
FANTASY THEMES AND FRAMES IN *THE STAR* ON OSCAR PISTORIUS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2013 SHOOTING

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on research conducted as part of two studies focusing on media reportage in the immediate aftermath and bail application of athlete Oscar Pistorius after fatally shooting his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, on 14 February 2013. The first study examined how print media portrayed Pistorius after he shot Steenkamp, but before his bail application. It was informed by Bormann's fantasy theme analysis (1972), based on his symbolic convergence theory, to identify fantasy themes. The second study was a deductive frame analysis of the primary news frames in articles published in print media during Pistorius' bail application. The news frames identified were a combination of the common frames identified by Neuman et al. (1992: 74) and Semetko and Valkenburg (in De Vreese 2005: 56) and include conflict, human impact, human interest, attribution of responsibility and violence. Both studies focused on a number of South African newspapers, but this article reports specifically on the results as they pertain to The Star, a leading South African newspaper. The period under investigation is 15-23 February 2013. The fantasy themes identified have indicated that, in Pistorius' case, he was mostly depicted in a negative light, while there were very few instances where he was portrayed positively. Conflict was the most common primary news frame found in the frame analysis.

Keywords: fantasy theme, frame analysis, framing, Oscar Pistorius, *The Star*

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INTRODUCTION

When Oscar Pistorius shot his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, in the early hours of 14 February 2013 his actions not only had far-reaching consequences for his own life, but also caused unprecedented public interest and resultant media coverage in South Africa and abroad. This includes a first for South African journalism: a television news channel dedicated entirely to Pistorius' trial (The Oscar Pistorius Trial – a Carte Blanche channel 2014: online). The trial began on 3 March 2014 and at the time of writing is still continuing.

Local and international media outlets rushed for details of the incident, and a glimpse of Pistorius. It resulted in what was described as a “media frenzy” during Pistorius' first and second court appearance (Evans 2013; Obuseng 2013). It is not difficult to understand the media's preoccupation with the incident: 26-year-old Pistorius, nicknamed “Blade Runner”, grabbed world attention when he became the first double amputee to compete against able-bodied athletes in the 400 m race at the 2012 Olympic Games. South African columnist Justice Malala hit the nail on the head when, in a column for the British newspaper *The Guardian* on the day the news broke, he described Pistorius as “no ordinary hero” for South Africans (Malala 2013):

For South Africans, and for many across the globe, it is impossible to watch Pistorius run without a stir of emotion, without wanting to break down and cry and shout with joy. Pistorius is no ordinary hero; he is that rare thing, a man with an almost-impossible narrative. His is not a rags to riches story, a poor boy made good – we have many of those in our country and on the African continent. His story is more intense. To be without legs and to become the epitome of excellence in the very field where one is not supposed to excel – that is the stuff of legends. That is why many of us, when talking about Pistorius, become hyperbolic sportswriters. We like an impossible story.

This explains the huge media interest in Oscar Pistorius. The story gained more media weight with the social status of Pistorius' girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, who was a South African celebrity in her own right. Patel (2013) argues that the Steenkamp shooting incident was different from other news stories. Steenkamp appeared on the cover of men's glossy magazine *FHM*, and was the face of various product brands (Tomlinson & Allen 2013). “This is a classic fall of a hero,” William Bird, Director of Media Monitoring Africa told Patel (Patel 2013).

Following the shooting incident, most of the media attention turned to Pistorius and Steenkamp as individuals. Many questions were raised about the representation of Steenkamp's identity in the media and the emphasis on her attractiveness and celebrity status (Patel 2013). Most of the attention was on Pistorius, though, as

journalists started focusing on his life, which Malala (2013) described as those things that have “always been niggling and worrying about him”. Very quickly, strong opinions in support of and against Pistorius surfaced in the media, especially on social platforms. It was described as the most talked about story by the weekend following the shooting incident (Patel 2013). Pistorius’ first court appearance at the Pretoria Magistrate’s Court and the resulting media attention was, to an extent, unknown in South Africa.

Evans (2013) states that social media tracker Memeburn suggested that 85% of all discussions around the Pistorius bail hearing had occurred on Twitter. It developed to such a degree that at a pre-trial hearing in June 2013 the sitting magistrate had warned against “trial by media” (Evans 2013). This came after leaked evidence from the crime scene was aired on an international television station.

Context of the research

This article reports on research conducted as part of two studies focusing on media reportage in the immediate aftermath of the shooting and Pistorius’ bail application. The first study examined how print media portrayed Pistorius after he shot Steenkamp, but before his bail application. It was informed by Bormann’s fantasy theme analysis (1972), based on his symbolic convergence theory, to identify fantasy themes.

The second study was a deductive frame analysis of the primary news frames in articles published in print media during Pistorius’ bail application. The news frames identified were a combination of the common frames identified by Neuman *et al.* (1992: 74) and Semetko and Valkenburg (in De Vreese 2005: 56) and include conflict, human impact, human interest and attribution of responsibility. Both studies focused on a number of South African newspapers, but this article reports specifically on the results as they pertain to *The Star*, a leading South African daily newspaper. The period under investigation is 15-23 February 2013.

THE CONCEPT OF FANTASY THEME

The concept of “fantasy theme” refers to the creative and imaginary interpretation of shared interpretations and occurrences, which thus provide perceptual frameworks. Although a fantasy theme is concrete and specific in its original form, one of its traits is that after it is accepted by members of the community it does not have to be retold in its totality.

Fantasy themes play an important role within societies; providing people with the tools needed to analyse, interpret, and make sense of the world around them. Fantasy themes appear in all discourse forms and chain out by means of a text (e.g. print media), and verbally in small and large group communication (Cragan & Shields 1995: 33-34).

Bormann's (1972, 1975) fantasy theme analysis guidelines were used to conduct the analysis:

- Choose a subject (Bormann 1972: 401): In this instance, Oscar Pistorius is the subject of analysis.
- Collect the appropriate and relevant rhetorical evidence (*ibid.*): This article reports on newspaper articles that were published in *The Star* during the period 15-20 February 2013 (see table 1).

TABLE 1: ANALYSED ARTICLES

Heading	Publication date
Deadly Valentine	15 February 2013
He is familiar with Boschkop police cells	15 February 2013
'Oscar month' falls from grace	15 February 2013
'I introduced them and they became close'	15 February 2013
Website deletes 'I am the bullet in the chamber'	15 February 2013
Oscar's dark side	15 February 2013
Model was on the verge of stardom	15 February 2013
Reeva's family decide to open up amid grief	15 February 2013
Slaying shows women are in the firing line	18 February 2013
Spotlight may have been too bright	18 February 2013
Prayers for Oscar	18 February 2013
Blade Runner accused of being out of control	18 February 2013
SABC 'insensitive' for showing Reeva in show	18 February 2013
Pistorius pulls out of races	19 February 2013
Time to stop horrendous crimes	19 February 2013
No visitors arrive as ANC Women's League takes aim	19 February 2013
'Reeva died in my arms'	20 February 2013
Another sponsor drops Paralympian	20 February 2013

- Search for patterns of characterisation, environment, actions and dramatic situations (*ibid.*).
- Develop categories to describe the content (Bormann 1975:176): See table 2.

TABLE 2: PORTRAYAL OF PISTORIUS IN *THE STAR*

<p>She was gunned down and shot multiple times by her world famous Paralympic boyfriend, Oscar Pistorius, who spent the day in custody on suspicion of murdering her in a crime of passion. (Deadly Valentine: Botho Molosankwe, Lebogang Seale, Angelique Serrao, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 870)</p>
<p>Oscar Pistorius is not unfamiliar with the surroundings of the Boschkop police station where he spent last night. He was a guest at the establishment when he spent 17 hours in a cell after student Cassidy Taylor-Memory laid a complaint in September 2009, claiming that Pistorius had assaulted her. (He is familiar with Boschkop police cells: Staff Reporter, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 867)</p>
<p>At that time, the athlete was involved with Samantha Taylor, who said Pistorius was a ‘player’ when it came to women. (‘I introduced them and they became close’: Unknown, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 862)</p>
<p>The man known as the Blade Runner certainly is no stranger to controversy. In September 2009, he spent the night in jail after being charged with common assault by Cassidy Taylor-Memory after she alleged that Pistorius had slammed a door on her after they had a fight at his house. Earlier that same year, Pistorius was admitted to hospital with facial injuries after he crashed his speedboat at the Vaal River. <i>Beeld</i> reported at the time that the police had found empty bottles of alcohol on the boat, but his blood was not tested for alcohol use. (Oscar’s dark side: Angelique Serrao, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 866)</p>
<p>Shortly after that, Pistorius prohibited media photographers from taking pictures of an accident scene on the N4 highway in which a friend of his was involved. <i>Beeld</i> reported that his friend had knocked over a pedestrian who died on the scene. Asked why they could not take photos, he was quoted as saying: ‘Because I am Oscar Pistorius’. (Oscar’s dark side: Angelique Serrao, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 866)</p>
<p>In September last year, Pistorius apologised after publicly lashing out at a Brazilian athlete, Alan Oliviera, who beat him to the gold medal in the T44 200M at the Paralympics Games in London. (Oscar’s dark side: Angelique Serrao, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 866)</p>
<p>‘Oscar is certainly not what people think he is,’ Taylor said. (Oscar’s dark side: Angelique Serrao, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 866)</p>
<p>A charge of defamation was laid against Pistorius after he allegedly threatened to break the legs of Van der Burgh’s friend, former soccer star, Marc Batchelor, who played for Chiefs, Orlando Pirates and Moroka Swallows. (Oscar’s dark side: Angelique Serrao, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 866)</p>
<p>Pistorius was not scared to defend himself, a New York journalist who interviewed the Olympian once said. The journalist was shocked to see the athlete grab a gun and creep down the corridor when he heard a noise in the house. (Oscar’s dark side: Angelique Serrao, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 866)</p>
<p>In November, Pistorius tweeted: ‘Nothing like getting home to hear the washing machine on and thinking it’s an intruder to go into full combat mode into the pantry! Waa.’ (Oscar’s dark side: Angelique Serrao, 15 Feb 2013, Ref No: 866)</p>

- Place the repetitive themes in groups, according to fantasy types (Bormann 1972: 401). See table. 3

TABLE 3: PISTORIUS' PORTRAYAL AS POSITIVE, NEGATIVE OR NEUTRAL ACCORDING TO FANTASY TYPES

Positive	Negative	Neutral
<p><i>World famous Paralympics hero:</i> Deadly Valentine (Botho Molosankwe, Lebogang Seale, Angelique Serrao: 15 Feb 2013, <i>The Star</i>)</p>	<p><i>Blade Runner:</i> Deadly Valentine (Botho Molosankwe, Lebogang Seale, Angelique Serrao: 15 Feb 2013, <i>The Star</i>) Oscar's dark side (Angelique Serrao: 15 Feb 2013, <i>The Star</i>) Spotlight may have been too bright (<i>Mail on Sunday</i>: 18 Feb 2013, <i>The Star</i>) Spotlight may have been too bright (<i>Mail on Sunday</i>: 18 Feb 2013, <i>The Star</i>)</p>	<p><i>Athlete:</i> Oscar's dark side (Angelique Serrao: 15 Feb 2013 <i>The Star</i>) 'I introduced them and they became close' (Unknown: 15 Feb 2013) Guns, girls and danger - Oscar's dark side (Jonathan Mcevoy: 17 Feb 2013)</p>
<p><i>Paralympics star:</i> SABC 'insensitive' for showing Reeva in show (Reuters: 18 Feb 2013 <i>The Star</i>) No visitors arrive as ANC Women's League takes aim (Karabo Ngoepe: 19 Feb 2013 <i>The Star</i>)</p>	<p><i>Disgraced athlete:</i> No visitors arrive as ANC Women's League takes aim (Karabo Ngoepe: 19 Feb 2013)</p>	<p><i>The Runner:</i> Spotlight may have been too bright (<i>Mail on Sunday</i>: 18 Feb 2013 <i>The Star</i>)</p>
<p><i>Paralympics champion:</i> Prayers for Oscar (Lali van Zuydam: 18 Feb 2013 <i>The Star</i>)</p>		<p><i>Paralympian:</i> 'Reeva died in my arms' (Unknown: 20 Feb 2013 <i>The Star</i>) Another sponsor drops Paralympian (Angelique Serrao: 20 Feb 2013) Time to stop horrendous crimes (Comment by Ray McCauley: 19 Feb 2013)</p>
<p><i>Olympian:</i> Oscar's dark side (Angelique Serrao: 15 Feb 2013 <i>The Star</i>) Reeva's doomed love speech (Zwelakhe Shangase: 15 Feb 2013)</p>		

Positive	Negative	Neutral
<p><i>Star:</i> Guns, girls and danger- Oscar's dark side (Jonathan Mcevoy: 17 Feb 2013)</p>		
<p><i>Most recognisable athletes:</i> Blades give him fame and fortune (David Isaacson: 15 Feb 2013 <i>The Times</i>)</p>		

FANTASY TYPES

According to Kuypers (2005: 215), fantasy types refer to an umbrella term for a cluster of recurring, related fantasy themes. In this instance, fantasy types include “Blade Runner”, “Paralympics” and “player” (see tables 2 and 3).

The Pistorius story caused an uproar because Pistorius was not only a national, but also an international sporting icon, who was loved by many across the globe. He was also a role model to the disabled community who had transcended the boundaries of disability and sport. People revered him and this incident caused major disappointment among the masses. They were not only hurt and disappointed about the crime, but also about the fact that this happened to their star and that there could be no going back. This is evident in the article titled, ‘Spotlight may have been too bright’ (*The Star* 18 Feb 2013), where Bill Schroder remarks, “it’s never going to be the same again. The icon has fallen”.

This article only reports on fantasy themes in the coverage of *The Star* during a specific period. More research is necessary to determine whether the fantasy themes identified here did indeed contribute to a shared vision.

FRAME ANALYSIS

The concept of framing has rapidly grown as a research method in communication research (Iorgoveanu & Corbu 2012: 91). It has been specifically used in mass media research, but from frame research literature there is no clear definition that holds up on what framing in mass media research is. Goffman (in Iorgoveanu & Corbu 2012: 92) suggests that framing is a “schemata of interpretation, referring to a cognitive structure which guides the perception and the representation of reality, allowing individuals to label various issues and events”. Since Goffman, various refined definitions have been proposed to explain the concept. However, Scheufele (1999) is of the opinion that “framing has been characterized by theoretical and empirical vagueness”. Developing Goffman’s views further, Entman (1993: 52) argues that framing basically includes selection and salience.

Nisbit (2010: 46) states that at its base “in storytelling, communicators can select from a plurality for interpretations”. What do journalists use to decide? Gitlin (1980: 6) argues frames are principles. These principles are used to decide what aspects of a news story to use, which elements to pay attention to, and how to present it to the readers of the newspaper. Therefore, journalists use frames cognitively to help them decide what is important and to present it to their readers in a packaged way.

The primary objective of the frame analysis was to identify the primary news frames used in the coverage of the Oscar Pistorius bail hearing by *The Star* during the period 19-23 February 2013.

Methodology

The news frames identified were a combination of the common frames identified by Neuman *et al.* (1992: 74) and Semetko and Valkenburg (in De Vreese 2005: 56):

The conflict frame refers to the news media’s “game interpretation of the political world as an ongoing series of contests, each with a new set of winners and losers” (Neuman *et al.* 1992: 74). Semetko and Valkenburg’s conflict frame is broader than Neuman *et al.*’s, referring to conflict between individuals, groups, institutions or countries (Semetko & Valkenburg, in De Vreese 2005: 56).

The human impact frame, according to Neuman *et al.* (1992: 74), focuses on “descriptions of individuals and groups affected by an issue”.

The human interest frame brings a human face or emotional angle into the event, issue and problem (Semetko & Valkenburg, in De Vreese 2005: 56).

The attribution of responsibility frame is defined as “presenting an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving to either the government or to an individual or group” (*ibid.*).

It was not possible to identify primary news frames in every single unit of the data sample. One unit was identified in *The Star* and placed in a “no frame” category. Articles without any prominent news frame, text article or graphic are defined as containing only core news facts (De Vreese 2005: 54).

Period of analysis

The period of analysis covers the bail hearing from 19-22 February 2013. Articles published on 19 February 2013 did not cover the bail hearing itself, but were published on the first day of the hearing. All news articles on the bail hearing up to the last day – Friday, 22 February 2013 – were sourced. This included articles and related graphics published on Saturday, 23 February 2013, which covered the Friday’s court proceedings.

Sample and unit of analysis

Articles were sourced by SA Media at the University of the Free State. Only news articles and related graphics were sourced, not opinion columns or letters. Articles were selected based on the presence of the words “Oscar Pistorius” in the articles.

A total of 17 text articles and graphics units were sourced from *The Star* for the research sample. For the purposes of this article, any computer-generated diagrams, graphics and pictures, such as floor plans, firearms and human figures, were treated as graphics. The graphics also included text articles written in column-form. The columns consisting of information are marked and identified on either side of the column by highlighted bullet points or text.

The distinction between visual and text or verbal items follows the proposal by Coleman (in Iorgoveanu & Corbu 2012: 95). Coleman defines “visual” as “the media content that is processed by the eye alone” (*ibid.*). The author states that visual components of media news include “photographs and moving images, drawings, facial expressions, body posture, maps, but also graphics” (*ibid.*). In the context of this article, text or text articles refer to “the verbal content, namely the written words, the language used by journalists” (*ibid.*). The text articles in the data sample could be identified further as written articles under a headline, one or more sub-headlines, and with a lead sentence.

The Star published 14 text articles and three graphics during the five-day period. The overall sample for analysis from *The Star* was 17 units.

Table 4 indicates that both newspapers carried most of the Oscar Pistorius bail hearing articles on their front page (page 1).

TABLE 4: PAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ARTICLES

Page number	<i>The Star</i> (articles)	<i>The Star</i> (graphics)
1	6	3
3	1	
4	3	
6	3	
13	1	
Total	14	3

As indicated in table 1, *The Star* published its articles mostly on the front page (6 text; 3 graphics), within additional reportage on pages 3 and 4. During the sample period, *The Star* published graphics only on the front page.

Table 5 contains a summary of the primary frames as identified in *The Star*.

TABLE 5: PRIMARY FRAMES IN *THE STAR*

Frame	<i>The Star</i>
Conflict frame	6
Human impact frame	5
Attribution of responsibility frame	3
Human interest frame	2
No frame	1
Total	17

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Conflict frame

The conflict frame was utilised the most in *The Star*. Six text articles were identified with a conflict frame. An example was a text article on 21 February 2013 on the front page. The headline was “Defence Gives Oscar Hope” and appeared underneath a banner-type sub-headline: “Punching holes in detective’s testimony boosts athlete’s bail bid”. The sub-headline in prominent lettering created a strong conflict frame. It set up a fight theme with words such as “punching holes” in the argument in court between the defence advocate, Barry Roux, and the state’s initial case investigator, Hilton Botha. The conflict frame was further supported by sentences in the article, such as: “By yesterday afternoon, advocate Barry Roux SC had punched holes in Botha’s testimony, forcing the veteran warrant officer to backtrack...” and “Roux also tore apart Botha’s evidence...”. *The Star* on 22 February 2013 in a front page text article said: “Lead investigator removed from Pistorius case”. The headline created a winner-loser theme.

These findings support international trends. Neuman *et al.* (in Semetko & Valkenburg 2000: 95) indicate that the media makes use of a few central news frames to tell their news stories and draw their readers’ attention, and “that conflict was the most common in the handful of frames in U.S. news they identified”.

Human impact frame

The second most common news frame identified in *The Star* (n=5) was the human impact frame. It looks at groups and individuals that are affected by an issue. An example of the human impact frame in *The Star* is found in an article focusing on the Paralympic movement under the headline “Paralympic movement will survive” on page 13, on 19 February 2012. The primary human impact frame was strengthened by the article’s sub-headline: “Others will continue to inspire the world, writes Laura Williamson”. The article focused on disability athletics’ “excitement” and “momentum” in world sport, which had come “crushing down” with the news of Oscar Pistorius’ arrest and Reeva Steenkamp’s death.

On the third day, 21 February 2013, *The Star* had another text article with the headline “Reeva’s parents want answers” and a sub-headline “Couple ‘are just interested in finding the truth’”. The article’s focus was on Steenkamp’s parents’ request for only one thing: knowing what had happened. The text article further focused on what their daughter was and could have been. It includes an interview with Steenkamp’s brother, Adam, who said that he had never “expected my younger sister to become the well-known personality” at the time of her death. The article also mentions that “the family had to adjust quickly to the intense media hype surrounding them”.

Human interest frame

The human interest news frame is closely linked to the human impact news frame; it was identified in two *The Star* articles. This frame brings a human face or emotional angle into the event, issue and problem. In *The Star*, this frame was identified as the primary news frame in a front page article on 22 February 2013. The text article, with the headline “Reeva Phone Poser”, focused mainly on Pistorius’ emotions. It used emotional words such as “wept”, “weary eyes” and phrases such as “worried look on his face” and “burying his face in his hands and shaking uncontrollably”, which evoke a strong human interest news frame. Neuman *et al.* (in Semetho & Valkenburg 2000: 96) found that the human impact and human interest, which they see as one frame, was a common news frame, next to conflict.

Attribution of responsibility frame

The Star published three articles that fitted the responsibility and attribution news frame. This frame presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute or give responsibility to somebody. It was either caused by or must be solved by government, an individual or a group. *The Star* published a story under the headline “Oscar’s gun wishlist” with a sub-headline “These are the powerful weapons Pistorius applied for weeks ago”. The text article quotes from a 2011 article on Pistorius in the British newspaper, *Daily Mail*, that Pistorius “sleeps with guns in his bedroom” and “one baseball bat and one cricket bat lie behind Pistorius’ bedroom door. A revolver is at his bedside. A machine-gun by his window”. It further focuses on the “powerful weapons” and the “need” for it.

The text article highlights two of the firearms, displayed in a prominent graphic. These are a Smith & Wesson Model 500 revolver, the “world’s most powerful handgun”, and the comment of a defence force analyst and expert on a .223 Vektor rifle, which he described as a “powerful rifle”. The article quotes the defence force analyst as saying he “could not understand what the need for the firearms would be”.

The Star had a prominent graphic picture of the six firearms, which included two revolvers, one rifle and three shotguns in a display setting. The investigation had found the graphic images of the .223 Vector rifle to be incorrect; they rather resembled two different military assault rifles, which are illegal in civilian hands in South Africa. *The Star* used a picture resembling a Swedish Heckler & Koch military assault rifle.

Summary: Frames

Conflict was the most common primary news frame found in the frame analysis. Putman and Shoemaker (2007:1) state that conflict “highlights incompatibilities, disagreements, or oppositional tensions between individuals, groups and institutions”. The human impact and interest frame was the second most used news frame. Most newspapers the world over compete in a tough market environment and “journalists and editors are at pains to produce a product that captures and retains audience interests” states Bennet (in Semetko & Valkenburg 2000: 96). This news frame helps the storytellers to achieve this. “Such a frame refers to an effort to personalize the news, dramatize or ‘emotionalize’ the news, in order to capture and retain audience interests,” Semetko and Valkenburg (2000: 96) opine.

From the analysis it is evident that *The Star* had followed tried and tested news frames in telling the story of the Oscar Pistorius bail hearing to the public. “Criteria of newsworthiness include drama, conflict, novelty, timeliness and visual appeal,” states Gans (in Calaghan & Schnell 2001: 189). News frames that fit into one of these categories would always be used by the media, the author contends.

Why must we examine the work of journalists from time to time and investigate the frames they use to tell a story - because journalists should help the public to understand social events. “Journalists are considered ‘sense makers’, but it is important to acknowledge that they may also present the news in such a way that it distorts as much as it attempts to make sense of our world” (Reese, in Linström & Marais 2012: 33).

FINAL REMARKS

How information is presented, be it through words, layout, choice of visuals, etc., has a definite influence on the message conveyed. Both fantasy themes and frame analysis can be used to identify what these messages are. The fantasy themes identified have indicated that Pistorius was mainly portrayed in a negative light, with a number of phrases using violence (“full combat mode”) and almost gang-style expressions (“threatened to break the legs”). The frame analysis has confirmed this by indicating that conflict was the primary frame in most of the articles under investigation. The presence and slant of the attribution of responsibility frame, which also brought to light expressions such as “powerful

weapons”, further supported the findings. The frame analysis indicated that the human interest frame was present in two of the articles, bringing a human face to the person associated with violence in most of the other articles. These two studies focused on the initial aftermath of the shooting; thus, only a few articles could be analysed. The initial findings have indicated a strong bias towards a more negative and violent portrayal - an aspect that should be investigated further once the trial has ended.

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