deaths, the story often cited that the victim was either unfaithful, partied a lot or the victim chose to stay in a violent relationship thus resulting in her death.

Table 3.4: How is the victim portrayed?

	2014/2015 n	2014/2015 %	2016/2017 n	2016/2017 %
Bad or responsible	7	3	4	3
Good	40	14	28	23
Neutral	233	83	88	74
Total	**280**	**100**	**120**	**100**

Race of victims and perpetrators

From the articles that were identified, there were 271/290 articles during the 2014/2015 period and 115/141 during the 2016/2017 period where the race of the perpetrator or victim could be identified from the names and surnames. Other articles did not mention the victim's name, therefore making it difficult to determine the race. Although classifying the subject's race from their name remains a crude estimate of population group, the researcher believes that understanding the racial dynamics of femicide reporting was a crucial component of this research.

For both periods, the majority of the perpetrators as well as victims in stories were black. During the 2014/2015 period, 92% of the stories covered cases with black perpetrators and black victims. During the 2016/2017 period although there were more black perpetrator and victim stories (57%), there was more coverage of white perpetrators and white victims than the previous period (see table 3.5). An interesting finding was that there were no mixed race couples (i.e. white perpetrator and black victim and vice versa) identified from the sample.

Table 3.5: Race of Victims and Perpetrators				
		2014/2015		2016/2017
	n=271	(%)	n=115	(%)
Black perpetrator and black victim	249	92	63	55
White perpetrator and white victim	22	8	52	45

Table 3.6 represents a further breakdown of the black perpetrators and victims. During the 2014/2015 period majority of the stories of the "black couple" stories were mostly people of Indian descent (95%) (due to the Anni Dewani case), and during the 2016/2017 period majority of the black couple stories were of African descent (93%).

Table 3.6: Breakdown of "Black" victims and perpetrators				
	2014/2015		**2016/2017**	
Race	N	(%)	n	%
African Couples	12	5	59	93
Indian Couples	236	95	3	5
Coloured Couples	1	0.4	1	2

3.9. Details in the articles

Details of the victim's death

Overall, across both periods, the majority (over 70%) of the articles did not describe the gruesome details of the victims' deaths (see Figure 3.6). For the purpose of this study, the term "gruesome details" referred to stories that described the details of the victim's death, for instance, making mention of her lying in a pool of blood or certain body parts being removed. An example of this is a quote from an article in *The Citizen* on 15 December 2016[8] titled "Anika Smit's "killer" fit to stand trial". The story refers: "The blonde schoolgirl's father Johan discovered her naked body in their home in Theresa Park when he returned home from work on 10 March 2010. She had been sexually violated, had several stab wounds and her hands had been chopped off and removed from the scene. Her hands were never recovered." Even though majority of the articles did not provide such details, there were some notable exceptions. During the 2014/2015 period approximately 7% of the articles described the gruesome details of the victims' deaths. More interesting however, is that from the number of victims whose details were described 73% were black victims. In comparison, during the

[8] https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/1377223/anika-smits-killer-fit-to-stand-trial/

2016/2017 period, 25% of the articles described the gruesome details of the victim's death, of which 85% were black (see figure 3.7).

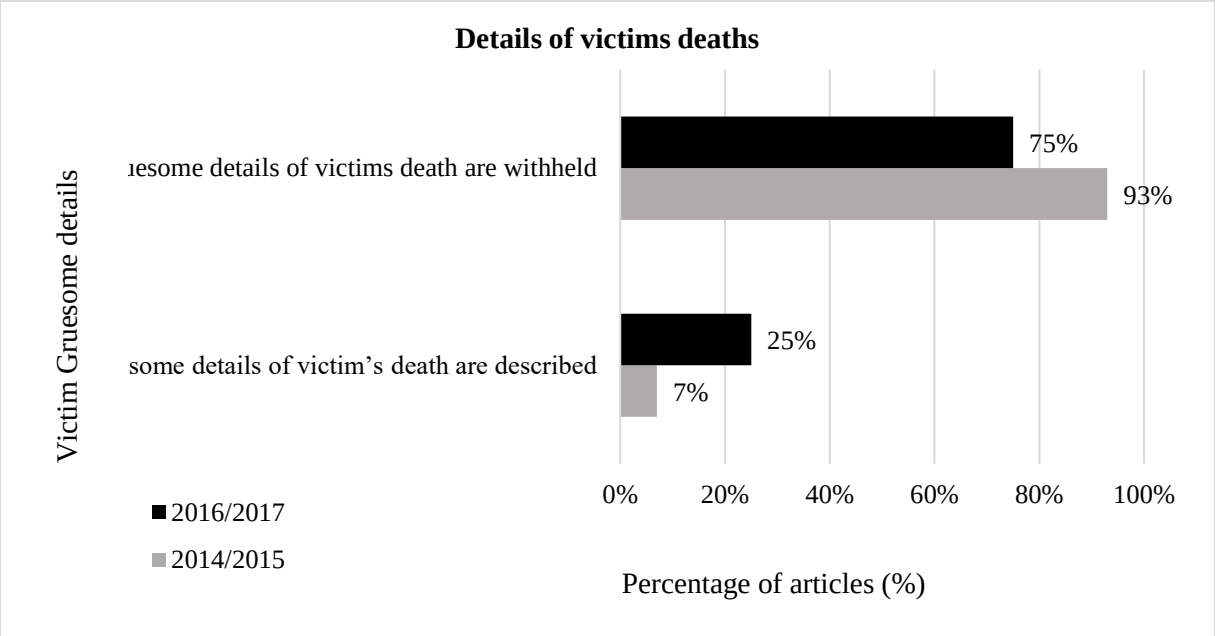


Figure 3.7.Details of victim's deaths in intimate femicide articles

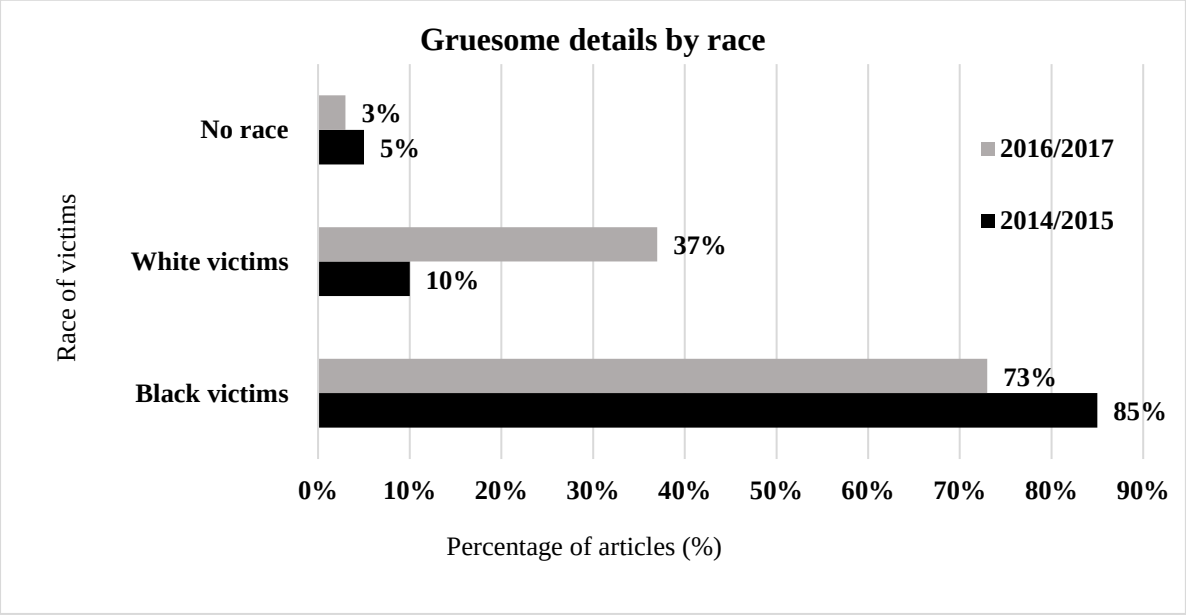


Figure 3.8.Provision of gruesome details of victims according to race of the victim

3.10. Reasons for death

Understanding how the media reports the reasons for the death of the victim is important in that it provides some context to the death. However not all the identified articles discussed specific cases of individuals and the reasons for the death. During the 2014/2015 period there were 280 articles discussing specific individuals and cases and during the 2016/2017 period it was 120 articles. From both periods 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 the reasons stated for death in the articles discussing specific cases of intimate femicide varied from the death either being a mistake or being pre-meditated. The most common reason cited for death in both periods was that the death was premeditated, which meant that the perpetrator's intention was to kill the victim and that the murder was planned. In both periods more than 50% of the articles reported in this way. There were however some articles (see table 3.7) that stated that the death was a "mistake", where, for instance, the perpetrator was said to have acted violently out of rage. In these cases, the victim died even though the intention was not necessarily to kill the victim. Despite the low coverage given to infidelity, descriptions of patterns of infidelity (either of the victim or perpetrator) were a constant thread throughout both periods. During the 2014/2014 period 10% and 1% of the stories discussed infidelity of the perpetrator and victim respectively. During the 2016/2017 period 9% and 10% of the stories discussed the infidelity of the perpetrator and victim respectively.

Table 3.7: Reasons for death of the victim

	2014/2015		2016/2017	
	n	n=280 (%)	n	n=120 (%)
Murder was pre-meditated	207	74	68	57
Death was a mistake	73	26	52	43
Femicide linked to infidelity of perpetrator	28	10	11	9
Death is linked to infidelity of victim	3	1	12	10

3.11. Intimate femicide-Suicide cases

An important finding in the analysis of intimate femicide stories is the number of cases that have been followed by the perpetrator having died by suicide. In the present study intimate femicide-suicide cases were apparent in both periods, however to a relatively small extent. Of the total intimate femicide articles during the 2014/2015 period, only 3% of the perpetrators of intimate femicide were reported to have committed suicide, in comparison to 16% of the perpetrators during the 2016/2017 period.

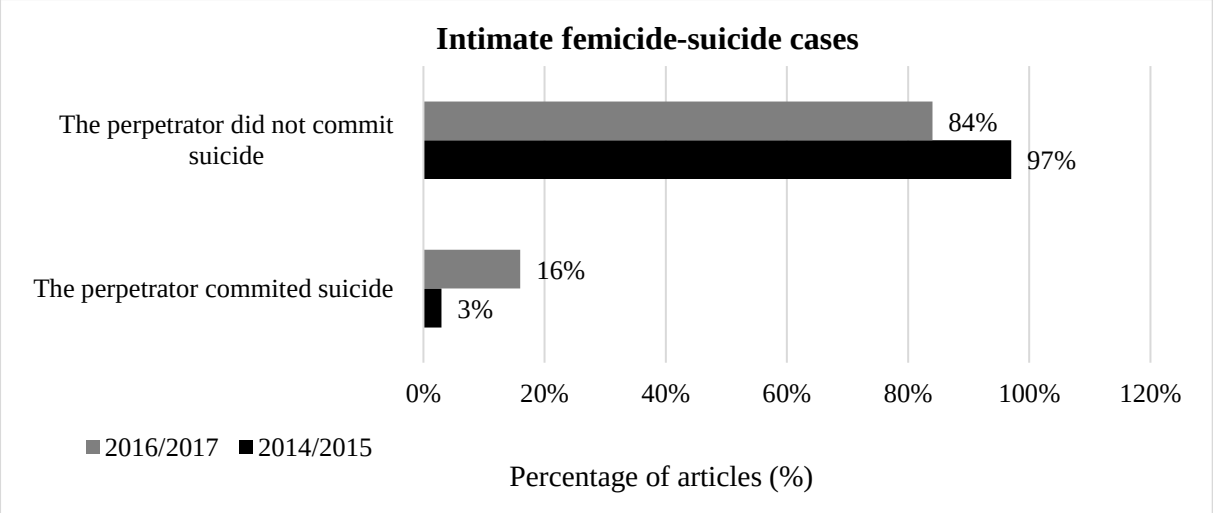


Figure 3.9 Intimate femicide cases followed by suicide of the perpetrator

3.12. Sources cited

For the purpose of this paper the researcher used Media Monitoring's definition of a source, as any person who is either directly or indirectly accessed in the article. Media is a reflection of power dynamics in society and evaluating who is given opportunity to voice their opinions is a reflection of that power. Those individuals or groups whose views on particular topics are actively sought out by the media are therefore those whose views are deemed important. Analysing sources is therefore key to understanding who has power to voice their opinion on particular issues. Understanding sources can be divided according to two categories: affiliation and gender.

Affiliation

Affiliation of the source is operationalized by MMA as a source's position or who they are representing such as government, academia, professional group or citizen.

The most accessed group of sources for both periods were individuals connected to the criminal justice system. These included judges, law enforcement officials, prosecutors and lawyers. Specifically, between the 2014/2015 period the most accessed sources were lawyers/prosecutors and advocates at 23% and the second most accessed were the judges at 21%. During the 2016/2017 period, the most accessed sources were the South African Police Services, where they made up 35% of the sources. The SAPS were often cited to provide valuable information regarding the case such as background information on the victims and perpetrators and the reasons for the murder. During the 2016/2017 period, the president of South Africa was the third most accessed source at 12%. For both periods private sources such as family members and friends were accessed less regularly, making up less than 10% of all sources. In addition, domestic violence experts such as gender and development academics and representatives from civil society organizations such as Non-governmental organizations (NGO) and community based organizations (CBO) were less than 5% of all sources in both periods. In these cases the sources were accessed to provide background information on domestic violence statistics and extent of gender-based violence nationally. Furthermore, the sources which were coded as "other" included witnesses, celebrities and friends. From this group 10% and 5% were accessed during 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 period respectively.

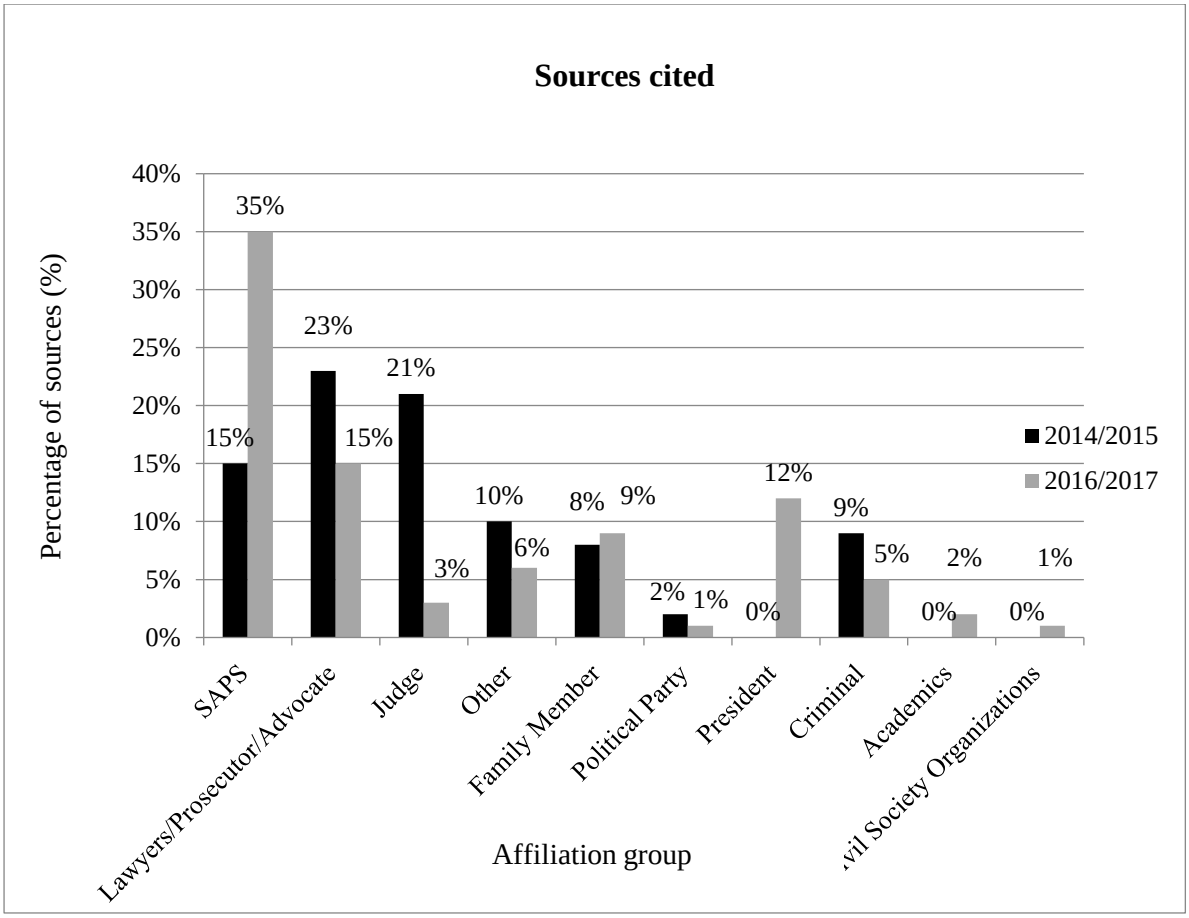


Figure 3.10 Affiliation groups of sources in intimate femicide stories between 2014/2015 and 2016/2017

Gender Breakdown of the sources

The graph below shows the gender breakdown of the sources that were accessed during both the 2014/2015 period and the 2016/2017 period. An analysis of the gender breakdown of the sources, which will be elaborated on further in the discussion chapter, reveals to us how gendered reporting on intimate femicide is and the voices of which gender is prioritised over the other. For both periods there was a large disparity between the female and male sources, whereby in both periods males were mostly accessed, i.e. 69% and 74% between 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 periods respectively.

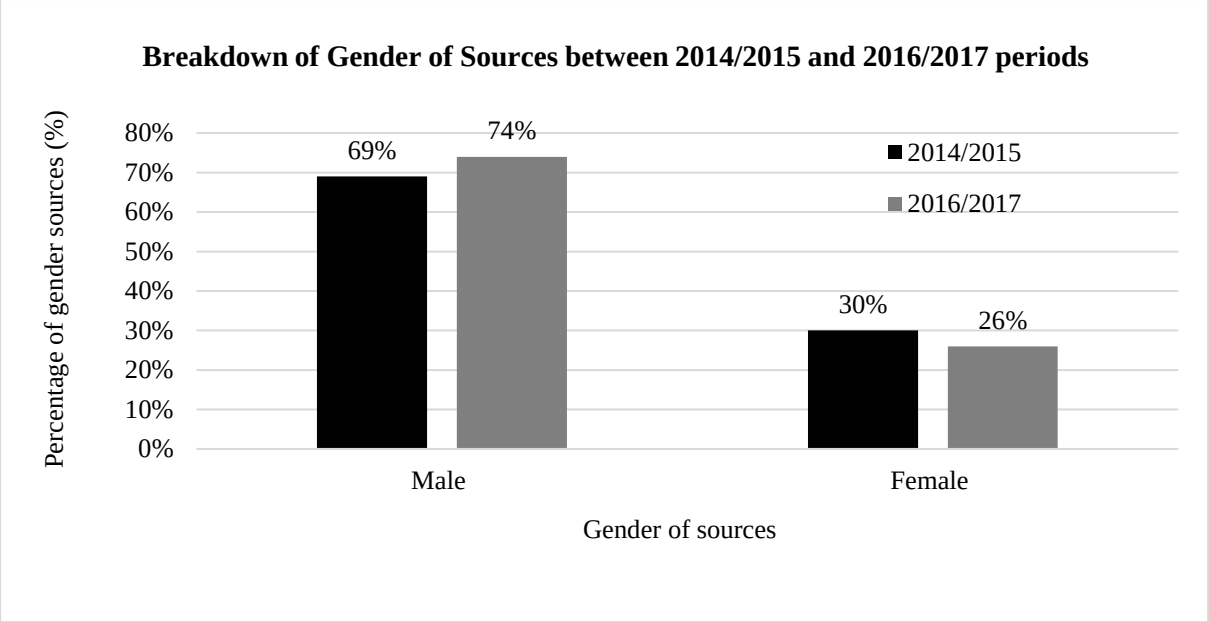


Figure 3.11 Gender of sources accessed in intimate femicide articles between 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 periods.

3.13. Quality of Reporting

Over and above the content of the articles themselves, it is also important to bear in mind other features that indicate quality of coverage. As described previously, this was taken to mean that stories that mentioned the basic context, causes, consequences, solutions and polices related to intimate femicide were seen as high quality articles. In this analysis, the quality of the articles from both periods was fairly low, where most of the articles did not report much on the root causes of intimate femicide (i.e. 5% and 7% for the 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 periods respectively); nor make mention of relevant policies related to GBV (12% between 2014/2015 and 3% between the 2016/2017 period); nor did they provide solutions or give the bigger picture of the context of intimate femicide in relation to GBV(1% and 6% for the 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 period respectively). In contrast, during the 2014/2015 period there were significantly more articles making mention of relevant policies, although most of which were related to judicial proceedings rather than gender based violence. During the 2014/2015 period none of the articles were found to provide any solution or self-help for women in danger of intimate femicide. This indicates that much of the coverage of these cases remains superficial and in many instances these stories lack basic insight and context to a very complex societal issue.

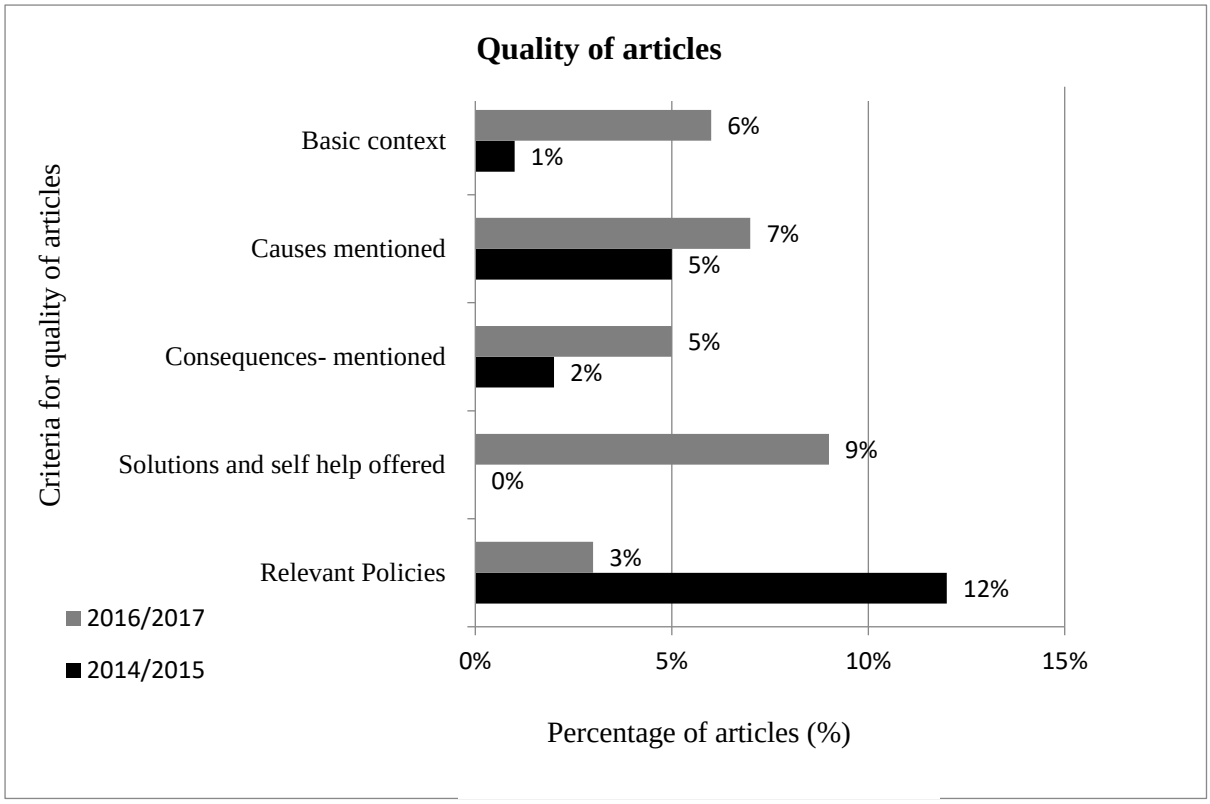


Figure 3.12 Quality of intimate femicide articles

Chapter 4: Discussion

This chapter aims to unpack the main findings identified in the media coverage of intimate femicide during the 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 periods. The discussion explores the significance of the findings as well as reviews these findings in relation to other research in order to establish the extent to which they either differ or replicate findings of previous studies. The section will also discuss the limitations of the study and how these could have potentially impacted on the reliability and validity of the findings.

4.1 The extent of intimate femicide coverage during the two periods

4.1.1 The number of femicide stories covered during the two periods

As mentioned before, the extent to which intimate femicide is covered in the news media is not reflective of the actual reality of the issue on the ground. In her study Brodie (2018) found that more than 2100 women are murdered in South Africa yearly yet less than 20% of these intimate femicide stories make onto the news (56). Furthermore globally, there are various studies which have also illustrated that coverage of intimate femicide does not mirror the actual crime rates (16, 52, 59, 79). Our findings support past research, where we found that there is a significant discrepancy between the number of femicide cases and stories in the media, and the prevalence of the issue in reality. We found that of all the articles published during the period under study less than 5% of these were intimate femicide cases (56).

Furthermore overall there has not been much improvement in the quality of reporting over the years and coverage only tends to shoot up during campaign times and with certain sensationalist cases. However it must be noted, we did see greater diversity in reporting in the second period as compared to the first period once the two dominant cases were removed for analyses. The impact of this gross under-representation contributes significantly to the silence surrounding this epidemic and also serves to distort the nature as well prevalence of the crime.

As mentioned before, the media play a critical role in keeping people informed and creating overall awareness about issues of national importance (30). The media also has an influence in the conclusions and opinions people have on particular issues (30). The extent to which the media reports on intimate femicide influences public understanding. Therefore an under-

representation of intimate femicide in the news has a consequence of creating the perception that the issue is not as serious as it actually is. The under-reporting of intimate femicide in the media reflects the priorities of the media, as well as society as a whole. The media are best described by Nies et al. as the gatekeepers, who control access to news and information and report on what they believe the public should be thinking about (80). Some may argue that they decide on what is newsworthy, however we agree with Shoemaker's assertion that, in actual fact, what makes the news is not necessarily what is most newsworthy (81). Shoemaker argues that the concept of newsworthiness is actually a mental construct and judgement call, and the level of newsworthiness of a story is only one of the many factors that determine how much coverage an issue will receive (81). Journalists scan the environment and make a mental judgement of what news might be of interest to the public and they decide what makes it to the news and the angle in which to spin it (81). Therefore the assumption here is that the media does assess the newsworthiness of a story but this does not mean it will make it to the news (81). Shoemaker previously asserted that the prominence of a story in the news reflects the newsworthiness of that story, however after research in ten countries in 2006 she found that in actual fact what citizens believed to be newsworthy did not dominate headlines (81). Our findings suggest that although intimate femicide is a newsworthy issue, the media prioritises other types of stories and does not reflect the issue in the extent that it occurs in reality

Intimate femicide and the broader issue of intimate partner violence is one of South Africa's biggest public health and human rights issues, and the statistics remain remarkably high. South Africa has one of the highest intimate femicide rates globally (23). Clearly this meets the journalistic newsworthiness criteria of prominence and human interest yet we continue to see inadequate quality of reporting (81). We argue this can be explained by the fact that issues that specifically affect women are not prioritised in the media and in society, reflecting the patriarchal structure of our society. Prominent media theorists have asserted that the media continues to give authority to men at the expense of women and at the core, sexist notions and values determine newsworthiness, which govern the functioning of not only South African media but also international media (82).

4.1.2 Origin of intimate femicide stories during the two periods

The 2012 Media Sustainability Index for South Africa found that South African journalists were more likely to report on urban over rural stories, which often left the stories of

"ordinary" people under-reported (83). Furthermore research conducted in Nigeria has also found an information flow problem where the media tend to focus news coverage primarily on activities and issues in the urban areas to the detriment of rural areas (84). Our study found a similar pattern where majority of the stories from both periods were reported from the metropolitan areas. This extensive coverage of stories in the metropolitan areas further speaks to the marginalization of rural areas, and also has the potential of perpetuating the silence of intimate partner violence including intimate femicide that exists in rural areas.

The silence on intimate partner violence in the rural areas is further perpetuated by the dual legal system in South Africa, particularly in terms of the response. The Domestic Violence Act can only be enforced in magistrate courts or family courts, which means that there are no specific rules in dealing with domestic violence within the customary law (85). Thirty-six percent of the total population of South Africans live in the tribal villages in the rural areas, majority of which are women, and may also adhere to the tenets of African customary law (85). The fact that the customary law does not outline how domestic violence against women can be dealt with means that it is often treated as a private issue between spouses which does not merit legal intervention (85). Issues of domestic violence would generally be raised with the husband's family if the couple is married and in a situation where the couple is not married the issue is debated in a family council (85). Evidently women who have experienced intimate partner violence in the rural areas are silenced by the traditional structures that their families still adhere to.

As mentioned before, some of the root causes of VAW include patriarchy, poverty, and cultural norms that enable the abuse of women (4). These root causes are largely prevalent in rural contexts and place women at increased risk of VAW and ultimately intimate femicide. Citizens in the rural areas as with urban dwellers also have problems that need to be addressed in the media, and it is imperative for the rest of society to also be made aware about their struggles and efforts that are being made to combat these (84).

Perhaps the marginalization of stories in the rural areas can be attributed to the lack of accessibility to the rural areas as most of the media houses are stationed in the urban centres. Furthermore we argue that this can also be attributed to the fact that often, for journalists to perceive a story as newsworthy, it must involve prominent personalities such as celebrities,

politicians and prominent businessmen which are less likely to be found in the rural areas (84).

4.2 How were the victims and perpetrators portrayed?

4.2.1 Portrayal of the victims

There is a body literature on the portrayal of intimate femicide victims in the media (52, 53, 57, 79). The studies showed that the media to a large extent often indirectly or directly blame the women for their own deaths. Richards and colleagues confirmed the tendency of media to blame victims for their own fate, using both direct and indirect strategies such as language that discredited the victim, or in some cases blaming the victim for staying in an abusive relationship that inevitably led to her death (54). Our findings contradict the research. We found that there was there was very little victim blaming during both periods of coverage, as victims were often portrayed in a neutral manner. The latter is also in line with the study conducted by McManus and Dorfman which found that the California newspaper articles were not framed in ways that placed the blame on the victim or excused the actions of the perpetrators (79). From our findings it can be argued that media reporting in South Africa in relation to how the victims are portrayed has improved over time from the 2014/2015 period to the 2016/2017 period. Reporting in ways that places the blame on the victim for her fate has the potential of creating a situation where women will most likely feel that certain behaviours places them at risk of being killed. Whereas the issue should not be that women should behave in ways that prevent them from being killed by their partners but rather men should stop killing their partners. Furthermore the consequence of placing the blame on the woman for her death is that women who are in abusive relationships are also then less likely to report this due to fear of also being blamed.

4.2.2 Portrayal of the perpetrator

Most research has indicated that the perpetrator is often excused from some responsibility for their actions (52, 53, 57, 79). Richards and colleagues argued that the perpetrators were often exonerated by providing reasons for their behaviour such as mental health issues, financial frustrations, and consistent arguments with the victim and in some instances struggles with substance abuse (54). Contrary to previous research, the current study found that during both periods the perpetrators were reported as being responsible for their actions. During the

2016/2017 period perpetrators were portrayed almost equally as villains and in neutral terms. In an instance where the perpetrator was vilified, this was often when he had been convicted and it was clear that he had committed the crime. Those that were portrayed in neutral terms were often suspected criminals that had not yet been convicted. In a situation where the perpetrator has been convicted it is imperative that the perpetrator be reported as responsible for his actions in order for them to account. Holding the perpetrators as responsible is critical in exposing violators. Taking responsibility away from the perpetrators and exonerating them by providing excuses has an impact on the way in which the issue is understood broadly. It also serves to not only maintain but also reinforce a culture of silence surrounding the issue and therefore failure to develop the necessary interventions to deal with the problem.

4.2.3. Relationship to the perpetrator

Much of the research that has explored the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim found that in most intimate femicide cases women were more likely to be killed by either their current or ex-partner (17, 52, 57) Our current study focussed only on intimate femicide therefore the murder of the women by someone either than her intimate partner was not included in the analysis. From our findings when we compared ex-partner and current partner perpetrators we found that across both periods more than 80% of the stories reported that the perpetrator was a current partner. We cannot back this finding with previous research as most research that has been done has not separated ex and current partner but rather analysed this together as a single variable. However, it can be safely assumed that the journalist or the sources of the story were not aware of the separation or pending separation thus the reporting of the perpetrator as a current partner. Understanding the dynamics of the perpetrator and victim relationship is important in that it provides more in depth information on the trend of violence and the possible risk factors.

4.2.4. Details of the victims' deaths

The media has a responsibility to report on issues in a well-balanced and ethical manner. Insensitive approaches such as the inclusion of gruesome details regarding how the victim died can have an adverse impact on the families and those close to the victim. Although the media does have an obligation to provide information to the general public, they also have an obligation to ensure the dignity of the family and their right to privacy (21). Overall from our findings only 7% from the 2014/2015 period and 25% from the 2016/2017 period described

the gruesome details of the victims in detail. Evidently the journalists can be said to have exercised a good amount of journalistic integrity in relation to how they reported the details of the victim's deaths. However upon further analysis it was also evident that in most cases it was the details of black victims whose details of the death were described in gruesome detail. This is similar to what Brodie describes as the ideal victim or perpetrator, in this case it can be argued that in actual fact the ideal victim is considered white and upper class, thus her right to dignity is preserved above that of the black victim who is of a lower socio-economic status (56).

4.2.5. Reasons for death of the victim

Researchers have argued that the way in which the death of the victim is reported on is fundamental to how society interprets the issue (56, 57, 79, 86). The reasons cited for the death of the victim can contribute to victim blaming and/or exonerating the perpetrator for his actions (16, 51). The current study found that in both periods more than 50% of the articles reported on the murder as being pre-meditated, which meant that the murder was not a mistake but rather the perpetrator planned to end the life of the victim. Our findings reflect that the perpetrators were reported as responsible for their actions counter to the majority of the research which often found that the perpetrator was excused for his actions by citing issues such as mental illness or substance abuse problems (16, 59, 86). Furthermore our findings also showed that infidelity, whether of the victim or the perpetrator was cited in less than 20% of the articles across both periods. This finding is important in that it shifts the causality of intimate femicide. Had the media reported that there was a high causal link between intimate femicide and infidelity, this would create the perception that intimate femicide can be solved by women or men being more faithful to their partners. Evidently this would be a misrepresentation of the intricacies of intimate femicide and possible solutions. We cannot predict for certain the reasons for this finding, however in terms of quality of journalism it is evident that South African coverage is on the right track regarding portrayal of perpetrators and victims in intimate femicide stories.

4.2.6. The race of perpetrator and victims

Brodie argues that in the South African media, the demography of violence is skewed along racial lines, where suspects of violent crime are almost universally either black or coloured (56). Furthermore Media Monitoring Project in their study which analysed coverage of race

and xenophobia in South African print media found that when reporting specifically on crime, the media did not challenge racial profiling and stereotyping but rather reinforced public perceptions about black men being likely perpetrators (87). Our study confirmed these assertions. During the 2014/2015 period, 92% of the stories were about black perpetrators and victims in comparison to 55% during the 2016/2017 period. At face value it may appear as though there was a decline in the number of black perpetrators during the 2016/2017 period. However, this was influenced by the fact that almost half of intimate femicide stories during the 2016/2017 period involved white victims and white perpetrators and this over-representation of stories from this racial group stemmed particularly from the persistent coverage of the Jayde Panyayiotou case.

When the major cases of Dewani and Panayatiou are excluded from analysis, the findings demonstrate that intimate femicide in the South African media is reported largely as a "black issue" and the only exception is when the perpetrator or victim is someone famous or rich.

It is important to show that femicide cuts across racial and class lines. Reporting femicide as an issue that mostly affects a particular race can have the impact of generating stereotypical associations between the particular race and the crime.

4.3. How intimate femicide is framed in the media

Framing of intimate femicide was analysed based on the sources and context provided. Overall we found that intimate femicide is framed as an isolated episodic event using a police or institutional frame which reports the violence based only on how the murder played out. The framing of intimate femicide is discussed below based on the sources that were accessed and the context in which the murder was reported.

4.3.1. Affiliation of the sources

In terms of sources accessed in coverage, the present study supports past findings that individuals most accessed for comment are those who are often connected to the criminal justice or law enforcement system (16, 52, 54-56). Specifically the results here show that the most accessed individuals were either judges, lawyers, prosecutors or police, whereas friends, family and domestic violence experts were rarely accessed. This was true across both periods. The emphasis on official sources is concerning because there is an inherent implication that police and court accounts of domestic violence murders are considered the most important

and that their views or opinions should be sought after and prioritised (55). These structures are also highly patriarchal in nature. In our study the over-reliance on these individuals may stem from the fact that the broad focus of the majority of the stories was on the judicial hearings and legal proceedings of intimate femicide cases. It is therefore inevitable that lawyers and the prosecutors would be cited as the most relevent sources. In addition we would also argue that the dominance of these types of voices mirrors ongoing power dynamics in society where it is the socio-political elite, such as the police, those in the judicial system and policiticans, who are given platforms more frequently to share their ideas on various issues. These results reflect other studies that demonstrate how deeply cemented media's notions of who is important and who is not actually is (88).

Who the media consult with and cite in the coverage impacts on the way in which the incident is portrayed, therefore it is not surprising that when looking at the underlying key messages about intimate femicide, our study found that across both periods cases were reported and treated as homicide cases.

Moreover this side-lining of family and friends means that those equipped to situate the violence within a broader context were rarely heard and a distorted picture of VAW was provided.

4.3.2. Gender of the sources

Various studies have shown that women are significantly under-represented as sources in news media with a clear preference for male sources (51, 55). The Gender Links study looked at more than 250000 news items from 114 print and broadcast outlets in 14 countries in Southern Africa and found that in South Africa 20% of the sources were female (89). Gender Links recommends that there be at least 30% women sources in news content (89). The current study findings are consistent with the available literature, during both periods the majority of the sources that were accessed were male and women sources made up less than 50% of the sources. In their review on media portrayal of violence against women, Sutherland et al. argue that the lack of women's voices in news coverage could potentially be related to the lack of women in media generally (51). It can be argued that although the number of women or men journalists can be a superficial way of understanding the skewed nature of gender sources in the media, it does give a picture about who shapes the decisions about media content (51). The 2015 GMMP study reported that in South Africa there is almost a gender balance across all media whereby women make up 49% of print journalists,

36% of TV reporters and with 60% represent the majority of radio announcers (44). However in terms of senior management, a study by Wits University showed that only 12 of 43 South African editors were female (90). Despite the increase in the number of female journalists in recent years, women remain neglected as sources in the media (90). This indicates that even with increase in women journalists overall, the lack of gender transformation in leadership has largely impacted on the influence that female journalists have in the newsroom and the editorial control they have over their own work therefore directly impacting on choices of source selection among others.

Furthermore the historical patriarchal systems and values that have been inherited in today's newsrooms has had a major impact on gender source selection, where we find men being sourced more often than women simply because they are men (88). The overall lack of diversity in source selection has the consequence of reinforcing a particular group's agenda. In the present study the consequence of a lack of source diversity meant that male sources such as law enforcement, and government officials controlled the narrative on intimate femicide.

4.3.3. Intimate femicide is placed within the broader social context

Consistent with previous findings, the current study found that the majority of the articles did not report on intimate femicide as part of a broader social problem marked by male dominance (59, 79). Articles did not provide relevant contextual factors linked to the issue of violence against women more broadly, but tended to report on intimate femicide as individual, isolated events (16, 52, 55). During both periods there were very low levels of articles providing contextual factors. The contextual factors that were analysed included placing intimate femicide within the broader social context (marked by male superiority and gender inequality) and information on prevalence rates. During both periods the media scored very low, at less than 10% of stories including all indicators. We argue that during both periods there seems to have been a missed opportunity to emphasize the extent of the problem which is imperative in advocating to policy makers to take the issue seriously.

Moreover, contrary to other research, where episodic or individualised reporting was seen more in breaking news or first reports the present study found that even in the follow up stories the broader context was not provided (51). A possible explanation for this could be because most of the stories were on judicial proceedings and the follow up stories were often

about the progress of the case. Nonetheless an in depth analysis of the murder and how this relates to issues of gender inequality could have still been explored.

As asserted in previous research, providing context into the possibility of domestic abuse, whether physical, psychological or emotional is imperative when reporting on intimate femicide to present it within the context of intimate partner violence (15). Reporting it in this way counters the perception that the homicide was a "mistake" or spontaneous occurrence (16). From our study however only 13% of articles across both periods reported on intimate femicide resulting from a history of domestic violence, more so in 2016/2017 (31%) in comparison to 3% in the 2014/2014 period. There appears to have been a small improvement over the period. A possible explanation for this could be the country wide workshops conducted by civil society organizations such as Gender Links and Sonke Gender Justice with media houses which encourage the media to play a constructive role in the eradication of gender-based violence through gender sensitive coverage (63). Evidently there is still a need for improvement in the quality of reporting.

4.4. Key Messages

The main key messages that warrant deeper analysis here included the following: "portrayal of intimate femicide as "general" homicide", "families are affected by intimate femicide" and "intimate femicide results from a history of domestic violence"

4.4.1. Intimate femicide as homicide

In terms of intimate femicide being reported under the gender neutral term of homicide, our findings mirror those found by Gillespie et al. who analysed the extent to which the media either framed intimate femicide as domestic violence or general homicide (86). We found that the majority (84%) of the news articles analysed from both periods reported on intimate femicide cases as homicide and not murder that is deeply entrenched in unequal gender relations and part of a larger systemic problem. Intimate femicide is a gendered phenomenon of killing and cannot and should not be defined as pure homicide (57).

It is imperative that we unpack this assertion regarding intimate femicide as a gendered issue. Research has consistently shown that intimate femicide is a complex phenomenon that can be attributed to various factors. From a public health perspective which incorporates the feminist perspective on intimate femicide it can be analysed using the ecological model (91). From an ecological model analysis intimate femicide results from risk factors at the different levels.

The different levels include individual, interpersonal, community and societal factors (91). At the individual level intimate femicide risk factors include either being abused as a child or witnessing a parent being abused and as a result growing to model that behaviour (91). At the interpersonal level this includes, but is not limited to, factors such as marital conflict, male dominance over various aspects of the family (91). At the community level would be issues such attitudes of the community towards intimate femicide and intimate partner violence (91). Lastly at the societal level some of these risk factors could include rigid gender roles, and masculinity which is linked to male dominance over their partners (91).

Intimate femicide is the final attempt of the man to exert control over his partner (27). The act is also an extension of intimate partner violence and as such needs to take into account the unequal gender relations in society (27). Research that was conducted by Mathews and colleagues with twenty men that had been incarcerated for killing their partners found that their relationships were critical to how they identified themselves as men (27). They believed that having an obedient, supportive and submissive partner reaffirmed their manhood and worthiness and it was up to these women to ensure that they support the fragile egos of their partners by living up to these expectations (27). If the men felt that their manhood was challenged in these relationships they would get violent (27). It has been argued that male violence has its roots in dominant constructions of masculinity which often glamorise physical strength. Intimate femicide is a product of the social context with social norms which legitimise men's use of power over their women (27). The use of violence by men establishes their dominance over women and thus maintaining their patriarchal gender order (27). The study conducted by Mathews and colleagues helps us to see the gendered nature of intimate femicide. There is a connection between how men who kill their intimate partners position themselves as men in their social contexts and their likelihood to kill their partners (27). Understanding that intimate femicide goes beyond general homicide is imperative in developing solutions. At the centre of it is dealing with the harmful gender stereotypes and changing the constructions of masculinity that emphasize control over women by men.

The difference between homicide and intimate femicide is a significant one and reporting on the two issues as homogenous, has the potential impact of concealing the reality of intimate femicide. It cannot be denied that homicide is a serious issue with consequences to society as a whole. In fact in 2010 a study found that close to half a million people had been murdered worldwide, and of those victims 80% of them were male, the consequence of this has been that interventions and strategies to deal with homicide that have been developed thus far have

focussed particularly on male victims and gang related violence of which men are part (57). However when we isolate intimate femicide from homicide, research has shown that there has been decrease in the number of homicide cases globally but this decrease does not apply to intimate femicide, therefore showing the importance of understanding and studying intimate femicide as a separate phenomenon from homicide (4, 92)**.** Naming and reporting femicide for what it truly is and not in the gender neutral term of homicide recognizes the scale as well as significance of male violence against women, and places society in a better position to deal with the issue and develop appropriate interventions. When intimate femicide is reported for what it is and not concealed, we place society in a better position to be able to understand the pattern of this type of violence. We further argue that by reporting intimate femicide as a homicide, this serves to continue to perpetuate the invisibility of the issue to the public resulting in an underestimation of the problem.

4.4.2. Families are affected by intimate femicide

Research has shown that intimate femicide does not only impact the victim and the perpetrator, but the consequences are often far reaching and also impact the surroundings of both the victim and perpetrator, this includes family, friends and neighbours (93, 94). However the current study did not reflect this phenomenon. Overall we found that of the total articles across both periods only 28% of the articles discussed how families were affected by the murder.

Intimate femicide has a strong and prolonged impact on women's surroundings. For example, surviving children of women killed by their intimate partners experience long-lasting effects, since they lose one parent to the murder, the other parent possibly to jail, and often have to leave their parental home and adjust to a new environment in which they might be labelled as the child of the murderer (12). A recent study from the UK further highlighted that the partner is seldom the sole victim in cases of intimate partner femicide (13). Others who might also be killed include the couple's children; unrelated bystanders; people perceived as the victim's allies by the perpetrator, such as lawyers, relatives, neighbours or friends; and the victim's new partner (13). Detailed reports on the extent to which families are impacted by the crime adds context to the murder and shows that intimate femicide does not occur as an isolated event. Furthermore reporting the impact that violence has on the families is part of reporting on intimate femicide from a public health perspective (57). Rodgers and Thorso argue that when reporting from a public health perspective it is important to show the

consequences of the violence for the families in order to provide readers with a more accurate picture of the world (57).

4.4.3. Intimate femicide results from history of domestic violence

Research has found that one of the main risk factors of intimate femicide is a history of domestic violence (95). Despite this fact our findings portrayed a fairly different picture, where only 12.73% across both periods, articles contextualised the femicide within a history of domestic violence. We argue that this is a gross under-representation of the issue, especially in a country where the prevalence of lifetime IPV is estimated to range between 19.1%-28.4% (4). It is therefore paramount for the media to frame intimate femicide within the context of domestic violence. Placing the murder within this context requires the comprehensive consideration of the relationship history of the victim and perpetrator in order to accurately contextualise the issue (52, 54). It is must be noted, however that we are not making the assertion that all the victims had a history of domestic violence. However the findings are a misrepresentation of the reality on the ground and the issue of intimate femicide as a whole.

4.5. Femicide-Suicide Cases

Femicide-suicide and particularly intimate femicide-suicide has been consistently reported as one of the most common types of homicide-suicide globally (54, 96). Particularly research conducted in Australia, Canada and the United States found that femicide-suicide cases account for 43-85% of all homicide suicide cases (96). In their study on the incidence as well as patterns of femicide-suicide in South Africa Mathews et al discovered that the rates of femicide-suicide exceeded the reported rates of other countries by far (1.7/100 000 women above the age of 14) (1). In contrast findings from the current study found that for both periods less than 20% of the articles reported on femicide-suicide cases, with 16% and 3% for the 2016/2017 and 2014/2015 period respectively. Although there were some reports of femicide-suicide these types of stories were not common and there seems to be a discrepancy with the prevalence in reality and the reportage. The high rates of femicide-suicide can be understood as part of the bigger issue of the high levels of intimate partner violence in South Africa. It is imperative for the public to have a better understanding of femicide-suicide cases as well as the prevalence because inevitably premature mortality has a significant impact for communities.

4.6. Overall Quality of the articles on intimate femicide from the two periods

Although the quality of the reporting can be assessed by factors already discussed above such as the sources accessed, and the level of context provided. We also analysed the quality based on whether solutions and self-help was provided to women at risk of intimate femicide, as well as whether the root causes and relevant policies related to domestic violence and the consequences of intimate femicide were also discussed. Our findings indicate that the quality of reporting from both periods was fairly low across all indicators. There was a small improvement during the 2016/2017 period but in all indicators the improvement was not more than 5%. As mentioned before, for an article to be considered to be good quality it had to include all the elements, however the level of quality can be said to exist on a continuum, where an article consisting of 1/3 of the elements was considered very low quality and 3/4 considered good and 4/4 considered the ideal.

4.6.1. Relevant policies are discussed

Firstly the fact that the articles under analysis have not shared relevant policies such as the Domestic Violence Act and how the act has been developed to protect women, fails to provide awareness on the policy mechanisms that are in place to protect women. In the current study, the actual policies that were mostly reported on were those relating to the judicial proceedings.

4.6.2. Solutions and self-help options are provided

Secondly, not providing solutions and self-help options to potential victims of domestic abuse or witnesses to femicide fails to acknowledge the gravity of the situation. In her study Derkel revealed that a lot of women did not know where to seek help, and that the barriers to seeking help are compounded by the lack of information available (62). Although we argue here that it is important for articles discussing femicide to provide information on the services that women who have experienced VAW can access, we must mention that it is also equally important to focus the message on the male perpetrators to refrain from committing violence in the first place (97).

4.6.3. Consequences for families of the perpetrators and victims

Previous research has shown that intimate femicide has an impact on the different levels i.e., the individual to the societal level (22). Intimate femicide has consequences for families of the perpetrators, as well the victims, and these consequences range from economic, physical and psychological impacts. It is important to discuss these consequences to provide readers with a more accurate and real picture of intimate femicide, what drives it and what suitable responses should be (57).Our findings show that across both periods only 28% of the articles depicted how severely the families were impacted by the femicide. The fact that consequences were often not reported can be attributed to the fact that femicide was reported as an isolated and unpredictable incident and the media is concerned more about sensationalizing the event rather than providing awareness on the broader impact.

4.6.4. Root causes of intimate femicide are discussed

Finally for both periods the fact that less than 10% of the articles mentioned the underlying causes of femicide is concerning. The fact that the coverage failed, to a large extent to discuss the drivers and causes of GBV and consequently intimate femicide generates a lack of understanding of the context of intimate femicide, and the possible solutions that can be developed to deal with it.

The choices that journalists often make regarding what to write about and how to write it, stems from viewership and readership patterns, regarding what sells rather than the provision of accurate, and contextualised reporting (59).

4.7. Topics

The topics were the central focus of the articles. From our findings most of the stories discussed intimate femicide in reference to it as “crime and violence” issue, where the focus was on the number of arrests that were made and how the criminal justice system is working to deal with the issue. The other central focus area that was used in reporting the stories was the “justice system” which were stories related to judicial hearings of the femicide cases. The “justice system” and “crime and violence” topics made up the bulk of the articles, at the expense of other focus areas such as “awareness” and “education” intimate femicide articles. This over-emphasis on reporting on the justice and law enforcement system creates the

perception that the issue of intimate femicide is best solved through these institutions, and takes away the fact that it is systemic issue, requiring a holistic approach. Intimate femicide requires concerted efforts from different structures, there is a space for civil society organizations, legal institution as well as the community in combatting the problem

4.8. Limitations:

Bias in age and gender identification of sources

Although Dexter automatically retrieves the names of sources, the researcher determined the race and gender of each source based on the name. The determination of race and gender in this manner is a limitation as this is not 100% accurate and is subject to bias. Although identifying the race and gender based on the name is not ideal this remains a crude estimate of the population group.

Sample Size

The study was limited in scope in that the researcher relied only on online news coverage and only monitored coverage during a six month period over the two periods. The fact that only online news coverage was monitored meant that community newspapers were not included in the analysis. Moreover only articles written in English were analyzed. However it must be noted all English South African online newspapers were analyzed, none were excluded, this was done so as to make up for the limitation of not being able to analyze the other mediums and also to attain as much maximum variation as possible.

Lack of research studies on the topic

Prior research is imperative in providing theoretic foundations for one's research question. Although there has been a lot of research conducted in America on the coverage of intimate femicide in the news, there is a lack of prior research investigating the coverage in South Africa. Although this can be seen as a limitation it also served as an opportunity for the researcher to identify new gaps in the literature and the need for further research.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there had been any changes over time in the way in which online mainstream news media reported on intimate partner femicide in South Africa. The following chapter will provide recommendations in response to the findings that could assist in improving the coverage of femicide issues in the South African media; thereafter a discussion on future research that can be conducted is presented.

5.1. Conclusion

This study has shown that although South Africa has extremely high rates of intimate femicide, the issue is not taken seriously in the media. The research has highlighted that overall coverage of intimate femicide is overly-simplistic, inadequate and portrays distorted representations of the extent and nature of the problem. Societal reactions in particular those of policy makers based on media portrayals, which as discussed are often imbalanced and often void of context have the potential to result in misguided interventions and strategies in addressing intimate femicide. Therefore it is imperative that media portrayal of violence against women represents the true nature of the issue. It is imperative for the media to ensure that they disseminate information that is accurate regarding the extent of the problem and the potential resources available to potential victims of violence. Media also needs to report on intimate femicide more responsibly by including sources from a variety of groups. The South African media has an opportunity to use its position of prominence to move towards providing readers with a more accurate and comprehensive account of violence against women. Providing more accurate information can lead to citizens starting to think about solutions to the problem which in turn may lead to policies and interventions that can help in addressing the root causes of VAW.

5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1. Extent of femicide coverage

In relation to the extent of intimate femicide coverage in the news media across the two periods, the overall coverage as discussed in Chapter 4 was very low and mostly included stories that originated from the metropolitan areas. There is a need for media houses to report based on the realities on the ground, which includes diversifying the types of cases covered, the voices accessed and the regions reported on. For example, it is essential that rural areas receive equitable coverage on such issues, as GBV and intimate femicide continue to be taboos in the areas (85). This could be done through increased use of citizen journalists in the rural areas, who can report on intimate femicide cases and other cases of violence against women to the mainstream news media. Citizen journalists are defined as citizens, (non-professionals) who collect, report, analyse and disseminate news information in their particular communities (98). In the African continent especially in rural areas certain issues such as VAW are side-lined and not spoken about enough which in turn results in the issues also being neglected by the mainstream media. Under such circumstances citizen journalists can play an important role. The benefit of citizen journalists is that they are on the ground and are able to bring to the news agenda issues that mainstream media fails to reach (98). Citizen journalism has also been hailed as a more transparent and democratic form of journalism (98). Furthermore citizen journalism is also said to be unique in that it provides first-hand account of the events which ensures deeper coverage of the issue (98). It is worth mentioning that in order to increase the efficacy of citizen journalism; the journalists would need to be thoroughly trained on the ethics of journalism to ensure their protection from legislation.

Health-e News in collaboration with Livewire, a grassroots organization is an example of successful citizen journalism that can be modelled (99). The two organizations have identified community leaders and equip them with the necessary skills to develop stories that can be published in the mainstream media (99). The training is focussed on journalism basics, how to identify what a story is, the types of stories that the media reports on and the basic ethics of reporting (99). In fact it must be mentioned it was one of Health e-news' citizen journalists that broke the story about the mentally ill patients that were removed from

Life Esidemeni, resulting in their death and consequent resignation of the MEC for health in Gauteng (99).

5.2.2. Quality of Reporting

In terms of the overall quality of intimate femicide coverage in South Africa, there is need for accelerated capacity building initiatives for media houses. Despite training that has been conducted by civil society organizations such as Sonke Gender Justice and Gender Links, there seems to still be a gap in the quality of intimate femicide coverage (11, 59). As evidenced in the current study the quality of coverage on intimate femicide was extremely low on all indicators across both periods. This calls for a need for more intensified training for journalists and media houses broadly on how to best report on intimate femicide and GBV. Some success in training journalists on how to best report on gender based violence has been demonstrated by Gender Links and their Centre of Excellence for gender programme where they have provided intensive capacity building workshops for 108 media houses in Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to encourage better reporting as well as increase the knowledge on GBV (11). Through their training programme Gender Links has managed to get media houses to develop their own gender policies (11). Furthermore in terms of gender parity they have also seen improvements in Madagascar, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia (11). Globally training journalists has also proven successful (11). A handbook developed by RICADV was assessed to determine whether the best practices outlined in the handbook had been adopted by journalists after they have been trained on it. It was found that where journalists previously framed intimate femicide as unpredictable isolated incidences they were now reporting on the issue within a broader social issue requiring public intervention (100). Thus, there is a need to upscale and intensify capacity building initiatives with media houses to ensure better coverage of such issues. Better coverage would ensure that intimate femicide is not reported on as an isolated event, the relevant policies related to VAW are mentioned as well as information on possible services that potential victims can access are provided. Coleman and Thorson (2002) stated that including context when reporting on violence creates a rich context for better understanding (101).

Furthermore training should emphasize the importance of source selection and how this impacts on the framing of a story. Journalists need to be encouraged to cite GBV experts,

academics, civil society organizations as well as family members and friends to ensure diverse views and provide the contextual roots and patterns of domestic violence on a broader scale (55).

While training is an important avenue to improving reportage, the poor quality seen here is also indicative of broader media quality issues linked to broken economic models and under-resourced journalists. The move to digital media across the globe has resulted in media houses not obtaining revenues as high as before and this has led to widespread retrenchments across the sector (88). These job losses mean that there are fewer journalists available to cover stories in rich and in-depth ways, and this ultimately reduces quality across all topics reported.(88) Media, as a whole, therefore also need to re-evaluate and experiment with their revenue models to allow for the hiring and capacity-building of staff on the ground.

5.2.3. Media advocacy

Furthermore, the media can play a critical role in advocating for the government to take action in relation to intimate femicide and VAW. Media advocacy is able to influence public debate, put pressure on decision makers and those with influence (102). The combination of advocacy approaches with the strategic use of media is capable of putting pressure on decision makers to take issues such as VAW more seriously and ensuring that gender equity is prioritised within all structures. There is strong evidence in public health which has shown the effectiveness of enforcing policies in attaining public health goals (102). Although as mentioned previously theoretically South Africa has some of the most progressive policies, the problem is found in the enforcement of such laws, which often boils down to political will. Using the media as an advocacy tool would mean a shift towards holding those in power accountable when policies and laws related to intimate femicide and VAW have not been enforced (102). Wallack argues that it is important to focus on broad social and political involvement instead of individual behaviour regarding issues that have a wider impact in order for there to be more sustainable changes when developing interventions (102). Furthermore it has also been argued that in order to set the public agenda it is important to gain access to the media as the agenda-setting process is often linked to the level of media coverage as well as the broad visibility of an issue (102). The media plays a critical role in getting people to think about certain issues, therefore the more coverage intimate femicide

receives in the media, the more likely it will become a concern to the general public and will receive more attention from decision makers and other influencers.

5.2.4. Public health implications

This study has shown that intimate femicide is a grave public health concern that has an impact on the individual, interpersonal and societal levels therefore comprehensive strategies are required to address the issue. How the media reports on intimate femicide in South Africa has important implications on how it is addressed and whether or not it is prioritised. Although the public perception of crime and violence is often influenced by primary factors such as family or personal experience, secondary factors such as media play a critical role in shaping the ideas that people have of violence (103). The fact that the media analysed in this study failed to contextualise the issue and place it within the broader social issue of intimate partner violence creates the perception to society that intimate femicide occurs as an isolated spontaneous event rather than, a social problem that is on the increase (4). Furthermore the overemphasis on the law enforcement officials as sources creates the perception that the issue can only be dealt with through law enforcement, failing to acknowledge other parties such as civil society organizations, government and community members can make significant contributions in dealing with intimate femicide. We recommend that the training of journalists includes education on IPV as a larger social problem and not as a unique incident and in turn report it as such. Furthermore we propose that journalists be obligated by the Press Council of South Africa (PCSA) to ensure that sources that are used for stories are varied and to stop relying on one sided accounts.

5.2.4. Increase number of women and the media

There is a gross under-representation of women in the media, as a result the newsroom is not representative of the South African society but often mirrors patriarchal views (104). We argue that there is a need for interventions that will tackle patriarchal values in the newsroom. To challenge patriarchy in the news room there is a need to hire more female journalists. Over and above increasing the number of female journalists as well as female editors it is imperative to tackle the actual patriarchal values in the media industry because the same women that are hired in positions are merely just placed within these patriarchal structures and are unable to make any real changes.

The assumption that gender has an impact on media gender representations can be evidenced through Armstrong's work (105). Armstrong looked into the effect of individual reporter gender on gender representations (105). Although research has shown that it is the more macro-level factors that have influence on news content (105). Armstrong asserts that the gender of the reporter also plays a role (105). When choosing sources reporters rely on their own judgement, based on research it was found that although not all reporters whether male or female are aware of the disparity between male and female representations, it is female reporters that were more sensitive to the issue (105).

Armstrong's study found that even though organizational and structural influences contribute to the overall gender representations the individual writer also has a significant influence (105). Female journalists were said to be more likely to write about women and showcase women in news coverage, whereas male journalist were more likely to emphasize males than females in their stories (105). The study concluded that the gender of the journalist played a significant role in the attention and emphasis of sources and subjects in news coverage (105).

Intensified training of journalists in relation to responsible coverage of issues affecting women such as intimate femicide is of outmost importance. Furthermore although affirmative action laws do stipulate that media houses need to meet a certain quota in terms of hiring previously disadvantaged groups this needs to be enforced more.

5.2.5. Future research:

The current study has shown that the coverage of intimate femicide in South Africa is sub-standard. Intimate femicide rates in South Africa are among the highest in the world yet coverage does not reflect the extent of the problem. Although the current study was limited in scope and was only able to monitor coverage during a six month period over the two periods, future research can build on the current research by exploring a longer period. Furthermore future studies could also look at other media sources such as print, television and radio news and explore how intimate femicide is covered on those platforms. Moreover, a content analysis of the coverage of intimate femicide, coupled with focus group discussions or interviews with journalists would also be beneficial in gaining a deeper understanding of the findings and the context in which these stories are published. For instance, from our study it is evident that journalists have a tendency to access official sources such as police, lawyers, and prosecutors therefore it would be important to gain understanding from them why this is the case. Furthermore interviewing journalists regarding why they report in the way that they

do would also provide insight on interventions that can be developed to improve the quality of reporting.

Moreover, there are still some gaps regarding the impact of news coverage on public understanding, attitude and behaviours in relation to intimate femicide and more broadly VAW and how to develop messages in the media to effectively promote social change. Therefore research on the latter would be critical.

As previously mentioned when we compared ex-partner and current partner perpetrators we found that across both periods more than 80% of the stories reported that the perpetrator was a current partner. We, therefore suggest further research to understand whether this is truly the case in reality, and if so what are some of the dynamics that can be attributed to this phenomenon. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that in many instances women who have been in long term abusive relationships end up being killed by their partners when they decide to leave this assumption needs to be ascertained through further research (92).

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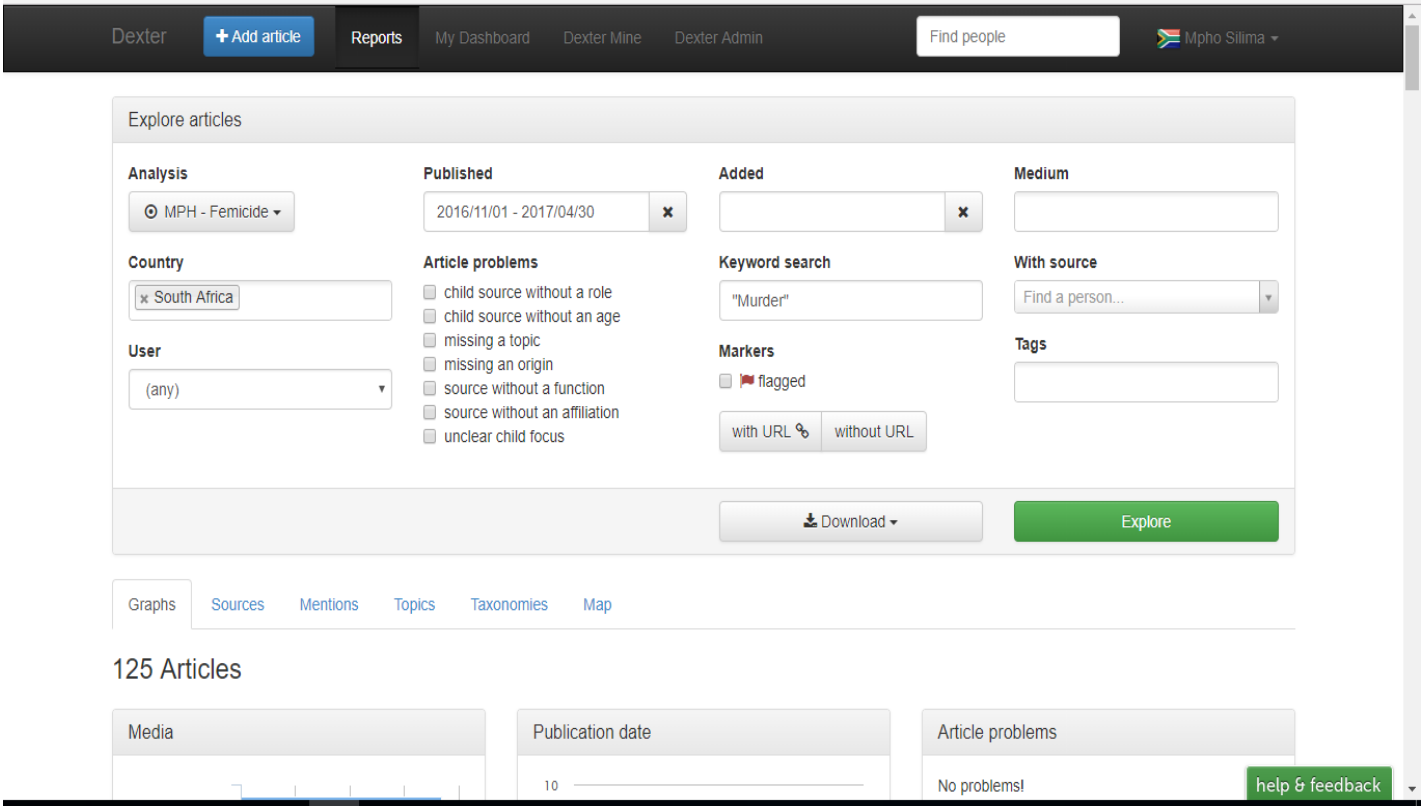
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Appendixes

Appendix A

Representation of Dexter, online media monitoring software



Appendix B

Full list of topics and description for the types of stories they describe

1. **Violence and crime:** stories centered on crime statistics as well as highlighted issues of violence and femicide as part of a broader crime issue
2. **Justice System**: Any item that relates to courts, judges and judgements, constitutional issues and the judicial system.
3. **Human rights**: Items that focus on access to certain fundamental rights.
4. **Children and youth:** Any item where the explicit focus is on children and youth, and issues and experiences related directly to them.
5. **Politics:** Political debates, international forums, press conferences and politicking about the issues of femicide and gender based violence
6. **Xenophobia:** Items that focus on femicide and/or gender based violence with particular reference to incidents of racism and ethnicity of the perpetrator or victim
7. **Awareness and education:** awareness pieces, giving information on Femicide and/or gender based violence
8. **Demonstration and protest:** Items about marches, protests and demonstrations highlighting issues around femicide and/or gender based violence

9. **Epidemiology:** Items which speak to the health status of the perpetrator or victim that could have impacted on the femicide such as HIV/AIDS or mental health issues. This could also include focus on the health system functioning, statistics of intimate partner
10. Other

Appendix C

Full list of the key messages that would be identified in the stories

- 16 days of activism campaign is effective
- Intimate femicide not linked to victim leaving perpetrator
- Intimate femicide case did not make it to social media
- Intimate femicide is a global issue
- Intimate femicide is a human rights issue
- Intimate femicide is a systemic problem
- Intimate femicide is an individual problem
- Intimate femicide is linked to substance abuse of victim
- Intimate femicide is never linked to other forms of GBV
- Intimate femicide is not a human rights issue
- Intimate femicide is only a South African issue
- Intimate femicide issue made it to social media
- Intimate femicide linked to infidelity of perpetrator
- Intimate femicide linked to other GBV eg. abduction, rape
- Intimate femicide linked to substance abuse of perpetrator
- Intimate femicide linked to victim leaving perpetrator
- Intimate femicide not linked to infidelity of perpetrator
- Intimate femicide occurs in the context of family murders
- Intimate femicide results from history of domestic violence
- Intimate femicide should be treated as a gender issue
- Intimate femicide should be treated as homicide
- GBV is an economic issue
- GBV is not an economic issue
- Government is doing enough
- Government needs to take action
- Gruesome details of victims death are withheld
- Gruesome details of victim's death are described
- Intimate partner violence affects the rich
- Intimate femicide affects poor
- It is responsibility of men, women to end intimate femicide
- It is the responsibility of men to end intimate femicide
- It is the responsibility of women to end intimate femicide
- Murder is justified- perpetrator is blamed
- Murder is justified- victim is blamed
- Murder was pre-meditated
- Other campaigns targeting GBV are effective
- Perpetrator is not responsible for his actions
- Perpetrator is responsible for his actions
- Police are doing their best
- Police are not doing their best
- Police statistics are lacking
- Police statistics are not lacking

- Relationship between perpetrator, victim is clear
- Relationship between perpetrator, victim unclear
- Sentencing is sufficient
- Sentencing of perpetrators is too long
- Sentencing of perpetrators is too short
- Statistics around femicide are contested
- Statistics around femicide are not contested
- The murder is always an intimate partner
- The murder is not always an intimate partner
- The perpetrator did not kill himself
- The perpetrator is portrayed as a villain
- The perpetrator is portrayed as a hero
- The perpetrator is portrayed as not remorseful
- The perpetrator killed himself as well
- The perpetrator was a current partner
- The perpetrator was an ex-partner
- The rate of intimate femicide is increasing
- The rate of intimate femicide is decreasing
- There are consequences for perpetrators
- There are no consequences for perpetrators
- There is enough research on intimate femicide
- There is not enough research on intimate femicide
- Victim is portrayed as good
- Victim is portrayed as “bad” or responsible
- White man is perpetrator of intimate femicide
- White women is victim of intimate femicide
- Women do not need to be protected
- Women need to be protected

Appendix D

Permission from MMA to use Dexter software

MEDIAMONITORING AFRICA

PO Box 1560, Parklands, 2121 • Tel +2711 788 1278 • Fax +2711 788 1289
Email info@mma.org.za • http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org
Promoting Human Rights and Democracy through the media since 1993

25 February 2018

To whom it may concern,

RE: Permission for Mpho Silima to use MMA software

This letter serves to confirm that Mpho Silima (student number: 511643, School of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand) has permission to use Media Monitoring Africa's online media monitoring software, *Dexter,* in order for her to collect data for her thesis (Ethics Protocol number: M180138). I, Sarah Findlay, provided her with log-in details as well as training on using the system. When her access to the system is no longer necessary, it will be revoked.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me on (011) 788 – 1278 or sarahf@mma.org.za.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Findlay
Senior researcher: Media Monitoring Africa

Appendix E

Ethics clearance certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (MEDICAL)

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Post Graduate Affairs)

TO: Ms M Silima
School of Public Health
University

E-mail: silima_mpho@yahoo.com

CC: Supervisor: Professor N Christofides <Nicola.Christofides@wits.ac.za>
and <HREC-Medical.ResearchOffice@wits.ac.za>

FROM: Iain Burns
Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical)
Tel: 011 717 1252

E-mail: Iain.Burns@wits.ac.za

DATE: 05/03/2018

REF: *R14/49*

PROTOCOL NO: **M180138** *(This is your ethics application study reference number. Please quote this reference number in all correspondence relating to this study)*

PROJECT TITLE: *South Africa online media coverage of femicide: A content analysis comparing coverage between 1 January and 30 September 2015 and 1 January and 30 September 2017*

Please find attached the Clearance Certificate for the above project. I hope it goes well and that an article in a recognized publication comes out of it. This will reflect well on your professional standing and contribute to the Government funding of the University.

