News Media, and Victim Blaming: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Motorway Rape Coverage

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Article Details

ABSTRACT

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This study emphasises the need for greater critical discourse analysis (CDA) research on how sexual assault is represented in popular culture. Emphasis is placed on the conceptual links between victim-blaming in media coverage and social norms, which implicitly accentuates an ethic of "personal responsibility" for risk management while putting structural issues in the background. Feminist media studies research demonstrates how victim conduct and individualising incidents lead to a misrepresentation of gendered crime in the media. This article builds on previous research by using coverage of the widely publicised 2020 Sialkot Motorway rape as a case study to perform a systematic, grammar-based analysis of transitivity and agency in news reports and show their frequently subtle connection with neoliberal notions of victimisation and risk that support the interests of perpetrators.

INTRODUCTION

More research is required for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of media depictions of sexual assault. The article investigates corporate news coverage of the high-profile Sialkot Motorway rape to provide an answer. The Motorway case made sexual assault a prominent media topic once again in Pakistan, but current analyses of media coverage do not sufficiently examine grammar and agency in constructing victim and perpetrator identities and accountability. They also do not identify and analyse the neoliberal bias that supports victim-blaming and perpetrator adulation. The article first describes neoliberalism as a cultural ideology that dominates conversation about many social issues before examining how it affects the culture of gender-based violence. The article briefly summarises the Motorway case and its continuing importance for the public discourse on rape before synthesising some of the key findings of communication and feminist media studies. It then illustrates CDA's contribution to this field of study through a sustained micro-analysis of grammatical transitivity, ideological framing decisions, and the naming and describing of social actors that imply that rape is a social problem This study demonstrates how content is communicated by emphasising linguistic subtleties and relating them to a larger neoliberal risk-management ideology that benefits dominant groups. Content (the what of social representations) has been the subject of previous analysis of the case (e.g. Moody-Ramirez, Lewis, & Murray, 2015; Pennington & Birthisel, 2016).

In feminist arguments, the study questions neoliberal agency values. Reviews and critiques of neoliberal feminist works can be found in Hall (2004), Mardorossian (2014), and Stringer (2014). The neoliberal-feminist school of thought favours strengthening women over blaming systemic injustices or pursuing justice. These arguments disregard the fact that dominant discourses shame and punish women, especially for gendered crimes like rape, and view female activity as improper, excessive, or harmful. The language around rape promotes agency in subtle but crucial ways. In order to "show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged" (p. 142), Michelle Lazar (2007) called for interdisciplinary "feminist critical discourse analysis" (p. 142). I think common-sense and hegemonic beliefs are reflected in mainstream Pakistani media coverage of sexual assault, particularly the idea that victims are to blame for their victimisation because of poor or mishandled agency. The feminist CDA advocated by Lazar "is not merely an academic deconstruction of texts and talk for its own sake, but comes from an acknowledgement that the

issues dealt with (in the hope of bringing about social change) have material and phenomenological consequences" (2007, p. 142). Stringer (2014) claims that "the neoliberal turn in victim talk carries serious political consequences" because it "drains all legitimacy from the idea that suffering can be social, political, and collective." The neoliberal interpretation of (negative) victim agency in this paper is therefore important. (pp. 2–3). I want to demonstrate how dominant cultural sense-making resources, such as news discourse, harm victims by blaming them by dissecting the grammatical and semantic components of this ideology. Neoliberalism and representations of rape.

Neoliberalism has an impact on media discourse, according to Chomsky (1999), Giroux (2014), Harvey (2005), and McChesney (2008, 2015). Global capitalism is dominated by neoliberalism, which prioritises corporate rights over the general welfare and market fundamentalism. (Duggan, 2003, p. 39) Neoliberalism goes beyond "free trade" and "upward redistribution of wealth". Society and individual lives are organised by it (Ericson, Barry, & Doyle, 2000, p. 532).

Neoliberalism encourages risk configurations that are tailored to each individual, where "all differences, and the inequalities that result from them, are seen as a matter of choice" (Ericson et al., 2000, p. 533). The risk view of neoliberalism is a linguistic ideology-in-action that describes what dangers are present and who should avoid or manage them. The gendered neoliberal risk concept is reflected in rape media. According to Joseph (2014), neoliberalism calls on ideal social subjects—typically men—to take risks. As a result, the risky activity of known criminals is more acceptable than that of a female classmate they victimise since women, regardless of how talented they may be in sports or the classroom, are not as valuable to society as men are. Second, in a culture where gender equality is the norm, neoliberal bias in corporate media promotes "choice". According to Vavrus (2007, p. 48), corporate media exhibits "a merger of neoliberalism with post feminism" and "the absence of consideration of structural concerns" relating to gender." Dines (2013). According to Crittenden (2001), the chosen vocabulary "leaves out power." According to those who benefit from the status quo, inequities are always attributed to the decisions made by the underdog (p. 234). Neoliberalism-influenced sexual assault discourse promotes assailant and victim accountability. According to Hall (2004), "In the 1980s and 1990s, the paternalistic myth of women's vulnerability donned the neoliberal cloak of risk management," which "personalised responsibility for a wide range of social, health, and environmental problems." These general challenges appear to many accidents that people should avoid in terms

of risk. (p. 1). Mardorossian (2014) identified "ennobling agency" as the central tenet of risk management (p. 32), which is consistent with the "anti-victimist stance that has defined discussions of rape" for decades (p. 30). According to Mardorossian, rape research "typically centres on the issue of the victim's agency." In the absence of victimisation, agency must exist. (2014, p. 32). In discourses that delegitimize victim claims, "agency is valorised" (p. 32), but it can also be used to incriminate and hold victims accountable. Stringer (2014) examined the rise of neoliberalism and "agency" as the cliché for legitimacy. (p. 2). Since they may "construct women as the blameworthy agents of their own victimisation, limiting "agency" to the ability to be blamed for experiencing a wrong," Stringer argues that "not all representations of women as agents are progressive and liberating." (2014, p. 59). Transitivity in rape news stories broadens Stringer's investigation into this construction of agency that assigns responsibility. The ideological foundations of (grammatical) agency as victim-blame will be invoked in the Analysis section using neoliberal victim theory and negative agency. Neoliberal victim theory is described by Stringer (2014) as "the rhetoric and motifs of conservative anti-victimism" (p. 6). In order to make victimisation through poverty, inequality, discrimination, and violence visible as collective and socio-economically embedded in a variety of intersecting engines of social hierarchy and difference, progressive political efforts have been directly undermined, according to Stringer. "Neoliberal victim theory's rather uncompassionate conception of victimisation as selfmade evacuates sociological explanation of social suffering." 2014's Stringer. Neoliberal victim theory is valued by feminist CDAs. Assigning agency to rape victims, negative (victim) agency is the language equivalent of neoliberal victim theory. Grammatical agency is transitivity.

OBJECTIVES

To investigate how gender roles and stereotypes are portrayed in the language used to discuss the motorway rape case and how this may be helping to normalize violence against women.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How have victim-blaming terminology and linguistic cue & patterns been used while discussing the motorway rape case, and how does these patterns help in normalizing violence against women?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Carter, 1998; Clark, 1992; Cuklanz, 1996; Gill, 2007; Meyers, 1997; Worthington, 2013; Ardovini-Booker & Caringella-Macdonald, 2002; Benedict, 1992; Carll, 2003; Wykes, 2001; Wykes & Welsh, 2009). Research looks at how media representations support rape myths. These

myths include the notions that rape is a necessary component of social life, that victims initiate rape by engaging in risky behaviour, and that men are "naturally" predisposed to rape (Benedict, 1992; Gill, 2007). Benedict (1992) found that news outlets utilised rape clichés that represented public perceptions under pressure to provide sellable content quickly. The media often placed the responsibility on the victims, particularly if they were young, knew their attackers, or disobeyed the traditional female role of staying at home to care for the family or young children (Benedict, 1992, p. 19). Public sympathy for rapists is increased if they are well-known, successful, or athletic, according to the rape myth that "perpetrators are lustful men driven beyond endurance" (Benedict, 1992, p. 13). Meyers (2007); Wykes (2001). Cuklanz (1996) observed that instead of emphasising dramatic and individualised concerns, the media deemphasized "the feminist alternative to popular notions about rape," making "individuals rather than institutions of law, gender, class or ethnicity become culpable for the crimes" (p. 50). While Carll (2003) asserted that by "presenting 268 L. A. BARCA stories of violence as separate isolated events," newspapers created a "mirage of individual pathology" that "denies the social roots of violence against women and absolves the larger society of any obligation to end it," Ardovini-Booker and Caringella-Macdonald (2002) found that rape coverage in popular magazines had a tendency to "reify sexist attitudes that condemn women for rape victim There are many excellent CDA studies, but more (and more recent) research on rape depictions is required, particularly in the news media.

Interviews with survivors (Wood & Rennie, 1994), decisions made during rape trials (Coates & Wade, 2004; Ehrlich, 2001), and student responses to made-up rape situations (Anderson & Doherty, 2008) have all been subjected to CDA. The backdrop of The Sun's perpetrator agency was compellingly examined by Clark (1992). Male readers gave less blame to attackers and less harm to victims when mock news texts on rape were written in the passive mode, according to research by Henley, Miller, and Beazley from 1995 (pp. 79–80). This study examines more recent language in "hard news" media in Pakistan and directly connects it to neoliberalism. By concentrating on the grammatical underpinnings of media misrepresentations of rape, I hope to demonstrate how rape myths are frequently cloaked in language that appears innocent and necessitates the use of linguistically empirical methodology to dispel them. Rape myths are occasionally overt enough to be identified through a more general approach. automobile studies The study of the motorway rape is succinctly summarised below.FIR While blogs "offered a platform for discussing issues that were omitted in mainstream media

such as women's rights, rape myths, and the need for rape awareness/prevention programmes for parents and youth," newspapers noted the importance that social media had in documenting the rape and trial. (p. 1). Although this is an interesting discovery, the methodology used to analyse it does not explain discursive representations or situate corporate media framing within a neoliberal value framework. Social media, as demonstrated by Pennington and Birthisel (2016), dominated traditional news coverage of the motoway case. In making social media the central issue in the motorway case rather than sexual assault as a social problem, they may be reproducing the news media's oversight. Their analysis does not address how social media and the victim, rather than the attackers, were given grammatical and conceptual agency in the news texts. The content-based conclusions from these studies are expanded upon by applying CDA to press coverage of motorway cases. It also encompasses the "how" of newspaper communication, including "how newspaper texts may be implicated in the construction and replication of social inequalities," according to Richardson (2007). CDA of journalism "doesn't merely cover the "what" of the materials communicated by newspapers... (p. 9). I suggest relating prevailing ideology systems, such as neoliberalism, to discursive patterns. Analytical and methodological categories

Instead of quantitatively examining massive corpora of material, this study uses "textually oriented discourse analysis" to investigate a purposeful selection of news pieces (Fairclough, 2003, p. 2). The elite media, including The Jang, The Dawn, The Nation, The Express, The Khabrein, The ARY, and other widely read Pakistani news outlets, are given "more attention to "top-down" relations of dominance than to "bottom-up" relations of resistance" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 250). The study's texts are analysed using the following techniques: framing and focalisation (the point of view expressed or implied); transitivity (how verb forms highlight or conceal agency); nomination and predication (how people are named and portrayed); and transitivity. The main coverage of the motorway case was episodic and framed from the views of the offenders and allies. It will also demonstrate how textual references to victims as "a carless girl, mother of three kids, stubborn, un-submissive" or simply "the girl" suggested blame and backgrounded perpetrator accountability through passive verb constructions. The theoretical literature for the three categories is briefly examined here. Focus and framing Numerous studies have been done on news framing, which refers to how some parts of an event are highlighted in news reports while others are ignored (Entman, 1993; Fairclough, 2003; Gamson, 1989; Iyengar, 1991; Kuypers, 2010; Mills, 1995; Patterson, 2013; Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997; Tiegreen

& Newman, 2008). This study benefits from Iyengar's (1991) distinction between "episodic" (dramatic, individual) and "thematic" (contextualised, systemic) framing because episodic framing, which is prevalent in commercial 270 L. A. BARCA media, "induces attributions of responsibility to individual victims or perpetrators rather than to broad societal forces," with the result that "the ultimate political impact... is pro establishment" (p. From a feminist perspective, Mills (1995) examines framing by concentrating on how highlighting key characters' voices "slants the emotive and ideological content of a text" (p. 185). She does this by adopting the term "focalisation" from narratology. Focusing is referred to as the "dominant reading," or the audience-subject, by Mills (citing Althusser, 1984). According to Mills (p. 67; Gill, 2007, p. 115), "the reader in a wide range of texts is positioned as predominantly male" I am opposed. The reader is instructed to interpret the situation from the viewpoint of the male suspects and/or offenders. Transitivity Agency is disclosed or obfuscated by verbs, subjects, and objects. My use of transitivity is informed by critical linguistics (Halliday, 1985, 1971), rhetorical stylistics (Fahnestock, 2012; Williams & Colomb, 2010), CDA (Fowler, 1991; Richardson, 2007; Van Leeuwen, 2008), and rhetorical morphology. Fowler (1991), following M.A.K. Halliday, said that "transitivity is the foundation of representation" since it "has the facility to analyse the same event in different ways, a facility... of great interest in newspaper analysis" (p. 71).

Theo Van Leeuwen (2008) asserts that, in the fullest sense of transitivity, "activation occurs when social actors are described as active, dynamic forces... passivation when they are represented as "undergoing" that activity or as being "at the receiving end of it." (p. 33). "In the case of suppression, there is no mention of the relevant social actor(s)..." Other places in the text, backgrounding refers to excluded social actors, although not as clause subjects (2008, p. 29). The "classic realisation" of suppression, passive agent deletion, gets rid of the doer (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 29). Williams and Colomb (2010) assert that the "choice of subjects and verbs... implies a philosophy of human action" and "has ethical implications" in compositional stylistics. They agreed that the passive voice can be used when the actor is obscured or irrelevant, when the writer has a good cause for withholding the actor's identity, or to make sentence transitions apparent (pp. 54–56). Little Red Riding Hood was once frightened when the Wolf sprung out from behind a tree as she was travelling through the woods. p. 29; Williams & Colomb, 2010). The passivation stands out as ludicrous (as the writers intended) because to the familiarity of the fairy tale Williams and Colomb adapted this example from, but when the media broadcasts actual violence, such obfuscating transitivity has more severe ramifications. Since the passive voice

"allows an action to be described without attributing it to any source," according to Fahnestock (2012), there are "occasions where use of the passive is obfuscating or deceptive" (p. 160). Janet was pursued down the alley and knocked to the ground, according to Fahnestock, who also acknowledged that "rhetors can construct energetic sentences with the passive" (p. 160). It's interesting to see that the attacker in this incident was concealed, just like in a large portion of the journalistic debate on the motorway rape case examined here. Both nomination and predication include representations of social actors; nomination refers to how these actors are identified, whereas predication refers to how they are portrayed. 'Journalists have to provide labels for the persons in the events they describe,' claims Richardson (2007), and they frequently highlight one category for a social actor "over other equally accurate alternatives" (p. 49). When persons in news media are referred to as generic nouns (criminals), this could have substantial impacts. Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 54) have referred to predication methods as the use of words (typically adjectives) to more directly depict the traits of social actors in conjunction with nomination. While various judgements are implied, the terms "brigands" or "good student" combine predication with nomination, and the phrase "drunk girl" does the same (Abbas, Ahmad, Ahmed, & Kaleem, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

The framework for this paper hinges upon three main analytical categories: framing and focalization (point of view represented or implied), transitivity (how verb forms highlight or suppress agency), and nomination and predication (how participants are named and described). Discursive patterns are tied to a pervasive ideological system like neoliberalism. The methodology, titled 'textually oriented discourse analysis', involves examining a purposeful selection of news texts. The study is focused on a detailed analysis of small selections of carefully chosen texts as opposed to a wider, quantitatively generalized examination of a large corpora of material. The paper particularly investigates media framing concerning the Motorway rape case, exploring how different aspects were highlighted or suppressed, underpinning social inequalities. This involves examining how stories were presented, how perpetrator accountability was less emphasized, and how sympathy was garnered for the perpetrators. The examination of 'episodic' and 'thematic' framing indicates how responsibility attributions and social perspectives were manipulated. 8 texts related to the case were examined with specific attention given to an interview given to Dunya News TV channel by Lahore police chief.

TEXT SELECTION

This article analyses Pakistani news media coverage of the motorway case between December 7 2020, when national coverage began, and September 10, 2020, when the incident occurred. After CCPO Lahore DIG's contentious statement, The Nation, Dawn, The Express Tribune, The Express, the News, the Geo News English, the Sama News and the Daily Post's online databases were searched for "motorway rape." Umar Sheikh into an interview with Dunya News video is present on twitter handle of shared link and all the relevant news coverage has been presented below.

NEWS STORIES OVER THE PERIOD OF TIME

"(witter.com/zburki/status/1303993477848596480?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etwee tembed%7Ctwterm%5E1303993477848596480%7Ctwgr%5Ecf9236af21d228f44500b6b9e8e0526 13db58c4f%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.geo.tv%2Flatest%2F307200-cpo-lahore-blames-motorway-rape-victim-for). Sheikh told Dunya News the woman left Lahore's Defence sector at 12:30am for Gujranwala.

"I am surprised that a mother of three, a lone driver [...] after leaving Defence should have taken the straight route from GT Road—a generally well-populated area," he added.

Since the route has no petrol station, the CCPO advised the victim to 'at least' check her car's fuel tank before starting.

Abid Malhi's Lahore High Court appeal. Anti-terrorism court executed him. Malhi appealed. Executed rapists.Lahore executed men for raping women. Six months later, Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta ruled. March 18, 2021—judgment pending.

A Lahore anti-terrorism court special bench decided after six months. March 20 is verdict day.

March 9, 2021 25 witness statements

Anti-terrorism court cross-examined 25 witnesses. Bhutta presided.

ASF's Rizwan Khan, Head Constable Tariq Mahmood, Dolphin Force officer Muhammad Abbasi, mechanic Athar, and ASI Ahsan Elahi testified. March 11 case delay.

December 13, 2021

Denies indictment

A special anti-terrorism court charged Abid Malhi and Shafqat Bagga with rape. They denied it. The next hearing required four prosecution witnesses.

The prosecutor reviewed the challan, the investigative officer told an anti-terrorism court. February 10 hearing.

Novembe 18.2020, Suspect jailed

Shafqat appeared before the anti-terrorism court on Wednesday. Admin Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta greeted him under tight security.

Cantt Kutcheri's suspect confessed. Judiciary remanded him till December 1.

November 2, 2020

Arrested main suspect.

Lahore's anti-terrorism court ordered Abid Malhi's 15-day detention.

Oct. 28, 2020, Suspect gets 10-day physical remand.

An anti-trrorism court gave Shafqat a 10-day physical remand. Judge demanded police inquiry update. Police found the suspect's wooden shaft that smashed the rape survivor's car window, the court was informed.

Oct. 27, 2020, Suspect's judicial remand extended

Anti-terrorism court remanded Abid Malhi till November 2. Court absence. The survivor had another identification parade.

Oct. 22, 2020, Survivor names rapist

Abid Malhi raped the survivor at a judicial magistrate identification parade.

Oct. 14, 2020: Punjab CM awards cops

Punjab CM Usman Buzdar honoured the police who arrested the Lahore motorway rape suspect.

Oct. 13, 2020, PEMRA approves TV coverage

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority abolished motorway rape prohibition.

Malhi jailed

A Lahore anti-terrorism court held Abid Malhi for 14 days. Shafqat Ali, his accomplice in police custody, appeared in court after an identification parade. Police remanded Ali until October 28.

Oct. 12, 2020, Arrested suspect

The major motorway rape suspect was caught after a month on the run.

Police are transporting Abid Malhi to Lahore. Faisalabad arrested him. Shafqat was arrested.

Investigators switched.

Punjab police reforms hindered the inquiry. Abdulghaffar Kaysrani replaced Zeeshan Asghar as Lahore SSP Investigation.

Five police raids arrested the primary suspect. 33-day run.

28 police teams examined the matter. New and past police investigators have not met yet.

Oct. 2, 2020

PEMRA forbids coverage

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority barred news coverage of the case.

PEMRA used a Lahore anti-terrorism court ruling to ban. The identification parade suspect was remanded.

Media broadcast devalued the prosecution's evidence, it ruled.

September 30, 2020, Survivor records statement

Motorway rape victim gives phone statement. She will identify detained rapist Shafqat Ali.

Extended remand.

Shafqat's court remand was extended by 14 days. Not yet.

September 28 2020, CCPO apologises

Lahore CCPO Umar Sheikh apologised to the Senate's Functional Committee on Human Rights for the Lahore motorway rape. Sheikh repeatedly misnamed the suspect. He called Abid Ali Babar Ali.

CCPO the committee, "It looks like the woman left the house without her husband's permission." Senators chastised him.

PPP Senator Quratulain Marri corrected him about a man calling the police after seeing the woman's car.

He denied knowing about the probe. Sheikh apologised.

September. 18, 2020

ID blocking

Police have banned suspect Abid Ali and blocked his ID card.

28 investigative teams and 31,000 cops look for him.

Police detained four Raja Jhang acquaintances. They say Shafqat Ali and his wife gave critical information.

September. 15, 2020, In court, Shafqat confessed. Prison for six days.

A towel-covered prisoner came before Additional Sessions Judge Misbah Khan.

Police said his FIR alleges terrorism.

Prime suspect's 'gang member' arrested

Lahore arrested Iqbal Alias Bala Mistry.

Sialkot apprehended Abid Malhi's accused gang member Mistry. Shafqat named him.

Shafqat said Malhi and Mistry invited him to Lahore. Mistry drove out before Lahore.

September 14, 2020, Two inmates

Dipalpur police arrested one of the two main suspects. Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar said Shafqat Ali confessed and matched DNA.

Another suspect surrendered to Sheikhupura police earlier that day. Waqar's brother-in-law is suspect Abbas. The cops said Waqar's name appeared during road geofencing.

Lahore CCPO should apologise for blaming survivor: court

Lahore High Court Chief Justice Muhammad Qasim Khan said the CCPO and cabinet should have apologised for blaming the survivor at a hearing for a judicial commission in the motorway rape case. "What departmental head blames the victim?"

Chief justice ordered government lawyer's full report. He directed the Punjab IG to report all road security.

CCPO Lahore testifies

"This portion [of motorway] was operating without handing and taking over," CCPO Lahore Umar Sheikh stated. Recent motorway development is considerable. In earlier meetings, I said we lack deputies.

The 130 operator correctly scheduled a conference call between the woman and an FWO major. Call 15. He said logic.

Why call herself, the chief justice asked? She dialled 130 instead of 15. She should've informed 15."

Rapists deserve chemical castration.

Prime Minister Imran Khan recommended chemical castration for rapists. He advised chemical castration on Monday 92 News. After the Lahore-Sialkot motorway rape. "Many nations do."

Murad Saeed: Lahore rape wasn't motorway.

Communications Minister Murad Saeed said the Gujjarpura gang rape of a woman that appalled the nation did not happen on the Sialkot-Lahore motorway.

"Let me repeat, the incident didn't happen on the motorway," Saeed said in the National Assembly. The minister didn't specify.

September 13, 2020, Suspect surrenders to police

Waqarul Hassan surrendered to CIA Model Town police. Accused denied.

36-year-old surrendered after seeing his CNIC card on TV. He surrendered to SP Hasnain at 11am Sunday at the police station with a relative.

Police said the man denied being near the incident. Former felon.

September 12, 2020, Punjab IG names suspects

In a news conference, Punjab IG Inam Ghani claimed they identified the two individuals and tried to arrest them, but they escaped.

Abid Ali, from Fort Abbas, Bahawalnagar, and Waqarul Hassan were the major suspects.

Help police find suspects. The CM gave aides Rs2.5 million apiece.

Pakistanis protest.

Pakistanis opposed rape. Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Multan, and Hyderabad protested.

CJP requests govt "wake up"

Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed said the Lahore motorway rape should "wake up" the authorities. He said "juvenile" and "non-professional" people ran the police.

Judiciary requested.

Lawyer Nadeem Sarwar requested a judicial commission from the Lahore High Court. He asked the court to provide 2018–2019 rape statistics.

Punjab Forensic Authority matches possible rapist's DNA

53 post-rape DNA samples. One crime scene sample matched Punjab Forensic Authority DNA.

In 2013, a 25-year-old Bahawalnagar resident raped a mother and daughter, according to police. The victim's DNA was on the automobile, window, and clothes.

September 13, 2020,Punjab Police guard motorway.

250 Punjab Police officers patrolled the Lahore-Sialkot Motorway.

Unmanned motorway.

48 Punjab police DNA samples

Punjab police took DNA from locals. 48 samples.

September 10.2020, Twelve detainees

Twelve were apprehended. Police took site evidence.

20 teams investigated. Investigation Police, Special Branch, CIA.

Police report nearby village. Residents are questioned.

CCPO Lahore will probe.

Shahbaz Gill, the PM's special assistant on political communication, said the Lahore CCPO is considering urban and rural policing.

Umar Sheikh's provocations

Lahore CCPO Social media politicians and campaigners have criticised Umar Sheikh's statements about the woman's road journey with her children.

Lahore CCPO Umar Sheikh spoke on Dunya News after the rape to criticise the survivor's

decision to travel the motorway with her children rather than his force's efforts to apprehend the culprits.

September 9, 2020, Motorway lady raped

Two men raped a woman on the Lahore-Sialkot motorway.

She ran out of petrol near Gujjarpura in Lahore while driving to Gujranwala. Two men broke her window and forced her to park on the road. They raped her and the kids in a nearby woods.

The men took three ATM cards, $100,000, and jewellery.

Punjab IG and Chief Minister Usman Buzdar asked staff to report the event."

Generic Web searches within the specified time frame are used in the text selection process, with stories chosen based on Google search engine results. This method chooses widely read news articles where the general public was most likely to learn about the case. Eight news articles were assessed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis that follows uses eight news articles. Almost all of the texts under investigation utilised the framing, transitivity, and predication choices that were highlighted in the primary issue. The Dawn controls the agenda, even in developing fields like television news (Golan, 2006). Analysis How the "Motorway gang rape shocks the nation" The motorway lawsuit was covered by The Express Tribune on September 10, 2020. In the well-known News International piece "You, Changing the Narrative," it is claimed that on September 9, 2020, two unidentified males sexually assaulted a mother in front of her children on the Lahore-Sialkot road. A passive verb phrase, an action participle or object, and a general or depersonalised subject (people, the night, members, or Twitter tweets) are all present in these expressions. "A woman had been sexually assaulted," the dependent clause, makes reference to the rape. The suspects were only mentioned in one phrase as "two unidentified men." The visuals and night depicted a universe in which things happen naturally without human intervention. This is what Van Leeuwen (2008) referred to as the "exclusion of the agentive participant," where human conduct is encoded in depersonalised occurrences and "given the force of an unavoidable natural event" (p. 30). (1971, Halliday). In order to demonstrate that rape is a natural force, Anderson and Doherty (2008) create a "realist or materialist" risk-hazard model in which "the underlying ontology of a hazard is real" and unyielding (p. 68). When using this strategy, a perpetrator "gets configured as a material hazard to be avoided by the person constructed as "at risk," rather than as a responsible agent in his own right," which places blame on the alleged victim. (2008), p. 68 (Anderson &

Doherty). The Sun's use of the word "tragedy" to describe a rape and the omission of the passive actor, according to Clark (1992), conveyed that "the attacks were an unavoidable misfortune, something which no one - and certainly not [the perpetrator] - was responsible for" (p. 217).

According to Ehrlich (2001), different syntactic encodings of the event result in quite different depictions of men and women's involvement in rape in legal discourse. These representations range from those in which a man commits an intentional act of sexual aggression to those in which the action is reduced to a static occurrence without a clear cause. (p. 39) According to Castel's (1991) analysis of neoliberal risk ideology, these combinations match: Risk is not brought on by a specific threat to an individual or group. Unwanted behaviour is more or less likely depending on abstract causes. (p. 287) This is consistent with press accounts of the highway rape case: inanimate causes lead to rape. 124; Macur and Schweber (2012). Madison used several rape myths to justify or deny the assault, including: that women start fights, even through far-off past behaviour; that women who are "sexually active" cannot be raped; and, perhaps most dramatically, that victims' "at risk" behaviour results in assault. She displayed what Stringer (2014) refers to as 'a fundamentally conservative conception of victimhood as... brought on by an individual's lack of personal responsibility, rather than a circumstance occasioned by wider social forces and the workings of power.' She was 'active' and 'clearly engaged in at-risk behaviour,' demonstrating what Stringer (2014) calls 'a fundamentally conservative conception of victimhood as... brought on by an individual's lack of personal responsibility, rather than a circumstance occasioned (pp. 2–3. The 'futures of the defendants' and the 'integrity of the town' were 'at stake,' with the attackers' roles backgrounded: 'The woman told the police that she was waiting for her relative to pick her up with her children when two armed men attacked her.,' with the unflatteringly predicated 'woman' as subject. These characteriszations are more prevalent in texts. This is facilitated by the pervasive cultural sense-making tool of neoliberal victim theory.

CONCLUSION

This essay has demonstrated how the journalistic coverage of the motorway rape case is based on neoliberal victim theory and how victim-blaming is expressed linguistically as negative agency. A neoliberal risk presentation was reinforced by episodic framing, focalisation from the perspective of the offenders, positive, passivated perpetrator characteriszations, and negative, agentic victim characteriszations. To update my study on rape in news media, I applied CDA to a case that rekindled popular interest in rape in Pakistan. Ehrlich (2001) discovered a "grammar of non-agency" (p. 38) in the fabrication of events by rape defendants. This discursive work was done for

the defendants by journalists in the media coverage I looked into. In addition, according to Ehrlich, cross-examination interrogators "characterised the complainants and their witnesses as autonomous, self-determining people, unrestrained by the socially-structured disparities that can affect women's responses to male sexual aggression" (p. 94). In addition to this earlier work, I have identified an often-implicit neoliberal slant detectable through grammatical and rhetorical nuances by mapping the discursive linkages between agency, risk, verb transitivity, and other language patterns. As Lazar (2007) notes, "an explicitly feminist CDA is all the more essential in modern times, when concerns of gender, power, and ideology have gotten increasingly more nuanced and subtle." I intended to contribute to such a CDA. (p. 141). The analysis that came before it aims to highlight and synthesise this complexity and nuance in rape discourse. Reporters should recruit experts on sexual assault and treat rape cases seriously. Iyengar (1991) said that the episodic framing of the highway rape case encouraged audiences to place more emphasis on particular people than on structural issues like institutional sexism. Verb transitivity was utilised in stories about the highway case to passivate the rapists as social actors and place the responsibility on the victim. In this pattern, the victim or impersonal forces were frequently underlined in remarks about the crime, whereas prepositional phrases following passive verbs were typically used to describe the attackers. The social cognition of news transmission, particularly framing patterns, is impacted by these transitivity structures. According to rules for reporting on gender violence, advocacy groups have recommended journalists to refrain from using these discursive techniques (Garcia-Rojas & Clark, 2012; Tiegreen & Newman, 2008). Both victim-blaming and accusing suspects should be avoided by journalists. Although victim anonymity and how it affects identity construction are unique to reporting on rape, the more widespread phenomenon of journalists' engagement with power through neoliberal and patriarchal appeasement, of which this essay has provided one example, applies to media coverage of a variety of power inequalities issues. I have made an effort to demonstrate how ideological prejudice exists in journalistic conventions, even when they are accepted. This analysis demonstrates how corporate media typically upholds hegemonic social relations by giving dominant groups and individuals precedence when covering events.

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