

**BRITISH NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF CHILD SEXUAL
ABUSE: RELATING NEWS TO POLICY AND SOCIAL
DISCOURSES**

By

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the dominant meanings arising from British newspaper reportage of sexual violence directed at children. The research employs a quantitative and qualitative analysis to answer the following questions: What are the dimensions of child sexual abuse that are covered? How do the media cover these (e.g. as straight news, editorials, opinion columns)? How are offenders and victims portrayed? What sources are cited in stories? What explanations are offered about the occurrence of child sexual abuse? The objective is to: (a) describe the content of press reportage about child sexual abuse through quantitative and qualitative content analysis and; (b) explain the nature of that content in terms of better understanding journalism as a producer of meanings, specifically in relation to coverage of child sexual abuse. In simultaneously identifying and comparing news coverage, the research attempts to articulate the political and ideological functions of language in newspaper coverage of child sexual abuse. It also attempts to develop explanations for the discursive representation of child sexual abuse in the British press, linking news discourse on sexual offending against children to the journalistic practices in news production, the profile of the profession as well as broader prevailing socio-political ideologies about the family, offending, childhood and risks faced by children. A close and systematic analysis of news texts is important to understanding the role of the media in the production of meanings about such a social problems.

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Sex crimes have long been a common feature of newspaper coverage (Howitt, 1998). However, child sexual abuse only assumed a high profile in the mid-1980s when the British media 'discovered' its prevalence particularly within the family. Significant to this 'discovery' was the launch of Esther Ratten's charity, *Childline* in 1982 (Kitzinger, 1996), the child sexual abuse scandal in Cleveland¹ in 1987. In addition, a cluster of prominent child physical abuse and neglect cases in the 1970s (Maria Colwell, 1973) and 1980s (Jasmine Beckford, Tyra Henry and Heidi Kosedra, 1984 and Kimberly Carlisle, 1986) had resulted in intense media coverage with particular criticism directed at child protection and welfare agencies. Itzin (2000d: 3) credits the combined influences of second wave feminism in the 1970s and 1980s (i.e. activism within the women's movement), the scholarship of feminist academics and advocacy by and on behalf of survivors as helping reveal 'incest as 'a widespread, universally permitted' practice'. Child sexual abuse became a key 'media issue' in the early 1990s (Skidmore, 1995).

Child sexual abuse violates accepted moral values in society. The age differential between the offender and the victim challenges expectations of what is considered normal adult-child interaction. Consequently, discussions about it are sensitive and emotional. Changes in legislation (for instance the introduction of the Sex Offenders Register in 1997), the publication of new expert research findings (for instance, McClurg and Craissati, 1996, Grubin, 1998, Oaksford and Frude, 2001) and increased reporting of incidents by victims, accompanied by public concern have all significantly influenced media coverage.

Government attention to child sexual abuse in the latter part of the 1990 saw the institution of a national Sex Offenders Register in 1997, the publication of research examining areas such as the risks of child sexual abuse (Grubin, 1998); repeated abuse of children in childhood (Hamilton and Browne, 2000); offender recidivism (Hedderman and Sugg, 1996, Grubin 1998, Hood et al, 2002); and offender treatment (Beech et al, 2000). A network to monitor the activities of child sex offenders on the Internet has been set up by

¹ The controversy over child sexual abuse in Cleveland began following the diagnosis of a number of children as having been sexually abused. Two doctors at the Middlesborough General Hospital mainly diagnosed the cases. Following their diagnoses, most of the children were made wards of court and taken into care. The media coverage that followed this incident precipitated interest amongst media researchers about media coverage of child sexual abuse particularly intrafamilial abuse.

the government². In 1999, the government initiated a review of sex offending laws in England and Wales.

Within the criminal justice system, there has been a review of sentencing of child sex offenders. Amendments to the Protection of Children Act 1978, which came into effect in January 2001, increased the maximum sentence for possessing and distributing child pornography from three to 10 years. A Home Office *Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet* set up in March 2001 examined existing legislation and child protection measures with particular attention to the Internet. Its interim report proposed the design of legislation to tackle 'paedophile grooming' activity both on- and off-line, a model of internet chat safety measures for providers and computer awareness training for police and people who worked with children.

Awareness about sexual offending against children is reflected in various initiatives and responses adopted by institutions such as the state, the social services, interest group organisations and the criminal justice system. For instance, different policing authorities have launched enquiries into abuse in care homes. In fact, by August 2000, 32 different police forces in England and Wales were involved in over 80 investigations into children's homes (Bright, 2000). Most are retrospective cases. In January 1999, the Greater Manchester Police launched Operation Cleopatra to investigate allegations of sexual abuse and violence in 66 children's homes over 30 years. Following the publication of the inquiry into the physical and sexual abuse of children in care homes in North Wales, officers in Lancashire launched Operation Nevada to investigate allegations of abuse in seven schools and care establishments during the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. The operation sought to establish whether there had been a problem of historic institutionalised sexual abuse in Lancashire. A three-year investigation into 33 years of sexual and physical abuse in children's homes in Harrogate and Ripon (Operation Pudsey), led to the conviction of six individuals on child abuse related charges in August 2000.

² The National Criminal Intelligence Survey (NCIS) has set up a Paedophile Intelligence Section that is part of its Specialist Crimes Unit. The aim of this specialist network amongst others is to provide both UK and foreign law enforcement agencies with: high quality and relevant criminal intelligence designed to lead to the arrest of paedophiles and/or the dismantling or disruption of their criminal activities or organisations; combat organised paedophile activity in the UK and abroad. It also maintains a database of known and suspected paedophiles (www.ncis.org.uk).

Voluntary child protection organisations continuously run campaigns highlighting the prevalence and consequences of child abuse and neglect. The charity National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has an ongoing “Full Stop” campaign designed to bring attention to and combat the abuse of children. There has also been the development of specific public information initiatives promoted by the voluntary child welfare agencies and the government such as through the careful inclusion of relevant story lines in popular television programmes and soaps (Ayre, 2001).

Mass media attention to child sexual abuse is evident in the increased reporting of child sexual abuse (Kitzinger, 1996) and media-initiated campaigns to change the law pertaining to the sentencing and release of child sex offenders (e.g. *The News of the World's* ‘For Sarah’ campaign, supported by other newspapers such as *The Mirror* and the *Daily Mail*). Public concern is evident in the vocalisation of disapproval toward child sex offenders and the perpetuation of vigilante actions against offenders. For example various protests and vigilante actions following petition signing and protests in Nottingham in 1999 concerning plans to house released child sex offenders Robert Oliver and Lennie Smith in secure flats at a Nottingham prison, and protests and vigilantism in the Pualsgrove estate in Portsmouth, following the *News Of the World's* campaign in August 2000. A significant amount of news reportage has also covered retrospective cases of child sexual abuse (e.g. abuse in children’s residential care homes and within religious institutions). It is reasonable to suggest that high profile cases involving celebrities (for instance Jonathan King and Gary Glitter), and incidents abroad such as the arrest of Marc Dutroux in Belgium in 1996, and Ireland (the failure of the Irish government to extradite a priest wanted for questioning on child sexual offences in Northern Ireland) (Cricher, 2002a), have influenced the reporting of child sexual abuse in the media. Equally significant in influencing media attention in recent times, are allegations against clergy in Australia, Britain and the USA which respectively provoked intense media coverage in Britain.

At the start of the 21st Century, child sexual abuse continues to occupy a significant place in public discourse with concerns increasingly being expressed about the use of the Internet by child sex offenders to access potential victims-‘Calls for legislative change to end child abuse on internet’ (*The Guardian*, 9 January 2001); ‘New laws to protect children on the net’ (*The Guardian*, 19 July 2001). The National Crime Squad operates a specialist National

Hi-Tech Crime Unit. In July 2002, following a one year investigation, by the unit, six men were arrested in Britain for producing and distributing child pornography on the Internet³.

These are some of the developments that prompted my analysis of contemporary media coverage of child sexual abuse. What child abuse related topics are covered in the news? How do the media cover these (e.g. as hard news, editorials, opinion columns)? What does news coverage tell us about journalism as a producer of meanings? Media reporting of certain crimes and social problems is the main source of information about these problems for most people. Mass communication content 'merits systematic analysis because of its assumed role as cause or antecedent of a variety of individual processes, effects or uses people make of it' (Riffe, Lacy and Fico, 1998: 8). Deciphering public understanding of a social problem such as child sexual abuse therefore needs to include adequate theorising about the media. Besides, as Young (1990) argued press discourse was 'an important subject for analysis in the inquiry into the construction of definitions of deviance and their representation because of its pervasive, non-specialist and everyday nature' (Young, 1990: vii).

Methods

The research employs a case study approach by examining news representation of four child sexual abuse related incidents in Britain. News coverage of the trials of Renate Williams and Gary Glitter in November 1999 on charges related to child sexual abuse was analysed. In order to examine the coverage outside the immediate context of criminal justice procedures related to child sexual abuse, the research also examined press reporting about child sexual abuse around an official inquiry (*The Inquiry into Child Abuse in North Wales*) and a newspaper campaign to change the law in relation to child sex offenders (*News of the World's 'For Sarah' Campaign*). Non-incident based coverage provides the opportunity for a broader discussion about the conditions that facilitate or inhibit abuse, and to examine the socio-political analysis of the problem.

The cases selected are part of some contemporary child abuse related events extensively covered in the media. They instigated public and media debates about child abuse

³ The men arrested were part of European wide network of sex offenders calling themselves the 'Shadows Brotherhood' www.nationalcrimesquad.police.uk The men arrested were part of European wide network of sex

related phenomena such as the impact and prevention of child sexual abuse. They also stimulated policy debates about abuse in institutional settings, social control, convicted sex offenders living in the community, parenthood, child protection as well the risks posed by the Internet.

The research combined a traditional quantitative content analysis of a two-week sample of news stories of the particular events with a more qualitative textual analysis of a selection of news articles from the sample. A quantitative content analysis was first used to establish and compare the amount of coverage, type of news article, topics covered, and sources cited. Recognising the significance of language used in media texts, and the social context within which these texts are produced, the qualitative analysis employed discourse analytic approaches to locate specific elements of discursive text representation such as thematic structures (narratives of the crime, representation of victims and offenders) in news headlines and stories. Both these quantitative and qualitative analyses inform the concluding discussion.

Structure

To provide an overall structure and general background for the current research, Chapter 1 attempts to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of sexual offending against children by examining the varying definitions, theories, myths and typologies of child sexual abuse. The theoretical framework informing much of this research is outlined in Chapter 2. In order to understand why crimes like child sexual abuse makes news, the chapter examines news values- the ideological and conceptual considerations that inform the selection and dissemination of news in the media. Locating child sexual abuse within the genre of crime news, Chapter 3 extensively reviews some of the literature on crime and the media. Such research varies in focus. For instance, types of crime covered in the news, comparing crime reported in newspapers with that recorded in official statistics, the influences of media content on the public's perception of crime, the media as a cause of crime, the role of the media in crime prevention and the role of the media in the criminal justice procedure. Given the vast nature of research in this area, and informed by the specific concerns of this research, the review is structured in three sections: crime news production, crime news

offenders calling themselves the 'Shadows Brotherhood'

content and effects of crime news. Moving on to the central concern of the current research, Chapter 4 specifically reviews research into media coverage of child sexual abuse beginning with research of the problem from the 1980s. In addition, it takes into account, contemporary constructions of child sexual abuse particularly around child pornography on the Internet. Chapter 5 outlines and explains the research methods and sampling decisions adopted. The research combined a traditional quantitative content analysis with a more in-depth context-informed textual analysis. Applying both methodologies to four contemporary cases of child sexual abuse-related events, the research examined coverage of child sexual abuse in 10 national British newspapers. Over a two-week time frame, the sample yielded 323 news stories. Chapters 6-10 present and discuss the quantitative and textual content results of the analyses. Chapter 6 provides a context for the subsequent qualitative analysis of individual case studies by reporting on the results of the quantitative content analysis of the entire sample. Moving on to individual case studies, Chapter 7 focuses on the case of Renate Williams- a female schoolteacher tried and acquitted in November 1999 for allegedly sexually abusing one of her pupils. Chapter 8 reports on coverage of the trial of rock star Gary Glitter in November 1999. Acquitted on charges of sexually abusing a teenage girl in the 1980s, Glitter was simultaneously found guilty and sentenced on charges of downloading and distributing child pornography on the Internet. Chapter 9 and 10 examine the coverage given to issues related to child sexual abuse outside the immediate context of a particular criminal proceeding regarding child sex offending. Chapter 9 covers the news coverage of the publication of a public inquiry into abuse in care homes in North Wales, in February 2000. Chapter 10 examines a campaign by leading Sunday tabloid-the *News of the World* -to change the law on the sentencing and release of child sex offenders. The cases studied all received intense media coverage. Each stimulated debate about social control, child protection, child sex offenders in the community, as well the risks posed by the Internet. Chapter 11 draws on both the quantitative and qualitative analysis to make some general conclusions on news framing of child sexual abuse derived from the research. It highlights the role of news values and socio-political ideologies in legitimising certain discourses. Of particular significance to the latter, is the importance attached to the institution of the family as the legitimate site for child protection and the conceptualisation of childhood itself.

In adding to the limited literature on child sexual abuse and the media, the uniqueness of this work lies in its examination of news reporting of contemporary cases of

child sexual abuse-related issues and the relating of that to other discourses. In undertaking an exploratory and comparative coverage of varied cases of child sexual abuse-related events (i.e. criminal prosecutions, the publication of an official inquiry and a media-initiated campaign), the research expands the aims of previous work. The research analysis develops the wider debates about the media and social policy, and expands understanding of news coverage of child sexual abuse. In addition, the research informs theorising on how journalistic practices and prevalent socio-cultural ideologies mediate in the production of journalistic output. The intention was to demonstrate how by the foregrounding of particular discourses and frames of reference, coverage is limited; and there are consequences to that limitation.

CHAPTER 1

DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Introduction

Child sexual abuse raises issues about child and adult sexuality, power relations, adult and child psychology, family welfare and care, and child protection. These issues are central to debates within feminism, criminology as well as psychiatry and sociology and social work. Further theorising about child sexual abuse is found in a multitude of disciplines such as psychology, biology and even history. The secrecy, shame and guilt surrounding child sexual abuse as well as the variability of victim experience renders child sexual abuse a potentially difficult area to research. An analysis of the reporting of child sexual abuse in the media necessitates paying attention to theoretical understanding of sexual offending against children.

According to Corby (2000), the term 'child abuse' was first officially used in Britain, in a Department of Health and Social Security circular in 1980 and by 1988 the department had identified physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse as categories of child abuse. Schechter and Roberge (1976: 60) quoted in Kempe and Kempe, (1984: 9), defined sexual abuse as: 'the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles'. This definition incorporates the child's inability to give informed consent to sexual activities, within the notion of a society's norms and values. The definition takes into account the age/power differentials between the child and the adult and in not specifying any age for the abuser or the abused, the definition implicitly includes abuse by peers and siblings. A child's lack of knowledge of the nature, social meanings and psychological effects of the sexual encounter limits their ability to give an informed consent to sexual acts. It however, fails to specify what precisely counts as 'sexual activities'. Precisely who fits into a description of 'developmentally immature children and adolescents' is not stated in the definition. Precisely who is a child is not clear.

Driver, (1989) employed the United Nation's Convention for Children's Rights to define a child- anyone below 18 unless the laws of their country state otherwise. This

implicitly acknowledges that the definition of a child varies by culture. Whilst some cultures identify childhood as a developmental stage between birth and puberty (around 12 or 13), in other countries adulthood does not start until 18 or 21 when individuals are legally allowed to vote or consent to sex.

Finkelhor (1984) used a broader terminology of 'sexual victimisation' which he defined as 'sexual encounters of children under [the] age [of] thirteen with persons at least five years older than themselves and encounters of children between thirteen to sixteen with persons at least ten years older' (Finkelhor, 1984: 23-24). The Standing Committee on Sexually Abused Children (SCOSAC) used a broader outline as its working definition:

Any child below the age of consent may be deemed to have been sexually abused when a sexually mature person has, by design or by neglect of their usual societal or specific responsibilities in relation to the child, engaged in or permitted the engagement of that child in any activity of a sexual nature which is intended to lead to the sexual gratification of the sexually mature person. This definition pertains whether or not this activity involves explicit coercion by any means, whether or not initiated by the child, and whether or not there is discernible harmful outcome in the short term. (SCOSAC, 1984 quoted in Glaser and Frosh, 1988: 5)

According to this definition, abuse can be either by design (commission) or by neglect (omission). Significantly, the definition takes into account acts undertaken with or without coercion. Nevertheless, its reference to 'sexually mature person' is problematic given abuse can sometimes be perpetrated by boys as young as 11 (e.g. 'Boy, 11, held over rape of 12 year old' -*The Mirror* 07 February 2000). Oaksford and Frude (2001) found the age of abusers ranged from 12-70 years. A case study of child sex offenders in South East London by Craissati and McLurg (1996) found the age of perpetrators to range from 19-72 with an average of 41.3 years.

The US-based National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) defined sexual abuse as 'contact or interactions between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of that adult or another person (Sexual abuse may also be committed by persons under age 18)' (NCCAN quoted in Kempe and Kempe, 1984: 10). For Doyle (1994: 8) child sex abuse is 'an activity, relating to the sex organs, engaged in for sexual gratification which takes advantage of, violates or deceives children or young people'

The central theme of these definitions is that child sexual abuse is an act carried out by an adult on a child for the sexual gratification of the adult. Equally significant to the theoretical understanding of child sex abuse is the view that 'sexual activity need not be restricted to physical contact. It could include exposing the genitalia, talking in a sexual way or involvement in pornography' (Doyle, 1994: 6). The overt or subtle exploitation of the power differential between an adult and a child for the sexual gratification of an adult distinguishes child sexual abuse from other forms of sexual abuse such as rape. It preys upon the dependency of the child/victim on the adult/perpetrator. This dependency in itself is one of the universal elements that define children as children. Moreover, as the SCOSAC definition noted, the inability of children to give informed consent to any such activity, classifies it as sexual abuse. A recent guideline issued by the UK government makes the relationship between the perpetrator and victim central to its definition of child sexual abuse:

Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) and non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children in sexually inappropriate ways (DoH 2000a: 6, quoted in Corby, 2000: 77).

This definition usefully makes it clear that abuse can be contact or non-contact. Child sexual abuse can also be defined by circumstances in which it occurs. Hence the distinction between intrafamilial (abuse by family or people known to the victim) and extrafamilial abuse (abuse by strangers). However, this distinction does not negate in any way the victim's experience of molestation in both instances. Moreover, regardless of setting, the offender's motive is always the same- sexual gratification. Research has shown that both family members and stranger offenders have the same arousal levels for children (Abel, 1977 in Driver 1989). Although some feminists reject the theoretical distinction between familial and extra familial abuse on the ground that incest is simply another name for child sexual abuse, others have chosen to retain the terminology because it described the experience of women who felt the abuse had influenced their family/domestic and emotional relationships as well as their general sexual safety as females (Driver, 1989).

Most definitions select a specific age limit, usually legal, to define a child or an adolescent while others use varying age differences between the minor and the adult for which an act can be classified as abusive. Regulating the age, at which it is legally acceptable for individuals to have sexual encounters, is seen in the institution of laws relating to 'the age of consent'. The age of consent is a specified legal age at which a person is deemed capable to voluntarily consent to sexual activity with another person. The age of consent varies between countries. For instance, in Spain, the age of consent is 13; in France, it is 15; while in the UK it is 16 for both heterosexual and homosexual encounters⁴.

The issue of consent is also crucial to the definition of abuse given a child's relative ignorance of adult sexuality and the absence of real choice in a relationship where a child is forced to rely on adults for their well-being. Children lack the knowledge and experience to make such a decision and they do not 'have the freedom, legal or psychological, to give or refuse their consent in a truly independent manner' (Driver, 1989: 4). Consequently, a child who might have some requisite social knowledge about sexual relationships would still be abused if his or her position in relation with the other participant was one of dependency, or that the child was being coerced, so that a free choice- informed consent, was not an available option (Glaser and Frosh, 1988). Evidently, there is no universally acceptable or acknowledged definition of child sexual abuse. In fact, Wolmar (2000: 5) usefully suggested that 'maybe the problem would have been taken more seriously if, instead of 'sexual abuse' the terms 'rape, buggery, fucking of children and sexual assault' were used every time instead.

Nevertheless, the definitions and categorisation generally offered take into account the age gap and differing developmental level of both the victim and perpetrator- that is the power differential between an adult (perpetrator) and a child (victim). Equally significant to theorising is the sexual gratification sought or gained from the act by the perpetrator. Definitions vary according to purpose. Definitions significant to the planning and implementation of social interventions will certainly vary from those intended to study the phenomena of child sexual abuse, offenders and victims. Some studies adopt specific definitions to suit the research while others focus on the nature of the activity and what makes it abusive.

⁴ The House of Lords three times rejected proposals to lower the age of consent. However, proposals introduced in the Sexual Offences Amendment Act which came into effect on 8th January 2001, brought the homosexual age of consent to 16.

Some feminist theorising insists that child sexual abuse must be contextualised within two broader perspectives: that of child abuse in general and that of sexual violence in particular (Driver, 1989: 20) by men. Feminist views on child sexual attempt to widen understanding and awareness of what might be considered abusive particularly by victims through the inclusion of varied experiences of victims (Kelly, 1988). Thus, while abusers may consider their acts as normal, victims and others see it as abuse. The effects on the victim are that he/she feels betrayed and unsafe.

Most definitions seem to emphasise sexual abuse as being purposefully carried out for the gratification of the adult abuser. The complexity in coming up with one universal definition notwithstanding, identifying encounters that count as abusive is necessary in order to understand the severity of the situation and to design the accompanying social responses/interventions to it.

What counts as Abuse

Attempts to identify a list of specific abusive activities are bound to be met with difficulties as 'it is not clear that every child will identify the same acts as sexual, nor that children will relate to them as exploitative and harmful' (Glaser and Frosh, 1988: 5). Considerable disagreement exists over what counts as sexual abuse and how serious various forms of abuse are. Is abuse less serious if it involves fondling, kissing and no orgasmic penetration? Sexual encounters, according to Finkelhor (1984), range from intercourse, anal-genital contact, to fondling and exhibitionist encounters. Subsequent research by the same author, has included kissing of a sexual kind, attempted intercourse (anal or vaginal) or situations in which a parent allows a child to have an unhealthy but consensual sexual relationship with a peer, as comprising child sexual abuse (Finkelhor, 1986). The use of children in pornography is also sexually abusive (Kempe and Kempe, 1984). A broad rather than restrictive definition of what counts as a sexual encounter would seem appropriate in capturing the variability in meaning and nature of encounters. Besides, Finkelhor (1986) cautioned that if researchers were too restrictive in their definitions then they might be unable to test their own assumptions while on the other hand definitions that were too liberal, could be rejected by the public and professionals as meaningless.

Driver (1989) identified the following as sexually abusive: touching the child, asking the child to touch oneself, itself, or others, ogling the child, taking pornographic pictures or requiring the child to look at parts of the body, sexual acts or other material in a way that is arousing to oneself. Verbal suggestions intended to sexually threaten the child or provide sexual gratification to the self equally counted as abusive acts. Employing a similar framework, Doyle (1994) distinguished between non-contact abuse and contact abuse. Non-contact abuse would include acts such as voyeurism, exhibitionism, pornography and verbal abuse (coprolalia and scatologia). Acts such as fondling, masturbation, frottage, oral sex, sexual penetration, bestiality and flagellation are categorised as contact abuse. Baker and Duncan (1985) found both touching and oral sex as the most commonly reported forms of abuse. These forms of sexual abuse are briefly discussed below. The outline acknowledges that abuse varies in the degree of physical intrusion and in the significance of the perpetrator as a figure to the victim's life. Some of these categories overlap. However, this variability does not reduce the abusive nature of the act or its effects on the victim.

Paedophilia: In psychiatric classification, paedophilia together with fetishes and sexual attraction to animals (zoophilia) is regarded as one of the sexual paraphilias (Howitt, 1995). Paedophilia literally denotes adult sexual preference for pre-pubertal children (both boys and girls). Some adults generally have a sexual orientation on children as a preferred means of achieving sexual gratification. In a Home Office report detailing the state of knowledge about sex offending against children, Grubin (1998) estimated that only 25-40% of offenders had the intense and recurrent sexual attraction to children that would attract the label of 'paedophilia'. However, Cowburn and Dominelli (2001) attribute the origins of the term 'paedophile' to the 'medicalized' professions and professions allied to it (e.g. psychology and social work). According to both researchers, its subsequent adoption and use by the media had led to commonsense and contemporary usage of the term as a generic reference to sexual offences against underage persons. This amply demonstrates the influence of medico-legal discourses on the social construction of child sex offenders. Jenkins (1998:73) noted that the term 'paedophile' was an extremely rare word in Britain before the 1970s. Its appearance in *The Times* index only began in 1977. Critcher's (2002a) examination of *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* respectively from 1990-2000 found a rare appearance of the word in newspapers in the early 1990s. Critcher (2002a) suggests that high profile incidents such as

the fall of the Irish government in 1994 following its failure to extradite a priest wanted in Northern Ireland for child sexual abuse related offence, the case of Marc Dutroux in Belgium in 1996, and the introduction of the Sex Offenders Act in 1997, led to an increased usage of the term in newspapers.

Nevertheless, the construct of 'the paedophile' is in itself ambiguous and flawed in many ways. Feminist influenced research has challenged it arguing that constructing the sexual abuse of children as 'paedophilia' i.e.- a minority sexual paraphilia, diverts from the widespread sexual exploitation of children; and focuses on a kind of person rather than a type of behaviour; on 'Other men' and not 'normal men' (Kelly, Regan and Burton, 2000); and locates abuse within the individual rather than socio-cultural institutions (Kitzinger, 1999). It also 'distracts attention from the similarities between 'paedophiles' and other men who sexually abuse children' (Itzin, 2000c: 90). This essentially initiates a dichotomy between 'normal' and 'deviant' men with the former readily perceived as ordinary and the latter portrayed as the predator-the outsider who should be kept out. This pathologising and individualising of such a crime, essentially diverts attention from examining the wider social context within which sexual abuse occurs- that of masculine sexual power.

Drawing on and influenced by such feminist readings, and mindful of such conceptual problems, this research variously uses the terms 'child sex offender', 'child sex offending' and 'sexual exploitation of children' which continue to be employed and understood within academic literature (particularly feminist influenced work).

Types of sexually abusive acts directed at children are briefly outlined below:

- **Voyeurism:** The act of obtaining sexual gratification by looking at the genitalia of children, watching them naked or undressing (Doyle, 1994). The voyeur might not necessarily have a relationship with the child and sometimes the child might not be aware they are being watched. Watching sexual acts between children is also classed as voyeurism.
- **Exhibitionism:** This kind of non-contact abuse involves the indecent exposure of adult (male) genitalia to girls, boys and women where the perpetrator experiences sexual gratification (Doyle, 1994). It may involve masturbation but is usually limited to exhibition and not any other physical contact. Referred to colloquially as 'flashing',

a common theory for exhibitionism is that the shock and fear it provokes in the young female victim reassures the male exhibitionist of his masculinity (Kempe and Kempe, 1984). Reverse voyeurism occurs where through coercion or by force, 'a child is made to watch the sexual activities of adults or pornographic material' is also a form of exhibitionism (Doyle, 1994: 22).

- Child Pornography: Still, video or film images depicting minors in sexual act or the distribution and use of such imagery for adult sexual gratification is classed as child pornography. With the arrival of new media technology, pornography has assumed a new dimension with the Internet providing electronic access to and distribution of child pornography (Jenkins 2001).
- Verbal abuse: Doyle (1994) classed as the deliberate use of sexual language and obscenities to a child in a sexual manner as a form of abuse. The abuser can frighten the child by deliberately employing sexual threats.
- Fondling and Molestation: This entails acts such as erotically fondling, touching, or kissing the child especially around the breast and genital area. Engaging in masturbation of the child or urging the child to touch /masturbate the adult equally count as molestation. This is a broad category and whose limits are not clearly defined. Fondling can be similar to frottage, which Doyle (1994:24) defined as 'the obtaining of sexual gratification by rubbing against the sexually desired person'.
- Sexual Intercourse: Sex with a child could occur without physical violence but through seduction, coercion, deception and the use of authority and other threats. Closely linked to sexual intercourse is the performance of oral sex. It may be performed on the child or the victim may perform it on the abuser.
- Buggery: This refers to forced or unforced sexual penetration of the anus.
- Rape: Rape refers to sexual intercourse or attempted intercourse without the consent of the victim. 'Rapists tend to approach child victims because they are less threatening to the rapist's self-confidence and are unlikely to have the strength to resist' (Kempe and Kempe, 1984: 12). Feminist understanding of rape sees it as the conscious extension of male violence on women using sexualised violence.
- Bondage and Sexual Sadism: Another type of abuse identified by Kempe and Kempe (1984). It involves the inflicting of bodily injury to another for sexual gratification

(e.g. piercing). However, the authors noted that this rarely occurred with a child as object. Sexual activities such as bondage and fetishism might accompany acts of child sexual abuse as was demonstrated in a BBC 2 documentary –*The Hunt for Britain's Paedophiles* (BBC2 13 June 2002). Bondage involves the offender tying up the victim or being tied up by the victim, or the offender dressing up or demanding that victims dress up in sexually enticing clothes (Doyle, 1994).

Settings where child sexual abuse occurs

The Family

Sexual activity between family members is generally referred to as incest. The label 'incest' has itself proven problematic for some professionals to deal with it, preferring the broad term 'child sexual abuse'. The very narrow legal definition of incestuous abuse implied that 'many cases, which would have had the same emotional effect on the victim as legally defined incest, could not properly speaking be called that' (Renvoize, 1993: 32). This narrow definition stems from the fact that under the current law in England and Wales, incest is confined to blood relationships implicitly excluding abuse carried out by step-parents, adopted parents or foster parents and siblings. Furthermore, within British legal definition, intercourse is the singular act that determines incestuous abuse (Renvoize, 1993). Renvoize suggested that the gradual disappearance of incest from legal and popular discourse was as much a result of moral disapproval as it was one of denial (making it an offence implicitly acknowledged its existence, thereby tarnishing the reputation of the family). Consequently, 'many people including professionals find it easier to cope with the thought of what is implied when the act is sanitized by calling it something less direct than incest' (Renvoize, 1993: 32). Following on from the legal discourse, the term 'incest' is rarely used in the media as well. The Press Complaints Commission's (PCC) Code of Ethics to which the British journalism industry adheres, clearly advises against the use of the word "incest" when reporting about children in child sex cases⁵. Consequently, the use of the term incest has

⁵ Article 7 of the PCC code of ethics deals with children in sex cases. Besides prohibiting the identification of children under 16 involved in sex offending cases, whether as victims or as witnesses. Section 2 states that "In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child

i) The child must not be identified.

ii) The adult may be identified.

gradually faded from public and media discourse. Although under legal and media discourse preference is shown for framing the offence, as ‘child sex abuse’ instead of ‘incest’, the family remains a prominent site of abuse. In the US, three-quarters of reported incest cases have been found to be father daughter and stepfather-daughter cases (Kempe and Kempe, 1984). In July 2000, a Home Office consultation paper recommended that sexual relations between blood relative should never be lawful and that the old offence of incest should be replaced with ‘a more modern offence prohibiting sexual relations between children under 18 and their blood relations, adoptive parents and siblings, step-parents, foster carers and those in a position of responsibility in the family’ (Home Office, July 2000: 11)⁶.

The family is understood here as a broad social category to describe the living arrangements between the abuser and the victim as well as relatives who do not permanently live with the child. Thus, abuse of an intrafamilial nature includes sexual contact with stepfathers, stepmothers, step uncles, non-related siblings living together, neighbours and family friends. The nature and extent of abuse can also vary within settings. Fischer and McDonald (1998) found an earlier onset, longer duration and higher level of intrusion in incestuous abuse. Intrafamilial offenders used more instructions “not to tell” and fewer enticements while victims of such abuse were found to suffer more physical and emotional injury.

Commenting on how incest first exploded into public discourse in the 1970s as a political issue informed by the women’s movement, Armstrong (2000) documented how incest had historically been legitimated within cultures and religions and how it remained enforced by direct threat on the victims, and the pre-emptive and codified disbelief by society. Sexual relations between individuals who are related have historically been accepted and encouraged in several cultures and religions such as amongst the ancient Greeks (Gibbens, 1984). According to Rush, (1974) Maimonides tolerated the rape of children under three because it was assumed the child would subsequently recover their virginity. Intrafamilial sexual relationships and marriages were also allowed in ancient Egyptian societies (Renvoize, 1993). Anthropologists have also found societies where sexual play

iii) The word "incest" must not be used where a child victim might be identified.

iv) Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.”
PCC Code of Ethics. Available at www.pcc.org.uk

⁶ This subsequently informed the Home Office white paper published in November 2002. The paper broadened the definition of the family unit to include members of the household not only blood relatives.

between children is permitted and where parents sexually stimulate their children as part of normal family upbringing (Renvoize, 1993: 30). Certain discourses in social anthropology, which view women and children as societal minors and sexual objects, consider marriage as involving the exchange of children and the control of their sexuality. According to this view, 'incest is less threatening than paedophilia, because it does not undermine the family's control of its children's sexuality, but paedophiles are direct threats to patriarchal authority' (Ennew, 1986: 69). Nevertheless, as Kempe and Kempe argued, 'incest violates one of the most tenaciously maintained taboos in most societies. It also deprives the child of the essence of his/her role in the family vis-à-vis the parents, that they will meet the child's needs for nurture and protection until the child is mature enough to seek out his/her own relationships' (Kempe and Kempe, 1984: 47).

Sexual abuse by a parent threatens the parent-child relationship that is one of the most important to children. Male siblings and relations could also perpetrate incest. Many cases of incest go unreported and are therefore less likely to feature in official statistics. Rising divorce rates, and the rise in second and or reconstructed families created from divorces means incest can potentially be on the increase.

Abuse in Institutions

The physical and sexual abuses of children in care homes and other institutional settings by people who work with them (e.g. teachers and carers), present a small but significant number of child abuse victims (Itzin, 2000; Gallagher, 2000). Such abuse could take place in special residential schools, nursery schools, churches or voluntary and community organisations. Gallagher (2000) broadly defined institutional abuse as: 'The sexual abuse of a child (under 18 years of age) by an adult who works with him or her. The perpetrator may be employed in a paid or voluntary capacity; in the public, voluntary or private sector; in a residential or non-residential setting; and may work either directly with children or be in an ancillary role' (Gallagher, 2000: 797). Gallagher's study of institutional abuse cases in eight local authority areas in the UK in the late 1980s and early 1990s identified three main types of institutional settings where child sex abuse was prevalent: community based institutions (e.g. school, play

scheme, religious building, abuser or victim's home⁷), foster homes and residential establishments (e.g. children's homes, special school and boarding school) (Gallagher, 2000). The abusers within community-based settings were predominantly teachers and head teachers as well as music tutors and clerics; while abuse in residential homes were largely perpetrated by social workers and teachers. Overall, these abusers tended to act alone and were mostly male. The abusers employed tactics of entrapment and coercion to access victims. The research also highlighted a difference in the gender of victims finding that girls were mostly abused in foster homes while boys were mostly the victims of sexual abuse in residential homes.

The case of Frank Beck in Leicestershire has been credited with bringing public attention to sexual abuse in children's homes (Wolmar, 2000). Beck perpetuated a series of sexual abuse and physical violence offences on children in homes he ran claiming he wanted to develop a 'therapeutic community'. In 1991, he was eventually charged and sentenced to life on charges of buggery, rape and assault following a series of complaints by children who had suffered abuse under his care. That same year, Ralph Morris was sentenced to 12 years for abusing children under his care at Castle Hill school- a home where 'difficult' boys were sent. Media interest in Beck's case raised awareness of the prevalence of abuse in children's homes. It not only made it possible for victims of abuse to come forward and lodge complaints, it heightened the seriousness with which the police treated such complaints (Wolmar, 2000). Beck's case began a snowball of investigations into abuse in children's homes. Amongst these were investigations of abuse in homes in North Wales, Cheshire (Operation Granite), Merseyside (Operation Care), Manchester (Operation Cleopatra) and Devon and Cornwall (Operation Lentish) (See Wolmar, 2000 for a comprehensive account of the child abuse scandals in care homes in the UK). Several of these investigations are still on going.

Trafficking and Child prostitution

Child prostitution is also part of the continuum of areas in which adults sexually exploit children. It entails children (both boys and girls) engaging in sexual acts for profit. Although

⁷ This referred to instances where a childminder abused a child in the home of the childminder or vice versa.

child prostitutes sometimes act on their own, other parties who are adults often manage their activities. Profit or payment can be in cash, or in kind (e.g. drink, drugs or a roof over one's head) (Kelly, Regan and Burton, 2000). It frequently involves different partners and can range from making pornography to engaging in sex. Using an individual's sexuality for profit or gain, has been a profession in which adults probably dominate but children can be coerced into prostitution against their will (Ennew, 1986). In some parts of the world prostitution stretches to victims being moved between countries - 'trafficking' (Thomas 2000) - 'Child sex tourists escape UK law' (*The Independent*, 13 July 1998). In some instances, it involves offenders travelling to destinations where they can easily meet potential victims - 'JP cleared of sex with Thai boy, 14' (*The Sun*, 22 December 1999); 'Philippines jails UK child abuser' (*The Guardian*, 10 July 1998). In November 1998, Chris Denning, a former Radio 1 DJ appeared on trial in Poland alongside two French men and an American on charges of sexually abusing young boys. During the trial, he said he had served as a male prostitute between the age of 14 -18: - 'Ex Radio 1 DJ was child prostitute' (*The Guardian*, 18 November 1998). Prostitution is defended by two main arguments: 'the oldest profession theory' and the 'male incontinence theory'. The former claims that prostitution has existed throughout human history. The latter theory views prostitution as protecting marriage and the family as the basic unit of society 'by functioning as a sexual safety valve for overwhelming male needs' (Ennew, 1986: 66). The first theory uses history as an excuse to perpetuate and continue child sexual abuse. The second is grounded in the assumption that men have more powerful sexual needs than women and need to contain these desires by carrying out sexual activities outside the marital relationships (Ennew, 1986).

Despite the variation in settings within which child sexual abuse occurs, a substantial body of research has reported an overlap or crossover between sites of abuse and the perpetrators, finding incestuous offenders who also abused children who were not their own and vice versa (Weinrott and Saylor, 1991; Faller, 1990; Abel and Rouleau, 1990; quoted in Eldridge, 2000). Consequently, types of abuse and sites where abuse occur are not discrete but can overlap (Itzin 2000c).

Prevalence of Child sexual Abuse

Official statistics and prevalence studies conducted on both victims and offenders are some of the methods of assembling information about the prevalence of child sexual abuse. Such knowledge significantly provides a framework in which to contextualise policy development and media representation.

Official Statistics

Official statistics related to sexual offending provide a partial insight into the prevalence of sexual offences. The government's Recorded Crime Statistics for England and Wales records sexual offences under the classification of violent crimes. Thirteen per cent of notifiable offences recorded by the police in 1999, were violent crimes of which sexual offending composed 6% (N=37,492) of the violent offences recorded (Povey and Cotton, 2000). These statistics however fail to specify the type of sexual offences. In 1995, Home Office figures relating to sexual offending against children showed indecent assault of a girl under 16 represented 50% of sexual offence involving children (Grubin, 1998). It was the most common sexual offence relating to children and 2,116 people formally received either cautions or convictions for such offences. Other offences for which convictions or cautions were recorded were (in descending order): unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16, indecent assault on a male under 16, gross indecency with girls 14 or under, unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13, rape of girls under 16, and gross indecency with a boy 14 or under (Grubin, 1998). Many of these statistics prompt certain questions. Are offences against girls under 16 any less or more severe than those against girls under 13? What is the difference between unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16 and rape of a girl under 16? Age of consent laws mean that girls under 16 cannot consent to sex. Sexual intercourse with a girl under 16 is therefore by definition, rape. Grubin's research also noted that girls were the main targets of child sex abusers (70%) and that adolescent sex offenders accounted for a third of sex crime offenders (Grubin, 1998).

However, given that the statistics recorded are for cautions and convictions, they are inadequate in reflecting the actual number of victims of sexual abuse. Not all perpetrators are caught and tried. Besides, perpetrators sometimes commit multiple offences or have multiple victims. This is not reflected in the cautions or convictions that are delivered.

Weinrott and Saylor, (1991) studied 67 child molesters who had been classed as “sexual psychopaths”. The men admitted offences against 959 different children rather than the 136 recorded in the official statistics (Weinrott and Saylor quoted in Grubin, 1998).

With the well-documented fear, shame and guilt surrounding child sexual abuse and other sexually related crimes, a significant amount of abuse goes unreported. Hence, official statistics on the prevalence of child sexual abuse should be read cautiously. They do however offer a useful starting point in estimating the numbers of offenders and victims.

Population Surveys

Population surveys tend to record the number of people who have suffered abuse even when such crimes have not been brought to the attention of the police. A significant proportion of these studies have found the abuse of female children is much higher than males and that boys are less likely to suffer intrafamilial abuse than girls did (Grubin, 1998). Baker and Duncan (1985) conducted a survey to estimate the prevalence of child sexual abuse in the general population. Based on a sample population of over 2000 people in the UK, 12% of females and 10% of males participants respectively, reported having been abused before the age of 16. Using the results, the researchers estimated that over 4.5 million adults had been abused as children and estimated that 1.1 million children were likely to be abused before the age of 15. Prevalence studies have also been conducted on specific populations. Oaksford and Frude (2001) found a prevalence rate of 13.14% in a survey of 213 undergraduate female students at universities in the UK.

However, the difficulties relating to the collection of information on such a sensitive issue (not all victims feel comfortable to come forward) as well as the varying definitions of what counts sexual abuse make it difficult to obtain information concerning prevalence rates from population surveys. Deciding on and selecting a representative population can equally be difficult. Besides, not every victim of child sexual abuse can accurately remember abusive acts retrospectively. Consequently, the results of such surveys potentially vary.

Offender Studies

In-depth interview and surveys of convicted offenders and self confessed sexual abusers equally provide an insight into child sex offender, how they view themselves and their actions and the prevalence rates of child sexual abuse. Such studies largely reveal a different number of offences than those recorded in official statistics. Elliott, Browne and Kilcoyne (1995) cited in Hamilton and Browne (2000) found that on average it took 5.8 years for child sexual offending to be detected and that the number of victims ranged from 1-9 per offender for 70% of the offenders. A further 23% had between 10-40 victims.

Considerations of access to prospective victims and the avoidance of detection play a part in the molester's choice of victims (Renvoize, 1993). Children with a more than usual dependence on others, such as children with learning disabilities, the deaf and those who are mentally handicapped, are considered most vulnerable to abuse. Their reliance on others for many activities, including some immensely personal activities, means they are rarely in a position to challenge those who take advantage of their vulnerability (Renvoize, 1993). The high profile cases in Britain involving allegations of long-standing abuse in children's residential homes and care-institutions in the late 1980s and 1990s highlighted the vulnerability of children in care homes.

Describing a typical child sex offender is difficult as their general behaviour is usually indistinguishable from people who do not sexually abuse children. Craissati and McClurg's (1996) sample of 80 child sex molesters assessed by the Challenge Project in South East London, found an overwhelming majority of abusers were white men (91%), while only 7.5% were African Caribbean and only one man in the sample was Asian. The research also reported 42.5% of abusers were single, and 32.5% were married or cohabiting. Almost half of the men in the sample were employed in regular stable jobs. Driver (1989), suggested that the abusiveness of child abusers was part of their make-up and that this existed regardless of the availability of child objects and regardless of the reactions of individual children whom they assaulted. Child sex offenders can however, differ in terms of their choice of victims and the venue of abuse. This explains some of the distinctions between incestuous abusers and abusers in extrafamilial settings. Driver (1989) argued against attempts to define child molesters by confining them to one group or another. This, she asserted, is as much an expression of society's unwillingness to acknowledge that abuse is much more closer to home

and even more prevalent than we think as it is 'an expression of our fears as a society that the phenomenon cannot be contained or controlled' (Driver, 1989: 17).

Child sex offenders can differ in the nature of sexual activity they direct at their victims. Some restrict themselves to non-contact sexual acts (e.g. exhibitionism, masturbation and child pornography) while others involve fondling and sexual intercourse. Craissati and McClurg (1996) caution that most offender studies are limited because they predominantly draw samples from prison populations or offenders who have undergone treatment.

Victim studies

Victim studies reinforce the point that abuse usually begins in early childhood and slowly progresses into early adolescence. Grubin, (1998) and Gallagher (2000) found that up to 80% of abusers were known to their victims and that such abuse took place in the home of the offender or that of the victim. An international survey by Finkelhor (1994) also found that close to half of the abuse suffered by girls took place in an intrafamilial setting. Such abuse was likely to continue as the victims faced continuous threats from abusers or simply because of misplaced loyalty to the family resulting in the victims' failure to report it. In addition, boys are frequently the victims of sexual abuse. Statistics on the number of convictions or cautions in England and Wales relating to the six most common sexual offences against children showed indecent assault on a male under 16 as the third most common sexual offence relating to children in 1995. Gross indecency with a boy under 14 also accounted for a minor number of recorded sexual offences (Grubin, 1998). But a combination of fears such as the fear of loss of the 'macho' image, the fear of being thought of or described as homosexual and also the fear of having HIV/AIDS renders boys even more wary of admitting having been assaulted than girls (Renvoize, 1993). Adult men are most likely to be the abusers of both female and male children (Oaksford and Frude, 2001; Craissati and McClurg, 1996; Finkelhor, 1981a). However, unlike female children, the abuse of boys is more likely to be by a non-family member (Finkelhor, 1981a). However, recent work by Fischer and McDonald (1998) has, found no difference in the victim sex preferences of both intra and extra-familial abusers.

Theories of Child Sexual Abuse

The diversity of approaches from which theorising on child sexual abuse has emerged, implies that the theories of child sexual abuse will share little or no similarity while some will overlap. Theories of satanic abuse of children gained currency among professionals in the early nineties. This was prompted mainly by fears about satanic abuse rings in Nottingham, Rochdale and Manchester. Based on an investigation of people who sexually offend against children, Howitt (1995) provided a comprehensive account of the many theories of child sexual abuse that are briefly reviewed below.

Sexual Learning Theory

The major thrust of this theory is that sex offending is learned or shaped through the sexual experiences in childhood or the environment. These sexual experiences could have been with peers. The sexual contacts in childhood lead the association of sexual arousal with an immature body thereby leading to a conditioning of a long-term fixation with sexually immature bodies. Peer rejection and parental hostility may act as punishments that create an aversion to adult-orientated sexuality. The theory also posits that a sexual youngster could fail to grow out of his paedophilia because of problems in relating to adults. Nevertheless, the theory fails to explain why so many people pass through adolescence with similar sexual experiences but fail to become paedophiles. Equally, it does not explain why adult males who are in relationships with adults engage in child sexual abuse.

Family Dysfunction Theory

The offenders' propensity to shift blame for their actions lies at the centre of this theory developed by Wyre, (1989). Scapegoating the child as the reason for the family's ills and using the child as a means of 'getting back' at the other parent is the focus of this theory in which child sex abusers attribute their offending to family break up, unemployment, the pressures of work or a wife/girlfriend who refuses sex. The family therapy treatment method derived from this theory views child sexual abuse as functioning as a means of keeping together families that would otherwise collapse (Corby, 2000). Blaming their actions on the dynamics of a dysfunctional family enables abusers to explain their actions as a subtly collusive group

dynamic (Driver, 1989). The theory, however, fails to explain the prevalence of sexual offending among young boys who are in no position to expect sexual relations because of the absence of any wives or girlfriends. It equally fails to account for abuse within apparently happy and contented families. Again, the theory does not help to explain abuse by siblings. Nevertheless, the theory significantly exposes the 'powerful nexus of relationships that the family can be sheltering and demonstrates how it can sustain unacceptable forms of abuse' (Corby, 2000: 144).

Precondition Theory

This theory attempts to explain why children are targets of sexual abusers. Its major assumption is that child sex offenders are what they are because they are diverted from adult relationships. Howitt (1995) notes that the theory was developed by Araj and Finkelhor (1985, 1986). Explanations for the sexual abuse of children according to this view are:

- i) Emotional Inadequacy: Child sex offenders are psychologically and socially immature individuals who lack self esteem and are narcissistic. Their incapacity to relate to and have sexual relations with adults is compensated for by relating to children instead. Offending is also seen as a means of coping with abuse suffered in childhood or a means of identifying with the aggressor.
- ii) Sexual arousal: Child sex offenders are socialised by child pornography or advertising to see children as sexual objects. It also posits that the experience of abuse in childhood also conditions sexual arousal in children and provides a model for deviant sexual patterns in adulthood.
- iii) Blockage: Difficulties in relating to adult females and adult sexual relationships, oedipal dynamics, deficient social skills, and anxiety over sexual matters, make adult sexual and emotional gratification unavailable to the offender.
- iv) Disinhibition: Mental retardation, senility, situation stress, tolerance of incest within culture or subculture, make it possible for some adults not to be deterred by normal prohibitions against sex with children.

Howitt (1995), however, criticised these views because their evidence was based on a highly selective sample and are therefore not accurate for generalisations. Moreover, the use of laboratory-based measures are questionable given that some participants can and do

“cheat” in standard laboratory erection measurements. Besides not all child abusers are attracted to child pornography. This theory largely fails to take cognisance of the amount of sex offenders who did not suffer any childhood abuse.

Feminist Theories

Feminist views on child sexual abuse are a major framework that I draw on throughout the thesis. Concern about male power is central to feminist debates and the exercise of such power through sexualised violence has remained a central theme within feminist research. Feminist understanding of child sexual abuse as a major social problem, is informed by previous concerns within the women’s movement about family violence particularly violence against adult women. The major thrust of the feminist perspective sees child sexual abuse as a continuum of male violence against women within patriarchal relations and consider the theories outlined so far as gender-blind (Rush, 1974; Driver, 1989). Abusers who are mostly men, find that masculine power gives them access to pleasure and they use it: ‘Sexual prowess is an important part of male self-image and by tradition involves conquest, domination and taking the initiative, all of which are easier with children than with adult women’ (Driver, 1989: 10). Consequently, feminist theorising on child sexual abuse understands it within the context of male socialisation and gender relations.

Although feminist thinking does consider the issue of distorted thinking in the offender, it views this as partially relating to the myths about the offence and the victim which are held to support offending (i.e. the attempts to transfer blame to others). Howitt’s (1995) criticism of feminist theory views it as focusing too much on male power without explaining why some men commit sexual offences and others do not. By focusing too much on men as the perpetrators of sexual offences against women and children, feminist researchers largely ignore abuse carried out by women. More recently, Corby (2000) has cautioned against the reductionism of attributing every ill to patriarchy and excluding other explanations.

Nevertheless, the family as the site of much abuse is the main context of considerations about child sexual abuse in feminist sexual politics. Boundaries of the family are extended to include “social uncles”-people with no biological or legal ties with the child but who are in a position of trust and have a socially-sanctioned access to the child. Within

feminism itself, some radical feminists view child sexual abuse strictly as acts carried out by adult males directed at female children (Driver, 1989). The potential to be an abuser is considered a particularly male characteristic- 'a deliberate male aggression, a violence based on male right' (Armstrong, 2000: 36). Specifically, incest was 'what ordinary men do routinely and regularly in their own homes as a matter of right'. In challenging patriarchy, feminists argue that child sexual abuse is a long-standing problem fostered by the 'tolerance of paternal child sexual abuse built into the underlying attitudes and formal structures of society' (Armstrong, 2000: 34). These structures such as the judiciary, the legislature and the family are embedded in patriarchy. Armstrong (2000: 31) argues that public discussion of the 'discovery' of abuse in the USA in the 1960s was silenced because its prevalence was found to be too widespread to criminalize it: 'how could you start making open charges against thousands of upstanding male citizens; charges of something that overnight and by fiat was being labelled 'abuse'? Instead, focus variously shifted to the victims as accomplices, mothers as culpable (sexually inadequate), feminists and false accusation syndrome.

Feminists also consider the fact that abuse is also carried out by boys as showing the true dynamics of abuse- it is not based entirely on adult-child power imbalance but male-female power imbalance (Cossins, 1999). In addition, feminist work has attempted to broaden the understanding of what is considered abusive by looking into the accounts of what victims describe as abusive (Kelly, 1988, Itzin, 2000a and 2000b). Thus, while an abuser might consider acts of voyeurism, making pornography or flashing as somewhat undamaging, feminist theorists informed by victim experience think otherwise.

These feminist views are a major framework that I draw on throughout the thesis. As outlined in earlier sections, research into the prevalence of child sexual abuse show that abusers are predominantly men. They are not the 'weird', 'sick' 'evil' men as predominantly described in the media, but ordinary heterosexual men. This view is important because:

...child protection policy and professional practice will fail ultimately, inevitably to stop abusers abusing, unless it addresses the sexual abuse of children as an issue of men's violence: the fact is that it is predominantly men who are the perpetrators of domestic violence an sexual violence, that it is largely males who are the child sexual abusers; that it is a 'men thing' and needs to be dealt with as what men do and what therefore men have to stop doing' (Itzin, 2000d: 4)

Though child sexual abuse has historically and culturally been stereotyped as abuse committed by a 'monstrous stranger', the major thrust of feminist research in this area has been to show that abuse is predominantly carried out by men and adolescent boys (Cossins, 1999, Itzin, 2000d); and that quite abuse takes place within the family, or is carried out by an individual who has a relationship of trust with a child (Driver, 1989, La Fontaine, 1990, Kelly, 1996, Armstrong, 1996, 2000). In fact, in the latter part of the 1990s, public concern about 'predatory paedophiles', led the Home Office to commission research which confirmed that the vast majority of child sex offenders knew their victims, most acted alone and that female children were most targeted (Grubin, 1998). Police crime reports estimated that there were up to 72,600 cases of child sexual abuse a year in England and Wales. Understanding and acknowledging this power dynamics in the sexual abuse of children is important not just for policy considerations but also for journalistic reporting and public understanding of such a problem.

Biological Theories

The themes of genetic characteristics and hormonal problems are central to biological theories about child sexual offending. It centres on the idea that abnormal hormonal and genetic characteristics make the child sex offender different. 'One obvious possibility is that the sex hormones of paedophiles are in some ways peculiar- they have too many, too few, too much or too much at the wrong stage in their lifecycle' (Howitt, 1995:149). A closely related theory is the neuropsychological theory, which suggests abusers have problems with the organisation of thought within and between the different halves of their brains resulting in deviant sexual thoughts. There is, however, little evidence to suggest that deviant thinking is characteristic of all aspects of abusers' thought. Besides, as Howitt, (1995) argues, if mental malfunctioning is responsible for all sexually deviant thought, it is unclear whether it is responsible for other thoughts and actions.

Informed by the general perception that sex offenders have a high risk of re-offending, proponents of both theories as well as other common-sense theorists, view surgical castration as a successful remedy to reduce rates of recidivism amongst paedophiles and other sexual offenders. Howitt (1995), however, suggests that although attractive in its punitive approach, the option does not cater for the "less obvious" sexually abusive acts such

as fondling and kissing- activities for which the offender does not need an erection. Consequently, surgical castration may reduce the libido of an offender but still do nothing for ‘...paedophiles who show very little interest in orgasmic penetrative intercourse with any sort of partner...’ (Howitt, 1995:155).

Other researchers have argued that sex offending is not a disease and hence does not lend itself to a particular cure. It is, however possible, to ‘...lower the risk of such re-offending significantly in some individuals and decrease the frequency of offending in others, in both cases reducing the number of future victims’ (Grubin, 1998: 42). According to Grubin (1998), the likelihood of a child abuser or a sex offender re-offending depends as much on his psychological state as on the circumstances in which he finds himself in society and the treatment programmes offered after conviction. Sex offender treatment programmes particularly cognitive behavioural approaches aimed at attitudinal re-evaluation by offenders towards their victims and towards their offending, have been identified as most useful (Hedderman and Sugg, 1996). Besides, recidivism rates amongst sexual offenders have been shown to be relatively lower than other crimes. A random sample of over 900 men with current or past convictions for sex offences, who were released from jail in the UK in 1987, found only a 7% reconviction for sex offences by 1991 (Marshall, 1994 cited in Grubin 1998). An evaluation of STEP - a three-stage sex offender treatment project - by Hedderman and Sugg, (1996) found that none of the offenders who had been assessed as significantly treated, were reconvicted within two years. The researchers noted that of 133 sex offenders referred to a community based treatment programme, only 11 were convicted of an offence within two years.

The ‘thin-line’ theory

Howitt, (1995) points out that the central point of this theory is that there exists a thin line between loving sensuality and abusive sexuality. The sexual offender confuses love and sexuality and only accidentally slips into molestation whilst cuddling the child in an ordinary way. Such acts may be perpetrated on the child in such a way that exploitative behaviour is interspersed with gentle caresses. Nevertheless, evidence from the testimony of victims (for instance ‘Rachael Pierce’ interviewed by Catherine Itzin, 2000a) and research highlighting repeated abuse in childhood (Hamilton and Brown, 2000) shows that the offenders

knowingly and deliberately commit sexual acts. The thin line theory fails to recognise that the offenders' motivations are to entrap the child into physical contact for his own benefit.

The aggression theory

The argument that the offender has an aggressive but not sexual motivation seems attractive to some researchers. Offending is therefore not a means of seeking sexual gratification. This false distinction prevents the recognition of abuse when it occurs and exonerates the many by stigmatising the few. Child sex abusers molest children for a variety of reasons, but sexual gratification remains the overriding goal. Nevertheless, feminists argue that the aggression theory 'allows us to avoid looking at any connections between male aggression and male sexual pleasure, and to avoid the uncomfortable thought that male sexuality in general may be implicated in his acts' (Driver, 1989:12-13).

Social motivation

Some child-molesters actively identify themselves as paedophiles whose chosen sexual preference is children rather than adults. In the past, attempts to justify their activities have seen them grouping together and fighting for their interests as a 'politically oppressed minority'. Attempts by supporters of child sex offenders to present their argument as springing from a broad-based sexual politics saw the formation of the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) in Britain in 1974. The organisation which originally set out as an advocate of men's right to have sex with children soon changed its orientation to that of children's rights arguing for the right of children to choose their sexual orientation and behaviour (Jenkins, 1992: 76). The organisations pro-paedophile standpoint viewed sexual contact with children as a process of socialising and preparing the child for future adult sexual relations and campaigned against age of consent laws (Wolmar, 2000).

In addition, this theory equates child sexual abuse to a gradual education process that prepares the girl child for being a wife and mother. Feminist writers who view the molester as having expertise in sexual abuse, argue that such sexual molestation of children only prepare them for their sexual exploitation as adult women (Chesler, 1974). This gender stereotyping masks the sexual abuse that these victims undergo in order to cater for

adult/male sexual needs. Moreover, as Driver argued, 'the motive of the individual man may also be part of a larger desire amongst men as a group to maintain sexual control over women' (Driver, 1989: 15).

The review of various theories put forward about understanding child sexual abuse, indicate the complexity of the subject. Views and explanations are not universal and can potentially overlap. Attempts to back these theories have produced mixed results while the evidence on some have been inconclusive. Though some of the theories rely on clinical experience rather than systematic empirical investigation, carrying out research on such an issue is not problem free. Some of these theories inform the generation of myths about child sexual abuse.

Myths about Child sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse like rape is surrounded by certain myths. Some of the theories discussed above, appear sympathetic to the offender seeing the offender as an individual engaging in an unproblematic and affectionate relationship in which reciprocity rather than exploitation dominates. This research views such theories as largely responsible for the development of myths about child sexual abuse. Driver (1989) outlined the following as some of the myths about child sexual abuse:

- **Children and women lie:** This view is based on the assumption that adolescent and preadolescent girls develop many fantasies. Allegations of sexual abuse are therefore part of such fantasies. By incessantly interrogating children about abuse, the mothers pressure them into creating stories about abuse.
- **Children are seductive:** This notion that by appearing to be sexually attractive, children play an active role in their sexual abuse is common. Its proponents even put forward the idea of a 'relationship' between the child and abuser. The use of the term relationship suggests reciprocity-the existence of a two-way interaction in which the child participates.
- **Sexual involvement with adults is good for the child:** This myth is closely related to theories of child abuse that consider sexual relationship with children as part of socialising the child. According to this myth, the experience is enriching to the child.

This is certainly an attempt by a defensive society to rationalise the occurrence of child sexual abuse within it.

- **Offender is the real victim:** According to this myth, some adults lack emotional maturity and as a result engage in sexual relations with children. This view considers that the children in such positions have power over the adults and are therefore in a position to stop this. However, the coercion, deception and possibly threats involved in child sexual abuse, exposes this myth for what it is.
- **Abuse by boys is not as serious as abuse by men:** This stems mainly from views that consider abuse by boys as unimportant owing to the fact that some degree of mutual sexuality exists between children. This myth is dangerous in its implicit acceptance of peer abuse. Feminists regard abuse by boys as exposing the true dynamics of sexual abuse: it is not based on adult-child power imbalance but on a male-female power imbalance that is frightening for both sexes to expose. (Driver, 1989)
- **Sexual abuse is confined to ethnic minorities and the working class:** The existence of incest in certain subcultures and religions lies behind the development of this myth. It is equally linked to other theories that view black male sexuality as frequently leading to the abuse of women. Such myths not only perpetuate prejudice against particular groups in society and but ensure that abused children within that group are not afforded the same protective and preventive services accorded to other children. Moreover, considering sexual abuse as an ethnic minority phenomenon masks its examination in the majority of the population. Closely linked to this view is the myth that child sexual abuse is a working class phenomenon. Owing to social isolation, poor housing and unemployment amongst the working class sexual abuse is prevalent.
- **Disabled children are not abused:** This stems mainly from social prejudices that consider children with disabilities as being unattractive. Renvoize, (1993) noted that handicapped and disabled children were particularly open to abuse because of their high and sometimes intimate dependence on others. The abuse of children with disabilities can possibly go unnoticed because there could be difficulties distinguishing the symptoms of abuse from the symptoms of disability.

- Men who work professionally with children do not abuse them: Recent cases of retrospective allegations of abuse in children's homes in the UK, demonstrate just how vulnerable children are to those in a position of trust. Child sex offenders sometimes cover their tracks by joining organisations that work with children. They assume positions ranging from social workers, teachers and child counsellors to carers. This grants them considerable access to children. This gives them easy access to prospective victims and equally prevents them from being detected.
- Abuse is caused by family dynamics: With its origins within the family dysfunction theory, this myth regards child sexual abuse as a measure taken by men deprived of conjugal rights. It also considers abuse as stemming from similar childhood experiences. The fact that other adult men in similar circumstances do not engage in child sexual abuse discredits this view. Moreover, the prevalence of abuse by boys discredits the notion of sexual deprivation. It does not explain the fact that many men abuse both within and outside the family.
- A related conceptualisation is that abusive sexuality is not the direct cause of the problem. Sexual deviance is considered as stemming from issues such as low self-esteem, insecurity and feelings of inadequacy and the general confusion about sexuality. The abuser confuses affection with sex. This is just another instance of excusing abusive behaviour. It fails to take account of incidents where there is no consent to sex as well as incidents where the abuser is acutely conscious of their actions.
- Intervention causes more harm: The view that professional intervention and family reactions in instances of child sexual abuse is damaging to the victim has been put forward. Though a bad experience may ensue from a disclosure of sexual abuse, the effect of this myth is to suggest that child sexual abuse is not really an important crime (Driver, 1989).

Summary

Definitions are derived from and embedded in the contemporary social and cultural views on human sexuality and childhood of each society. Equally important to definitions is the purposes which they serve. Nevertheless, the terms 'sexual gratification', 'sexual arousal' and

'informed consent' are crucial to any definition of child sex abuse given that touching a child's sexual organs may not implicitly carry any sexual connotation (for instance, paediatric examinations, hygienic care and assistance to children and toddlers or adolescents with learning disabilities). The power dynamic that puts children in a dependent and powerless position in the face of physical, psychological and legal power and control by adults is central to theorising about child abuse. The exploitation of this power differential underscores why sexual encounters between the two are considered as being abusive. It is this, which informs the outrage and emotion that accompanies much public discussion on child sexual abuse. This powerlessness is most felt when abuse is within the domestic set up and abuse is by adults in positions of trust- the so-called 'protectors'. This framework informs some feminist criticism of society for implicitly endorsing abuse by failing to sanction the family (Viinikka, 1989).

Typologies of child sexual abuse help establish an understanding of what is appropriate and inappropriate in sexual relations in society. Abuse occurs in different settings and offenders employ different tactics. Owing to the proximity of the offender to the victim, intrafamilial abuse tends to be more repetitive (i.e., last longer) and progresses rapidly. Nevertheless, there is little variation in the specific types of sexual abuse carried out in both familial and extra-familial settings. Whilst the categorisation of types of abuse is useful in understanding what counts as abuse, it is important to note that there can be overlaps between sites and forms of abuse. Child sexual abuse can be either by design or by neglect and can be with or without coercion as seen in the 1984 definition of the standing committee. Research has however failed to reveal any apparent physical traits that distinguish a child sex offender from an ordinary person.

Research on prevalence rates, though varied and inconclusive has managed to establish the fact that the majority of perpetrators of such abuse are men and that an overwhelming majority of victims know their abusers. The age differential, power, status and authority of the abuser aggravate the vulnerability of the victim. A series of revelations in the late 1980s and early 1990s about child abuse in care homes, meant abuse in institutions assumed a high profile in the political and public agenda in the 1990s and various enquiries were launched to investigate these allegations and offer recommendations about reforming the child care system. News media coverage of such abuse occurring in residential care homes is a significant issue examined in the current research. Equally significant to this work

is the feminist conceptualisation of child sexual abuse as a continuum of abuse perpetrated by ordinary men against women. Adult male power and sexuality as responsible for sexual violence directed to children and women, is a major theme in feminist understandings of child sexual abuse.

Theories explaining of child sexual abuse of children provide a useful context to understand the problem and some motives of the offenders. It is equally useful if one is to consider media discourse about child sexual abuse. The media are not only central to identifying and defining social problems they influence how these are understood by the public (Franklin, 2001)-which includes victims, professionals and politicians. In adopting the feminist approach to child sexual abuse, this research however agrees with Howitt's view (1995) that, although some theories of child sex offending have a moral/ideological basis, some only gain currency during particular events and high profile cases. Consequently, these are not solely about why some people offend against children, but invoke a wider consideration of structural and ideological issues in society as well. It forces us to challenge a range of assumptions about a wide scope of issues ranging from psychological development in childhood, to the construction of adult-child relationships and masculinity and the family.

For this research, analysing the discursive representation of child sexual abuse in news reportage not only contributes to an understanding of the social construction of child sexual abuse, but such an analysis allows one to theorise on the 'constitutive and political nature of representation itself, ...about its complexities, about the effects of language...' (Hall, 1992: 285). A close and systematic analysis of news texts usefully informs us about the political and ideological functions of language. The pervasive nature of the mass media means that many people spend more time in a mass-mediated environment rendering news messages a 'part of the extrasituational information used to engage in the transactions of everyday life. News words are also deeds, providing links for further action' (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1991: 13). Recent work by Kitzinger (2001) demonstrated that the high profile of child sexual abuse in the media was instrumental in influencing how survivors constructed and understood the context of their abuse. Kitzinger concluded that the media 'fundamentally transformed private and public discourse about this issue: opening it up for both personal reflection and community discussion' (Kitzinger, 2000: 99). Goddard and Saunders (2002) equally comment on how certain media stories on child abuse in Australia had influenced victims to reveal the abuse they suffered as children.

Kitzinger (2000) highlighted the importance of the mass media as a source of information about child sexual abuse. In focus group research involving 270 participants to explore their knowledge of child sexual abuse, the research found that public recollections of central themes about the Cleveland scandal, reflected themes that had dominated media coverage of the event included issues about 'innocent families falsely accused', 'arbitrary' and 'discredited' testing. It also found that journalistic coverage of subsequent events in Orkney was partly influenced by constructed memories (i.e. press cuttings, a perceived public collective consciousness) of Cleveland (Kitzinger 2000). However, news is not only a form of knowledge (Park, 1940) news itself is a product derived from a set of internalised values and practices within journalism. The newsworthiness of an event is decided by a set of values and practices within the journalistic newsroom. The next chapter examines the determinants of newsworthiness enabling us to understand why the crime of child sexual abuse makes news.

CHAPTER 2

CRIME NEWS AND NEWS VALUES

Introduction

Child sex abuse is a high profile crime (Skidmore, 1995; Kitzinger 1996) in the UK and as such, frequently reported in the press because crime, especially sexual violence is news. This chapter outlines the central theoretical framework informing much of this research. In order to understand why crimes like child sexual abuse makes news, the chapter examines news values- the ideological and conceptual considerations that inform the selection and dissemination of news in the media.

Newspaper publishers in the 1830s considered crime as closer to the daily lives of people than political news (Dennis, 1995). A cursory look at today's press will reveal that different crimes such as assault, fraud, murder, rape, and theft, are still central features of newspaper coverage. Law and order dramas and docu-soaps also remain recurrent features of contemporary television programming (e.g. *The Bill*, *Inspector Morse*, *CSI-Crime Scene Investigations*, *Law and Order*). The expansion of popular journalism in the early 20th century brought with it more competition in newspaper circulation. As a result, more news interest developed in the early stages of criminal justice process (Chibnall, 1977; Dennis, 1995). Today, that expansion in the field is reflected in the different specialist correspondents who variously cover crime news: crime correspondent, social affairs reporter, home office reporter, and court correspondent. This highlights the steady growth of crime reporting as a specialist field. It equally demonstrates how 'crime, politics, media and public opinion and research intertwine in a complex web of mutual influences' (Howitt, 1998: 1). Some researchers argue that sensationalism and the employment of sexual imagery has become a permanent feature of the tabloid press (Woffinden, 1997).

The media are sometimes employed in serious crime investigation. This could be through maintaining a story in the public domain (Steward, 1999) or generating information from the public through reconstructional representations like *Crimewatch-UK*. The police as the major institution that is a source of crime news have rapidly adjusted to the expansion of the field by institutionalising its dealing with the press. In fact, media-handling skills has been

acknowledged as an essential skill for the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) (Feist, 1999:1) and most police branches now operate a press bureau⁸.

According to Osborne (1995), the post-modern world of television, news and entertainment have all become interrelated to the extent that actions by the media are themselves cited as legal grounds within a trial. In 1999, when the Earl of Hardwick and his friend Stefan Thwaites were tried for snorting cocaine and trying to sell it, the jury found it hard to reach a verdict. The jury cited the way evidence, against both men had been obtained (video footage shot by an undercover *News of the World* team). Though the *News of the World* investigative reporter gave evidence in the trial, both defendants received only suspended sentences. The judge in his sentencing cited the entrapment of the two defendants by journalists: 'Were it not for that elaborate sting, you would not, I accept, have committed these particular offences' (*The Guardian*, 27 September 1999). This interaction between the criminal justice system and the media highlights the complexity of theorising the relationship between crime and the media. Nevertheless, there exists a distinction between the two institutions:

The criminal justice system seeks to preserve a discourse that produces truths and final judgements of facts whilst the mass media, and particularly television, seek to endlessly reproduce, redraw and redefine social reality as a flux, as a never-ending narrative of possibility and infotainment. The mass media are commercially oriented information systems to whom audiences are a life blood, the criminal justice system operates as the last bastion of Enlightenment rationality attempting to hold the symbolic universe of statehood in balance (Osborne 1995: 33)

In fact, Osborne (1995) observed that faced with the complexity of media's symbolic power, in certain systems such as in America, the criminal justice system was increasingly struggling to exert itself as a defining power.

Crime news stories in the press appear as hard news, feature stories, and opinion columns or even by way of public perspectives (letters to the editor). Crime news also developed as a genre for other media particularly television. In television's case, the insatiable demand for "good pictures" and absorbing stories means that the most gruesome or

⁸ Recent developments such as the role of media appeals in influencing a witness during the investigation of the killing of Damilola Taylor in November 2001 and the huge sums of money offered by popular newspapers during the search of school girls Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells in August 2002, has exposed the potential pitfalls of media involvement in crime investigation.

notorious episodes of crime receive extensive attention while other forms of crime are ignored (Gilliam et al, 1995).

News accounts of crime serve as a focus for the articulation of shared views about criminals and criminality. It provides newspapers with the opportunity to express their latent ideologies as well as appropriate the anxieties and moral conscience of their readers (Chibnall, 1978). Through the representation of crime, 'the mass media do not simply communicate criminogenic messages, they tell us about the worlds of crime, law enforcement and criminal justice. As such, they are part of the creation of certain crimes as social issues, political platforms concerning crime, and the definition of who or what is deviant' (Howitt 1998: 27). Media coverage of crime may influence public understanding of crime and equally persuade governments to take action. News coverage of the Stephen Lawrence murder and the subsequent public reactions, led to the setting up of a commission of inquiry. The coverage of rape and rape victims has triggered feminist criticisms and subsequent changes in the law (Soothill and Walby, 1991). Crime coverage by the media places the media at a pivotal role in the definition of the nature and extent of crime in society. As Dennis (1995) suggested,

Crime is a topic of universal appeal and ultimately makes a statement about the nature of society itself. [...] Crime is often the focal point of elections and politics, with office seekers arguing that they will be tougher on crime than their opponents will. Covered without context, such claims often cloud full public understanding of crime and criminality (Dennis, 1995: xiii)

Nevertheless, crime is central to public and political debate and quite often concern about increasing crime rates have been exploited by politicians seeking election into office. Law and order was a dominant agenda and a key factor in the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 (Cook, 2001). The Labour Party's 1997 election campaign had as one of election appeals, the slogan: "tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime". It viewed this as a strategic way of attacking both those who broke the law and aspects of society that lead people to commit crimes. Criminals are seen as transgressing against the core values of society. We know this because journalists and the law tell us so.

By reporting infractions to law and order, crime news shapes definitions of deviance in society. Crime news informs the public about crime and what is regarded as deviant and criminal behaviour. Consequently, the media together with the criminal justice system

becomes part of the deviance defining elite and are central agents in the reproduction of order (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987). This process of policing society results in law and order news eventually serving as an 'influential vehicle through which the authority system can instruct people on what to be and what to do' (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1991: 7). It has also been argued that crime news may be vital to securing popular consent for new criminal justice policies that are implemented in hopes of creating conditions conducive to a stable political economy (Barlow, Barlow and Chiricos, 1995).

Although the amount of crime coverage may differ within various media, the nature of representation and construction are similar. Routine accounts feature heroes/victims (the good) being threatened by villains (the evil). Equally, writing and editing imperatives make news of crime, deviance and control easy to process because it easily fits into the standard inverted-pyramid style of news reporting. (Gordon and Heath, 1981 quoted in Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987:53).

News Values

In order to understand why crimes like child sexual abuse makes news, one needs to examine the ideological and conceptual issues that inform the production of news in the media. Hall et al, (1978) asserted that crime is news, because its treatment both evoked and confirmed the consensual morality of the society. Crime news in the media is the result of a selective process informed by institutional and journalistic values (Howitt, 1998, Aldridge, 1994, Katz, 1989). This chapter considers some of these concepts. Pioneering work by Johann Galtung and Mari Ruge (1965) formulated a list of factors that they observed as informing the selection of news. Their list of attributes was developed mainly to talk about foreign news but can still be used to think about the ways in which child sexual abuse is reported in the press in the UK partly because the criteria for news selection is conventions informing news selection are similar. Considerations underlying news selection remain based around these criteria or variations of them. These are briefly discussed below.

- **Frequency:** An event is more likely to feature as news if its occurrence is close to the publication time of the medium. Some newsworthy events with a longer time span go unreported unless they reach some dramatic climax.

- **Amplitude:** The scope of the event and its magnitude determine its newsworthiness. An arm robbery at an international airport like Heathrow is more newsworthy than that at a corner shop.
- **Clarity and cultural proximity:** The less the ambiguity of the event, the more likely it is to make news. Similarly, the more likely the event is to be meaningful to the reader, the more newsworthy it is. The 'cultural proximity' of the event refers to the capacity of the event to be interpretable within the cultural framework of the audience. Nevertheless, culturally distant events can however, be newsworthy because of their broader meaning and potential impact/implication.
- **Consonance:** Prediction and expectation lie behind this criterion. Expecting and predicting an event, 'creates a mental matrix for easy reception and registration of the event if it does finally take place' (Galtung and Ruge, 1973: 64).
- **Rarity:** Events can also be newsworthy if they are unexpected and rare. Events that happen without any prior warning and which are out of the ordinary are more newsworthy. Hence though an event may be meaningful and predicted, (e.g. a long haul flight), it is the unexpected or rare within the event (e.g. plane crash or highjack) that will make it more newsworthy.
- **Continuity:** Newsworthiness is also determined by an established template- a sense of familiarity. Galtung and Ruge stated that 'once something had hit the headlines and has been defined as 'news', then it will continue to be defined as news for some time even if the amplitude is drastically reduced'. (Galtung and Ruge, 1973: 65). For instance, focus on police investigations and criminal justice proceedings, implies that much child sexual abuse reporting in the media falls within the realm of crime news (McDevitt, 1996). An event such as the Cleveland scandal of 1987 (which involved several children being removed from their homes and placed into care after concerns that they were being abused at home) has become a template in news narratives about child sexual abuse and the social services in general (Kitzinger, 2000).
- **Composition:** The make-up and balance of space in a newspaper or time on radio and television equally affect newsworthiness. Space and time limitations can determine how news stories are covered.

Galtung and Ruge also suggested the following criteria of newsworthiness that they considered were related to specific Western cultures:

- **Elitism:** Events in powerful nations and activities of the elite are more newsworthy than events of less known nations or ordinary people. The activities of the elite are considered more consequential. For example the respective trials and conviction of rock star Gary Glitter in 1999 for downloading child pornography from the Internet and that of pop star Jonathan King on child sexual abuse related charges in November 2001, received relatively more news coverage than less known sex offenders.
- **Personification:** Presenting events as the actions of individuals rather than processes are central to this value. The potential of events to promote feelings of empathy and identification with the audience equally makes it informative. For instance, stories of the suffering of vulnerable children in care homes. Fowler (1991), explains that this criterion effects the simplification of complex historical and institutional processes but cautions that the ‘obsession with persons and the media’s use of symbols, avoids serious discussion and explanation of underlying social and economic factors’ (Fowler, 1991: 16).
- **Negativity:** Bad and sad events are more newsworthy than the positive. A murder will be more newsworthy than perhaps a story about the publication of national crime statistics.

The outlined criteria usefully inform us about how news is selected. It provides a framework within which news can potentially be predicted. News values such as ‘consensus’ and ‘hierarchy’ are general values that are found in society (Fowler, 1991). Galtung and Ruge’s landmark research has however been criticised for deriving their conclusions from a study on the reporting of specific foreign news event (Tunstall, 1971), and for disguising important ideological determinants of news stories (Hartley, 1982). A revisit of Galtung and Ruge’s news values by Harcup and O’Neill (2001) acknowledged news stories frequently contained the elements identified in the 1965 study, but also found it difficult to identify these values in news stories in contemporary British newspapers. Based on an analysis of 1276 news stories in three British newspapers Harcup and O’Neill, (2001) suggested some

additional factors that influenced contemporary news coverage: celebrity, entertainment (sex, show business, human interest, humour, animals), surprise, good news, follow-up and the individual newspaper's/news organisation's agenda.

Although, individualisation and personalisation also decide newsworthiness, personalisation in news stories has been criticised for producing the semblance that troublesome people rather than troublesome social structures are at fault (Pfohl 1985 quoted in Ericson, Baranek and Chan. 1991). In fact, the emphasis on individual morality can be seen as a dramatic technique for presenting news as well as a political means of allocating responsibility and attributing accountability for actions (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1991: 8). In the case of child sexual abuse, the media focus on the 'paedophile' as the dangerous stranger responsible for monstrous acts, mystifies the social roots of the problem and equally side-lines or totally rules out accounts that question the authority of certain institutions (the family, the state or the media themselves) (Cossins, 1999; La Fontaine 1990) and cultural values. However, the personalization of news stories can also be part of making the story interesting/entertaining and giving the audience an opportunity to better understand the event by attempting to relate to the experience.

These limitations notwithstanding, subsequent researchers have identified similar news values. Chibnall (1977) recognized immediacy, dramatisation, personalization, simplification, titillation, conventionalism, structured access and novelty as implicit guides in the construction of news stories. With time, these values are 'translated into conventions of the craft of journalism which constrain not only what type of reality the reporter can accommodate in his accounts but also what kind of sense he can make of an acceptable event' (Chibnall, 1977: 14). The more an incident fulfils these news values, the more the incident is likely to be reported as news (Fowler, 1991). Consequently, 'these news values enable journalists to produce a uniformity of message acceptable to their audience within a framework of common-sense wisdom' (Crandon, 1988: 15).

In response to the question what makes crime news, Katz (1987) pointed to a set of dimensions that a crime must possess in order to become newsworthy. These include crimes that challenge our personal sensibilities (e.g., crimes by women and children) or those that demonstrate human ingenuity. Crimes also become newsworthy when they are perceived as threatening the collective integrity of the community or an institution (e.g., crimes affecting the elite, local business or the church). Related to this factor is the status of the person

involved in the crime (e.g., child sexual abuse by priests or by famous people is certainly more newsworthy). Katz also suggested that the political conflict behind the crime and not the crime could also make it newsworthy (e.g., terrorist attacks). Crime equally becomes newsworthy when it is trivial or makes for light entertainment (e.g., Under the headline 'It's a crazy world' a story in the *Sunday Mercury* in Birmingham reported that 'While robbing a hospital pharmacy, a nervous thief took three sleeping pills to calm his nerves - and then dozed off at the scene of the crime' (*Sunday Mercury*, 17 June 2001).

In summary, crime is newsworthy because it represents a case of deviation from the norm in society. Some authors even argue that because news usually involves deviance, conflict, the bizarre, and the sensational, crime has helped shaped the modern definition of news (Dennis, 1995). Considering news values such as prominence, the unusual and the sensational, Shoemaker and Reese, (1996) also suggested that the criteria for selecting what counts as news were, indeed, based on dimensions of deviance. Drama and human interest particularly play a significant part in determining the selection of crime news. Indeed, the prevalence of sexual crime in society has meant that everyday news stories of such crimes can need an extraordinary twist to interest both the newspaper and the reader (Carter, 1998). These twists emerge not only in the victims and in offenders involved in a criminal incident but equally in the criminal justice process that ensues. In April 2000, a Norfolk farmer Tony Martin was convicted for murdering a 16-year-old who had burgled his property. Mr. Martin had pleaded that he had acted in self-defence when he fired a shotgun at the burglar and his accomplice. The incident in itself was newsworthy as was the outcome of the trial. It combined both the unusual and human-interest factor, and the sentencing of Mr. Martin began a public and media debate about the public's right to self-defence and crime control. Nevertheless, many murders (both unusual and common) go unreported in the media, explaining the ambiguities of the news values themselves.

Besides news values, a variety of 'built-in factors, ranging from the individual newsman's intuitive hunch, about what constitutes a 'good story', through precepts such as 'give the public what it wants' to structured ideological biases, which predispose the media to make certain events into news' (Cohen and Young, 1973: 15) can influence news selection.

Equally significant to the selection of news are sources external to it (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Herman and Chomsky extensively discussed how commercial imperatives; professional, institutional, political, and moral demands influence the form, content and

scope of news. The role of news sources in the mediation of news cannot be underestimated. Chibnall, (1977) observed that crime reporting as a specialist field was characterised not only by a reliance on the police as a major source, but also a tradition of secrecy and of source suspicion. This leaves the media vulnerable to developing a dependency on the police and criminal justice system that potentially become primary definers of crime. These primary definers of crime 'succeed in establishing the terms of reference from which all discussion of crime emanates'. (Welch, Fenwick and Roberts, 1997: 475). The result is the perpetuation and maintenance of a dominant view about crime. Thus, news as a product strives to meet the demands of its audience as well as the commercial pressures on the media.

Further research by the authors showed that politicians and law enforcement officials served as primary definers of crime while professors and non-academic researchers served as secondary definers. According to this view, the language and message of the media serve to legitimise the social order. The media dependence is questioned, as is the credibility of the sources that are seen to be pursuing various motives. Welch, Fenwick and Roberts, (1997) however argued that the media's dependence on primary definers was a product of structure arising from the organisational needs and routine of the journalist. The constant time constraints under which the media operate can result in journalists being obliged to rely on institutional resources. This shows the complex nature of the crime reporter's role in deciding precisely what and how much information to accept from a source. However, reliance on these sources (i.e., law enforcement officials and politicians) also serves to 'assure the public that the crime news is "officially" confirmed and "validated"' (Welch, Fenwick and Roberts, 1997: 489). Nevertheless, there are instances when the relationship between the media and the law enforcement officials can be mutually beneficially - e.g., through television crime solving programmes like *Crimewatch* and *Crimestoppers*. Such programmes give the media unusual access to cases under police investigation. In return, television programmes assist the police by screening crime reconstructions, or playing CCTV footage of criminals and giving the public an opportunity help the police in criminal investigation.

In audience terms, crime attracts large numbers for both factual and fictional programmes (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994). Some crimes are considered more newsworthy because of the drama and human interest factor involved (e.g., murder can be considered more newsworthy than routine burglary and assault). Crimes involving people tend to be substantially over-reported in the media than crimes involving say property or fraud. Stories

involving random crime have a great dramatic value (Howitt, 1998). Consequently, murders and rapes are more likely to be reported in the news media than crimes such as computer hacking, money laundering or fraud. In fact, Sherizen (1978) noted that the rules for crime coverage were that:

...the more prevalent the crime, the less it would be reported, with the exception of murder/manslaughter...The only other crimes that appeared more frequently than expected were those which were (or could be written as) humorous, ironic, and /or unusual or in which the situation was sentimental or dramatic, especially in terms of participants. (Sherizen, 1978: 215)

Crime involving particular groups in society can equally be more newsworthy. Assault and victimisation of vulnerable groups such as children, women and the elderly are likely to feature in newspapers rather than assaults on other groups.

The fact that a story involves multiple considerations (e.g., legal, audience, sources institutional and organisational resources) and has multiple intended functions (e.g., information, entertainment, policing organisational life) means that the criteria for newsworthiness are multiple, intersect, and are not easy to sort out by the research analyst (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987: 139). This demonstrates that judgements of newsworthiness are situational, contextually determined and can possibly shift over time. Social, cultural, ideological and professional factors therefore heavily influence news selection. What is ultimately presented in the media as news is the result of systematic processes of newsgathering, selection and dissemination that are each informed by a defined criteria of newsworthiness but are simultaneously mediated by factors external to the newsgathering process. This means that 'news is not simply that which happens but that which can be presented as newsworthy' (Fowler, 1991). Nevertheless, the consumer's capacity to selectively seek out, consume and retain media messages, as well as the existence of competing sources of information (e.g. interpersonal communication) suggests that knowledge is not derived singularly from the mass media.

Types of Crimes in the News

Some research shows an overemphasis on murder and sexual crimes as a dominant feature of crime news coverage (Sherizen, 1978). Other analysis of crime coverage by the media has also

demonstrated the tendency for the media to predominantly concentrate on solved crimes (Roshier, 1973). Focusing on the types of crimes covered, Barlow et al, (1995) found 82% were about crimes and criminals as opposed to 31% news items about the criminal justice system. It exemplified how both rarity and personification were significant criterion in crime news coverage. Thus, when the perpetrators of crime are women and children, this is considered unusual and media coverage frequently assumes a more sensational tone than usual. The murder of 2-year-old James Bulger by two 10-year-old boys (Bobby Thompson and Jon Venables) in Liverpool in 1993 sparked widespread condemnation that Franklin and Horwath, (1996) argued was carefully nurtured and encouraged by the media's sensational and extensive coverage. Newspaper reports variously described the child killers as 'monsters', 'evil', 'bastards' and 'wicked'. Franklin and Howarth argued that newspaper criticism of Bulger's killers, and the media's unwillingness to consider any mitigating circumstances that might have provided an explanation to the actions of Venables and Thompson, transformed the social construction of childhood and children and in its place, conceived a discourse of children as inherently evil. Given prevailing ideologies of childhood innocence, Thompson and Venables had to be constructed as non-children, non-human and monsters – similar labelling attributes often ascribed to adult criminals like serial killers, rapists and murderers. The sensational media coverage generated by the murder, the investigation and arrest of the killers and their subsequent trial and sentencing, was as much a result of community fury at the murder itself as it was about the age of the perpetrators of such a crime. It was equally a case of moral outrage about society, the socialisation of children within it and fears over the loss of community.

Jordan (1999) however takes the argument further suggesting that 'the case provided the government with cultural and rhetorical resources for launching a combination of policies on crime and community, linking the need for greater control over youth with the virtues of traditional families and values' (Jordan, 1999: 196). According to Jordan, these notions of responsibility and the community that address crime and violence are equally values that continues to shape the New Labour government's ideology. Thus, an analysis of news coverage has implications for understanding media and policy as ideological discourses.

Female Offenders

Crimes committed by women provoke even more outrage and generate sensational coverage. Official crime statistics indicate gender differences in crime. The percentage of women convicted for crime is relatively smaller than the proportion of men. The dominant theory used to explain the criminality of women is biological determinism. This position considers that the low rate of criminality amongst women is because of 'their affiliative, nature, their physique and their lack of assertiveness' (Gove, 1985: 138 quoted in Morris, 1987: 41). Naylor (1995) usefully identified a number of commonsense themes through which the press framed violent women. These were: Madonna/whore, driven by sexual passion (using love as an excuse for crime), being mentally frail and unstable, being a monster/witch, not being woman/ maternal, and being inherently devious and manipulative. Naylor (1995) concluded that such characterisation was significant in negotiating the place of women in society. The media coverage of the trial of Fred and Rosemary West who were both involved in the abuse and murder of several children, focused mostly on the woman in the case. Rosemary West's crime was considered even more outrageous because she was a woman. Killing is not a role that is acceptable for women, nor for men (Wykes, 1998). Rosemary West deviated not just legally, but from her feminine role and press accounts of her crimes categorised her as not normal. In this kind of research, patriarchal ideology is seen to be evident in news, as men are not criticised in terms of their masculinity.

White collar crimes

White-collar crimes do not often get the same amount of coverage as violent crimes. The failure of newspapers and journalists to provide frequent and prominent coverage of corporate crime, explains why corporate crime significantly escapes the amount of public condemnation that is directed at crimes committed against the person (Evans and Lundman, 1983). Nevertheless, to fully understand the representation of crime in the media, it is important to study crimes rarely covered because they are judged not to be newsworthy, as it is important to study recurrent crime news stories. In a general discussion of corporate and business crimes, Lynch, Stretesky and Hammond (2000) analysed media coverage of environmental crimes- an issue the researchers call, 'excluded news'. They defined such news as '...criminal or otherwise serious events that the media fail to investigate and report' (Lynch,

Stretesky and Hammond 2000: 112). Using a case study of coverage of accidental chemical releases in Hillsborough County, Florida (USA) between 1987-1997, the researchers found that of the 878 chemical spills reported to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), only nine were reported in the *Tampa Tribune* that the researchers analysed. Yet they found that of the 47 reported homicide in the county in 1995, the *Tampa Tribune* carried 4089 articles on homicide with 88 of these focusing on specific incidents of homicide. This bias reflects previous findings that have shown that media coverage does not reflect the incidence of crime. Most importantly it shows a media bias toward street crimes particularly violent crimes involving people. It also reveals how the media's underlying relationship with the corporate world on whom it relies for advertising, acts as a filter in the overall presentation of news (Chomsky and Herman, 1994 and Herman, 2000).

Sexual Crimes

Howitt, (1998) historically located news coverage of sex crimes to as far back as Victorian times. These include crimes such as rape, child sexual abuse and incest. The sexual element of the crime as well as the victim increases the newsworthiness of these crimes. The image of sex crimes portrayed by the press was the central concern of research by Soothill and Walby (1991) in work spanning four decades. The series of analysis that began as far back as 1951 and was repeated in 1961, 1971, 1978 and 1985 and focused on newspaper coverage of rape and other sex crimes which is discussed extensively below.

Kay, Soothill and Walby (1980) examined the press reporting of rape in the aftermath of the passing of the Sexual Offences Amendment Act of 1976. The Act had stated that the victim and the accused (unless convicted) should remain anonymous. The Act's ban on the naming of the victim, the identification of details in rape cases and curbing the defendants' right to produce the rape victims past sexual relationships in court as admissible evidence were also seen as an indirect means of filtering the material available to the press. The research was grounded in the hypothesis that by 1978, changes in newspaper reporting following the implementation of the act would have become standardised. The study however, found an increase in newspaper reporting of rape. Rape reports in the sampled newspapers was 40% compared to the 25% that had been found in previous studies between 1951-1971. The increased reporting of rape to the police was found to significantly

account for this rise in newspaper reporting. Nevertheless, there were variations in coverage between newspapers. Coverage by *News of the World*, which in the 1950s and 1960s had provided a majority of stories about rape, dropped by 20%. Nevertheless, the paper remained distinctive in its coverage, as a significant number of cases reported in the paper were not reported anywhere else.

The research concluded that in the overall nature of reporting, loopholes within the law could be exploited by the press to provide varying sets of identifiers pertaining to the victims in rape cases. Even then, the very fact that newspapers reported the court proceedings and events leading up to the incident, was seen as a measure of trying the victim publicly and hence only prolonging her ordeal (Hay, Soothill and Walby, 1980). Though the Act had not succeeded in producing a drop in the newspaper reporting of rape, the researchers suggested that the increased reports of rape in the press was part of employing sexual titillation to sell newspapers. Of particular concern was coverage in the *News of the World* and *The Sun*, both owned by the same person (Rupert Murdoch). Their coverage had increased over the years and during the period of analysis, both papers never covered the same case. The research also suggested that the increased reporting of rape perhaps served as a tacit warning to women to protect themselves.

The combination of sexual titillation and ownership has elsewhere been observed to impact on the coverage of sex crimes. Gordon (1995) reported a content analysis of the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Tribune* as carried out by the *Columbia Journalism Review (CJR)* a year before Rupert Murdoch took over the *Chicago Sun-Times* and two months after the acquisition. The research confirmed predictions that the latter would follow the strategy used by many Murdoch owned papers by featuring more violent crimes and doing so sensationally. It was equally predicted that in order to compete, the *Tribune* would print more sensational crime stories. The *CJR* analysis found an increased coverage of violent crimes by both newspapers with space for rape news particularly doubling in the *Tribune*.

Soothill and Walby's longitudinal analysis was extended in the mid-eighties to include coverage of other sexual offences. The research found an overall increase in the coverage of sex crimes. Rape, which in the 1950s was a topic covered mostly by the *News of the World*, had become a subject of large-scale coverage by popular dailies. The research also found that a high level of selectivity still existed in the cases reported. The researchers' category of sexual assault predominantly focused on rape but also included analyses of sex

murder and child sexual abuse. There was an increased dramatic coverage of such selected cases.

The research found that cases of murder with a sexual element in them were rarely covered at the stage of police investigation as the police themselves were bound to withhold information or reveal very few details. In all, the research identified the following trends in the newspaper coverage of sex crime: an increased interest in covering rape crimes both by popular and quality papers; reduced reporting of rape in the *News of the World* which before the mid-1970s, was the leading publication in reporting rape; the language used in reporting had also changed with the term 'rape' being widely used than it was between 1951-1971. It also found that quality publications such as *The Times* were increasingly attracted to sensational headlines that were a typical characteristic feature of the popular press. Despite indirect attempts to control press reporting of sex crimes through the introduction of the Sexual Offences Amendment Act in 1976, press reporting of sex crimes continued to increase. Loopholes within the law meant that newspapers could indirectly give information about the sexual history of defendants in rape cases.

By 1985, the analysis of Soothill and Walby found that an increase in the number of rape trials had precipitated an increase in the quantity of press reports giving a large section of the population access to news about rape. Three popular dailies (*The Sun*, *The Star* and *The Daily Mirror*) showed a considerable increase in the coverage of rape court cases while the *News of the World* instead showed a decrease in coverage (see Table 3.1 below).

Table 3. 1 Number of rape cases reported in the press

Newspaper	1978	1985
The Sun	32	49
The Daily Mirror	26	45
The Times	21	19
News of the World	72	2
Sunday People	1	3

Source: Soothill and Walby, (1991)

Soothill and Walby attributed these shifts to the rapid development and use of sexual titillation as a sales tool in an increasingly competitive market. Reports of sex crimes and rape in particular were considered as a soft pornography that was being used by the popular press especially *The Sun* and the *News of the World*.

Whilst the research by Soothill and Walby (1991) should be credited for its systematic and longitudinal analysis that has expanded theorising about media coverage of rape, the studies largely focused on rape and did not distinguish between coverage of different categories of rape. Furthermore, the subsequent inclusion of different sex crimes at latter stages of the longitudinal analysis limited the extent to which comparative analysis could be made. Besides, studying the representations of specific types of rapes gives a sense of prevailing understanding developed by the media and depicted to the audience.

Subsequent researchers have examined different categories of rape: stranger rape, acquaintance rape and or date rape as well as spousal rape. Lees, (1995) suggested the following scenarios as means of distinguishing between date rape and acquaintance rape:

“Date” rape, therefore, would not refer to situations where a woman was offered a lift in a car or was invited to go somewhere under false pretences, and where a woman invited someone into her home who had accompanied her home. Such cases are acquaintance rapes. ‘Date’ rape should be confined to describing cases where there is a more defined relationship between the parties, from a first date to a more established romantic relationship... (Lees, 1995: 117)

Lees (1995) examined three case studies of press coverage of rape trials in order to see how such coverage was distorted to give the overall impression that more insubstantial cases were being brought to court and that more men were increasingly being accused (falsely). Lees monitored rape trials where the victim was over 16, at the Central Criminal Court (The Old Bailey) for four months in 1993. Trials at two other courts were monitored, as were 31 court transcripts that she then compared to press narratives.

Contrary to predominant press representation, the conviction rate for both rape and attempted rape had witnessed a yearly decrease. With the evidence from Home Office research that a high proportion of rapes reported to the police were subsequently categorised as ‘no crimes’-hence not recorded as offences; and other research that suggested many rape convictions were subsequently dropped on appeal, Lees (1995) criticised the system for

increasingly encouraging women to report rape, yet often denying them justice. The press coverage was seen as a humiliating to women victims. Lees noted press interpretations of rape allegations was purely in sexual terms thereby playing down or leaving out descriptions of violence or coercion. If the latter was mentioned, it was interpreted as what the victim wanted. Such representation only reflected the stereotypes that emerged from the judicial process—quite often the comments of the defence barrister, about the complainant (slut, hysterical and, manipulative) was used as main interpretive frames. The placing of reports in the papers was also significant to the meaning that emerged. Analytic articles if present were placed in the women's section or given low prominence. 'Reports of acquittals where a trial is being followed are front-page news, whereas reports of convictions tend to be given far less prominence, and fits the stereotype of the psychopathic stranger.' (Lees, 1995:111). Press coverage of the date rape cases that year showed focus had shifted from the stranger rape cases to a sustained attack on women who made allegations of date and acquaintance rape. For Lees, media portrayals of rape led to a denial that rape actually occurred and failed to examine the reason why men rape. In this regard, rape reporting in the media gave a distorted picture of the inadequacies within the judicial system; discounted women's experiences as false by presenting their allegations as unreliable if not false. Nevertheless, the publicity given to these 'date rape' cases could be seen as a reaction to the greater recognition of the reality of male of violence against women (Lees, 1995:126).

Based on research conducted in the United States, Benedict (1992) highlighted how news reports of rape seemed to encourage the blaming of rape victims and suggested strategies in changing news coverage of rape. Such changes included the changes within individual news organisations in areas such as the vocabulary or reporting rape, the introduction of more balance, the provision of more contextual information and the provision of training about rape myths (Benedict, 1992).

Elsewhere, in a study of news accounts of sexual violence in tabloid newspapers, Carter (1998) established how newspapers contributed to a wider normalisation of sex crimes through constructing the 'extraordinary' as the 'ordinary'. Identifying the prevalence of a media context whereby 'the routine character' of sexual violence news meant it was 'increasingly the spectacular events incidents of male violence' that could stand out as the exceptional, (Carter, 1998: 231) the research also suggested that news reports indeed invited

readers to acknowledge sexual violence as a 'natural' feature in the daily lives of women and girls.

Summary

Geographic/cultural proximity, the bizarre (out of the ordinary), personification, magnitude, consonance, elite people and human interest are all concepts that shape the production of news in general. Despite the existence of these news values whose composition are derived and defined by the media themselves, the entwining of media institutions with political, legal and social structures in society somehow serves to shape news discourse. The role of sources such as police, courts, politicians etc ('primary definers') in the production of news, cannot be underestimated.

Media interaction with crime operates at various levels and has been theorised from varying perspectives. At the level of the media, 'reporting infractions of order is central to everyday news coverage' (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994: 16). Crime news is the result of internalised elements and processes of news production. On another level, given the large extent to which news values view news, as 'mapping problematic reality, then crime almost by definition is 'news'' (Hall et al, 1978: 66). Considering commercial considerations, crime is equally a commodity that sells and can increase the circulation of newspapers. At the broader societal level, general understanding and perceptions of risk and vulnerability as well as a sense of security are central to daily existence in society. Consequently, deviance and criminality continue to occupy a significant proportion of public discourse and imagination and crime news serves to map out what is deviant from the accepted norm.

Crime as a genre is used both for factual purposes (information) and for entertainment (the fictional genre). Crime news in the media assumes various forms ranging from the reporting of a criminal justice procedure (trial and sentencing), the reporting of official statistics, criminal justice policies on crime prevention, to reports of specific incidents of crime, and police arrest and investigation. Consequently, some crime news can be routine. Research has equally highlighted the tendency of crime news to focus on particular crimes such as violent and sexual crimes. Therefore, news through the repetition of particular themes becomes a ritual (Crandon, 1988). This repetition of themes already understood by

the audience, (e.g. politics murders, armed robberies and government decisions will always be newsworthy) makes news appear obvious and expected.

Child sexual abuse satisfies many news values. In addition, it includes a strong dimension of cultural resonance. It allows a re-examining of our own moral codes that sort out good from evil, immoral from corrupt, adult and child, love and lust. These codes underpin much of British socio-cultural life, legal system and personal relations. Consequently, the meanings of child sexual abuse resonate not just popularly but personally. The next chapter considers how that relationship between crime, the news media, meanings and society has been explored and theorised.

CHAPTER 3

CRIME AND THE MEDIA: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The media tend to be a major source of information and images of serious crime because relatively few people in society have a direct experience with such crime. Nevertheless, figures from the Recorded Crime Statistics for England and Wales indicate that only 13% (N=663, 800) of crimes recorded by the police were violent crimes. Comparatively, property offences (burglary, fraud, theft, and criminal damage) accounted for 84% of crimes recorded by the police (Povey and Cotton, 2000). The representation of crime in the mass media provides the opportunity for the public to perceive the difference between behaviour that is good and acceptable and that which is bad, unacceptable or simply intolerable. The mass media are seen to play a significant role in this process.

The reason...why deviant behaviour occupies so much media space is not because it is intrinsically interesting, but because it is intrinsically instructive. It serves to reinforce the world-taken-for-granted by restating rules social rules and warning subjects that violators will not be tolerated. In this way the wayward are cautioned and the righteous are comforted (Box 1971:40) (cited in Chibnall, 1977).

This crime and media spectacle (Kidd-Hewitt, 1995) has formed the basis of a significant body of research in media studies, criminology, sociology and psychology that Kidd-Hewitt (1995) categorised into the following strands of research: the media as a major cause or contributory factor to criminal and deviant behaviour; media (particularly) press constructions of the social world as distorted and stereotypical; whether by sensationally reporting crime, the media engender moral panics; whether representations of real crime and fictional crime impact on the viewer in similar ways.

Another institution responsible for much of what is learned about the social order is the criminal justice system. Crime is a deviance whose control is offered by politicians seeking to garner electoral support and win elections. Pledges concerning new criminal justice policies such the 1997 Labour government's 'tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime' invite the public to see the government as working to curb the prevalence and the menace of crime.

Studies have examined various facets of the relationship between the media, and crime, as well as the media and the criminal justice process. For instance, the role of the media in conditioning the activities of people in the criminal justice process (Pritchard 1987); the link between media reporting of crime and public perceptions of the frequency of crime occurrence (Sheley and Ashkins, 1981); how the media's coverage of crime helps to create a dominant ideology of crime, and the relationship between media reporting of crime and the fear of victimisation (Gunter, 1987). A significant body of social science research has also examined the link between television viewing and violence or copycat crimes. The diversity of the issues examined, stress the significance of the relationship between crime and the media. It equally highlights the complex web of mutual influence into which crime, the media, politics, public opinion and research are intertwined (Howitt 1998).

This chapter reviews the literature on crime and the media. The vast research in this area can usefully add a context to the theoretical understanding and analysis of news about child sexual abuse. Despite the complexity of the subject, evidenced by the multidisciplinary approaches used, research can be classified into the following broad categories: studies of media production, studies of media content, and audience studies. This comprehensive and constantly expanding literature on crime and the media, has employed a multiplicity of methodological approaches. However, the emphasis of my research is primarily on textual content and secondarily on the production context. Consequently, the vast literature on audience studies is only reviewed where it is relevant to those major trajectories that inform my research questions: how is child sexual abuse reported? Why might that be? Does its reporting relate to other discourses on child sexual abuse?

As already acknowledged under the earlier discussion of news values in Chapter 2, the reporting of crime as news stems from journalistic definitions or professional conventions of newsworthiness- that intrinsic quality in events that make them worth reporting. Socio-cultural conventions, values and organisational imperatives equally influence the construction news in varying ways. The first review section looks at the literature on crime news production, the process that makes it possible for some crimes to be represented and others eliminated (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987).

Crime News Production

Studies on media production traditionally focus on journalists, news sources and general newsgathering processes. Examining the news production process enables researchers to document how the organisational factors, employee cultures, social relationships, news sources and how these influence the production of news.

The influences that direct the production of media messages and their construction were the focus of Steve Chibnall's (1977) work on crime news in the British press. Law and order news was considered the major site for the explicit and implicit expression of values, ideologies and interests that informed media production. Newsgathering entails research, writing and editing. Seeking and obtaining information from news sources precedes this process. The construction of crime news though relying on journalistic conventions of newsworthiness, is equally heavily influenced by the media's reliance on sources within the criminal justice system. By placing themselves in a position to gain easy access to the police, victims, and people within criminal justice, the news media are able to adequately control the production of crime news to provide the source of crime news.

Ericson, Baranek and Chan undertook ethnographic research of print and broadcast news organisations in Canada. In a case study of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* newspaper and CBLT television station, the researchers undertook a critical analysis of the news production process (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987). Their research identified assignment, reporting and editing as the various processes and skills involved in the selection and production of crime news. Assigning entailed editors designating reporters to cover stories. Beat reporters were expected to feed the assignment editor, with story ideas. These steps frequently overlapped and intertwined with each other. Despite these variations in views about the amount of steps involved in the production of news, the systematic properties remain the same and the result (media output) is almost uniform across the different media.

The evidence suggested a structure based on reliance on source organisations and an application of journalistic discretion in the selection and dissemination of news. Though source information significantly determines what can be said about a crime story, editorial scrutiny, as well as space/time and format imperatives in news organisations influence the overall presentation. Crime news, as other news is therefore '...not a veridical account of

reality, but a social and cultural construction of journalists and their sources' (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987: 346).

Chermak's (1995) case study of the production of crime news examined the production of news at the *Midwest Tribune* and the *Nightly* in America. His research found national and international crime stories were often compiled from wire services and other newspapers, while local crime stories were internally produced by one or all of the following: police beat reporters, court beat reporters and general assignment reporters. With the location of the police beat on the first floor of the police headquarters, reporters had ready access to police documents (official memoranda, arrest documents and police blotter reports) and sources that enhanced the efficient production of crime stories.

News production in itself entails condensing the vast amount of information made available to the media into an allocated news space. Conventional journalistic decisions are then applied in the selection and presentation of the final news stories. Consequently, although large numbers of stories can be available to the media, organisational decisions within the media equally ensure that only a few selected crime stories appear in the news. This step in the news production process is known as gate keeping. In a study of newspaper presentation of crime news, Roshier (1978) observed that there were two processes at work in the selection of crime news: the extent to which crime news is selected for publication in competition with other news stories, and the way particular crimes and criminals are selected for publication out of the potential number of crime stories that could be reported. Roshier's work, was however, based on an analysis of media content and not the news production process itself.

Following his study of the news production process Chermak, (1995) identified four primary steps in the production of crime news: access of reporters to source organisations, the selection of a range of stories from the vast number of crime stories obtained from the sources, the determination of what information to include in selected stories, and the decision on how to present a selected crime news story to the public based on its competition with other news stories for inclusion.

The variations observed in comparing television with the press, show that each medium characteristically determines its organisation and presentation of news. As Marshall McLuhan (1967) argued, each medium had ideological features, which affected its content, and these features had to be understood in order to grasp its messages. So briefly, time and

space allocations differ and so does the overall social organisation in each medium. Television newsrooms have been found to have fewer journalists (Chermak, 1995; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987) than newspapers. Television relies more on the visual. Obtaining images, processing and editing leaves little room for contacting news sources and doing in-depth with stories.

A concomitant limitation on television journalists is the need to sustain a dramatic narrative that is entertaining enough to hold the audience through an item and over successive items. While most newspapers try to carve out a particular place in the marketplace of ideas, most television stations try to provide the marketplace itself by offering dramatic, entertaining items that will appeal to the broadest possible audience which in turn will be appealing to advertisers (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987: 354)

On the contrary, newspapers have more resources and a system that enables them to cover a larger and more diverse range of stories. Moreover, the constraints of space and time in newspapers are less stringent giving newspaper journalists greater flexibility than those on radio or television. Chermak (1995) found newspapers covered more crime news than television. Differences in output indicate the influence of the production context.

Chibnall (1977) identified two sets of components through which the press identified and interpreted the news:

Firstly there is the framework of concepts and values which (a) permits the classification of events into types of stories and-political, human interest, show-biz celebrity etc. and (b) shapes the meaning of the event, rendering understandable in terms of the ideological system and implicitly defining it in a number of ways (Chibnall, 1976:12).

Press language reflects these concepts and values and as a consequence, their constant use over time, render them both ideological and legitimised as common modes of expression. The second component of the press ideology that Chibnall identified was the professional imperatives on journalism. These imperatives stem from and are deepened by the news values discussed in the previous chapter.

Therefore, the production of crime news entails a set of entwined processes. Story ideas are derived from regular beats and sources such as police and courts, as well as other news organisations. Dennis, (1995: xiv), however, criticises the fact that the output of journalists draws almost exclusively on criminal justice sources and less often from the

explanation and interpretation of experts, such as sociologists historians or theologians. This research agrees with Dennis' views that if the best intelligence about crime is to become available to the public, journalists have to draw on both expert and police sources. Although establishing and maintaining cordial relationships with criminal justice sources is important to the meeting of crime story quotas within news organisations, it limits the information provided in news stories as these agencies/institutions can be biased in their perspective (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987; Chermak, 1995). For these authors, the nature of the source-media relations is ultimately bound to affect the presentation of news as sources negotiate their terms of communication with journalists

The complexities of media source strategies notwithstanding, the news media are also open to other influences that affect the presentation of news, such as advertisers, other media organisations (for example, news agencies) and the audience. Advertising plays a significant role in the financing of news organisations (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). Reliance on advertising sponsorship and the need to make profit influences the amount and nature of news presented, as news organisations attempt to publish stories that will attract the maximum amount of audiences given that 'advertising rates are computed according to how many audience members use the medium' (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996:191). The overall situation of the economy influences the resources of news organisations and as a result, affects the production of news as a whole (Chermak, 1995).

Also significant to this production process is the profile of journalists (i.e., their background, training, socialization). Power relations about class, gender and race define the composition of the journalism profession. In the UK, the profession is historically and ideologically masculine (Wykes, 1998) and dominated by white, male, upper class, Oxbridge educated and 'an extremely London-oriented group' (Tunstall, 1996). Ainley (1994) cited in Cottle (1999) pointed to an imbalance between white journalists and Black and Asian journalists within the British media class- an imbalance that still persist regardless (Hodgson, 2002). Kitzinger (1998) identified the gendered politics of the news production process in her analysis of news coverage of false memory syndrome arguing that gender politics influenced the news production process: 'the position of men and women within media hierarchies interact with gendered values to create particular tendencies in coverage' (Kitzinger, 1998: 198). Kitzinger demonstrated that many journalists specialised in 'soft news' reporting (i.e. feature articles based on personal experience) were women, whilst most of the senior

editorial staff within news organisations were men. Such a composition potentially influences the way news is produced because 'both 'selection' and 'transformation' are guided by reference, generally unconscious, to ideas and beliefs' (Fowler, 1991: 2). The result is a masculinist hegemony that is also white and middle class.

However, the best source of data about journalism is the product-news. The study of crime news production is dominated by ethnographic research methodologies as well as surveys where information is obtained by observation, documentary analysis and interviews with reporters and editors. Equally, sources are frequently studied to understand the strategies they employ in dealing with the media (Crandon, 1988).

Crime News Content

The socio-political and cultural significance of media representation of crime and justice is a growing area of enquiry to criminologists (Barlow, Barlow and Chiricos, 1995). A central focus of studies of crime content in the media is to examine both the quantity and nature of crime news coverage. Quite often, content studies seek to examine the nature of this representation - the language use and the format of accounts, as a means of assessing either practices and ideologies of news production or the potential impact such coverage could have on the audience.

Researchers within this tradition believe that studying content can enable them to predict the potential impact such a message will have on potential audiences, whether these are the general public, criminals, the police, politicians or criminal justice professionals. This focus has developed as crime has become increasingly salient not just to news but also socially. Research based on a longitudinal analysis of media content has found an increase in crime news in the media. Windhauser et al (1990) examined crime coverage in 24 Louisiana dailies in two separate periods and found an increase in crime news over five years. The researchers suggested the increase in coverage was the result of the publication of more drink-driving offences, increased coverage of public order offences and increased coverage of crime prevention stories. Equally, the emergence of 'new' crimes over the years such as stalking (Howitt, 1998) and date rape, possession and exchange of child pornography, road-rage, and air-rage, can be said to account for the increase in crime coverage in newspapers.

The publication of crime statistics is a subject that equally generates a significant amount of coverage from the news media. The more it becomes possible to label and measure crime, the greater the value of statistical content that is available as crime news data. However not all crime data has the news value to make it reportage content (for instance, white collar crimes).

Some crime news literature also suggests a disproportionate focus on crime news as compared to crimes known to the police. Barlow et al, (1995) found a 73% focus on violent crime in a sample of 144 articles about crime and criminals in *Time* magazine. On the contrary, only 10% of crimes known to the police were violent crime. Barlow et al noted that the disproportionate focus on violent crime could at one level be easily explained by the fact that sensational stories about violent crimes sold newspapers news magazines, and this view of equating crime to violence, according to the researchers, undermined the fact that the motive behind most crime, (what crime is really all about) was the acquisition of property. The researchers suggested that the perpetuation of this distorted view meant property relations were not questioned and therefore the interest of the dominant classes was protected. The authors concluded that 'given that most crime news is about violent crimes, the net effect of an increase in the amount of crime news is an increase in news about violent crime' (Barlow et al, 1995: 11), leaving most people's experience of crime invisible and unvalued in the most public discourse domain.

Ditton and Duffy (1983) undertook an empirical investigation into newspaper distortion of the official picture of crime in a systematic analysis of newspaper coverage of crime in Scotland. The research examined newspaper crime coverage in Strathclyde to see if crime news was selective and distorted. Content analysis of six sampled newspapers for all of March 1981 and official data on crimes in that region for that month were both analysed. Scrutinising the newspaper for crime news reports or court cases, the researchers found that 6.5% of news space in the newspapers was devoted to crime news. The study also found that only a small fraction (11%) of the crime news concerned reports of crimes made known to the police and criminal court cases. However, a comparison of the newspaper coverage sample and the crime incidence sample showed these were not only a small fraction, but were equally a distorted selection. An over-reporting of violent crimes was accompanied by an over-emphasis on crimes of a sexual nature. Whilst violent crimes and crimes of a sexual nature constituted only 2.4% of real incidence, these crimes constituted 45.8% of newspaper

coverage. Despite the results, the researchers however argued that 'in defence of existing biased coverage of crime, it may be claimed that the readership is sufficiently intelligent and discerning to appreciate that the frequency and type of coverage does not necessarily reflect, pro rata, frequency and type of incidence' (Ditton and Duffy, 1983: 164). Such conclusions however remain debateable in the face of earlier audience research by Roshier (1978) that found that crimes over reported in newspapers were those respondents thought were most serious.

Research demonstrating a difference between daily media accounts of crime and the official statistics has also been reflected in publications that do not serve the mainstream. A 1982 study of crime news in a black weekly compared crime news in the *Cleveland Call & Post* with the FBI's published Uniform Crime Reports for the paper's coverage area of the city between 1973-1976 (Ammons et al 1982). The research found a lack of correspondence between the offences categorised in the FBI reports and that reported in the weekly newspaper. The researchers concluded that the pattern of crime coverage in the black weekly newspaper was the same as those in metropolitan dailies.

A study of television and newspaper representation of crime, police crime statistics and public views about crime trends in New Orleans over a three-month period in 1978 found variations between media (Sheley and Ashkins, 1981). Although newspaper coverage of crime tended to approximate police crime figures than did television reports, violent crimes such as murders and robberies were found to account for 80% of crime reported in television newscasts, and 45% of crime stories featured in the newspaper (*Times-Picayune*). Yet, police statistics showed larceny as the most frequently reported crime in the city with only 12.4% of crimes being homicides and robberies. Roshier, (1978) equally found an over representation of violent crime, drug offences and blackmail in a content analysis of British newspapers.

However, media coverage can sometimes be matched by official statistics available to public agencies. McDevitt (1996) found an increased number of child abuse stories in newspapers at the same time as the increased number of child abuse reports made to mandated agencies in Pittsburg between 1963-1989. Nationally, reports of child abuse and neglect increased dramatically between 1968-1975. For McDevitt (1996), the changes in legislation accounted for the increased reporting of incidents of abuse to the mandatory agencies and in news coverage in the media.

Crime and Media Effects

Crime News and Society

McQuail, (1987) asserts that: 'the entire study of mass communication is based on the premise that there are effects from the media, yet it seems to be the issue on which there is least certainty and least agreement' (McQuail, 1987: 251). Given that knowledge of events of which audiences have no direct experience, can be gained from the media, media construction of crime and criminality is often seen as significant in the shaping of public opinion about crime and even causing criminality. This research attempts to link news about child abuse to press practises and broader policy discourses rather than public opinion. Nonetheless, some work on crime news audiences offers some useful insights-not least that audience research offers contradictory and sometimes unreliable findings.

One of the earlier analyses of the relationship between public perceptions of crime and criminals and how these related to newspaper presentation and the official statistics of crime was undertaken by Roshier (1978). His findings suggested that newspaper biases did not seem to influence public perceptions, as a random sample of adult respondents in Newcastle upon Tyne found that estimates of the prevalence of crime were close to the official picture. Nevertheless, the crimes thought to be most serious by the respondents were those that had been over-reported in newspapers. Respondents' estimates of the rate of solved crimes also reflected the picture represented by the media. The results also showed readers of a particular newspaper (*News of the World*) appeared to share their newspaper's preoccupation with sex by rating sexual crimes as being particularly serious and frequent. When asked about their views on the reduction of crime, readers' views failed to reflect the views expressed by their newspaper. His findings led Roshier to conclude that '...the simple deterministic conception of effects of the mass media whether on attitudes, knowledge or behaviour grossly underestimates the abilities of the recipients to differentiate and interpret the information they receive' (Roshier, 1978: 39).

Smith (1984) examined the relationship between crime news and public opinion by replicating Duffy and Ditton's (1983) research approach. A content analysis of local daily evening newspaper in Birmingham was matched by a household survey conducted in north central Birmingham that revealed that 52% of the respondents identified the media

as their main source of information about crime. A significant 35.8% of the respondents identified interpersonal communication and hearsay, as their primary source of information about crime. The study found some evidence to suggest that public opinion about crime was likely to reflect trends in news coverage than that of official statistics. Respondents, who identified the local newspaper as their major source of information, were found to be more likely to have a pessimistic view of local crime and perceived local crime as being mainly about personal violence and vice. These were crimes accorded most prominence in the media. Smith concluded that ‘...bias in newspaper reporting might create and define a broad public awareness of crime that is substantially different from any “reality” contained in official statistics. Within this framework, however, many other factors are responsible for shaping public beliefs’ (Smith, 1984: 293) The influence of interpersonal communication, their social situation and the environment as a whole can influence perceptions of crime in the community.

Some content research has examined the link to policy and practical ideology by relating the nature of crime news in the media with social and political change. Such is the focus of research undertaken by Barlow *et al*, (1995) who conducted a content analysis of articles of crime, criminals and criminal justice in *Time* magazine during the post World War II period in the US in order to see how coverage varied with developments in the political economy.

Coverage during periods of economic expansion and low unemployment was compared to crime news coverage during times of economic stagnation and high unemployment. The researchers also made comparisons between crime news stories and official statistics, between years of low unemployment and high unemployment and between the long periods of economic expansion and stagnation in the United States. The analysis of the depiction of crime, criminals and criminal justice in *Time* magazine at different points in the post-war period found there were generally a higher number of articles about crime in 1982 compared with 1953. There were 62 articles about crime in 1982 as compared to 13 in 1953, indicating an increase in crime news in the post-war period. In terms of crime news articles during the years of high unemployment, there was a major increase with 52% more crime news appearing in the years of high unemployment- 1958, 1975, 1979, and 1982. Increases in the number of crime news articles were also found in the years of economic stagnation. Comparisons with official statistics produced mixed findings. Although increases

in crime news articles sometimes corresponded with increases in crime rates, there was also a notable non-correspondence between the number of articles about crime and crime rate. The researchers concluded that *Time* magazine's crime news was influenced by factors other than the prevalence of crime.

The value of much of this American based research to the British news media context lies in the similarities between American news journalism and other English speaking countries like Britain. The cultural, linguistic and social parallels between the two countries point towards potential similarities in the news values, news production and news content. As concerns claims of the two journalisms, Cameron, (1997: 171) suggested that 'Britain cannot match America's best but incomparably transcends America's norm'.

Chibnall, (1977) noted the dramatic rise in crime waves in post-war Britain when there were conditions of social disruption, general austerity and commodity shortage. Allen, Livingston and Reiner (1998) examined the changing images of crime and criminality in post-war British cinema and concluded that, while there had been no major quantitative change in the amount of crime in films since 1945, there had been major shifts in the depiction of crime, the criminal justice process, violence and the overall relation between crime and society.

Crime news and Ideology

In their study of ideologies of crime in the media in the post- World War II years, Barlow, Barlow and Chiricos (1995) found evidence of the ideological construction of crime and the criminal justice process in the news done in ways that served the needs of the dominant/powerful class in society. Investigations into the media as an apparatus in the maintenance of the dominant ideology have often been examined by exploring the relationship between the media and the 'primary definers' of crime such as the police with the media often wholly viewed as reproducing the definitions and views expressed by those in such institutions.

...because such definitions are imposed early in the defining stage of the social construction of crime news- by public officials whose credibility typically rests in their positions of power and prestige- these ideological perspectives command the field. As a result, primary definers (i.e., law enforcement officials) succeed in establishing the terms of reference from which all discussion of crime emanates; in fact, even dissenters

must at the very least acknowledge the dominant ideology's prominence at the center of discourse (Welch, Fenwick and Roberts, 1997: 475).

The dominant ideology thesis sees the media as only serving to express and maintain the views of the elite and dominant groups in society. Parton (1985) suggested that in the case of child sexual abuse, before 1973, 'the media essentially reproduced the definitions and explanations of the experts in the field, particularly the NSPCC Research Unit, Henry Kempe and his colleagues in Denver, and certain paediatricians and forensic pathologists' (Parton, 1985: 86). Whilst the NSPCC remains a significant news source in relation to child abuse, today, expert sources frequently used in the media include the police, the probation service, other child welfare organisations (Barnados, Childline,) the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO) and other experts are routinely used (for instance, Ray Wyre a former probation officer who subsequently opened a treatment clinic for child sex abusers⁹, journalist and author Christian Wolmar, as well as Childline founder and journalist Esther Ratzen). Welch, Fenwick and Roberts (1997), however argue that this relationship between the media and the primary definers of crime should not be regarded as the result of a conspiracy but be seen as stemming from a structure whereby the media depend on these primary definers. The professional values and organisational constraints of the media themselves are part of the structure which defines this relationship.

The explicit expression of political ideology in crime news coverage was central to research by Humphries (1981) that analysed routine crime stories from the *New York Post*. Humphries asserted that 'ideologies fragment a specific phenomenon, such as crime, by abstracting it from its historical foundations and structural circumstance and by conveying the resulting fragments of information as universal or natural features of the social world' (Humphries, 1981: 195). This fragmentary representation is then used as an account of reality. Humphries subsequently concluded that crime news accounts by attributing crime to the personal actions of individuals and omitting information about the social or historical context of a criminal act was ideological.

⁹ Plans to relocate Wolvercote Clinic (the residential rehabilitation clinic for the treatment of offenders) from Epsom to Chertsey was opposed locally, leading to an announcement on July 4th 2002, that the clinic was to shut down.

Gorelick (1989) explored the content, language and ideology expressed in the *New York Daily News* campaign about the causes and remedies of crime. The campaign called the *Daily News Crimefighter* (DNCF), featured daily half-page news features on the remedies of crime and described how readers could join the paper's war against crime. The campaign, inspired by the \$125,000 armed robbery of a *New York Daily News* truck, lasted 96 days. The research examined the campaign's hierarchy of crime seriousness, implicit in the campaign, the language of the campaign, and the remedies proposed by the campaign and whether these represented an ideology of crime. It found significant differences between the hierarchy of crimes represented in the campaign and that found in official statistics- a finding reflected in previous works (Sheley and Ashkins, 1981; Humphries, 1981; Sherizen, 1978). The campaign also featured an over emphasis on violent robberies with 50% of crimes depicted in the campaign being about robberies. Burglary made up 18% of the campaign's stories. The large focus on violent criminal acts meant that the coverage of a concurrent significant problem such as car theft remained almost invisible. 'This focus on immediacy excludes from news coverage, those crimes that are considered social problems in a cumulative, rather than a discrete, sense (Gorelick, 1989:428). Gorelick posited that by offering an incomplete and fragmented representation of crime, the campaign deprived consumers of an accurate analytic understanding the context of crime and how it affected them. Consequently, such coverage according to Gorelick conveyed an ideology. The presentation of fragmentary accounts that fail to fully explore or explain the context of crime is also relevant to the UK ideological context. It normalises certain discourses about crime and criminals that does not necessarily reflect the 'real' nature and prevalence of crime.

At the centre of the dominant ideology thesis is the view that '...the power of politically and economically dominant groups in the society defines the parameters of debate, ensures the privileged reproduction of their discourse, and, by extension, largely determines the contours of the dominant ideology-of what is socially thinkable' (Schelsinger et al, 1991). Journalistic imperatives that call for the reliance on sources as well as the language use and format of accounts are considered as implicitly working to produce this dominant ideology. The result is that 'the normal is reaffirmed by being presented routinely and in juxtaposition to the deviant, which competes at the boundaries for attention' (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996:

226). Not surprising given the close relationship between influential journalists and editors and politicians (Tunstall, 1996; Routledge, 2001¹⁰).

Though the dominant ideology perspective has been the preoccupation of significant media research, it is flawed in its overestimation of the capacity of a primary definer of an issue. The definition of social issues is constantly a struggle between various groups in society and not just the acceptance of an unopposed view of those who represent institutionalised power or the dominant middle classes. Drawing from Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model, it is obvious that encoding and decoding in the communicative process are determinate though 'relatively autonomous' moments. Though messages are embedded by the producer of a message, in decoding the message, the receiver might not necessarily employ the frameworks applied by the producer. The result is varying modes of interpretations that depend on the individual circumstance of the receiver. Consequently, news texts encourage certain preferred meanings but cannot guarantee the reader will decode them as intended.

Nevertheless, in many ways, the political ideology approaches to content tells us about journalism and politics. As such, it provides a useful framework for the focus of this research and its concerns with why some news messages are generated and how these relate to policy.

¹⁰ Writing in the *British Journalism Review*, Routledge (2001) cites the number of former journalists and editors working for the government as evidence that the two administrations of Tony Blair has signed up more journalists than any previous governments. 'In Downing Street there are Alastair Campbell (*Mirror*), Phil Bassett (*Times* and *Financial Times*), David Bradshaw (*Mirror*), Andrew Adonis (*The Observer*) and Fiona Millar (*Express*). . . . At the Foreign Office, John Williams (*Mirror*) rules the media roost, aided by David Shaw (*Evening Standard*). Sheree Dodd of the *Mirror* is senior spinner at the Department for Work and Pensions, having previously been Mo Mowlam's spin doctor at the Northern Ireland Office. Peter Hooley (*Express*) is senior press officer at Defra, the food and animals department, and Sian Jarvis (*GMTV*) is director of communications at the Department of Health. Peter McMahon (*Mirror*, *Scotsman*) holds First Minister Henry McLeish's hand at the Scottish Office. It is only to be expected that the Mirror Group, with its strong Labour bias, would be well-represented. But no newspaper is safe. Estelle Morris, the Education Secretary, has just hired Chris Boffey, news editor at the *Sunday Telegraph* but also ex-*Daily Star*, as her special adviser. This list is long, but not exclusive' Routledge 2001: 31)

Fear of Crime

The fear of crime stems from views that consider the media's extensive and sensational coverage of crime as leading to public beliefs in a high prevalence rate for crime than it actually is. Garafalo defined fear of crime as an 'emotional reaction characterised by a sense of danger and anxiety...produced by the threat of physical harm...elicited by perceived cues in the environment that relate to some aspect of crime' (Garafalo, 1981: 840). Views about personal vulnerability and perceptions about the consequences of criminal victimisation are at the centre of the concept of fear of crime. Recent discussions about the fear of crime has conceptualised it as a social problem in itself - a problem significant enough to warrant periodic examination within the British Crime Survey. Measurements about the fear of crime centre on two issues: the degree of concern among people of becoming a victim and the anxiety over their personal safety in various situations (Williams and Dickinson, 1993).

The basic assumption that increased reporting of sensational crimes increases fear is questionable especially as research on whether people base their perceptions and assessments about the probability of crime, on the frequency of media coverage have so far proved inconclusive. Fear is situation specific: fear in urban areas is different from fear in rural areas, fear for personal safety different from fear for others (Gunter, 1987). Social perceptions occur at different levels. Effects gleaned from crime viewing can be related to the different types of crime watched.

Though little or no correlation seems to exist between the fear of crime and actual risk of crime, fear of crime has been shown to have effects on behavioural patterns. Williams and Dickinson (1993) combined a quantitative and qualitative analysis of newspaper content with a survey of newspaper readers on their fear of crime. Sensational reporting by the tabloids particularly the low-market tabloids was matched by readers who had higher levels of fear of crime and increased estimates on the likelihood of crime. The precise causal link between the two however remained unclear.

Television entertainment programmes that portray crime reconstruction like *Crimewatch UK*, have significantly added another dimension to the debate about the media and the fear of crime. As Osborne has observed, '...the selectivity of these programmes, the agenda they adopt and set, the kinds of media messages they generate all point towards an analysis which suggests that they are creating a popular culture of cynicism and despair.

mixed with neo-fascistic longing for order and retribution' (Osborne, 1995: 39). The result is a reinforcement of positive perceptions about law enforcement agencies like the police. Agencies like the police have a stake in maintaining the fear of crime in order to improve its public image (to be seen to be serving the community) but also in order to justify funding and possibly solicit more. Baer and Chambliss (1997) provide an example of this. Looking at crime statistics such as the Uniform Crime Report assembled annually by the FBI in the United States, the researchers observed how the report itself made claims about crime in America: '... there is a murder every 23 minutes, a forcible rape every 5 minutes, a robbery every 51 seconds, a burglary every 12 seconds' (Baer and Chambliss, 1997: 88). Presenting the data by creating what Baer and Chambliss described as a 'crime clock', not only exaggerated the seriousness and frequency of crime but generate fear and alarm.

Osborne (1995) suggested that the fear of crime was to be located in long held fears that the media rather than the family were increasingly assuming the socialisation role in society. These fears explained the increasing surveillance of the public space and the easy acceptance of more control and regulation in society. For Osborne, the effects of such fears on popular culture as well as politics is that fear has become 'both a form of political control and a marketing technique for neo-conservative politics, as well as both a means of selling crime surveillance technology and service' (p.38). The growth of CCTV is one of such technology. Seen as a significant tool in crime deterrence, street corners, record stores, supermarkets, office buildings and just about every corner shop install CCTV cameras it as a necessary crime deterring and crime-solving accessory. Television programmes like *Crimestoppers* use footage from CCTV recordings on TV slots to seek public help in identifying and catching criminals (For instance, the CCTV footage of Liverpool toddler James Bulger being led out of a shopping centre by his would-be murderers).

The major flaw of the theorising about the relationship between the media and fear of crime is the assumption made about the audience perceived to unquestioningly consume media messages. Audience-centred analysis has demonstrated that the public can selectively consume and selectively media content. Besides, anticipation of victimisation is separate from risk of victimisation and actual victimisation; and frequently there is no correlation between the two (Gunter, 1987). Moreover, the ability to cope with victimisation rather than risk of victimisation may be crucial to fear. The determinants of fear of crime are complex to identify. The nature and level of fear also depends on several factors such as past experience.

ethnicity and culture, gender, age, as well as socio-economic status. Research has found that women, the elderly as well as people from ethnic minorities, have more fear about crime. Women fear sexual assault more than do men, while the elderly have more fears about being a victim of burglary than do young people. Fearfulness can be specific to geographic location certain situations. People can be fearful of crime in one situation but not in another and fear can mean fear for others but not for the self (Gunter, 1987).

O'Connell (1999) asserted that the public understands that newspaper reporting may not be wholly factual and that crime stories are selected for coverage not because they reflect the real world but because they are attention grabbing, interest holding, titillating and tension generating. Nonetheless, an atmosphere of public concern evidenced by 'blanket coverage' may place certain issues high on a political and legal agenda. News can appear to represent 'real' concerns just because of its invasive presence. Other research suggests news can generate a public panic about events, even if the original event is misrepresented or even minimal.

Moral Panics and the Media

The concept of moral panic developed out of the disciplines of the sociology of deviance and the sociology of mass media. Stan Cohen's pioneering analysis of the confrontations between the subcultures 'mods' and 'rockers' in the early 70's remains a seminal piece of work in theorising about the concept moral panic. It is grounded in assumptions about the media's ideological role and how the media actively construct certain kinds of meanings not 'reflect' some kind of shared reality. Cohen's discussion on the perceived image generated by media reporting has described a moral panic as occurring when 'a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become a threat to societal values and interests'. It is characterised by an intense wave of public concern and anxiety over something perceived as a threat to the core values of society. Cohen coined the term 'folk devils' to refer to groups that periodically became the focus of moral panics.

Central to the concept of moral panic, is a view that the media's overrepresentation, exaggeration and distortion in coverage of certain events and issues are creating public perceptions that subsequently develop into moral panics. This remains a partial view, as public concern is fundamental to the conception of moral panic. Public concern can

sometimes begin without any direct media influence. It is well documented that personal experiences and concerns have led to the creation of pressure groups to lobby on behalf of defined interests. As Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994:38) suggested, 'there must be some latent potential on the part of the public to react to a given issue to begin with, some raw material out of which a media campaign about a given issue can be built'. Exaggerated media constructions- distortions subsequently act on these concerns with the result that public concern is heightened. Concern about issues of threat to the social order can occasionally lead to witch-hunts and hysteria (as seen in the pursuit of convicted child sex offenders released from prison) and result in the concealment of a reasoned debate on the problem.

Moral panics are not new and have often existed over a variety of issues ranging from youth crime and drug abuse, to homosexuality, 'paedophiles' in the community (Kitzinger, 1999); Internet pornography (Sutter, 2000); the consumption of genetically modified foods (Morris and Adley; 2001; Rowland, 2002); 'welfare scroungers', and asylum seekers. These are issues whose representation in the media can be sensational and sometimes misleading. Consequently, some panics can be society-wide while others could simply be restricted to certain groups or categories in society. A moral panic can quickly die down while in some cases it has more serious and lasting implications such as the changes in legislation and social policy. For instance, concern about re-offending by sex offenders led to the introduction of a national register for sex offenders, which came into effect in 1997. Though seen to be generated and being acted upon by the dominant social order, moral panics vary in nature and the patterns of occurrence.

A refined model of moral panic by Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) identified five elements that characterise moral panic: concern (different from fear); hostility (an "us and them" dichotomy); consensus (agreement); disproportionality (degree of public concern compared to concern about other more damaging actions); and volatility (erupting suddenly, transient). Some revisionists also view the concept of moral panic as having moved from being an unintended outcome of journalistic output to becoming the routine way in which the public's attention is drawn to issues, implicitly becoming 'the standard response, a familiar, sometimes weary, even ridiculous rhetoric...used by politicians to incite consent, by business to promote sales in a niche market, and by the media to make home and social affairs newsworthy...' (McRobbie and Thornton, 1995: 560).

Audience studies have most notably cited media representation as influencing the development of distorted beliefs about crime and this is evidenced in the overestimation of crime prevalence, the instigation of a fear of crime amongst audiences and sometimes generating a moral panic within the public. However, as outlined earlier, other studies have disputed this by citing mediating factors such as interpersonal relationships, personal experience, location, context and environment. Far from accepting crime news uncritically, audiences can develop perceptions and attitudes independent of views of crime that are in the media. A major point of focus within this strand of research is the extent to which media coverage influences audience perceptions of reality. The debate over the impact of media messages on audience perceptions is made even more complicated by 'its being a meeting point of different academic traditions with very different ideas about canons of argument, evidence and proof' (Aldridge, 1995: 17) Researchers have used mostly audience surveys and experimental methods to measure the perceptions of media content. Literature on the existence of a causal relationship between media representations and public perceptions, is not universally conclusive. The critical interjection here is not to contribute to that complexity but to focus on the textual evident of news on child sexual abuse as a means of interrogating the role of news journalism within broader criminal and policy discourses.

Summary

There has been a substantial increase in crime news over the years. This has been accompanied by an over-representation of violent and sexual crimes and a personification of crime news in the media. Other key findings are the focus on individuals, rare cases and the personification of crime that results in diverting from wider social context and the presentation of particular groups of people as criminals. The result of such constructions is the failure to question the status quo and to maintain existing power relations. Importantly, the literature suggests that crime news generally fails to reflect the accurate picture of crime. Research comparing media depiction of crime with official statistics has revealed that as well as exaggerating the prevalence of violent crimes, the media representations project stereotypes (Davies, 1952). Such research is also matched by analyses that demonstrate that the media do not act alone. Social scientists and government agencies have been found to systematically mislead policy makers and the public by misrepresenting crime data thereby

demonstrating the impact of source-media interactions on both crime news production and output. Internal influences such as media routines (news gathering, gate-keeping, the beat system), the socialisation of journalists and external influences emanating from journalist-source relations, and the economy of the media all impact on content.

Newsgathering relies heavily on sources - persons with a position of authority on the subject or event. Though news production seems to be highly institutionalised, its institutionalisation depends on the power/knowledge struggles between these sources and journalists (Ericson, Baranek and Chan: 1991). Journalists' interaction with sources and reliance on these sources for news, impact on news in different ways. The police and the criminal justice system engage in crime control. The nature of the work of both institutions renders routine police work, as well as the processes and outcomes of the criminal justice system, newsworthy. These become vital sources for crime news.

Imperatives of drama, titillation and sensation were stressed at the advent of crime reporting as a field. Contemporary coverage is still characterised by such stress on the sensational and playing upon official statistics to give the impression of an upsurge in crime. In October 2000, despite official statistics showing an overall 10% drop in crime since 1997, examples of newspaper headlines reporting this data included: '10 per cent drop in crime masks rise in violence' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 17 October 2000), 'North top of league for violence and burglaries' and 'Suburbs are hit by sharp increase in street crime' (*The Times*, 17 October 2000). The result of such headlines that fail to capture the context and statistical perspective of crime data is potentially an injection of fear and alarm in the public and the possible legitimating of tough law and order policies and policing.

The inconsistency between newspaper representation of crime and official crime statistics, as well as the over-representation of certain types of crimes is a predominant finding in most of the literature replicated in many studies (Roshier, 1978; Sheley and Ashkins, 1984; Ditton and Duffy, 1983; Smith, 1984; and Gorelick, 1989). Crime news not only reflects society's values but is also informed by these values as well as the organisational considerations, values and ideologies of the news media. Through the relationship between the media and the institutions of law enforcement and the state, a consensus of what constitutes deviance and other social problems, is created. Understanding the views and ideologies that shape the construction of crime news facilitate theorising about the representation of crime in the media.

Anxieties about crime news in media content emerge from concerns about the effects such content might have on the audience. Inherent distortions in media coverage of crime, the failure of crime news to reflect the prevalence of crime evidenced in official crime statistics and the over representation of certain crimes and certain criminals in media reports, potentially serve as a means of putting governments under pressure to control crime, regardless of any public opinion, and also of how the focus of news on an extreme crime relates to real crime that constitutes ordinary experiences – the ‘everyday violence’ (Stanko, 1990). This media-reality of crime is different in quantity and quality from the known statistics. Yet the news remains the main source of information and so constitutes a ‘real’ view for most. The following chapter considers how these concepts manifest themselves in the case of child sexual abuse.

CHAPTER 4

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE MEDIA

Introduction

Media representation of sex and sexuality has been the subject of research and debates about the impact of such portrayals on audience attitudes, behaviour and perception and the overall impact on public taste, family values, marriage as an institution, the social and sexual implications for victims and its effects on the commission of sexual offences (Gunter, 2002). Concern about the representation of sex crimes in the media began as far back as the 1970s and was generally inspired by feminist politics and specific concerns about the apparent leniency of the courts towards rape (Hay, Soothill and Walby, 1980). Much theorising about child sexual abuse and the media has developed from within this framework. Such is the growing interest in the area that a special issue of the journal *Child Abuse Review* in 1996 examined issues related to the media and child sexual abuse.

This chapter specifically reviews some of the literature on the construction of child sexual abuse in the media. Given the specific concerns of this research with newspaper accounts of child sexual abuse, particular attention is given to research on representations in the press. Analysing news reportage enables one to theorise about the framing of a particular social problem and its relation to other social and political discourses. Atmore (1996) suggested that the media attention to child sexual abuse was part of a broader and intense preoccupation with issues about sexuality, complexly interwoven into the rise in tabloid news. Given the media's power in defining and constructing social problems to many, reading media texts is bound to give us an idea of what people might be hearing and watching (Atmore, 1996) and reading. Where relevant, reference is made to issues identified in the representation of various sex crimes in the media.

The use of the mass media to promote awareness of and prevention of child sexual abuse is an issue that Goddard and Saunders (2002) discuss extensively. Largely based on case studies in Australia and New Zealand, the authors suggested that such campaigns 'usually endeavour to broaden the community knowledge of child abuse and neglect, to influence people's attitudes towards children and young people, and to change behaviours that contribute to, or precipitate, the problem of child abuse and neglect in our communities'

(Goddard and Saunders, 2002: 1). Although such campaigns provide a means for 'governments to be seen as doing something in relation to the problem' (p.6) they can equally be designed to give children a platform to express their views and in doing do specifically target 'adult audiences who habitually ignore the views and experiences of young people'. (p.5). Examples of such campaigns include the NSPCC's ongoing 'Full Stop Campaign' launched in May 1999 and the 'Campaign Against Baby Battering' launched in April 2000 respectively. Earlier research by Andrews, Mcleese and Curran, (1995) demonstrated the effectiveness of campaigns aimed at promoting public understanding and action. A case study of a multimedia campaign to increase awareness of the link between addiction and maltreatment and to encourage public action on behalf of families affected by child abuse or maltreatment, reported an increase in the number of callers to a telephone helpline service for information on how to help others.

The utility of such campaigns notwithstanding, little research exists on their precise effectiveness in reducing child abuse. Whether media coverage of child sexual abuse leads to increased reporting of incidents remains debateable. McDevitt (1996) found a simultaneous increase in news stories of child abuse and reports of abuse made to mandated agencies over 25 years in the United States. However, drawing on the review of research on crime and the media presented in the previous chapter, there is no consistent relationship between crime news reports and the prevalence of crime (Davis, 1952, Sheley and Ashkins, 1981).

The 'discovery' of child sexual abuse: The 1980s.

In the context of the UK, Soothill and Walby (1991) observed that child sexual abuse had emerged as a major topic in the press in 1985. Its coverage in the media was sustained largely by the activities of the charity sector such as NSPCC and National Children's Home (NCH), which organised several campaigns during the year to educate the public on the nature and prevalence of child sexual abuse. Whereas in the case of rape, the coverage centred on the official version that rape was carried out by strangers, the message from the charities about child sexual abuse back then was that it mostly occurred in the home (Soothill and Walby, 1991).

However, Kitzinger (1996) credits the launch of a child abuse helpline *Childline* in 1986 by Esther Rantzen and the Cleveland scandal in 1987 with the increased awareness of

the prevalence of child sexual abuse as a social problem in Britain. Clearly, the 'discovery' of familial abuse in Cleveland in 1987, brought media and public attention to the nature and context in which abuse occurred. Subsequent scandals such as that of Rochdale and in Orkney¹¹ 1991 sustained media attention to the issue. Jenkins (1992) found an increase in coverage of child sexual abuse in *The Times* from 1986-1990- a finding replicated by Kitzinger (1996) in an examination of both *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. Kitzinger (1996) demonstrated an increase in news related to child sexual abuse between 1980 and 1994 with various peaks in coverage during the Cleveland scandal and inquiry, the revelations of abuse in Orkney and the trial of Frank Beck for assaulting children in his care in residential homes. McDevitt (1996) reported a similar increase in news in the US in a study comparing child abuse news stories and reports of abuse made to mandated agencies between 1963 –1989. However, in this instance news reports increased at the same time that reports to these mandated agencies increased.

Research into media coverage of Cleveland revealed that in the wake of the scandal, the social services, doctors and even working mothers emerged as hate figures while the children themselves became missing in the debate (Nava, 1988). Personal criticism was used to attack child abuse specialists, and social workers, were criticised for being heavy handed, somehow incompetent and for inflicting suffering on both parents and children. Paediatricians Dr Marietta Higgs and Dr Geoffrey Wyatt diagnosed most of the cases. However, the media shifted its focus singularly to Marietta Higgs and predominantly framed her as anti-father because she was a working mum, possibly anti-men, a feminist and anti-traditional¹² (Nava 1988). Higgs' representation in the media which La Fontaine (1990) described as a with-hunt, worked to 'displace the guilt for the sexual abuse of children from the perpetrators' (Nava 1988:119). Equally central to media coverage was the challenge to statistics on actual prevalence of child abuse (Jenkins, 1992). Overall, media coverage sought

¹¹ Rochdale involved 21 children taken into care in Manchester following suspicions of that their parents were ritually abusing them. The Orkney case in 1991 involved 9 children in Orkney (an island off the North coast of Scotland) who were taken into care amid allegations of ritual abuse in the family. The children were later returned to their families.

¹² Marietta Higgs' representation in the Cleveland scandal is similar to the ways in which women are blamed for the behaviour offenders (e.g., their children, boyfriends and partners). In the case of Thompson and Venables discussed earlier, some representation shifted blame not only to violent videos, but to Jon Venables' mother for being too motherly to her son (Young, A. 1996b in Howitt, 1996)

to assert the rights of parents by presenting them as victims of repressive state actions (La Fontaine 1990, Jenkins 1992).

In focusing the debate on the risks of inappropriate intervention, the media failed to critically examine child sexual abuse as a problem. Subsequently, though child sexual abuse emerged into public consciousness, the discourse was centred on the defence of patriarchal values and the protection of the family while those who advanced arguments about the mass scale of child abuse particularly abuse within the family were portrayed as extreme feminists and anti-family radicals (Jenkins, 1992).

Kitzinger and Skidmore (1995) similarly found a disproportionate focus on abuse outside the home/family network (that is, by strangers), at the expense of categories of abuse such as assault by those working with children, and assault by family members or friends¹³. The research, which entailed a content analysis of press reports for all of 1991, also found that representations were predominantly case based and focused on one of three prevention strategies: alerting parents about the possibility of abduction and training children to recognise and resist molestation; providing therapy for abusers; and screening staff who work with children. For the authors, focus on protection strategies without looking at the long-term prevention measures failed to balance the discussion. Kitzinger and Skidmore (1995) theorized that coverage of child abuse prevention strategies, particularly preventing abuse within the family, could be constrained not only by the general 'hard news' imperative of news reporting, but equally by the male-dominated nature of the mass media. For Kitzinger and Skidmore (1995) discussions of the underlying causes and prevention of sexual violence, especially familial abuse, do not fit comfortably within this framework. Thus, the broader media debate was bound to exclude feminist perspectives, which challenged male sexuality. This feature of newspaper representation was equally evident in the coverage of the West case in 1994. Although both Fred and Rosemary West conducted the sexual abuse and murder of children, the media coverage particularly focused on the woman-- Rosemary West (Wykes, 1998). In this case, far from interrogating the family/home as a site of consistent abuse, journalists promoted marriage and the family as the desirable norm whilst presenting feminine sexual transgression as a cause of marital and familial disorder. Similarly, Wykes argued that the masculinity of the journalistic profession 'in terms of its history, ideology and

¹³ The research was conducted in 1991 as part of a larger project on 'Child Abuse and the Media Project'.

practices embeds it in patriarchy, where masculine power largely depends on feminine passivity, family and marriage'. (Wykes, 1998: 234). This partially explains the lack of critique of the family and traditional gender roles in the news accounts.

Non-UK studies have equally identified the dominant media construction of child sexual abuse as occurring outside the family. Locating a heightened interest in media attention to child sexual abuse from the mid-1980s, Atmore (1996) examined the coverage of two child sexual abuse cases in popular magazines and television in New Zealand. One case involved an advertising campaign drawing attention to 'family violence' and child sexual abuse. In the first case, radical and lesbian feminists were presented in the media as crusading and conspiring to produce and promote false child sexual abuse statistics. The second case involved a family's anguish over the alleged abuse of a girl by her father. Media coverage identified and criticised feminist theories of child sexual abuse and child protection advocates whom the media considered were intervening in family life. As in the Cleveland case, the media focus barely featured the family and male relatives; rather the issue was presented as a witch-hunt of the state (epitomised by 'woman' doctors and social workers) against the family (Atmore, 1996).

The 1980s saw a new media (and public) awareness of the prevalence and nature of child sexual abuse. Although the Cleveland case significantly contributed to this sudden awareness, Jenkins (1992) also cited factors such as the campaigning work of the NSPCC, the growing influence of feminist perspectives on sexual violence, the increased sensitivity of social services following child death enquiries as contributing to the acceptance of child sexual abuse as a social problem. However, media coverage predominantly focused on contentious issues such as the social service intervention in removing children from homes where they were deemed to be at risk, and questioning the accuracy of diagnosis. The focus on controversy in the case of Cleveland meant a sidelining of views highlighting the extent and nature of abuse in society particularly the dangerousness of the family and fathers.

Ritual abuse, false memories and sex offenders in the community: The 1990s

Media attention to child abuse was renewed in the early 1990s following allegations of ritual abuse in Rochdale (Manchester) and Orkney (Scotland) respectively. In each instance,

children were taken from their homes and placed into care. The children were subsequently returned to their families. Once again, media reactions to the events in Rochdale and Orkney became one of 'innocent families persecuted by incompetent, heartless, and ignorant social workers who knew so little of children that they could wrench such sinister meanings out of their fantasies' (Jenkins, 1992: 189). Jenkins observed that criticism was most evident in the liberal quality *The Independent* and the mid-market conservative tabloid *Daily Mail* with both papers criticising the interpretations of ritual abuse as the product of a small number of theorists who were mostly American cult experts, American therapists and domestic religious fundamentalists, or were influenced by these (Jenkins, 1992). Some sections of the media even simultaneously presented social workers as hostile to normal families and incapable of protecting children themselves. The role of the NSPCC in initially supporting the theory was considered by *The Times* as attempts by the organisation to increase its potential funding.

The rhetoric of blame that characterised the media's social construction of child sexual abuse was again evident in the 1990s, when the risk of 'false memory syndrome' gained prominence in media and public discourse about child sexual abuse. The 'false memory syndrome' was premised on the theory that it was impossible accurately to recall memories repressed from childhood. The media considered such (false) memories as possibly generated through 'inappropriate counselling (or being helped by self-help books, survivor groups, feminism, and 'cultural anxiety')' (Kitzinger, 1996: 321). The emergence of the 'false memory debate' was simultaneously influenced by the Ramona case in America- where a father successfully sued his daughter's therapist for 'planting false memories' into his daughter's head; and the emergence of the British False Memory Society. Through this organisation, parents accused of sexual abuse offered personal accounts about their experiences following such accusations (Kitzinger, 1999). As much of the press coverage became centred on the risk of false accusation and challenging 'recovered memories', therapists, social workers and care professionals not abusers, were once again considered a threat to children and family life. As well as capturing 'the mood of the moment' (injustice against the family), reporting false memories provided a new angle to child sexual abuse news whilst locating the threat to parents and family life posed by such recovered memories, (Kitzinger, 1996). It also contributed to a kind of 'backlash' against feminism as false memory was linked to 'man hating' (Armstrong, 1996 and 2000)

Following proposed government legislation to establish an official register of sex offenders in 1996, media and public demands for a right to notification about child sex offenders in the community triggered debate about the dangers posed by 'these men (and some women) who might invisibly slip back into the society free to abuse again' (Kitzinger, 1999:208). Community demands for a right to notification and the subsequent extensive media coverage provoked a wave of public fear and concern. Coverage by both local/regional and the national press though feeding on the protests was overtly provocative (Kitzinger, 1999). In some cases, individuals were 'outed' by the press who printed photographs and last known addresses of offenders. The release of convicted child sex offenders into the community clearly inspired a lot of controversy but brought another dimension into the discourse on child sexual abuse. As Kitzinger observed, dramatic coverage by the media while trying to reflect the public reactions, further served to amplify the 'crisis'. The whipping up of public hysteria via excessive, sensational and exaggerated coverage meant that 'convicted abusers were beaten up and driven from their homes, leaving behind arrangements put in place to monitor them (such as electronic tagging and video surveillance) and often absenting themselves from any treatment programmes' (Kitzinger, 1999: 211). The media were bound to fall for this easy journalism because 'to acknowledge that sexual violence was quite so endemic would have undermined the narrative thrust of most 'paedophile in the community' stories. By confining their attention to a minority of convicted multiple abusers and defining those who sexually abuse children as a certain type of person, a paedophile, the media were able to focus not on society but a few dangerous individuals within it' (Kitzinger, 1999: 218).

Benedict (1992) identified similar media bias in the coverage of rape, concluding that rape myths and the newsroom culture combined to render the coverage of rape in the media biased. Media narratives included some of the prevalent rape myths such as: rape is sexual and not aggressive, the rapist is motivated by lust not the need to dominate, the assailant is perverted or crazy, is usually black or lower class, that women provoke rape, that women by failing to protect themselves, deserved rape, that only 'loose' women were victimised, sexual attacks dirtied the victim, rape was a punishment for past deeds and that women cry rape as a means of revenge or simply to get attention (Benedict, 1992).

Subsequent news coverage of the release of convicted child murderer Sidney Cooke in 1998, further demonstrated the panic about child sex offenders released from prison

(Collier, 2001). For Collier, the intensive media coverage of Cooke's release highlighted public attention to an established debate about sex offending – a debate with a political and legislative history and a growing set of participants (paedophiles and paedophiles released into the community). In identifying a growth in public “outing” of offenders in Britain during the 1990s, Collier usefully argued that media coverage and the subsequent political reactions to Cooke's release projected public fears and fantasies unto a particular individual or group through a societal crisis. Such fears were derived from a perception that these men could be “anywhere”, undetectable, unknowable and unseen’ (Collier, 2001: 229). Consequently, focus became shifted to the dangerous individual existing at the edge of society.

A reading of press coverage of child sexual abuse, in the latter part of the 1990s, shows a cluster of themes ranging from reports of child sex offender abroad (child sex tourists) to paedophiles infiltrating charities. Equally, abuse by teachers, priests and other clergy continues to be a recurrent theme in the press coverage of child sexual abuse. Jenkins' (1996), examination of sexual abuse amongst clergy suggested that media coverage was critical of the individuals involved as well as the Catholic Church itself. For Jenkins, coverage not only demonstrated the popular anti-Catholic and anti-clerical views of activists and groups, but also reflected a shift in media and public standards toward religious matters. Abuse by priest and other clergy however remain a recurrent theme of news coverage of child sexual abuse. Recent incidents include allegations of abuse by priests in Boston (USA), Ireland, Australia and Britain respectively. Between 1995 and 1999, 21 of the 5600 Catholic priests in England and Wales were convicted of varied sexual offences against children (Barr, 2001). An inquiry commissioned by the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor headed by Lord Nolan made several recommendations including using the Criminal Records Bureau to vet candidates for the priesthood (‘Catholic priesthood told to target child abuse’, *The Guardian* 17 September 2001).

‘Net-paedophiles’: Child sexual abuse enters the 21st Century

At the start of the 21st Century, child sexual abuse continues to occupy a significant place in public discourse with concerns increasingly being expressed about the use of the Internet by paedophiles to access potential victims. In fact, a front-page leading article in the weekly international news magazine *Newsweek* on March 19 2001 declared: ‘The darkest corner of the

Internet: How the web has fed a shocking increase in the sexual exploitation of children'. News stories of paedophiles infiltrating teenage chat rooms as well as that of paedophiles using the Internet to access and distribute child pornography indicates a new theme in the news interest about child sexual abuse. Examples include Gary Glitter, a former rock star who was sentenced for downloading images of children from the web and Patrick Green, sentenced for abusing a young girl he had befriended through an Internet chat room. The use of the Internet to access and distribute child pornography has equally gained prominence in news coverage of child sexual abuse. In May 2001, a 13 year-old boy received an 18 month suspended sentence for downloading child pornography from the web- 'Police smash child porn network: Boy of 13 among more than 30 held in raids on paedophile suspects' (*The Guardian* 28 March, 2001). School teacher, Vincent Knight, was sentenced in March 2001 to six years in jail for downloading over 11.000 child pornographic images from the Internet. In September 1998, a worldwide police raid, named 'Operation Cathedral' led to the arrest of a group of individuals in 12 countries involved in the distribution of child pornography on the Internet. They were all members of a worldwide paedophile ring called 'The Wonderland Club'. In January 2001, seven members of this Club were jailed in Britain for the production and distribution of child pornography on the Internet. 'Britons face jail over Internet paedophile club' (*The Times*, 11 January 2001). Police raids to arrest individuals suspected of involvement in the distribution of child pornography seems to have become a monthly activity. In April, May and July 2002 respectively, police investigations led to the arrest of several individuals involved in distributing child pornography on the Internet- '36 held in Internet paedophile swoop: crackdown after US tip' (*Daily Mirror*, 21 May 2002); 'Police smash nationwide paedophile ring with 70 raids' (*Evening Standard*, 24 April 2002); 'Middle class Internet child porn perverts held in swoop' (*Daily Mail*, 25 April 2002); 'Police swoop on international net paedophile ring' (*The Guardian*, 2 July 2002).

The case of Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells who went missing in Soham in August 2002 once again revived media interest in the potential 'evil that lurk on the web'. In the aftermath of their disappearance, it emerged that the two 10-year-olds had used the computer for about 25 minutes before going out for a walk. Despite the absence of any proof that their disappearance had anything to do with a web chat, the press was quick to point a finger at the Internet insinuating that the two girls had been lured by a "predatory paedophile" whilst they chatted online. 'Internet chatting: the risk to your child; POLICE

WARN PARENTS OF THE HIDDEN DANGERS ON THE HOME COMPUTER - WHERE PAEDOPHILES MAY BE PREYING ON YOUNGSTERS' (*Coventry Evening Telegraph*; 13 August 2002); 'THE NET CLOSES Computer lead will help cops find girls' *Daily Record*; 10 August, 2002; 'Crackdown on internet paedophiles' (*The Times* 10 August 2002). Ironically, two officers involved in the investigation of the missing girls were later arrested and charged with unrelated child abuse offences. DC Brian Stevens was charged for indecently assaulting a 13-year-old girl whilst PC Tony Goodridge, who had also worked on the Soham investigation, faced charges of making indecent images of children. Recent police investigations into child pornography on the Internet has led to the arrest of several individuals including police –'100 HELD IN PORN SWOOP; Police and teachers arrested' (*Evening Mail*, 28 September 2002); 'Child porn swoop targets 90 police' *The Observer*, 20 October 2002).

Concerns about the 'dark side of the internet' in the UK, have been traced to the early 90s when the then British Prime Minister John Major issued instructions to the Home Office about protecting 'young and vulnerable' from the looming threat of computer porn (Gavin Sutter, 2000). For Sutter, however, the moral panic surrounding the availability of cyber porn began in earnest in the USA in 1995 when *Time* magazine ran a cover story entitled 'On a screen near you: Cyberporn' (3 July 1995). While concerns in the early and mid-nineties were clearly about the availability of pornography to children using the Internet, subsequent focus has shifted to child sex offenders using the Internet to circulate pornographic material and to access potential victims. Jenkins (2001) offers a clarification about these interrelated concepts by distinguishing between "cyberporn" (children gaining access to adult pornographic material on the internet), "cyberstalking" (where predatory individuals seek to contact and seduce children online) and child pornography (the distribution of obscene or indecent images of children on the Internet).

The issue of child sex offender accessing victims through chat rooms, or networking in distributing child pornography on the Internet, has been the subject of fictional representation as well. A BBC 1 crime drama *In Deep* (February 26th and 27th 2001) featured a storyline about an Internet paedophile ring while another storyline in the drama series *Clocking Off*, (BBC 1 02nd April 2001) was on child pornography on the Internet. Similarly, in July 2001, a government backed story-line in ITV's *Coronation Street* featured a

teenager who spent time chatting over an internet chat room with someone whom she thought was a 17-year-old boy, but the person turned out to be an older man.

The use of the Internet by child sex offenders to access children and to circulate child pornography is a significant element of contemporary media representation of child sexual abuse. Research within this area is relatively scarce. However, these developments point to a changing profile in offenders from the 'pathetic old man lurking the school playground' to a 'computer literate middle class man' operating from the confines of his bedroom. It seems a significant aspect of this news narrative about child sexual abuse is to identify and explain the problem of child sexual abuse as being caused and sustained by the ability of sex offenders to use the new media: 'Before the internet came along, pedophiles [sic] were lonely and hunted individuals. Authorities had child pornography under control. Today networks or child abusers are proliferating worldwide' (*Newsweek*, 19. March 2001). Seen as a 'Web of filth' (*The Independent*, 14 November 1999) and a 'world wide web of depravity' (*The Sunday Telegraph*, 11 February 2001) where 'teenagers can discover a secret parallel world at the click of the mouse' (*The Times*, 19 August 2000), the new medium of the Internet is significantly positioned as posing a danger to children. Coverage is characterised by anxiety and apprehension directed at the new media and not the men engaged in these actions.

The representation of offenders and victims

Dennis, (1995) observed that crime coverage was largely focused on crimes against the individual and how society coped with them. Coverage therefore highlighted victims, defendants, witnesses, criminal justice personalities as well as experts on crime (i.e. forensic psychiatrists, criminologists, psychologists, historians etc.). Some content studies have focused on how particular individuals (e.g. victims, defendants and experts) or groups of individuals (e.g., women, ethnic minorities) are represented in crime stories. While much of the literature on the coverage of child sexual abuse in the media has generally considered the thematic focus on news coverage, little attention has been paid to the depiction of offenders particularly the demographic elements mentioned in news stories.

However, within the broader crime news literature, Sherizen's, (1978) content analysis of four Chicago newspapers found the depiction of the typical offender to be

predominantly centred around the view that the person is an isolated individual driven by 'passion and insanity'. Barlow et al (1995), however, found a prevalence of references to age and gender of offenders in crime news articles. Articles included relatively few references to the race, education level and social status of the offender. References to social status were limited to descriptions of the offender's socio-economic status, which pointed to a working class, middle class or upper class individual. The largest depiction of social class offenders was found in the upper class category (52%). Moreover, the researchers found that among 207 specific references to the employment of offenders, 77% of these were references to offenders in white-collar jobs while only 3% of the references indicated the offenders were unemployed. References to the marital status and general family situations of the offenders were equally analysed and the researchers found that 92% of the references alluded to a positive family connection. These findings are counter to popular conceptions that consider crime as being perpetrated by individuals from broken homes.

Barlow et al suggested that '...perhaps crime news support popular ideologies of crime primarily through the reporting of characteristics thought to be unusual for criminal offenders' (Barlow et al, 1995: 13). Consequently, crimes by women, children and the elderly are reported more. Nevertheless, a comparison of these findings with the official arrest statistics found a disparity between the two. Although 84% of those arrested were male, only 66% of references to gender in the articles referred to male offenders. Similarly, while 74% of references to race in the magazine described offenders as non-white, only 28% of those arrested were actually non-white. The researchers considered such racial bias in media representation as an attempt to present as predators, particular racial groups, who through unemployment, alienation, poverty and crime were the most victimised within the social structure of the capitalist economy.

Coverage of Mike Tyson's trial in 1992 for raping a contestant in the Miss Black America pageant, demonstrated how the media were connected in current social struggles. Discussing the news, coverage of the trial, Lule (1997), asserted that Tyson's 'degradation shaped and was shaped by the American press mythologies about African Americans' (Lule, 1997: 377). The press focus on Tyson as a savage rejected views that he was a victim of racism. These images according to Lule served to demean and debase Tyson and perpetuated previous racist stereotypes and stereotypes about sex offenders. Tyson's portrayal as a victim detailed the poverty he faced in a childhood in Brooklyn, his orphaned life on the streets, his

criminal record as a child and the time he spent in reform school. Added to images of an impoverished childhood, was the notion that Tyson's predicament was because of the death of his trainer. Lule argued that:

The subtleties of Tyson's portrayals are such that some defenders of the press still might argue that much of what was said about the boxer was "true". It is important to be clear: Tyson is not an animal or a monster or a helpless man-child or passive victim. He is a man convicted of a heinous crime. The depictions may appear to have an aura of truth-may appear to explain- precisely because they draw from familiar, stereotyped categories for blacks (Lule, 1997: 391).

Lule also suggested that by reporting and reproducing racist stereotypes of Tyson, news representation could be an illustration of modern racism in the American press where 'racist images are re-presented and re-produced in the absence of overtly racist rhetoric' (Lule, 1997: 389).

If offenders cannot be classified as 'other' by race, they may be made 'other' by other labels. Sherizen's, 1978 content analysis of four Chicago newspapers found the depiction of the typical offender to be predominantly centred around the view that the person is an isolated individual driven by 'passion and insanity'.

Certain theorising about media depictions of the child sexual offenders predominantly evoked in the tabloid press has highlighted how the media routinely pathologize offenders by portraying them as different. Offenders are variously characterised as: a 'monster,' 'perv,' 'sex pest,' 'pervert,' 'depraved,' 'evil' or a 'fiend' (Kitzinger and Skidmore, 1995; Kelly 1996; Kitzinger, 1996; Kitzinger 1999). The image of the offender as a sex beast, fiend, or monster has similarly been identified in research on news media coverage of sex crime news particularly rape (Lule, 1997; Soothill and Walby, 1991). Such labels which pathologize offenders as different/'other' from the 'normal' - are problematic because they imply an unusual, abnormal or a different calibre of human being. They potentially yield a particular understanding of child sex offenders and child abuse itself. Significant from the feminist perspective, is that this framing locates the offender as outside and not within society. It confines the discussion of child sexual abuse to issues other than the conventional adult male sexuality and control (Kelly, 1996). Cossins (1999) has argued that 'the cultural depictions of these offenders as 'perverts', 'deviates' or 'monsters' have a specifically sexed

dimension, since such terms are associated with a sexuality that is distinctly masculine and is contingent on the concept of so-called 'normal' masculine sexuality. [However,] whilst such terms connote the deviation from normative masculine sexuality, it is implicit in such descriptions that the body committing the offence is male' (Cossins, 1999, p.9).

The predominant use of the narratives of 'otherness' in the discourse about child abuse locates the offender outside instead of within society narrows the debate and minimises the fact that most sexual offenders are ordinary men known to their victims (Kelly, 1996, Kitzinger, 1996, Kitzinger 1999). This fact is made even more apparent by simultaneous media depictions of the seemingly 'ordinary' nature of these offenders identified within some news articles. Take the following examples from news stories, describing some child sex offenders:

- '[The offender] was headmaster of the £7000 a year Dulwich College Preparatory School for 20 years...holds an OBE for services to education...taught Sophie Rhys-Jones at the school...was also an adviser to the Thatcher Government and a chairman of the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools' (*Daily Mail*, 17 October 2000 pg. 37).
- 'The captain of a cricket team...who is married with two children' (*Daily Mail*, 10 February 2000: pg. 5),
- '...an "outwardly respectable" member of the magician circle who also helped teachers with swimming lessons' (*The Sun*, 29 November 2000 pg. 9)
- 'A top army officer...Pay supremo...married dad-of-three...a soldier for 27 years-had just been made director of the Special Pay services Unit of the Adjutant-General's Corps and was about to be promoted to a £70.000 a year brigadier. ...appeared to be a happy family man' (*The Sun* 9 December 1999: pg. 5)
- 'The former teacher who trained as a counsellor at Oxford University' (*The Times*, 15 August 2000 pg. 5)

The 'other' person involved in a crime is the victim. The representation of the victim in a crime news story is equally a significant element in making the crime story more news worthy. Research on crime victims has evolved into a whole strand of sociological

inquiry known as victimology or victim studies and increasingly the representation of victims in the news media is a major preoccupation of researchers.

Chermak, (1995) explored the characteristics of victims that were presented in crime news and observed that the status of a victim was influential in determining how stories were filtered out and which stories got printed. Victims provided the human-interest part of crime news stories and more often than not, their experience was used both to sell the news and to enable media audiences to empathise with the victim. His research revealed that victims' demographic characteristics were rarely provided while their names were provided only in 60% of the stories. Demographic characteristics such as age and occupation can be significant in determining the level of news interest in a crime. Crimes against children and the elderly, who are considered weak and most vulnerable in society, increased the newsworthiness of crime. Chermak's research also found that the occupations of victims was mentioned less than 30% of the time in news stories with crimes against those responsible for protecting the public (e.g. police, doctors, criminal justice professionals) being considered more newsworthy.

Although victims are used to enhance a vicarious understanding within the audience, Chermak's content analysis also found only approximately one percent of stories mentioned the psychological effects of crime on the victim. Physical harm and death can be considered more newsworthy and thus predominantly featured than emotional or psychological harm. Chermak equally observed that a victim's behaviour and reaction to a crime incident could add drama and emotion to a crime story. Instances where the victim resisted attack raise the newsworthiness of a crime story. For instance, in April 2000 when Tony Martin, a farmer in Norfolk was tried for shooting and killing a 16-year-old boy who had attempted to burgle his house, the coverage of the incident was increased by the added drama of a crime victim's heroic resistance to being victimised. His resistance and shooting are all experiences that the public can visualise and perhaps identify with. Soothill and Jack (1975) found selectivity in the reporting of victims of rape, concluding that '...from newspaper reports it would appear that only tall and attractive blondes and brunettes get raped!' (Soothill and Jack, 1975:704). Only a small proportion of cases received sustained coverage while only one or two cases received sustained coverage at all stages of the criminal justice proceedings.

Meyers (1994) examined how women who were victims of male violence were represented in crime stories. Informed by the theory of dominant ideology, Meyer's research findings showed female victims of male violence were dominantly portrayed in the news as responsible for their own abuse and perpetrators of such violence had their behaviour excused or portrayed as monsters. Representing the (male) perpetrator of violence on women as a monster or psychopath ignores the systemic nature of such violence and only reinforces the idea that such instances are unrelated to the wider issue of male power and control over women. Such representations help reinforce and sustain the ideology of male supremacy. Feminists argue that such representation in the media encourages violence against women. In noting how the gender bias of language helped to sustain myths about women, sex and rape, Benedict (1992) argued that words used to describe female victims of sexual crimes were consistently sexual and condescending and rarely used for men. She suggested that by habitually defining women in terms of their relation to men rather than as self-determining individuals, rape myths were helping shape press portrayal of female victims of sexual crimes.

Lees (1995) however locates the sources of such coverage to forces outside the media observing that by giving prominence to the defence barrister's comments - that were always aimed at discrediting the victim, the press implicitly worked to portray men and not women as victims in rape trials. Consequently female victims of sex crimes tend to be cast in two categories which Benedict (1992), outlined as follows:

The 'Vamp' version: The woman, by her looks, her behaviour or generally loose morality, drove the man to such extremes of lust that he was compelled to commit crime. The 'Virgin' version: The man, a depraved and perverted monster, sullied the innocent victim, who is not a martyr to the flaws of society (Benedict, 1992:23).

As Benedict (1992), elaborated, the vamp version is destructive in its seeking to blame the victim, while the virgin version paints women dishonestly and perpetuates the notion women can only be madonnas or whores. This latter version invariably relies on the sex fiend image for portrayal of such crimes (Benedict, 1992). These categories, that neither captures nor reflects the experience of rape victims can sometimes appear simultaneously (Lees, 1995). They are destructive to the victim and hinder public understanding of rape and related phenomena.

Lees' (1995) analysis of the Donnellan 'date rape'- case observed that the complainant who had accused Donnellan of raping her after a Christmas party where they had both got drunk, was labelled by parts of the press as 'a false accuser' and in the *Daily Mail* was referred to as 'campus wild child'. She was criticised for ruining the reputation of the defendant. The dominant image of the defendant presented by the press was that of a man of proper/decent upbringing who had been falsely accused. Similarly, in the Kydd case that was centred on allegations of sexual assault at the University of East Anglia, *The Guardian* presented the female complainant as a slut and coverage rarely mentioned her testimony.

Such press reports render victims further distressed because it fails to properly capture their experience. The dominant image of stranger assault has a cascade effect on those connected with the sexual assault cases and provides a dangerously narrow version of sex crime to the public. Gordon (1995) asserted in focusing on the sensational and the unusual, media reporting increased women's fear of sexual assault. Such fear tended to become more acute when women learned of the assault of a friend, or read or heard about the rape of someone else. Gordon (1995) found that women who read newspapers with the largest proportion of violent crime reports also indicated the highest levels of fear.

The press inclination toward victim bashing (Soothill and Jack, 1975; Benedict, 1992; Lees, 1995) may be arising from the fact that issues surrounding the sexual assault of women have been regarded in the past as taboo topics. Owing to their being treated with secrecy, when they do emerge to the open, women victims have difficulty proving the alleged assaults. Gordon (1995) suggested that the coverage of sexual assaults against women should shatter taboos around the subject.

The construction of victims of child sexual abuse can equally be problematic. Focusing on the language used in representing victims of child abuse and neglect, Goddard and Saunders (2000), observed how news discourse routinely identified and then lost the gender of the victim of child sexual abuse by using the pronoun 'it' to refer to the victim. This recurrent 'gender slippage' or 'gender neglect' was found in stories concerning both male and female victims in the UK and Australian print media (tabloid and broadsheet). Goddard and Saunders argue that this gender neglect together with the lexical re-description whereby abusive acts are identified in news discourse in ways that minimise the abuse (e.g. reference to a sexual assault as an 'affair') constitutes a 'textual abuse' of the victim. It is important that such constructions are challenged not just for their potential to minimise the

offence or reframe the abuse of a child as a consensual relationship, but because of the consequence, such interpretations potentially have on the conceptualisation of children's rights.

Media coverage and social policy

An equally significant and expanding area of research related to the media and child abuse is media coverage of child protection practitioners (social workers) and social policy (Franklin and Parton, 1991a and 1991b; Aldridge, 1994; Goddard and Liddell (1995); Franklin, 1998; Franklin, 1999; and Franklin and Parton 2001). McDevitt (1996) cites Cohen B. (1983) research in foreign news to note how the media potentially influenced policy makers.

In the UK, media criticism of social work and social workers has been most intense following particular cases such as events in Cleveland in 1987 and the Rochdale and Orkney controversies (Aldridge, 1994). Franklin and Parton, (1991b) observed that media coverage of child abuse rarely mentioned the inadequate financial and human resources allocated to deal with the problem, failed to acknowledge the gendered nature of abuse, and in the case of Cleveland sought to present the problem as a battle between the state's commitment to protect children and state intervention into the traditional authority of the family. The authors also highlighted the sensationalising and trivialising of issues, bias and partisan views, over-simplification through events-based coverage, misrepresentation and inaccuracy in reporting, and the drive to pick a scapegoat as particular aspects of press coverage of child sexual abuse. Such adverse media coverage of abuse tragedies and stereotypes of social work professionals also resulted in a lowering staff morale within the social work profession. In a substantial piece of research documenting, press coverage of incidents and controversies involving child abuse, child protection and social work in the UK, Aldridge (1994) similarly pointed out how particular newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* were exceptionally hostile to social work, by consistently documenting the failures of social workers. Woffinden, comments that this lack of scope and rational analysis in the discourse about child sexual abuse has had particular effects such as creating 'an overzealousness in official agencies; it has led to changes in the law to make convictions easier to obtain; and has instilled in the population -and thus the juries- a fear of allowing supposed offenders to escape' (Woffinden 1996: 46).

Aldridge (1994) explained that the failure of social work professionals to recognize how the news media operate as well as the underlying assumption within social work that news treatment was always going to be the same (i.e., gross) regardless of the type of incident, were both destructive considerations informing the sensitivity of social work professionals to the media. For the media, the requisites of newsworthiness and editorial policy influenced coverage but the variability in market niche and party politics were considerations that weakened the thesis of a universal media interpretive framing of social work (Aldridge, 1994).

The review of crime news indicated that crime news might be vital to securing popular consent for new criminal justice policies that are implemented in hopes of creating conditions conducive to a stable political economy (Barlow, Barlow and Chiricos, 1995). Analysing the nature and consequences of media reporting of social policy issues was the focus of a collection of essays edited by Franklin (1999). Philo and Secker (1999), for example, demonstrated that prominent media coverage that associated violent behaviour with mental illness was instrumental in reshaping the policy of care in the community. In the same volume, Jordan (1999) argued that the Bulger case and its media coverage stirred fears about the loss of community. The strong theme of crime control that emerged 'provided the government with the cultural and rhetorical resources for launching a combination of policies on crime and community, linking the need for greater control over youth with the virtues of traditional families and neighbourhoods' (Jordan, 1999: 196-197). It has equally been suggested that the Children Act of 1975 was prompted by the media coverage and public concerns following the Maria Colwell case (Franklin and Parton, 1991b); while the Children Act of 1989 was informed by the child sexual abuse scandal in Cleveland in 1987 and the public anxieties which media coverage of the events generated (Lyon and Parton, 1995, quoted in Franklin, 1999). Elsewhere, Goddard and Liddell (1995) explored the intense media campaign launched by an Australian mid-market tabloid the *Herald Sun* in 1992 following the murder of two-year-old Daniel Valerio by his mother's live-in boyfriend. The authors conclude that the paper's campaign (titled 'Save our Children') was instrumental in the country's introduction of mandatory reporting of child abuse by designated professionals.

Summary

Just as rape became a very topical issue in the 1970s and 1980s, the 1990s and early 21st Century, has seen increased media coverage of child sexual abuse (Kitzinger, 1996). Media coverage of particular abuse incidents and publicity to reports and enquiries concerning child sexual abuse clearly show that the debates and discussion about child sexual abuse are still contemporary issues of concern in British society. The literature demonstrates the contexts in which child sexual abuse is reported in the press and how media coverage in itself, can affect public opinion, victims, social work professionals, the development and implementation of social policy, as well as the prioritisation of social work and resources.

Focus on the rare rather than the commonplace, particularly the dramatising of 'such adversities as child murder, sex rings and social workers abducting children into care, encourage the development of moral panic, which over-sensitises people to the risks involved' (Gough, 1996: 366). Associating child sexual abuse with the 'dangerous stranger' as the likely abuser instead of highlighting the likelihood of children being abused by someone they know, is evidently an example of this. In using sensational and titillating material in the reporting of sex crimes, some researchers suggest the media use such news as a tool to boost circulation (Holland, 1998). Woffinden, (1996) suggested that in an increasingly competitive environment where the media needed the shocking and the startling in order to win more readers/viewers, child abuse stories have emerged as a sales tool. But as Gordon (1995) cautioned, in the case of violence against women, the 'commercial uses of crimes against women to increase ratings or circulation contribute to the climate of fear and the acceptance of urban violence and fear as the simple facts of life' (Gordon, 1995:126). Sensational headlines call on public revulsion against such crimes but, partly driven by journalistic concepts of newsworthiness, the media can focus on a narrow definition of sex crime leaving broader areas of deviance largely unreported.

Significant to some of the concerns of this research, newspaper coverage of child sexual abuse has been shown to be consequential particularly in the effects it can have on social policy. In certain instances, reform of criminal justice policies have been preceded by sustained newspaper coverage. Sustained media attention in Britain in the late 1980s and early 1990s was largely due to the events in Cleveland, Rochdale and Orkney. These cases even led to 'child abuse fatigue' within the media in the early 1990s (Kitzinger and Skidmore 1995; Kitzinger, 1998). Media reactions to the incidents in Rochdale and Orkney were to attack the

ritual abuse theorists together with the law and order establishment and social workers who had accepted their views.

From the literature, it is obvious that media constructions have largely failed to take into account feminist-influenced analysis of child sexual abuse. Whilst expert knowledge and academic research has clearly located the child sex offender as existing within society, media discourse maintains the 'Otherness' of these offenders, thereby positioning them outside society and possibly beyond reform. As observed in the case of violent crime (Naylor, 2001), media coverage also depends on how readily child sexual abuse can be constructed as breaking away from the normal and how readily it can fit into an existing discourse.

A considerable gap in the literature which this research addresses is the limited attention paid to the systematic analysis of the language used in describing both the crime of child sexual abuse as well as the offenders and victims. Such a systematic examination of the language used in media constructions of such a social problem and the implications such of language use in the media remain important in theorising about media messages. Studying media content enables us to make inferences about the producers of these messages and speculate on the likely effects their messages can have on the audience. Given the particular orientation to representation, this research accords particular attention to the language used to present child sex offenders and victims- an issue that, from the literature has been accorded little systematic attention.

Agreeing with the observation that prominent individual cases provided 'a focus for social and political debates about the roles of men, women and children, and the state's conflicting responsibilities to protect children and to respect the sanctity of family life and freedom from intrusion from outside' (Gough, 1996: 365), raises the questions: What child abuse related topics are covered in the news? and how do the media cover these? (For example as hard news, editorials or opinion columns). Focusing on a selection of contemporary case studies, of media coverage of child sexual abuse, this research explores how the press represents these issues. Such a systematic and comprehensive analysis of media texts enhances an understanding of the relationship between media texts and the broader society in which these texts are consumed (Deacon et al, 1999). The next chapter elaborates on the methodological choices employed in order to answer these questions.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH APPROACH

Introduction

This research seeks to analyse the way news stories both cover and explain child sexual abuse, offenders and victims, and also put forward and justify different policy options. The objective is to: (a) describe the content of press reportage about child sexual abuse through quantitative and qualitative content analysis and; (b) explain the nature of that content in terms of better understanding journalism as a producer of meanings, specifically in relation to coverage of child sexual abuse and specific related law and policy issues regarding such an offence. The discursive representation of child abuse is indicative of wider contemporary concerns about childhood, the family, power relations, public opinion and social policy. These considerations lead to the generation of the following specific research questions: What are the dimensions of child sexual abuse that are covered? How are offenders and victims portrayed? What sources are cited in stories? What explanations are offered about the occurrence of child sexual abuse? What explanations are offered about preventing child sexual abuse and protecting children?

The research method adopted for the research is content analysis. Within the broad methodology that examines media output, two approaches are adopted: quantitative content analysis and a more detailed textual analysis using discourse analytic techniques. Both approaches are distinct in their focus on quantitative and qualitative aspects on media texts.

Content Analysis

One of the aims of this research is to provide a descriptive account of newspaper coverage of child sexual abuse. In order to provide such an overview of press reporting, a quantitative content analysis was used to establish the amount and distribution of child sexual abuse news in the press.

Content analysis is primarily concerned with measuring the attributes of media output that can be counted. For example, the number of newspaper stories about a particular issue, the number of minutes a radio report lasts. Content analysis developed from widespread pre-World War II concerns about the development and influence of the mass

media. In the 1940s, the use of content analysis to analyse media output became very popular amongst American researchers. The belief in powerful media effects was prevalent at this time and content analysis was seen as a means of detecting the presence and influence of propaganda in media output (Deacon et al, 1999). Hansen et al, (1998: 92) suggested that its development owed much to concerns about the contribution of the mass media to social upheavals and international conflict and the desire to make social enquiry as scientific as the controlled systematic and objective methodologies of the natural sciences. Although first employed in communication research and with a long-standing background in this area, content analysis was adopted by other disciplines such as politics and sociology in the middle of the 20th century. It has become the fastest growing method of quantitative research (Neuendorf, 2002) and remains useful a research method employed to answer questions and hypotheses about media output. For instance, studies grounded in the agenda-setting theory of mass communication, use content analysis to determine the nature of media content (e.g. Soroka, 2002; Chritcher, 2002a; Kitzinger, 1996; Lupton, 1994) and study their potential impact on audience perception of issues (e.g., Kitzinger, 2000). Other academic disciplines such as history, sociology, political science, and gender studies equally employ content analysis in the study of different phenomena.

Berelson, (1952; 263) described content analysis as ‘a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication’. Krippendorff (1980) criticised Berelson’s definition for lacking clarity, focusing on manifest content only and failing to explicitly state the objective of content analysis. For Krippendorff (1980: 21) content analysis is ‘a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context’. It reduces communication content to a convenient/controllable number from which inferences can be made about a particular phenomenon under study and conclusions drawn. Hansen et al (1998: 92) also add that ‘...the aim of content analysis in media research has more often been that of examining how news, drama, advertising and entertainment output reflect social and cultural issues, values, and phenomena’. The stress is on an objective and systematic approach that could be applied by different analysts to arrive at similar results. Riffe, Lacy and Fico (1998) have recently offered another definition specifying the quantitative attributes of content analysis:

Quantitative content analysis is the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values

according to valid measurement rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, in order to draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption' Riffe, Lacy and Fico (1998: 20).

Like Riffe, Lacy and Fico, Berelson (1952) and recently Neuendorf, (2002: 14) also content analysis is a quantitative process whose goal is 'a numerically based summary of a chosen message set'. In specifying the kinds of inferences that can potentially be made from applying content analysis, Lacy et al seem more explicit about the goals of content analysis than others are. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) also identified the main purposes of content analysis as: describing the patterns or mapping trends in media representation, testing hypotheses about the aims and policies of media producers, comparing media content with what obtains in the real world, assessing the representation of particular groups in society, drawing inferences about media effects. From the definitions content analysis is:

- Systematic: This implies all material is subject to the same analytic procedure of identified categories
- Objective: Explicit sampling, operational definitions and coding rules should eliminate researcher bias and ensure that other researchers replicating the study could arrive at similar conclusions.
- Quantitative: It quantifies manifest media output and the resultant statistics are used to make larger inferences.

The outline partially reflects some of the strengths and weaknesses of content analysis as a method of analysing communication output.

Its strengths (which implicitly inform its application) lies in its ability to systematically summarise and compare media output in order to draw inferences about the production and consumption of messages. Berelson (1952) proposed that the main assumptions of content analysis are that relationships can be established between content and intent (of the communicator) or between content and effect (attention and attitude) on audiences.

Another advantage of content analysis is its suitability for establishing patterns of representation in media content over longitudinal periods. Consequently, it is useful for studying trends of coverage in the media. In addition, compared to research methods such as

surveys, focus groups and experiments, content analysis is relatively unobtrusive. For instance, material for this research was derived from hard and archive copies of newspapers.

Despite the relative strengths of the method in facilitating the systematic description of media content, there are some weaknesses with the methodology. Content analysis has been criticised for its claim to objectivity (Hansen et al, 1998) and Krippendorfs (1980) definition of content analysis leave out reference to it as objective. Like other research that involve subjective decisions, the claim of objectivity is seen as just an ideal because various decisions in the analytic process cannot be said to be completely value free.

A major weakness inherent in quantitative content analysis is its preoccupation with manifest content (what is said). The result is the tendency to deliver 'purely descriptive accounts of the characteristics of media output and make few inferences in advance about the potential significance of their findings in the context of what they reveal about production ideologies or impact of media content on audiences' (Gunter 2000: 81). Krippendorfs (1980) rejection of the reliance on manifest content is based on the view that consideration of context is important in drawing inferences about the production and reception of media messages. Besides focusing only on manifest content, the stress on quantification in content analysis has been questioned by some researchers (Kaid and Wadsworth, 1989) suggesting the use of more qualitative methods of textual analysis which took into account contexts of production of the message, and which consider amongst others, the role of language in the creation of particular ideological construction.

Another weakness of content analysis is the stress on quantification. As most of the definitions indicate, its goal is to identify and count specific characteristics of text in order to make inferences about such content and to theorise about their broader social significance. Problems arise about how far quantification can be taken and the extent to which quantification is useful for deciphering the 'intensity of meaning in texts, the social impact of texts or the relationship between media texts and the realities which they reflect' (Hansen et al, 1998: 95). In focusing on numerical counts and summarising, it sidesteps the fact that 'an item's importance may far exceed the frequency of its occurrence' (Kaid and Wadsworth, 1989: 199).

Developments in media research have sought to overcome some of the shortcomings of content analysis by suggesting that content be used in combination with

other more detailed qualitative analysis which can identify meanings encouraged by media texts¹⁴, or make empirically-verifiable inferences about the agenda of media producers or potential impact of media content on the audience (Gunter, 2000). Such qualitative approaches provide detailed analysis of texts. The limitations of content analysis notwithstanding, it was employed within this research to:

- Systematically identify the distinctive characteristics of press reporting about child sexual abuse by quantifying textual features such as topics, sources cited, offender and victim demography.
- Describe and compare coverage of child sexual abuse in different context and in newspapers with different ideological viewpoints and readerships.
- Make inferences about the production of messages about child sexual abuse drawing particular reference to the role of news values and journalist routines.

It is with this framework in mind that I designed the content analysis for use in this research.

Methods of Content Analysis Employed (Coding Strategy)

The application of content analysis depends on the specific research questions. This variability in research focus ultimately implies that there is not a single technique of content analysis. Nevertheless, analysis generally proceeds along the following stages (see Kaid and Wadsworth 1989; and Deacon et al, 1999): the formulation of the research question, deciding a sample, defining categories to be analysed (units of analysis), designing a coding frame and training coders for its use, data collection (implementing the coding frame), determining reliability and validity, and analysing the results. As already indicated, the aim of this research is to describe the content of press reportage about child sexual abuse through quantitative and qualitative content analysis and; to explain the nature of that coverage in terms of better understanding journalism as a producer of meanings. The content analysis focused on news reportage of contemporary cases of child abuse related news stories in 10 national

¹⁴ Hall's(1997) encoding/decoding model rightly suggests that texts can only encourage certain preferred meanings but there is no certainty that the receiver/audience would decode the message as intended by the producer of the message.

newspapers. A detailed discussion of the sample is provided in subsequent sections of this chapter.

In designing and implementing the coding frame, a news article was identified by its specific headline (relevant to the sampled cases) and margins demarcating it from other stories on the page. Having identified the news stories for analysis, categories were developed within the coding frame to measure important dimensions of each news story such as: type of story, main and secondary topic of article, sources quoted, type of abuse, offender and victim profile (i.e., age, gender), place where abuse occurred, and prevention strategies cited in article. The prominence of the story within the paper was measured by location (front or inside page). A front-page story that continued on the inside pages, was coded as one news story. Sampling was restricted to the following genres: hard news stories, editorials, features, fillers (news in brief) and opinion columns. Given the general research focus on journalistic discourse, letters to the editor were not included in the analysis. Editorial attention to news stories is also indication of the importance attached to the story by the newspaper. As Seymour-Ure explains 'at the same time as providing readers with a guide to news priorities and tone throughout the paper, they are a benchmark for the staff themselves: a daily exercise in updating and redrafting what a manager might nowadays wincingly call the paper's mission statement' (Seymour-Ure, 1998: 43). To differentiate and code relevant news articles as independent items, the data collection instrument specified that the headline of each news story be written in full on the coding sheet. Photographs and other graphic representation were not coded. News source quoted in articles were coded by their position within the story (first or other source), their profile (who they are) and gender. The assumption here was that the position of a source within the news article significantly sets a framework within which readers make sense of the news report (Carter, 1998). The aim of inserting a variable on source gender was to examine the representation of men and women as 'actors,' in news about sexual violence towards children.

A detailed coding frame with operational definitions adopted in the design of the quantitative data collection instrument and the list of news articles coded is available at appendices 1 and 2 of this work.

Content analysis entails systematic quantification of media texts. Employed in the current analysis, it provided a descriptive and quantitative overview of properties of media coverage of child sexual abuse. However in order to provide a detailed account of the

characteristics of language used, its discursive formations and the meanings created by such news representation, a more detailed analysis of the news texts was undertaken. Such a more interpretive and in-depth examination of the news texts not only adds depth to content analysis but is important in developing critical explanations about the framing of news about child sexual abuse and how such discourse function to articulate broader socio-cultural issues. Examining the text components in this way facilitates theorising about the function of news discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Van Dijk (1988a) observed that qualitative analysis based on news discourse structures and processing, provided a more adequate approach to the study of news than classical content analysis. Given the limitations of content analysis, the method is often used in combination with other research methods such as audience surveys, textual analysis or discourse analysis. Culbertson and Somerick (1977) combined content analysis with experimental techniques to study effects of unnamed story attribution on readers' views on the believability of the report. Roshier (1978) and Smith (1984) studied the relationship between public perceptions of crime and criminals and how these related to newspaper presentation and the official statistics of crime by combining content analysis with audience survey. Critical discourse analysis has also emerged as a substantial research method to use in combination with content analysis (for instance Lupton, 1994).

Critical discourse analysis is used as a second method in this research for its interpretive and explanatory framework that seeks to understand the relationship between language use and the social structure, particularly power relations. Given that media accounts can inform many people in society, it is necessary to subject media output to such systematic examination. Such an in-depth textual analysis is a way of treating language (Wood and Kroger, 2000) that permits the researcher to source out the construction of power relations within texts and to see what ideologies are dominant in such texts. Although, studying media discourse is potentially complex because it entails paying attention to theoretical issues of interpretation and the generation of meaning, qualitative data analysis of this nature provides more depth and insight than quantitative analysis alone.

As a more interpretive approach it focuses 'not only on the actual uses of language as a form of social interaction, in particular situations and contexts, but also in forms of representation in which different social categories, different social practices and relations are constructed from and in the interests of a particular point of view, a particular conception of social reality' (Deacon et al, 1999: 146). A significant feature of qualitative research of this nature is therefore the emphasis on interpretation- the analysis of implied meanings in texts. Through the provision of detailed linguistics insights, discourse analysis employed here, enriched the overall analysis by providing insights about the dominant meanings about the problem enabling theorising about 'the ideological practice of representation' through language (Fowler, 1991:5). Specifically, it provided the basis for subsequent description and explanation of the characteristics of child sexual abuse news in the media. While quantitative content analysis count and describe media text, the procedures of qualitative analysis highlight the capacity of texts to create multiple meanings dependant on the receiver (Gunter 2000). This results in theorising about the relationship between the producer(s) of these texts and the effects of the text.

Language is fundamental to newspapers. It is also a powerful ideological tool (Clark, 1992). Together with pictures, it is the medium of communication used by all the print media. Wodak (1997) considered language as a form of social practice that is shaped by and shapes situations, institutions and social structures. Consequently 'the transmission of a message through a language almost of necessity encodes values into the message. Language gathers its own emotional and cultural 'loading'. What this loading is will depend on the nature of the culture or sub-culture in which the language exists' (Reah, D. 1998:55).

Though frequently seen as having specifically developed out of attempts within critical linguistics and semiotics to assess the meaning of language and its implicit ideological assumptions, discourse analysis owes its development to a multiplicity of disciplines such as anthropology, ethnography and semiotics. These parent disciplines account for the theoretical and methodological diversity of the approach (van Dijk, 1988a). Of particular significance to the analysis within this research are the works of van Dijk (1988a, 1988b, 1998) Fowler (1991), and Fairclough (1989, 1992 and 1995). As a multidisciplinary research method, there are a considerable range of definitions and approaches to discourse analysis. The different researchers reflect these. Without claiming to undertake a review of the vast

body of work on discourse analysis, I briefly outline some definitions in the field and then explicate on the model most relevant to the current research.

Brown and Yule, 1983 observed that 'the analysis of discourse is, necessarily the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of the linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs' (Brown and Yule, 1983: 1). Jaworski and Coupland, (1999: 6) emphasised that 'discourse analysis offers a means of exposing or deconstructing the social practices which constitute 'social structure' and what we might call the conventional meaning structures of social life...The motivation for doing discourse analysis is very often a concern about social inequality and the perpetuation of power relationships, either between individuals or between social groups, difficult though it is to predict moral correctness in many cases'. According to Lupton (1994) 'critical discourse analysis centres attention upon the choice of words, the figures of speech and the style as well as the subject matter of verbal communications, and the manner in which meaning is produced therein. The method spends more time examining linguistic processes than do most textual analysis techniques within the cultural studies tradition' (Lupton, 1994: 28).

Wood and Kroger (2000) defined critical discourse analysis as a term 'used to identify a set of perspectives that emphasises the relations between language and power and the role of discourse analysis in cultural critique' (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 205). Emphasis is not just on language use but also on the linguistic nature of socio-cultural processes and structures; power in and over discourse; determining how language use produces/reproduces transformations in power relations; and establishing the ideological function of language use (Titscher et al 2000). The power of discourses therefore, lie in their capacity to 'define, describe and delimit what is possible to say and not to say (and by extension -what is possible to do and not do)' (Kress, 1985: 6).

Taken in combination, these outlines stress the interpretation of texts (particularly media texts) and an acknowledgement that 'both the ideological ways of using language and the relations of power which underlie them is often unclear to people. Critical discourse analysis aims to make more visible those opaque aspects of text' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258). The authors provide outline eight principles that inform the method and theory of critical discourse analysis. These are briefly outlined here for their relevance to the context of this research. Critical discourse analysis:

- Addresses social problems by focusing on the linguistic character of socio-cultural processes and structures
- Power relations are discursive.
- Discourse constitutes society and culture. (Texts constitute representation, relations and identities).
- Discourse does ideological work
- Discourse is historical (Connected with discourses produced earlier as well as those produced synchronically and subsequently).
- It views the link between text and society as mediated
- Critical discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory
- Discourse is also a form of social action. It has had success in changing power relations in institutions.

A central tenet of critical discourse analysis is therefore its quest to understand the relationship between language use and the social structure- the complex relationship between news texts and context, and between texts and power relations. Significant to the 'critical' approach is its view of relationship between language and society; and the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). From the range of perspectives offered, it is obvious that there exists a variety of perspectives and possibilities within the field concerning discourse analytic approaches. The theoretical framework adopted by any research therefore determines which approach/method will be subsequently applied. As a method whose central focus is on words, the figures of speech and the style, and the ways in which meaning is produced therein, critical discourse analysis therefore offers a suitable approach for the examination of media discourses on child sexual abuse

Van Dijk's approach, which he applied in a case study of international news in the late 1980s recognised, distinguished and analysed different structural levels of text. His approach considered news as a type of discourse and hence in studying it acknowledged that news reports were the result of journalistic cognitive and social processes in meaning production (van Dijk, 1988a).

Crucial to van Dijk's approach is the examination of the semantic macro-structure of texts that entails describing parts or entire discourses at a more comprehensive, global

level. This entails making 'explicit the overall topics or themes of a text and at the same time defines what we could call the overall coherence of a text as well as its upshot or gist' (van Dijk, 1988a: 13). Macro level description takes into account knowledge of the social context the world within which the text is produced. Implicit in this is the inter-subjectivity of such an analysis as event meaning and significance varies from person to person. Equally implicit from this is the acknowledgement that the 'thematic or schematic organization of a news report may well be biased, for instance when a relatively unimportant piece of information is expressed in headlines or lead or when important information is placed at the end or omitted altogether' (van Dijk, 1988a: 15-16).

Consequently, in serving as summaries of news stories, news headlines and lead-ins implicitly account for the subjective means through which newsmakers routinely sum up news. Garret and Bell (1998) usefully emphasise and conclude that 'such macro-rules draw upon the reader's world knowledge. At the macro level then, is a point at which meanings are assigned by readers' (Garrett and Bell, 1998: 7). Macro-structures are therefore not only significant in understanding the news production processes employed by journalists, but also for the 'comprehension, storage, memorization and later reproduction by media users' (van Dijk, 1988a). This accounts for why readers mostly remember main topics in news. The result of such an analysis is a structural description accounting for the presence or absence of specific themes.

The local or micro-structure of analysis in van Dijk's approach focuses on the syntax, semantics and overall grammatical structure of sentences, taking into account their cohesion and coherence. The choice and variation in lexicon used in sentences can significantly determine the speaker's social role, the meaning intended and the kind of audience being addressed. Examining individual headlines, lead-ins and main texts is significant to determining this.

Norman Fairclough shares some of Van Dijk's theoretical perspective. Fairclough, (1992) considers discourse analysis as '...language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice. (Fairclough, 1992:28). For Fairclough, 'discourse constitutes the social. Three dimensions of the social are distinguished-knowledge, social relations, and social identity- and these correspond respectively to three major functions of language [...] Discourse is shaped by relations of power and invested with ideologies' (Fairclough, 1992: 8). The approach has three components: the analysis of texts (their form, content and function),

the discourse practices of text production, distribution and consumption; (i.e. the journalistic practices) and social and cultural practices which frame discourse practices and texts. For Fairclough, each dimension demands a different level of analysis. The social and cultural practices that frame discourse and texts in child sexual abuse can be located within the domains of social work, paediatrics, criminology, law and feminist discourses about child sexual abuse that have been examined elsewhere in this work. The discourse practices of text production can be identified within the news values that shape the overall production of news. Fairclough's version of critical discourse analysis specifically attempts to integrate statements which link social and cultural practices to properties of texts (Fairclough, 1998: 144).

Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis Applied

The range of perspectives, evidently suggests that discourse analysis is suitable for analysing the construction of social problems taking power in discourse as a major point of focus. Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 7), considered that discourse analysis, can range from 'the description and interpretation of meaning-making and meaning-understanding in specific situations through to the critical analysis of ideology and access to meaning systems and discourse networks'. Consequently as an interpretive and explanatory method, there is no universally accepted means of conducting discourse analysis. Its application varies with individual research questions. Nevertheless, social psychologists, Potter and Wetherell (1987: 161), suggested that regardless of its complexity, the emphasis in discourse analysis is 'looking for patterns in the texts, for both consistency and differences in the content and forms of accounts, for shared features, and for the function and consequences of accounts'.

Informed by some of these theoretical perspectives, guided by the specific concerns of the current work, and the overall goal of identifying the nature of the discursive representation of child sexual abuse in the British media and their function, the strategy adopted for the textual analysis is the micro and macro structures that van Dijk (1988a) outlined.

1/Local structure

Analysis at this level examined textual structures such as syntax, semantics and lexicon of headlines, lead-ins and sentences. Headlines significantly define the most important information in texts. Lexical choices frame what is represented. For instance particular labels such as 'perv', 'wierdo' 'sicko' and 'wacky' that recurrently feature in newspapers, (particularly tabloid) news not only linguistically construct and represent actors, but equally serve as a distinguishing factor – 'the other'. As a result, I also took on board the differential emphasis (i.e., passive or active) on agency in discursive media construction. It equally took into account the sentence structure and coherence as well as cohesion - the examination of textual organisation above the sentence (Fairclough, 1995). This method of analysis was crucial in identifying the framing of offenders, victims and other news actors as well as the crime itself.

2 Macro structure

The macro analysis examined the topics, themes expressed in whole news texts or whole news articles (thematic structure). Again, this was derived by looking at sentence meanings (propositions). Examining the text components in this way, facilitated the identification of the function of this discourse given that 'such macrorules draw upon the reader's world knowledge.

The function of such a thematic analysis was its provision of a framework to relate the patterns of discourse observed at the micro level with the wider contexts in which these occurred. As a result, the analysis took into account the discursive context within which news articles are derived (news values) and operate, and the view that readers assign meaning at the macro level (van Dijk, 1988a and 1988b). Fairclough's recognition of the impact of language on social processes and change is also significant here for it provides a suitable foreground for examining the appropriate ideological and political functions of language in news texts about child sexual abuse particularly concerning power relations.

Fairclough distinguishes between the discourse practice and social practice (Fairclough, 1992 and 1995a). For Fairclough, the discourse practices that inform the production of texts are central to the communication of events. Implicit from this is the acknowledgement of journalistic practices and routines that impact on the production of media content as 'this allows us to make explicit the well-known role of news values and

ideologies in the production and understanding of news' (van Dijk, 1988b: 2). Equally significant for Fairclough is the acknowledgement of the social context or social practice (Fairclough, 1992 and 1995) of the text. According to Fairclough, such an analysis could be at different levels such as 'the more immediate situational context, the wider context of institutional practices the event is embedded within or the yet wider frame of the society or culture' (Fairclough, 1995: 62).

The interpretive analysis equally acknowledged the encoding/decoding model advanced by Hall (1997), which points out that the audience actively decodes meanings from media messages. It recognizes the existence of a 'preferred meaning' (that intended by the producer) and the 'constructed meaning'/interpretation read by audiences which is dependent on factors outside the text (e.g., class, gender, age, education, personal experience, ethnicity etc). Consequently, meanings are not universal. They are socially, culturally and contextually bound. The result of such an explicit and systematic description of language use in text and context is a discussion of the form, content and function of the sampled news stories about child sexual abuse.

Case Study Approach and Cases Studied

Coverage of cases and policy debates in the media play an important role in informing public opinion and shaping attitudes towards issues concerning child sexual abuse. In fact McDevitt (1996) suggests that media focus on the individual cases, particularly sensational cases 'may not be in affecting opinions of the general public but in influencing the attitudes of policy makers' (McDevitt, 1996:265). In the case of child sexual abuse, certain cases receive a higher profile media coverage than others because of the personalities involved or the context of the incident: For instance, the case of serial child sex abuser Marc Dutroux in Belgium, 1996; the trial of British pop artist Gary Glitter in 1999; the trial of media personality Jonathan King in 2001 and the trial of school teacher Amy Gehring in February 2002 for indecently assaulting a male pupil. Particular cases come to be seen as key events in the consequent impact they have on public conscience and social policy. For instance, the publication of the inquiry into child abuse in North Wales in February 2000 and the *News of the World's* 'name and shame' campaign, respectively increased media and public attention to the sexual exploitation of children. These events can variously be considered as

key events in public debates on child sexual abuse for the media attention they each generated and the subsequent policy shifts informed by such increased coverage. Kepplinger and Habermeir's (1999) approach to 'key events' identifies key events through spectacular reports about more or less unusual occurrences. Drawing on this media-led approach, the concept of key events is used within this research to mean (un)common occurrences that stimulate significantly higher media coverage about the event or particular subject matter-child sexual abuse. Discussion is not only limited to the event itself but quite often extends to wider discussions about policy matters. Coverage equally stimulates the coverage of thematically related events. Kepplinger and Habermeier (1999) identified the significance of studying media coverage of key events:

- Key events focus the attention of the public on a particular topic by awakening interest and making it appear significant.
- They focus the attention of journalists on a certain occurrence and lead them to assume that readers want to know more
- They stimulate pressure group activities as these groups seize the opportunity to gain media attention. The result is an increase in mediated and staged events.
- The reactions they trigger exert pressure on decision makers and in some cases the latter react to situations that were informed by fictitious developments.

In summary, key events and the media coverage that they trigger can influence audiences (public opinion), the media, pressure groups and decision makers. In the case of child sexual abuse, particular incidents, legislative procedures, and media initiated campaigns concerning child sexual abuse are some of the events that stimulate press coverage and public interest on child sexual abuse. Press coverage equally invites the attention of organisations that work with victims as well as those who work with offenders. For instance, when the *News of the World* launched its "Name and Shame" campaign in August 2000, it led to protest calls from the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO) as well as the web-based Prevent Violence Against Pedophiles (PVAP). Kepplinger and Habermeier (1999) went on to outline a few assumptions that lie beneath the concept of key events: after the event, there is increased news coverage with journalists reporting more about the topic;

past events similar to the key events also receive increased news coverage; thematically related events brought about by the key event (i.e., staged) or altered by it, are more frequently reported; and the more coverage given to a key event, the more impact it will have upon the future coverage of the topic. Examining coverage of sampled key events in the media can test these assumptions. For the current research, news coverage of the following events were sampled:

- The case of Gary Glitter (November 1999): A pop star tried and acquitted for sexually abusing a 14- year- old girl he had befriended. He was subsequently found guilty of downloading child pornography from the Internet.
- The case of Renate Williams (November 1999): The trial of a female teacher accused of sexually assaulting a male pupil.
- 'Lost in Care' (February 2000): A report of an official inquiry into institutional child sexual abuse in North Wales.
- 'For Sarah' (August 2000): A media initiated campaign for a change in the law on releasing sex offenders in the community.

Though everyday news of child sexual abuse is common, quite often it is the big cases- the scandals that remain key events in both media and public discourse. In this regard, such cases are atypical of the everyday reports of child sexual abuse in the news because of their increased news value -for instance, star involvement (e.g., Gary Glitter and Jonathan King); rarity (e.g., 'stranger danger' rather than familial abuser, female sex offender); drama (missing child) or continuity (retrospective incidents of institutional abuse); and cultural resonance (e.g., the family as appropriate site for care and child protection, suffering children). Case studies generally provide the opportunity for more intensive analysis. They generate reactive news stories and features that in turn receive media coverage (news, commentary and editorial treatment) which ordinary news of child sexual abuse rarely do. Such incidents of child sexual abuse that receive comparatively intense media coverage provide an opportunity for the media to cover thematically related events occurring at the time.

In addition, studying particular cases facilitates comparisons between similar narratives. Analysing media coverage of a particular event can reveal certain textual characteristics that might remain submerged or imperceptible in a random sample.

Furthermore, the analysis of a prominent event provides the opportunity to examine in detail the main frames formulated in journalistic discourses of such an event. As already noted, such events lead to increased reporting of thematically related events whether brought about by it or altered by it. They also facilitate the creation of particular news frames. Keywords, concepts, metaphors and visual images all combine to make news frames and these can be detected by 'analysing for particular words and images which appear in a narrative conveying thematically consonant meanings across media and across time' (Entman, 1991:7). News frames are 'themes within news stories that are carried by various kinds of framing devices' (D'Angelo, 2002: 873). For Entman, (1991) news narratives contain news frames, which encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop particular understandings of them. As thematic units, frames sometimes work to make certain ideas more salient in a text by 'providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and images that reference some ideas but not others' (Entman, 1991:9).

In research examining the production context of child sexual abuse news, Kitzinger (1996), through interviews with journalists, found perceptions of 'child abuse fatigue' in newsrooms. For the journalists, routine child sexual abuse was no longer news. Consequently, for child sexual abuse issues to be covered by the media, there had to be an 'extra twist' to an incident. Carter (1998) made similar observations about newspaper coverage of violence against women. The false memory syndrome and injustice against families provided this new angle for coverage in the early 1990s.

Each case examined within this research reflects different areas of discourse on child sexual abuse. Such a range of cases significantly illuminated the research questions. Each case received heavy publicity in the press. The case of Renate Williams simultaneously highlighted an instance/context of female sexual offending and abuse in an institutional setting. Gary Glitter's case highlighted the context of familial abuse, the prevalence of child pornography on the Internet and possessed the 'extra' twist of a celebrity involvement in such a crime.

Hesketh and Lynch (1996) observed that the likelihood of news coverage of child sexual abuse incidents was when these cases reached the courts. Within that framework, the preliminary stages of the criminal justice process (arrest, detention and charging) draw most media. The cases of Renate Williams and Gary Glitter respectively represent instances of coverage of child sexual abuse at the stage of the criminal justice process. Both cases usefully

provide a framework within which to understand and compare the evolution of news stories of this nature. Research has indeed shown that the different phases of the judicial process prompts different types of coverage (Soothill and Walby, 1991). Analysis of the coverage of sex crimes by both authors found that during the search stage, coverage centred on the criminal and deviant nature of the offender. The courtroom phase entailed coverage of the committal, the trial and the sentencing. Coverage of sentencing focused on the level of the sentence as well as the judge's comments. There was rarely much coverage of offenders during the stage of post-conviction.

Though the prosecution of offenders provide the opportunity for widespread news reporting about child sexual abuse, it is important to examine the coverage given to issues related to child sexual abuse outside the immediate context of a particular criminal proceeding regarding child sex offending. These give an opportunity for broader discussion about general issues of concern including child protection policies, the prevention of abuse, the prevalence and nature of abuse, the conditions that facilitate or inhibit abuse, and to examine the prevailing socio-political analysis of the problem. Soothill and Walby (1991) adopted a similar approach in their analysis of sex crime news, by examining coverage given to official reports and attempts to change the law. In order to examine the coverage of child sexual abuse outside the immediate context of individual (sensational) child sexual abuse incidents, this research also examined press discussions about child sexual abuse around official inquiries and a newspaper campaign to change the law in relation to child sex offenders. Child abuse inquiries are major triggers of media interest and news focus on the subject of child abuse (Franklin and Parton, 1991a).

An important issue in case study research is achieving balance and variety. The use of multiple cases or multiple data gathering techniques can strengthen the usefulness of case study research (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). The respective trials of Renate Williams and Gary Glitter were genuine events (i.e., independent of media). The campaign for Sarah's Law was a media-initiated event in itself. The case studies equally differ in the nature of abuse and personalities involved. Two concerned criminal justice proceedings involving individuals accused of child sexual abuse. *Lost in Care* was a report of a government-initiated inquiry on institutional abuse in North Wales. Though the publication of a public inquiry is routine, the occurrence of child sexual abuse in institutions which were expected to offer children protection, as well as the sensational manner in which the findings of the inquiry was

reported in the media made it a key event. A campaign by *The Independent* in 1994 had claimed that authorities had actively covered up a trail of abuse in Wales. The inquiry looked at 20 years of abuse in children's homes in North Wales. Published in February 2000, it criticised oversights and inadequacies in the system and made 72 recommendations amongst which was the call for extensive changes to the way local councils, social services and police dealt with children in care and the creation of a children's commissioner.

The campaign for Sarah's Law was a story whose origins lay in the media. The key event which triggered the wave of media coverage was not the abduction and murder of Sarah Payne (the event in itself not an unusual occurrence in Britain), it was the sensational campaign launched by the *News of the World* that triggered the amount of coverage that ensued. The events identified all received significant media attention. Each stimulated debate about child abuse related issues such as the causes, consequences and prevention of child sexual abuse. They also stirred discussions about social control, child sex offenders in the community, child protection, the status of childhood as well the risks posed by the Internet respectively.

With the examination of specific prominent incidents, the research is able to establish the depth of coverage, and identify the tone and nature of coverage and value judgements embedded in news narratives about child sexual abuse. The choice of cases sampled for analysis enabled the research to better understand the range of perspectives available about child sexual abuse in British newspapers. In the following section, the sampled newspapers and the decisions informing the sample are discussed.

The Sample

Despite the proliferation of broadcast and electronic media, newspapers retain significant social and political power within society. Statistics provided by organisations such as the Audit Bureau of Circulation and the National Readership Survey respectively, indicate that newspapers are read by millions of people everyday in the UK. Amongst the audience are politicians, the police, judges, social workers and other professionals. The UK press market is characterised by a distinct group of national circulation newspapers with the top ten papers accounting for at least 99% of the total circulation (Sparks, 1999). These operate in a highly competitive environment. The dominance of the national daily press as well as the obvious

political alignment of most of the papers has been noted as the most distinct feature of the UK press industry. This is most obvious when comparisons are made with countries such as the USA and Germany where newspapers tend to have strong state and regional orientation. Sparks (1999) suggested that the most obvious explanation for this difference is the relatively concentrated nature of political power in Britain.

Given the overall research focus, a comparative analysis of news accounts of the sampled cases in different national newspapers with varying political stands was seen as significant in developing generalizations about news coverage. The newspapers selected for the research were weekday and Sunday editions of *The Times*, *The Independent*, the *Daily Mail*, *The Sun* and *The Mirror*. The Sunday equivalent of *The Sun* is its sister publication the *News of the World*.

The sampled papers vary in ownership structures. *The Sun*, the *News of the World*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* are all owned by Rupert Murdoch's News International. *The Mirror* and the *Sunday Mirror* are part of Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) whilst Independent Newspapers Limited (UK) publishes *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday* respectively. Associated Newspapers Ltd. publishes the *Daily Mail* and the *Mail on Sunday* respectively. The sampled papers therefore represent a cross section of the British press market in terms of market segmentation, political orientation and ownership.

The sampled newspapers also represent the different readerships -- a market stratified between the broadsheet and the tabloid (both mid-market and popular) press. *The Times* and *The Independent* represent the broadsheets - the 'prestige' or 'elite' market that address a predominantly upper and middle class readership (socio-economic category A and B). Widely perceived to have more balanced and less sensational coverage, broadsheets are commonly referred to as the 'quality press'- a subjective classification that almost immediately presumes quality in style and content and the lack of it in titles not similarly categorised. Describing the British newspaper industry, Aldridge (1994) defined readers of broadsheet papers as people 'holding positions of minor or major responsibility in key social institutions: industry; commerce; health, welfare, education and other public services; the polity. Meanwhile the mass tabloids 'address those whose autonomy is restricted to their leisure and domestic life. Mid-market, one might speculate, are those who hold some position of authority but little power - and often resent it' (Aldridge, 1994: 63). The readership of the Mid-market papers press (represented here by the *Daily Mail*) is the socio-economic B2 and

C1 (the middle and upper working class). McNair, (2000: 16) emphasised that the mid-market papers address 'middle England' (as opposed to middle-Britain)-a moderately affluent, socially and morally conservative people concerned about but not obsessed with politics mainly in so far as it affects their personal incomes and quality of life'. *The Mirror* and *The Sun* are read mainly by the C2 social group (unskilled working class) and as the circulation figures indicate, sell more copies than most of the broadsheets. The stratification of the newspaper readership market according to social classes is an issue that Sparks (1999) equally highlights, noting the economic implications of such stratification to the newspapers, advertisers and readers respectively. Franklin (1997), actually suggests that the 'intense competition between newspapers for readers and advertisers is blurring these once clear boundaries, with broadsheets increasingly supplanting their traditional editorial with reporting 'showbiz' stories and royal gossip' (Franklin, 1997: 82).

The distinct ideological standpoint of the various newspapers is also a characteristic of the British press industry. In discussing the power play within UK newspaper partisanship, *The Sun* and *The Mirror* are both mass tabloids ("red tops") with a predominantly working class readership although each paper has rather different political views. *The Sun* is the British newspaper with the highest circulation and has for most of its existence been pro-Conservative. McNair (2002) however suggests *The Sun's* following of the political views espoused by its proprietor Rupert Murdoch at any given time, influences the paper's political allegiances. In a dramatic change of allegiance in the 1997 elections, the paper backed the Labour party¹⁵. In terms of distinctions between the popular tabloid, Aldridge (1994) noted that *The Mirror* 'distinguishes itself from *The Sun* by being pro-Labour, family-oriented, for slightly older 'folks' and trying to avoid racism' (Aldridge, 1994: 68). However, following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, on New York's World Trade Centre, *The Mirror* repositioned itself as a 'serious popular paper' and even became more critical of the Labour government¹⁶. The 'rebirth' saw the paper resume using its previous masthead – *Daily Mirror*.

¹⁵ The 1997 elections proved a watershed in newspaper party allegiances as the traditionally strong Conservative leanings of the press was broken. Traditionally conservative papers renounced the Tories and some urged their readers to vote Tony Blair. For a detailed discussion on newspaper readership and the 1997 elections, see Curtice, (1999) and Chapter 8 of McNair (2002).

¹⁶The paper's editor explained the changes in an edition of the *British Journalism Review*. 'What the *Mirror* needed was something dramatic to happen to allow us to reposition ourselves as a more serious popular paper – without the nagging fear that sales would fall irreparably in the meantime. It sounds almost Jo Moore-like to say that the events of September 11 gave us that opportunity. But it's undeniably true that this cataclysmic event provided

For the broadsheets, *The Times* tends to be a centre-Right paper and is traditionally a pro-Conservative newspaper whilst *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday* adopt liberal political stance. Apart from their different ownerships, I considered these ideologically different positions between the two broadsheets important determinants in examining both for comparative purposes when examining news reportage of child sexual abuse. The *Daily Mail* is a Conservative leaning paper with staunch Thatcherite values of ‘strong state’ and as Aldridge observed in her analysis of coverage of social work, it ‘is the most pure in its support of individualist, *petit bourgeois*, patriarchal family values’ (Aldridge, 1994: 208). However, McNair (2002: 17) suggests that after the 1997 elections it transformed into a ‘considerably less conservative beast, targeting a younger, gender-balanced, more ideologically diverse market than it had traditionally been associated with’. Tunstall (1996) pointed out research by Butler and Kavanagh (1992) that showed the partisan skew of the press from the late 1970s to the early 1990s as 70% Conservative and 27% Labour. McNair (2002) has gone on to indicate that between 1979-1992, British newspapers were not only pro-Tory but were pro-Thatcher. Sparks (1999) located this political alignment of the press within a broader frame of product differentiation in the competitive UK newspaper industry. Table 5.1 is the most recently available circulation figures for each of the sampled papers.

my staff and I with a unique chance to change the *Mirror's* brand of journalism significantly and permanently. We led on the War on Terror for over 50 days, deploying the largest number of journalists abroad of any UK newspaper, and devoting the most space inside to the extraordinary daily events. We broke great scoops, filed great reportage, took amazing pictures and brought this unbelievable international story to our readers in a dramatic, vivid and believable way. Perhaps more importantly, we made the paper credible again. We released ourselves from the political shackles of New Labour by repeatedly questioning their war strategy, prodding and probing, haranguing where necessary [sic]. If we didn't agree with Tony Blair, we screamed so all over Page One'. Piers Morgan, Editor of the *Daily Mirror* (2002) in *British Journalism Review* Vol. 13 (2):

Table 5. 1: National Newspaper Circulation October 2002*

Newspaper	Circulation
The Times	687,611
The Sunday Times	1,398,414
The Independent	221,369
Independent on Sunday	228,328
Daily Mail	2,436,889
Mail on Sunday	2,412,966
The Sun	3,612,646
News of the World	4,004,586
The Mirror	2,095,125
Sunday Mirror	1,697,419

*Source: Audit Bureau of Circulation (www.abc.org.uk) Accessed 22 November 2002.

A distinct feature of the British media compared to other European countries is the national nature of the newspapers. The 10 national newspapers are available on newsstands throughout the country everyday. So the sampled papers all have a national readership. Local newspapers were excluded from analysis since their orientation is usually toward local and not necessarily national agenda. The relatively huge circulation figures for some Sunday publications potentially suggest a crossover in readership and perhaps slightly different audience profile. (For instance, the variability between the circulation figures for *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, *The Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror*, *The Sun* and *News of the World* suggests Sunday audiences might have a different profile to weekday readers). Consequently, research on the coverage of child sexual abuse in these different papers will enable us see what variations (if any) exist in news coverage among newspapers that cater for different markets. Daily newspapers are more likely to report an event when it occurs while weekend and Sunday editions might concentrate more on commentaries and more extensive features. Sunday editions were included for the following reasons:

- The style and focus of Sunday editions are generally different from the dailies leading to the possibility of socially differentiated readership patterns.

In fact, as already discussed, certain Sunday newspapers have a higher circulation than their daily counterparts (see Table 5.1 above).

- As weeklies, Sunday newspapers are more soft news oriented (Fishman, 1978) entertainment and feature led (for instance fashion and travel supplements, TV and movie listings, food and restaurant guides, book reviews) and more likely to provide a summation of the week's stories or provide analytical comment on the week's stories. Daily newspapers are more likely to report an event when it occurs on weekday, while weekend and Sunday editions carry a lot more commentaries and features that are more extensive.

Sampling Frame

In selecting stories for analysis, a sampling frame consisting of all the stories for each case study was first constructed. This yielded 452 stories. From this population, a purposive sample was drawn. It was decided that coverage for each case could be quantified by coding consecutive stories appearing within a two-week timeframe from the day each story broke in the media. Such consecutive-unit sampling offers a good way of analysing continuing news. Research by Soothill and Walby (1991) reported a linear relationship between amount and length of coverage, i.e., the more newspapers that covered an incident, the greater the likelihood of coverage continuing for days. Riffe, Lacy and Fico, (1998) suggested that consecutive unit sampling entailed analysing a series of content units produced during a certain time and is particularly useful when studying continuing news (e.g. elections and continuing controversies). In the context of this research, such sampling made it easy to study possible follow-ups.

A similar sampling procedure applied during the pilot study yielded 80 stories over two weeks in four daily newspapers. The pilot study analysed 80 news stories whose primary thrust related to an aspect of the Cleveland child sexual abuse scandal in 1987. The stories were drawn from four national daily newspapers the *Daily Mirror*, *The Sun*, *The Independent* and *The Times*. Specifically, 13 from the *Daily Mirror*, 16 from *The Sun*, 28 in *The Times*, and 23 in *The Independent* were analysed. The pilot study facilitated the modification of the coding frame. Based on findings obtained from the pilot study, as well as a prior engagement with the data,

it was concluded that two weeks coverage would yield a significant and manageable sample that could be quantified. In three of the cases chosen, this time frame implied the sampling entailed the inclusion of all stories in the sampling frame. It is possible to deduce from this that continuing coverage of such events lasted an average two weeks. Two weeks coverage therefore provides adequate reflection of the distribution of the population and allows time for the exploration of the research questions.

The two-week period closely reflected the sampling frame and demonstrated the greatest potential to yield good data to answer the research questions. The sample size drawn from the timeframe also enabled a fair representation of the Sunday newspapers. Moreover, containing the data in this way, made it manageable. In addition to examining the discursive representation of child sexual abuse within specific cases, and with the benefit of some of the theoretical assumptions within detailed analysis of media discourse, such a continuous sampling approach provided sufficient grounds to examine the development of news stories in the press. Informed by the general theoretical framework of the research, these sampling decisions yielded the following numbers:

Renate Williams 5th – 18th November 1999 (N=41)
Gary Glitter 10th –24th November (N= 87)
North Wales Inquiry 16th – 29th February 2000 (N= 88)
'For Sarah' Campaign 23rd July –5th August 2000 (N=107)
TOTAL=323

The amount of data yielded from this sample was in proportion and volume sufficient to allow a significant analysis with relevance to the research questions. Data derived from the content analysis facilitated focus on the in-depth qualitative analysis.

In the case of Gary Glitter, Renate Williams and the North Wales Inquiry, two weeks coverage meant all the stories in the sampling frame were included. In the case of *News of the World's* 'For Sarah' campaign, the sampling decision yielded 107 stories. Given that the entire population of stories from this particular case was 236 for the period 23 July - 30 August, analysing 107 seemed fairly representative and sufficient not to skew the analysis.

The respective methods of quantitative and qualitative analyses of texts employed for the research have already been discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The next four

chapters present the findings of the analysis. Chapter six presents the results of the analysis from the entire sample while Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 respectively report the findings from each of the individual case studies.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

Introduction

Before carrying out individual analysis of coverage of each case, it is necessary to make some general observations on the sample as whole. This will facilitate comparison between newspapers. This chapter reports on the results of the quantitative content analysis of the entire sample. This provides a context for the subsequent qualitative analysis.

Amount of Coverage

The analysis adopted the approach of Soothill and Walby (1991) where the amount of coverage referred to the number of days a case was mentioned while the range of coverage referred to the number of newspapers that cover a case. A frequency count of the total number of news stories covered in each of the sampled newspapers indicated a variation in coverage between the tabloid and broadsheet newspapers with the tabloid news coverage accounting for 63.4% of the sample compared to 36.6% in the broadsheets.

In the current analysis, *The Mirror*, *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* published substantially more articles than the other newspapers in the sample. Coverage in *The Mirror* represented 21.1% of the overall sample. Other research that has identified a significant increase in the number of 'sex crime news' stories in popular daily newspapers (Soothill and Walby, 1991; Carter, 1998) and a general emphasis in sexual crimes in crime news reports (Ditton and Duffy, 1983) and a slightly higher proportion of crime news in *The Mirror* (Reiner, Livingstone and Allen 2000)¹⁷. The general orientation of the mass circulation tabloid papers (i.e., focus visual, drama and titillation) almost means that these are the most likely to report sexually-related crimes. The exception here was *The Times* whose coverage seemed to quantitatively match and in some cases surpass those of the tabloid papers. This finding perhaps adds to the wider discussions about the increasing blurring of editorial styles and content between broadsheets and tabloids (Franklin, 1997) (see Table 6.1).

¹⁷ Reiner, Livingstone and Allen (2000) undertook a historical analysis of *The Times* and *The Mirror* from 1945-1991 found a slightly higher proportion of crime stories in *The Mirror*.

Table 6. 1: Distribution across Newspapers*.

Daily Newspapers		
	Frequency	Percent
The Mirror	68	21.1
The Times	59	18.3
Daily Mail	54	16.7
The Sun	43	13.3
The Independent	38	11.8
Sunday Newspapers		
News of the World	25	7.7
Independent on Sunday	13	4.0
Sunday Mirror	12	3.7
The Sunday Times	8	2.5
Mail on Sunday	3	.9
Total	323	100.0

*(Given that Sunday newspapers have fewer editions than daily newspapers, they will inevitably contribute fewer stories in numerical terms compared to daily papers)

Table 6.2 is a break down of the amount of coverage of each case by individual newspapers. Whilst indicating a prevalent interest among newspapers in the coverage of issues related to child sexual abuse, the most apparent trend observed from this analysis is the diminishing intensity in total coverage of each case. The trial of Renate Williams received the least coverage compared to that of Gary Glitter, whilst the coverage of the campaign for ‘Sarah’s Law’ received more coverage than the publication of the Waterhouse Report.

Table 6. 2: Number of stories per case in each newspaper.

Newspaper	RW	GG	NW	FS	Total
The Times	8	15	20	16	59
The Sunday Times	2	0	2	4	8
The Independent	4	7	11	16	38
Independent on Sunday	1	6	5	1	13
Daily Mail	10	13	18	13	54
Mail on Sunday	1	0	0	2	3
The Sun	4	18	13	8	43
News of the World	0	6	0	19	25
The Mirror	10	17	16	25	68
Sunday Mirror	1	5	3	3	12
Total	41	87	88	108	323

RW -Renate Williams

GG -Gary Glitter

NW -North Wales Child abuse Inquiry

FS - 'For Sarah' campaign.

The difference in the intensity of coverage does not necessarily imply an increase in coverage of child sexual abuse issues over time. Coverage could have been influenced by the nature of each case, particularly the actors, the prevailing social contexts within which each event occurred, as well as journalistic concepts of newsworthiness outlined by Galtung and Ruge (1965), Chibnall, 1977, Harcup and O'Niell (2001) (e.g., amplitude, entertainment, consonance, drama and titillation, elitism, rarity and negativity) were significant factors that influenced the coverage of each case. Thus, whilst the trial of a schoolmistress for allegedly sexually-abusing a male pupil might have been newsworthy owing to elements of drama, titillation, negativity and rarity, the trial lasted only a week and Miss Williams was subsequently cleared of the charges¹⁸ (amplitude). Gary Glitter's celebrity status and his involvement with Internet child pornography ensured that his trial for the sexual abuse of a teenage fan attracted more news space. Equally, news values such as amplitude (extent and duration of abuse, and the number of children involved), and consonance (the inquiry's report was expected and some of its findings anticipated) were significant to news coverage of the Waterhouse report into abuse in homes in North Wales. In addition, and with particular reference to news coverage of social work, the availability of a clear interpretive

frame (Aldridge, 1994) in this case the perceived failure of policy and errors in practice as well a poignant story of suffering vulnerable children by people who should know better (carers, the social services and local authorities), enhanced the human interest factor of the event.

Table 6.2 also indicated a difference in the intensity of coverage between daily newspaper editions and Sunday editions. By virtue of the fact that Sunday editions are weekly publications, there is a marked disparity in the amount of news coverage between Sunday newspapers and daily newspapers as indicated by the number of stories. Nevertheless, Sundays can provide more in-depth coverage. News values play a significant role here. The significance of some stories might have diminished by the weekend to make it into the Sunday editions. This is the case with coverage of the trial of Renate Williams. It is worth noting that the relatively high proportion of stories featuring for *News of the World* is skewed because of the paper's 'For Sarah' campaign launched in August 2000 (See Table 6.1). The other sampled cases received significantly less or no coverage at all from this paper. It is possible to speculate that in the case of North Wales, the absence of specific personalities to vilify rendered the story dented the tabloid's interest in the story. The fact that the Gary Glitter case (with its relatively higher news value- celebrity and child sex-which appealed to the paper); occurred soon after the trial of Renate Williams, could partially explain the *News of the World's* lack of coverage of the Williams case.

Format of stories

Hansen, Negrine and Newbold, (1998: 107) observed that 'different media formats/types/genres set different limits for what can be articulated, by whom, through what format/context'. Any examination of media content must therefore bear in mind that the genre of a news article affects the overall nature of coverage. The majority of the articles analysed were hard news articles (57.9%). The hard news imperative of the media environment prompts a reliance on hard news rather than features and commentaries. It remains the most popular journalistic format. Brief news items and news features each accounted for 12.7% of the sample respectively. Editorials accounted for 8% of the sample,

¹⁸ And though in many instances, coverage in the media usually last longer because of pre-and post-trial publicity,

closely matched by opinion columns, which made up a further 8.7%. The almost similar statistics between editorials and opinion columns perhaps reflects the increased ascendancy of the columnist within contemporary British journalism (Tunstall, 1996; Franklin, 1999)

Table 6. 3: Genre of News Item

	Frequency	Percent
Hard news story	187	57.9
Feature	41	12.7
News in brief/filler	41	12.7
Opinion column	28	8.7
Editorial	26	8.0
Total	323	100.0

Though the trend of having a higher proportion of hard news was reflected in the newspapers, differences were observed between popular and broadsheet papers in the use/presence of editorials (see Table 6.4).

Table 6. 4: Crosstabulation of News Formats*

Newspaper		Genre of news item					Total
		Hard news	Editorial	Feature	Opinion	filler	
The Times	Count	41	2	4	5	7	59
The Sunday Times	Count	2		3	2	1	8
The Independent	Count	29	3	3	2	1	38
Independent on Sunday	Count	5	1	5	2		13
Daily Mail	Count	28	3	8	8	7	54
Mail on Sunday	Count	2		1			3
The Sun	Count	23	3	5	2	10	43
News of the World	Count	11	3	5	3	3	25
The Mirror	Count	40	9	6	3	10	68
Sunday Mirror	Count	6	2	1	1	2	12
Total Count		187	26	41	28	41	323

* Actual counts rather than frequencies are used because the number of stories in some cells appearing is too small. This simplifies and renders the statistics more meaningful.

The Mirror wrote nine editorials, accounting for 13.2% of the paper's coverage on the respective cases sampled. Editorials for the other newspapers averaged 2.4. This finding is significant given that previous research identified the *Daily Mail* as the paper most likely to

there was no pre-trial coverage of Williams' trial in the media.

offer sustained coverage of stories related to social work (Aldridge, 1994). Most of this coverage was adverse to social work. Aldridge (1994) also suggested that *The Times* orientation to business meant social issues received little coverage. Only the *Mail on Sunday* and *The Sunday Times* respectively did not express editorial opinion within the time frame of coverage that was analysed for each case. It is, however, plausible that since these are Sunday publications, editorial opinions might have been expressed in their respective daily sister publications. The differences in the expression of editorial opinion could equally be because of the variations in ideologies and house styles between the papers. For instance, Aldridge (1994: 207) observed that *The Mirror's* editorial line 'tried to keep the values of the welfare state, and the idea of civil society in view' whilst also conforming with 'popular 'common-sense' notions of traditional working-class family life and the aetiology of social problems'. The subsequent chapters paying attention to coverage of the individual case studies will demonstrate this variation in editorial styles.

Prominence

The placement of stories in terms of page location, operationally defined the prominence of stories for this research. The assumption here was that news considered important would be included on newspaper front pages. Given that this category was designed to measure prominence the major distinction was between front page and inside page news stories. Stories appearing after page 3 were coded as 'inside page'. Analysis indicated that the majority of the stories (72.4%) appeared on the inside pages of newspapers, while 13% of news stories featured on the front page in some measure (i.e., as a stand alone article or as a lead-in to subsequent news stories within the paper).

Table 6. 5:Location of Article

	Frequency	Percent
Inside page	234	72.4
Third page	29	9.0
Front and inside page	23	7.1
Front page	19	5.9
Second page	18	5.6
Total	323	100.0

Using newspapers as a control variable to analyse the location of news stories indicated a similar trend. However, broadsheet newspapers were more likely to carry front-page news stories than the tabloids. Broadsheets appeal to a different readership and have more page space than tabloid papers. Equally, they have a reputation for having a more serious tone and style of coverage.

Table 6. 6:Location of Article by Newspaper

	Location of article					Total
	Front page	Second page	Third page	Inside page	Front an inside page	
The Times	6	5	10	37	1	59
The Sunday Times	1			7		8
The Independent	5	2	5	24	2	38
Independent Sunday			5	8		13
Daily Mail	2	1	1	47	3	54
Mail on Sunday				3		3
The Sun		2	3	32	6	43
News of the World		3	2	17	3	25
The Mirror	5	5	2	48	8	68
Sunday Mirror			1	11		12
Total	19	18	29	234	23	323

Focus of News Stories

Of the 323 stories analysed, the combined frequencies of topics related to the criminal justice process (police investigation, offender arrest, prosecution, sentencing or acquittal) amounted to 30.7%, with the prosecution of offenders being the most frequent main topic at 11.5% (N=37) of news articles. This was a trend repeated when the analysis of secondary topics mentioned in the news stories was undertaken.

Table 6. 7: Main Focus of Article

	Frequency	Percent
Offender Prosecution	37	11.5
Proposed law	27	8.4
Police investigation	24	7.4
Media initiated campaign	22	6.8
Conviction/sentence	20	6.2
Offender profile	19	5.9
Retrospective case	16	5.0
Official inquiry	13	4.0
Official report	12	3.7
Victim profile	12	3.7
Offender acquittal	11	3.4
Vigilante action	11	3.4
Child pornography	10	3.1
Victim death	10	3.1
Offender search	9	2.8
Offender arrest	7	2.2
Offender death	7	2.2
Child protection	7	2.2
Press regulation	7	2.2
Existing law	6	1.9
Consequences of case	6	1.9
Exposing paedophiles	6	1.9
Offender treatment	4	1.2
Specific incidence of csa	3	.9
Court ruling	2	.6
Offender release	2	.6
Offender statistics	2	.6
Interest group campaign	2	.6
Victim statistics	1	.3
Other	8	2.5
Total	323	100.0

Whilst the attention to criminal justice proceedings could be a consequence of the heightened interest in the trial of Renate Williams and Gary Glitter respectively, a cursory look at random news stories of child sexual abuse in the press, will affirm that news reporting of child sexual abuse is frequently prompted by the results of procedures within the criminal justice system. For example:

‘Magician perv gets 12 years’ (*The Sun* 29.11.00)

‘Sex-pest is shot dead by a police’ (*Daily Mail* 28.01.00)

‘Village shop fiend: life for gay killer of Thomas 12’ (*The Sun*, 9.12.99)

‘Paedophile admits to string of sex attacks’ (*The Independent*, 06.10.99)

‘Programmer on child sex charge’ (*The Times* 15.12.99)

Like other crime stories, child sexual abuse stories seem to follow the bureaucratic phase structures of the criminal justice process (Fishman, 1978) hence the focus on various phases of this process (arrest, trial and sentencing). For Fishman, journalistic dependence on bureaucratic structures such as the police, fire department, the courts, imply that the ‘the domain of coverage is produced for the newsworker in formally organized settings by...all certified incumbents in a structural position of knowledge (Fishman, 1978: 52).

Issues related to social policy and the law (both existing and proposed) were the major focus of 1.9% and 8.4% respectively. Existing legislation equally featured as a secondary topic in 7.4% of news articles as compared to a 10.8% occurrence for proposed legislation. This finding suggests that more coverage was given to proposed legislation than to existing legislation. Though it is worth cautioning that this trend was not necessarily reflected when the coverage of individual events is analysed, it is perhaps indicative of a general media preoccupation with the inadequacies of existing child protection laws. Examples of headlines of news stories whose focus was an aspect of existing law include:

The Gary Glitter Trial: Law Outdated, say Ministers (*Independent on Sunday*, 14 November 1999).

Our criminal obsession (*Independent on Sunday* 14 November 1999)

Gay sex laws must stay now (*Daily Mail*, 19 February 2000)

Prey on our kids and law will follow you (*News of the World* 23/07/00)

If Blair wants to get tough, start with the paedophiles (*The sun* 27 July 2000)

US Paedophile law like putting gasoline on fire (*The Times* 31 July 2000)

The headlines indicate a mixture of responses towards existing law and policy. Again, this could possibly be a function of the particular cases studied. For example, the four-months sentence handed to Gary Glitter for accessing and downloading child pornography was considered too lenient, leading certain newspapers and commentators to call for a review of the sentencing of sex offenders. The trial equally prompted discussions

about the adequacy of laws governing Internet pornography. Likewise, the publication of the inquiry into abuse in North Wales coincided with debates about the repeal of Section 28. While *News of the World's* 'For Sarah' campaign was premised on the view that existing laws regulating the sentencing and release of convicted child sex offenders were inadequate. This particular aspect of coverage is examined in the subsequent chapters, which looks at the individual cases studies.

Proposed Remedy

The interest in proposed rather than existing legislation was equally reflected in the analysis for proposed remedy for protecting children. A total of 106 news items sampled mentioned one or more proposals for protecting children. This represented 32.8% of the sample. Although the frequency with which particular remedies were proposed varied with each case study, longer and/or life sentences for sex offenders was the most frequently cited proposal for the combating child sexual abuse (29.2%) across the entire sample. This view was most prevalent in the summer of 2000 when the *News of the World* launched its 'For Sarah' campaign: 'Lock them up for life (*News of the World*, 23 July 2000), 'Paedophiles will get life' (*The Mirror* 27 July 2000) and 'Paedophiles exploit soft sentencing' (*The Times* 3 August 2000).

The analysis also indicated a variation between the broadsheets and the tabloid papers with the latter being most likely to suggest and approve of proposals for a life sentence for convicted child sex offenders. In fact, tabloid newspapers accounted for 74.2% of the number of times this particular proposal was mentioned. This might be indicative of a particular perspective on child protection (that of eliminating the dangerous individual) assumed by the tabloid press in general. Although this is finding might be significant in theorising about newspaper agenda setting and 'legislation by tabloid' respectively, the government reluctance to introduce life sentence for offenders exposes the limitations of both perspectives.

News Sources

News sources constitute a significant element in the news production process. Apart from providing background information, news sources lend credibility to news stories. It has been documented that despite the potentially available variety of news sources, journalists often limit themselves to the use of press releases and interview quotations from sources. Ericson, Baranek and Chan, (1989) asserted that 'in the contemporary knowledge society news represents *who* are the authorized knowers and *what* are their authoritative versions of reality. [...] At the same time that it informs about who are the authorized knowers, it suggests, by relegation to a minor role and by omission, who is excluded from having a say in important matters' (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1989: 3-4). Fishman, (1978) describes such authoritative sources as key spokesperson for particular bureaucratic organizations. News sources and the social institutions they represent are therefore significant actors in influencing the public discourse about child sexual abuse. Analysis of the sources quoted in the stories can be useful in deciphering how social power in society is expressed through the mass media. The position and gender of the news sources quoted in child sexual abuse stories can equally be an indication of a particular perspective of interpretation.

Between one and two sources were most frequently quoted within the news articles analysed. Of the 323 stories analysed, only 18.6% did not clearly mention a particular source. This is understandable given news formats such as editorials, opinion columns and sometimes feature articles rarely quote specific sources.

Table 6. 8: Number of News Source

	Frequency	Percent
1-2	187	57.9
None	60	18.6
3-4	53	16.4
5 and above	23	7.1
Total	323	100.0

The current analysis examined the first news source quoted in the article. The assumption here is that the position of a source within the news article is significant in setting a framework within which readers make sense of the news report (Carter, 1998). A variety of news sources was cited in the sampled articles. These ranged from victims and offenders to

criminal justice personnel (i.e., judge, magistrate, police, lawyers), interest group organisations and politicians (see Table 6.9).

Table 6. 9: First news source quoted

	Frequency	Percent
None quoted	59	18.3
Victim	31	9.6
Victim's relatives	24	7.4
Police	22	6.8
Offender	22	6.8
Minister	21	6.5
Judge/magistrate	19	5.9
Other	19	5.9
Individual citizen	16	5.0
Media/journalist	15	4.6
Document	13	4.0
Interest group	9	2.8
Prosecution lawyer	7	2.2
Defence lawyer	7	2.2
Social worker	7	2.2
Police spokesperson	5	1.5
Charity organization	5	1.5
MP	5	1.5
Offender's relatives	4	1.2
Inquiry chairperson	3	.9
Government spokesperson	3	.9
Medical professional	2	.6
Childcare expert	2	.6
Academic expert	1	.3
Council Official	1	.3
Probation officer	1	.3
Total	323	100.0

Victims of child sexual abuse were the most frequently cited sources representing 9.6% of first sources quoted in the news articles. Including victims' voices in the news allows for a personification of the news and can possibly encourage audiences to identify with the victim. The subsequent chapters in this work however demonstrate that the relatively high frequency of victims cited as sources could be a factor of the respective cases studies (i.e., criminal prosecutions where victims gave evidence, victims in retrospective cases of abuse- in this case adults who could offer interviews). Medical doctors, academics and other childcare

experts were least likely to be quoted as first sources in news stories. Individuals within the criminal justice system (e.g., judges, magistrates, police officers, police spokespersons, lawyers and probation officers) accounted for 18.9% of the first news sources quoted in all the sampled news stories (see Table 6.9). The journalistic culture and newsgathering routine is structured around an orientation and dependence on these authoritative sources who are regarded as credible. News orientation toward these particular sources reflects previous research that has noted that news organisations tend to rely on authoritative (probably male) news sources such as judges, court officials and police as primary source of news (Fishman, 1978; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1989). These primary definers are the 'socially authorised and socially sanctioned knowers' (Fishman, 1978: 95) whose accounts journalists are predisposed to treat as factual than others mainly because of 'their social structural position i.e., their official assignment over a given jurisdiction' (p.93) and also because of the performative character of their accounts. Such a predisposition toward authoritative (bureaucratic) sources can be important in deciphering how audiences are encouraged to understand these news stories.

Where possible, the gender of news sources was coded. A substantial body of child sexual abuse research has indicated that child sexual abuse is a crime committed mainly by adult men and adolescent boys against female victims (Cossins, 1999). The aim of inserting a variable on source gender was to examine the representation of men and women as "actors," in news about sexual violence towards children. Van Zoonen (1998) cites the overwhelming presence of male sources and spokespersons in news as part of the masculine character of journalism, attributing this to the personal networks of male journalists instead of the representation of actual gender divisions. Analyses of news sources revealed a gender bias in the news sources. Male sources made up almost half of first news sources quoted (45.8%) compared to only 20.1% of female sources (see Table 6:10). This would confirm to the general observation offered by Hartley, (1992) that 'news is not only about and by men, it is overwhelmingly seen through men' (Hartley, 1982: 146) The representation of women in the media news as reporters, managers and as newsmakers has been the source of intense debate and scholarly research within feminist media studies (Carter, 1998; Kitzinger, 1998).

Table 6. 10: Gender of First News Source

	Frequency	Percent
Male	148	45.8
Female	65	20.1
N/A*	81	25.1
Unclear	30	9.3
Total	323	100.0

*N/A-not applicable

The use of women as sources very much depends on their being seen and acknowledged as important figures on a particular news topic. The inadequate representation of women in certain professions and the gendered structure of news (Skidmore, 1998) influence how and where women are cited as news sources. Further analysis of other news sources quoted within stories, showed that that female source were most likely to be quoted as first sources in their capacity as victim's relatives, offenders, and social workers. Perhaps this is indicative of the relative absence of women in "established" source organisations such as the police, the judiciary and politics. Carter (1998: 227) argues that female sources are seen as unauthorised (passive) voices and used to present an 'emotional' or 'familial viewpoint', whilst the authorised (active) voice is frequently male sources.

Types of Abuse

Official research has identified the following offences as the most common offences committed against children in the UK: unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16; indecent assault on a male under 16; gross indecency with a girl under 14; unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13; rape of a girl under 16; and gross indecency with a boy under 14 (Grubin, 1998). However, while the law tends to be specific in its description, journalism and popular discourse are limited to and assume generic and commonsense understanding of sexual abuse. Journalistic writing can be seen as informed by and reflected in popular and commonsense understanding. Consequently, newspapers would often refer to an instance of "child sexual abuse" (a generic term of reference – that would not annoy their readership (La Fontaine, 1990) rather than specify the nature of abuse- for instance, rape, fondling or indecent exposure. This was the case with 12.7% of the sampled stories. Providing little precision about the nature of abuse sanitizes leaving little room for broader public

understanding about the experience of victims. Nevertheless, the current analysis indicates that more than half of the sampled stories are specific in naming the particular kind abuse meted out on victims.

Child pornography, sexual intercourse, murder rape and sexual seemed to be the most prominently featured type of child sexual abuse (see table below). These offences were mentioned within articles either in relation to a specific incident or as part of reporting a criminal justice process. It should, however, be noted that by definition, children under 16 cannot consent to sex, hence any sexual intercourse with a person less than 16 is by definition a rape. Nevertheless, within the law itself, in some instances, offenders may be charged with another offence such as 'unlawful sexual intercourse' (Grubin, 1998).

Table 6. 11: First Type of Abuse Mentioned in Article

	Frequency	Percent
N/A	63	19.5
General/Not specified	41	12.7
Pornography	36	11.1
Sex	32	9.9
Murder	27	8.4
Rape	23	7.1
Sexual assault	23	7.1
Abduction	20	6.2
Indecent exposure	19	5.9
Indecent assault	16	5.0
Physical abuse	11	3.4
Molestation	5	1.5
Buggery	3	.9
Other	2	.6
Touching/fondling	1	.3
Kissing	1	.3
Total	323	100.0

The sentencing of Gary Glitter on child pornography charges might explain the high amount of attention to this particular crime within the sample. Nevertheless, news stories of sex offenders infiltrating teenage chat rooms as well as that of 'paedophiles' using the Internet to access and distribute child pornography has been a recurrent theme in news coverage of child sexual abuse in the latter part of 1990s. The arrest, trial and subsequent sentencing of the Gary Glitter in November 1999, for downloading 4000 images of child

porn from the web, was probably the most significant event to bring British public attention to the prevalence of child pornography on the Internet. This particular theme reflects a different pattern in news interest about child sexual abuse. Its development has heightened public attention towards protecting children particularly children who use the Internet. Implicit in its development is the acknowledgment of the changing directions from which threats to children emerge.

In order to measure how the aspects of the law are covered in the media, the analysis coded the specific criminal charges mentioned in the news article. A total of 138 (42.4%) stories from the sample mentioned one or more charges brought against child sex offenders (see Table 6.12).

Table 6. 12: Specific charge cited in news article

Criminal Charge (N=138)	Cited	Not cited	TOTAL
Indecent assault	48.6%	51.4%	100%
Sexual assault	21.7%	78.3%	100%
Child pornography	31.9%	68.1%	100%
Other charge	23.2%	76.8%	100%
Rape	8%	92%	100%
Gross indecency	5.8%	94.2%	100%
Unlawful sex with a minor	5.1%	94.9%	100%
Assault	4.3%	95.7%	100%
Violence and cruelty	3.6%	96.4%	100%
Molestation	2.9%	97.1%	100%
Murder	1.4%	98.6%	100%
Buggery	.7	99.3%	100%
Abduction	.7%	99.3%	100%

Of the news articles that indicated what charges were brought against an offender, the most frequently cited charge was indecent assault. This again reflects the official research statistics, which identify indecent assault of a female or male under 16 as the most common forms of sexual offence involving children (Grubin, 1998). The fact that indecent assault is the main charge used in criminal prosecutions on sex offending against children partly explains the high frequency with which this particular charge is cited in newspapers. Once again, this is where the language of the law comes in conflict with popular discourse. 'Indecent assault' in itself can be a vague term that can cover several different forms of abuse.

Within the law itself, indecent assault is defined as covering offences that amount either to assault or battery (touching and psychic assault without touching) (Selfe and Burke, 2001).

Offenders

Constructing typologies of child sex offenders is significant not only to assist police investigations (Wyre, 2001) and offender treatment programmes, it is similarly important in informing popular understanding of these offenders. Child sexual abuse has been characterised as a gender specific problem -i.e. one committed mainly by adult men and adolescents boys against both male and female children (Cossins, 1999, Wyre, 2001). This observation is reaffirmed by the current research which shows that more than half of the news articles analysed reported incidents of child sexual abuse carried out by men (51.4%) against both girls and boys (see Table 6.13).

Table 6. 13: Offender Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	166	51.4
No offender	78	24.1
Female	42	13.0
Not stated	26	8.0
Male and female	11	3.4
Total	323	100.0

The identification of the perpetrator gender as primarily male was a pattern reflected in all the papers. Given that one of the case studies analysed involved the trial of a female teacher for alleged sexual assault, 13% of the stories indicated the offender as female. The most frequently reported case of male violence involved violence directed at a female victim/child (40.1%) compared to 18.1% for male victims. Male offenders who targeted both female and male victims were mentioned in 16.3% of the news articles.

Just over half of the news stories mentioned offenders who acted alone (51.7%). Only 21.6% of the sampled stories mentioned two or more offenders. The offender age ranged from under 20 to above 60. Offenders within the 31-60 age groups were the most represented in the news stories. The sample also established that abusers were most likely to have some kind of relationship with their victims (43.9% N=142 of the news articles mentioned the capacity in which the abuser knew their victim). Care workers (40.1%) and

teachers (33.8%) were most frequently mentioned as perpetrators of abuse. This finding might be skewed because of the publication of the inquiry into abuse in North Wales in which the care workers and teachers were identified as having perpetrated abuse on child in their care during the 70s and 80s. Outside these two categories, perpetrators identified also included fathers and other males in parental role such as stepfathers, foster fathers and family friends. This finding is significant to constructing popular typologies of child sex offenders. It also reflects expert research that has revealed that child sexual abuse is perpetrated largely by men known to their victims and rarely by unrelated males who may be strangers (Driver, 1989; Itzin 2000d).

Victims

The news sample established that female children were more likely to be mentioned as victims of sexual abuse than were males (see Table 6.14). Victims of crime add human interest in a news story. Thirty per cent of victims identified in the news stories were female children. Twenty-two per cent of the sampled stories identified boys as the victims of sexual abuse while 12.4% reported incidents involving both female and male victims. Though there exists some disparity in the proportion of female and male victims, the high percentage for each, shows that victim gender was not so significant in newspaper reporting of child sexual abuse. However, 15.2 % of the articles did not identify the gender of the victim. It has been noted elsewhere that the prevalent use of a non-gendered label and the failure to reflect the gendered nature of abuse can 'obscure the fundamental character of sexual abuse and prevent serious examination of the reasons why it occurs and the kinds of policies necessary for its prevention' (Franklin and Parton, 1991b: 15).

Table 6. 14: Victim Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Female	97	30.0
Male	71	22.0
Not applicable	66	20.4
Not stated	49	15.2
Female and male	40	12.4
Total	323	100.0

The analysis further showed some disparity between multiple victims and single victims. Two or more children were identified as victims in 59.1% of the news articles while 40.9% of stories mentioned incidents where the offender assaulted just one child. Where possible the age of the victim was coded. Analyses indicated that the majority of these victims fell into the 7-15 age group. Recent official statistics have shown that the highest rate of victimisation within recorded violent crime against a person, were people aged between 14-19 (Povey et al, 2001).

Discussion

This chapter has provided evidence about the distribution and variation of coverage across different newspapers, the major topics mentioned in the coverage of child sexual abuse cases analysed, the use of sources, the types of abuse mentioned in news stories and the representation of offenders and victims. The perceived news interest in child sexual abuse varied between newspapers. A substantial variation existed in the types of news stories with hard news stories forming the bulk of the sample. Despite the relatively low percentage of news editorials and opinion columns, these respective formats are important as they present an opportunity for subjective analysis and reporting of issues and can be significant in deducing a newspaper's stand on varied social issues. This initial analysis indicates an overwhelming focus on issues related to the criminal justice process. This general trend might have been affected by the fact that two of the events analysed involved prosecution for offences related to child sexual abuse¹⁹. This chapter has also established that a substantial variation exists in the amount of attention given to proposals for increased child protection as only a third of the sampled stories mentioned existing child protection legislation or suggested other measures to prevent child sexual abuse. The most cited measure was life sentences for offenders. While the special circumstances of one of the cases (*News of the World's* campaign to introduce a law on parental access of sex offender's registers into British legislation) led to an intensified coverage accounting for 33.4% of the entire sample, the importance of the other cases studies cannot be underestimated. Recognising that differences might exist in the coverage of the respective individual case studies, the subsequent chapters

¹⁹ An analysis of a random sample of routine news of child sexual abuse in five national dailies, however established that more than half of the news stories reported the arrest, trial or sentencing of a child sex offender (Ndangam, 2001).

will report in the analysis of coverage of individual case. The analyses include the discursive representation of offenders, victims and policy related to child sexual abuse will also be examined in detail.

CHAPTER 7

THE CASE OF RENATE WILLIAMS

Background

In November 1999, a schoolteacher Renate Williams was tried on charges of indecently assaulting a 15-year old male pupil during a school trip to Wales. During the trial, which lasted six days, Miss Williams who taught drama at the school, admitted having been drunk and having swum naked during the field trip to Wales with her pupils. Earlier during the trial, following directions from the judge, one charge of indecently assaulting the pupil by having sexual intercourse, was dropped. Miss Williams was subsequently acquitted of charges of indecent assault.

Amount and Range of Reporting

Table 7.1 is a breakdown of the coverage by newspapers. Considering the differences in frequency of publication, the table is split between daily publications and Sundays. The table indicates an uneven distribution in the frequency of coverage between broadsheets and tabloids. Coverage in the broadsheets accounted for 36.6% of total news sample of the case compared to 63.4% in the tabloids. Two tabloid papers - *The Mirror* and the *Daily Mail*, carried a similar number of stories about the case (10) while *The Sun* had just four news stories representing 9.8% of the entire coverage. There were no reports of the case in the leading Sunday tabloid the *News of the World*. The pattern of coverage between the quality dailies was mixed. The frequency of coverage in *The Times* was similar to that of the tabloid newspapers as the paper carried eight news stories on the trial compared to just four in *The Independent*. This reflects the overall trend in the pattern of coverage observed in the previous chapter when analysis of the entire sample was reported. *The Sunday Times* reported two news articles related to the case while the rest of the Sunday publications carried only one story referring to the case.

Table 7. 1: Distribution of coverage

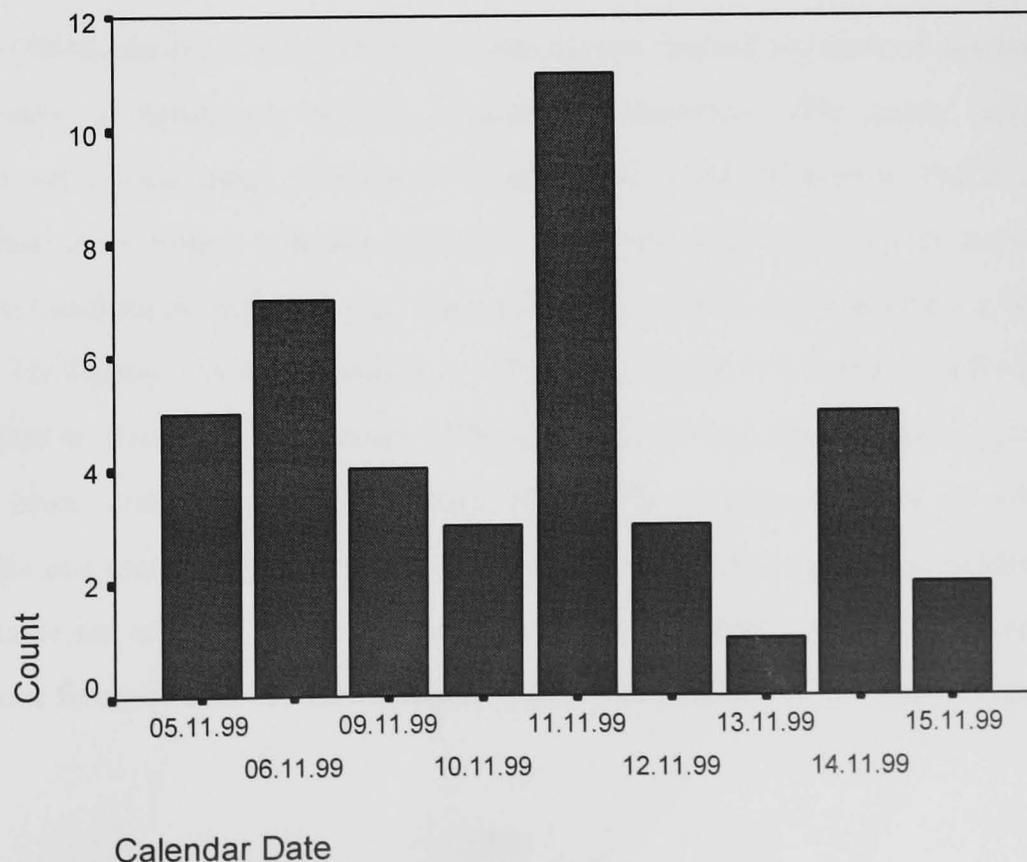
	Frequency	Percent
Daily Mail	10	24.4
The Mirror	10	24.4
The Times	8	19.5
The Independent	4	9.8
The Sun	4	9.8

Sunday Publications

The Sunday Times	2	4.9
Independent on Sunday	1	2.4
Mail on Sunday	1	2.4
Sunday Mirror	1	2.4
Total	41	100.0

Coverage averaged four news stories a day and peaked on November 11th when Williams was acquitted. Despite her acquittal, a deal between Renate Williams and the *Daily Mail* for the exclusive rights to her story as well as her decision to take her former employers to an industrial tribunal on sex discrimination charges, sustained post-trial coverage of the case. Coverage of the case in Sunday publications accounts for the slightly high amount of coverage on the 14th of November.

Figure 7. 1: Distribution of coverage over sampled period.



Prominence of Coverage

Further analysis indicated little variation between newspapers in the genre and prominence of news stories (see Table 7.2). Most of the coverage was hard news stories and they frequently appeared on the inside pages of the newspapers. Of the 41 news stories analysed, 32 were hard news stories representing 78% of the sample whilst the rest were feature length articles, opinion pieces and a filler item. The only editorial on the case appeared in *The Mirror* the day after Williams was acquitted.

Table 7. 2: Genre of News Item across Newspapers

Newspaper	Genre of news item					Total
	HNS*	Editorial	Feature	Opinion Column	News brief/filler	
The Times	7				1	8
The Sunday Times			1	1		2
The Independent	4					4
Independent on Sunday				1		1
Daily Mail	7		2	1		10
Mail on Sunday	1					1
The Sun	4					4
The Mirror	8	1	1			10
Sunday Mirror	1					1
Total	32	1	4	3	1	41

* Hard news story

Tunstall (1996) observed that political commentators formed the bulk of newspaper columnists. However, a significant number of general columnists offer policy oriented opinionated views on a wide range of subjects ranging from child protection, health, race issues, and globalisation. Opinion columns with a focus on the case came mainly from the broadsheets and the mid-market tabloid, e.g., Jeremy Clarkson ('Miss ugly taught me a lesson I'll never forget', *The Sunday Times* 14 November 1999), Joan Smith ('A victim of schoolboy fantasies', *Independent on Sunday* 14 November 1999) and Peter Mckay (Stressed out? You are just plain daffy, Miss. *Daily Mail* 15 November 1999). The relative absence of tabloid columnists perhaps confirms Tunstall's (1996: 290) observations that the policy columnist mould was unsuitable for tabloids as 'the normal columnist's prerogative of set space and no sub-editing does not fit easily into the down market tabloid way of life'. Newspaper columns

are potentially powerfully because they 'are the most weighty and most individual part of a newspaper's output' (Tunstall, 1996: 281).

Of the 41 stories analysed, front-page news items about the trial were featured in *The Times*, the *Daily Mail*, *The Sun* and *The Mirror* respectively (see Table 7.3).

Table 7. 3: Location of article

	Third page	Inside page	Front/inside page*	Total
The Times	3	4	1	8
The Sunday Times		2		2
The Independent		4		4
Independent on Sunday		1		1
Daily Mail	1	7	2	10
Mail on Sunday		1		1
The Sun		3	1	4
The Mirror	1	8	1	10
Sunday Mirror		1		1
TOTAL	5	31	5	41

*Stories that featured on the front-page and continue in subsequent pages within the newspaper.

Further analysis indicated that four of these front-page news items on the case appeared the day after Williams was acquitted. The only front-page item to feature at the beginning of the trial appeared in *The Sun*. ('School miss accused of seducing boy, 15' *The Sun* November 5 1999). This suggests that though *The Sun's* coverage was numerically small, it initially gave the story more prominence reflecting the paper's particularly tabloid news agenda (Harcup and O'Neill 2001), which gives prominence to sex, entertainment, and relies on a heavy personalisation of news stories. Together with the other tabloid newspapers, this particular agenda was significant in creating and maintaining an image of Miss Williams as a female seductress. The remaining front-page news coverage of the case appeared the day following her acquittal. This evidence suggests that the newspapers analysed gave more prominence to the outcome of the trial than to the trial itself.

Content of Coverage

Main Topic

Reporting court proceedings and related events inevitably entails citing what offenders, victims, the judge, prosecution and lawyers say during proceedings. The construction of a

case for or against the conviction of any one on trial is heavily reliant on the evidence of both parties involved in the case. The construction of the prosecution case entails police and prosecution lawyers identifying and selecting facts needed to present a coherent case (Naylor, 1995). A substantial amount of news focused on the trial proceedings and subsequent acquittal of Miss Williams. This focus on the criminal justice process again reflects the general trend reported elsewhere within this work (see Table 7.4).

Table 7. 4: Main focus of News Articles

	Frequency	Percent
Offender Prosecution	19	46.3
Offender acquittal	8	19.5
Offender profile	6	14.6
Specific incidence of CSA	2	4.9
Interest group campaign	2	4.9
Victim profile	2	4.9
Retrospective case	1	2.4
Police investigation	1	2.4
Total	41	100.0

During the proceedings almost equal news coverage was given to the evidence of Williams as to that of the boy who had accused her. News focus on her profile highlighted her background and upbringing - the fact that she was born out of wedlock and brought up by her grandparents and the fact that she had a bohemian attitude to life. Her admission that she had been drunk was repetitively used in the media to construct an image of an emotionally/mentally unstable woman. As would be outlined later, this particular characterisation became the template in which Williams was framed throughout news coverage of the court proceedings. Coverage of the boy who had accused her emphasized the evidence presented in court that most of the pupils at the schools fantasised about their teachers: BOYS PUT BET ON WHO'D BE FIRST TO BED THEIR TEACHERS' (*The Mirror*, 6 November 1999); Spurned pupil made up seduction claim (*The Times* 6 November 1999); Fantasy world of teenage no hopes (*Daily Mail* 11 November 1999).

News Sources

Owing to media reporting of the case being based on the trial of Williams, the most frequently cited source in news stories was Williams herself, quoted as a first source in 14

news stories. Other individuals directly or indirectly connected to the case, (i.e., prosecution lawyer, victim, victim's relatives and offender's relatives) were cited less often (see table 7.5). Some sources were cited directly in news headlines-which is also a standard way in which newspapers try to draw readers' attention. Examples include the following headlines which clearly indicate that the source being quoted or paraphrased was Williams: 'I lied, I was ashamed of myself, I was drunk' (*The Mirror*, 10 November 1999); 'Why a male teacher helped me undress, by drama mistress' (*Daily Mail* 10 November 1999); 'Pupils turned me into target for sex' (*The Mirror* 6 November 1999); 'Who will give me a job now?' (*Daily Mail* 11 November 1999). Instances in which the boy who accused her was cited in the headlines include: 'My teacher took off her clothes, ran into the sea and begged me to have sex with her' (*The Mirror* 6 November 1999).

Table 7. 5: First news source quoted

	Frequency	Percent
Offender	14	34.1
Other	7	17.1
Victim's relatives	5	12.2
Victim	4	9.8
None quoted	2	4.9
Journalist/editor	2	4.9
Individual citizen	2	4.9
Interest group	2	4.9
Prosecution lawyer	1	2.4
Offender's relatives	1	2.4
MP	1	2.4
Total	41	100.0

Other sources cited in the headlines were witnesses presenting evidence (Drama teacher 'bribed boys to conceal affair' (*The Times*, 6 November 1999); Miss 'had sex in cupboard' (*The Sun* 6 November 1999). The interest groups cited during the trial included her union the National Union of Teachers (NUT), which though divided over her conduct had planned to back her in another in a legal action against the school²⁰. The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers was cited when it expressed

²⁰ Following her admission during the trial that she got drunk during a school trip, the union subsequently declined to support her when she began fighting for unfair dismissal.

concern about 'Hundreds leaving teaching due to false abuse claims' (*Independent* 12 November 1999).

The Categorisation of the offence

Indecent exposure and sexual intercourse were the two most frequently cited types of abuse during the trial. Williams was tried and acquitted on two counts of indecent assault. Two in three (68.3% N=28) stories in the sample mentioned the specific charge of indecent assault on which Williams was tried and acquitted. Although the victim had claimed that Williams had had sex with him, when under cross-examination, he acknowledged that this had not been the case. On the direction of the judge this charge was later dropped. This change in direction was significantly reflected in the newspapers as a distinction is made between the crimes Williams was accused of. Consequently, the most frequently cited offence was 'indecent exposure'. During the trial, Williams admitted having gone for a swim in the presence of some of her pupils and having sent Christmas cards to the pupils that might have been suggestive.

Table 7. 6: First type of abuse mentioned

	Frequency	Percent
Indecent exposure	16	39.0
Sex	13	31.7
Not applicable	6	14.6
Sexual assault	3	7.3
Indecent assault	1	2.4
Touching/fondling	1	2.4
Molestation	1	2.4
Total	41	100.0

Summary

The quantitative data suggest that coverage was largely focused on the proceedings of the trial itself with repetitive accounts of what Williams is alleged to have done and much emphasis placed on her evidence in court. As a result, the most frequently cited news source was Williams. Reporting was mainly through hard news stories. Analysis of the prominence of the news stories about the trial showed that an average of 4 news stories

were reported each day during the period of analysis and most of the newspapers located reports of the case on the inside pages. Only *The Mirror* expressed editorial opinion regarding the trial. Variation in coverage between the broadsheets and the tabloids was inconclusive as the analysis indicated that the tabloid *Mirror* and *Daily Mail* accounted for the highest amount of coverage in terms of number of stories, whilst coverage in the broadsheet *Times* significantly matched the high number of news articles appearing in tabloids.

Patterns of text and textual meanings in the Trial of Renate Williams News Headlines

Headlines summarise news stories and serve as a central point of focus by drawing attention to the story. They are equally the most prominent and widely consumed parts of news texts. 'They function as initial summaries of news texts and foreground what the producers regard as most relevant and of maximum interest or appeal to readers' (Brookes, 1995: 467). Headlines summarize and present complex information in a way in which audiences can quickly capture. 'The headline, the leading sentences, the grammar, the choice of words and phrases, the tone are all formulaic to the newspaper style. Different newspapers also have recognizable styles; for example, the style of a 'quality' broadsheet is often discernible from that of a tabloid newspaper, especially in such features as headlines and editorials, using smaller print, a greater number of words, fewer and smaller photographs and less dramatic and colloquial language' (Lupton, 1994: 34). Dominant in the news headlines of the trial of Renate Williams are key participants (victim and offender) and processes (the crime). The sensational and titillating tone of press coverage of the proceedings was set on the very first day of the trial as indicated by the first news headlines about the case:

- 'School boy of 15 'seduced by his skinny dipping drama teacher' (*The Daily Mail*, November 5 1999)
- 'Miss 'had sex in cupboard' (*The Sun*, November 6 1999)
- 'My teacher took off her clothes, ran into the sea and begged me to have sex with her' (*The Mirror*, November 5 1999)
- 'Female teacher 'had sex with pupil, 15' (*The Independent*, November 5 1999)

- 'Drama mistress is accused of seducing boy on school trip' (*The Times* November 5, 1999)

This highly sexualised portrayal of Williams was a prominent theme which endured through out her trial regardless of her subsequent acquittal: 'Cleared: Nude Miss innocent of sex romps with boy, 15' (*The Sun* November 11 1999) and 'Court clears 32-year-old attractive teacher who drunk and swam naked with her 15-year old boy pupils, then wondered why they made up sex fantasies about her' (*The Mirror* November 11 1999). The emphasis on Renate Williams' reckless behaviour not only framed her as guilty by default, but also portrayed her as sexually provocative and probably incapable of being a teacher.

The Criminal Woman

The major theme running through the word choice in most of the headlines is the gendered portrayal of the offender. Though this was particularly evident on the first day of news coverage, this gendered discourse continued to manifest itself during the trial, particularly in the tabloid newspapers as illustrated by the following examples:

Drama **mistress** is accused of seducing boy on school trip (*The Times*, 5 November 1999).

Female teacher 'had sex with pupil, 15' (*Independent*, 5 November 1999)

School **miss**, 32, 'bedded boy, 15 after a naked romp in the sea' (*The Sun*, 5 November 1999)

School **miss** accused of seducing boy, 15 (*The Sun*, 5 November 1999)

Miss 'had sex in cupboard' (*The Sun* 6 November 1999)

Cleared: Nude **Miss** innocent of sex romps with boy, 15 (*The Sun*, 11 November 1999)

My teacher took of **her** clothes, ran into the sea and begged me to have sex with **her** (*The Mirror*, 5 November 1999)

Miss sent me weird card (*The Mirror*, 6 November 1999)

Innocent. Court clears **the attractive 32-year old teacher** who got drunk and swam naked with **her** 15-year-old boy pupils, then wondered why they made up sex fantasies about her (*The Mirror* 11 November 1999)

Miss 'sex addict' (*Sunday Mirror*, 14 November 1999)

The use of words and address forms to refer to Williams' gender (female, mistress, miss, and the pronoun 'her') draws attention to the gender of the offender²¹ as well as her marital status. Equally observable from the headlines is the sexualised presentation of Williams. She is described as 'attractive' and a 'sex addict'. Female criminal offending is a statistically and comparatively rare phenomenon (Heidensohn, 1994). Heidensohn pointed out that women's crimes were fewer, less serious and more rare than men's were. This is reflected in the case of Williams in that the severity of her 'crime' was limited to the fact that she acted in a sexually provocative manner by going for a naked swim with teenage boys looking on. Aside from being an alleged female sex offender, Renate Williams was also a teacher and had responsibility for teenage boys. The use of "Miss" in the news headlines was perhaps an attempt to reflect this. Nevertheless, it simultaneously highlights how in William's case, the expectations breached were both gender and professional. The gendered presentation observed in the coverage of Williams is a feature not implicitly obvious in news headlines that involve male offenders, which frequently omit the gender of the agent: 'Life sentence for rape and murder of schoolgirl, 15' (*The Times*, 11 December 1999); 'Girl 'groped' in lesson' (*The Sun*, 26 September 2000); 'Perv aged 89 is caged for groping kids' (*The Sun* 6 September 2000).

These gendered and sexualised characterisation of Williams was used in both broadsheet and the tabloid press. Such representation reflects previous observations of patterns representation of female criminality which have noted that when incidents of crime involve a female offender, coverage in the media is not only intense but is characterised by a heavily gendered discourse (Carter, 1998, Wykes, 1998, Naylor, 1999).

This particular framing of Williams both reflects and is informed by the society and ideological framework in which these texts are part. For the news media, the breaching of normal expectations is a criterion for ascertaining newsworthiness. At the same time, the gender and social framework within which the media function is one that largely considers

²¹ This is also evident in other news coverage where the offender is a female e.g., 'A year in jail for housewife who seduced 14-year-old boys' (*Daily Mail*, 29 September 2000); 'Mum's 3-in-bed-romp with boys, 14' (*The Sun* 26 September 2000)

women are expected not to commit crimes. As Naylor, (1995) noted, when women are violent, 'these fundamental structures are challenged. Explanations are sought to reduce the contradiction' (Naylor, 1995: 78). Consequently offending by women, particularly violent offending, offers 'not only human drama but sexualised drama and violence. The expectations breached are not just those of normal human interaction but also gender expectations. The story is more readily personalized than stories about men, and can double as entertainment-as soap opera, as humour, or indeed as soft porn' (Naylor, 1995: 80). As a result, female perpetrators of crime are likely to be blamed because they are women (Howitt, 1998: 119).

The Representation of Participants

To further investigate the discursive structure, this part of the textual analysis focused on the dominant themes within which the key participants were constructed.

The main actors in the news event were Williams and a male pupil who for legal reasons, was never identified. A grammatical analysis of the headlines indicated that Williams was predominantly constructed as the active agent (doer): Drama teacher bribed boys to conceal affair' (*The Times*, 6 November 1999); Teacher admits nude swim shame' (*The Times*, 10 November 1999) Female teacher had sex with pupil, 15' (*Independent*, 5 November 1999); School miss, 32, bedded boy, 15 after a naked romp in the sea' (*The Sun*, 5 November 1999); (*The Sun*, 5 November 1999); Miss had sex in cupboard' (*The Sun* 6 November 1999); My teacher took of her clothes, ran into the sea and begged me to have sex with her (*The Mirror*, 5 November 1999).

Although the above headlines simultaneously present the victim in a passive role (that is as an affected participant or receiver of action) certain headlines also portrayed the victim as an agent/doer: 'Spurned pupil made up seduction claim' (*The Times*, 9 November 1999); 'Lads kept asking Miss for nookie'' (*The Sun*, 9 November 1999); 'Boys put bets on who'd be first to bed their teachers' (*The Mirror*, 6 November 1999); 'Boys put bets on who'd be first to bed their teachers' (*The Mirror*, 6 November 1999); 'Pupils turned me into a target for sex' (*The Mirror*, 11 November 1999); 'Boys made up stories of because I refused them sex' (*The Times* 9 November 1999). Implicit from these headlines is the recognition of the offender as affected participant and the victim as the agent.

This emphasis on the victim as a responsible agent can be understood within the framework of particular victim actions that are seen as negative actions. In discussing the discursive representation of minorities, van Dijk (2000) observed that minorities were often represented in passive roles unless they were agents of negative actions such as illegal entry, crime, violence in which case their responsible agency will be emphasized. In this instance, whilst Williams (the offender) was generally seen to have acted irresponsibly, coverage in some sections of the press was equally keen to point out the unreliability of the victim by suggesting that in the course of the trial, 'Williams had been found to be a victim of terrible untruths by the boy and his peers, truths which it was argued in court, amounted to the conspiracy to have her sacked' (*The Independent*, 13 November 1999).

The conception of the victim's actions as negative actions is further reinforced by constructions that considered Williams a victim of teenage male pupil fantasies: 'Fantasy world of teenage no hopes', (*Daily Mail* 11 November, 1999). This position was reflected in a comment by *Sunday Times* columnist, Jeremy Clarkson: 'Really and truly, you can't put a stunning 32-year-old skinny dipper in charge of a 15-year-old boy whose hormones have just shifted into sixth gear at 180mph. He is going to fantasise about her into the wee small hours. And he'll keep fantasising throughout the trial and possibly to his mid-thirties' (*Sunday Times*, 14 November 1999).

The Offender

A major theme underlining the news framing of Williams during and after her trial was the thematic stress on feminine instability. This was characteristic of both broadsheet and tabloid representation. This theme can be broken into two categories. Both are informed by Williams' background and presume a mental and emotional instability that contribute to:

Her being unable to cope as a teacher of young adolescent boys.

Her free spirit/bohemian life.

Even when reports of Williams did appear to be sympathetic, emphasis on her background subtly suggested her instability and implicit guilt. The particular discursive strategies, through which the media represented Williams, are discussed below.

Unstable and can't cope

The framing of Williams as an unstable and weak character was accomplished through direct characterisation of her as volatile. For example:

'Her inability to get them to behave left her "increasingly stressed and exhausted" she said but when she approached colleagues for assistance, her concerns were dismissed as ordinary panics of a newly qualified teacher. Depressed, she took to drink and to Valium, and in court confessed to being under the influence of alcohol on the night of one of the two assaults she was falsely accused of committing against one of her drama pupils. (*The Independent* 13 November 1999).

'Miss Williams, newly qualified and in her first full-time post...' (*Daily Mail*, November 11, 1999)

'Free spirit thought she was in wrong job' (*The Times*, 11 November 1999) (sub-headline)

And

'Ms Williams never claimed her own conduct was exemplary. She was in her first job as a drama teacher at a boys' boarding school in Worcestershire. She found the boys disruptive and aggressive, and faced a barrage of sexual innuendo. She had the good sense to complain that she felt overworked to her superiors, who brushed her worries aside. She began to drink heavily and take tranquillisers, beginning a sequence of events that led to her suspension and dismissal'. (*Independent on Sunday*, 14 November 1999).

This portrayal of Williams equally saw her as inadequate and unsuitable for the job: 'Her performance was rated as "satisfactory" [...] Her drama classes comprised only of a handful of boys' (*The Times* 11 November 1999) and 'Williams did not only have a chequered career-including training as a trapeze artist-but also took with her disturbing emotional baggage and a self-confessed tendency to be "off the wall" and drink under pressure. The question is, what was she doing in charge of a group of young people at all?' (*The Sunday Times* 14 November 1999). The emphasis on Renate Williams' reckless behaviour not only framed her as guilty by default but portrayed her as sexually

provocative and probably incapable of being a teacher- she was ‘a newly qualified teacher’, who pursued a ‘rebel’s Bohemian life’ (*The Mirror* November 11 1999) and a ‘free spirit [who] thought she was in the wrong job’ (*The Times* November 11 1999).

What seems to emerge from this particular portrayal of Williams is that she was unsuitable for the position and incapable of the job. Framing and categorising Williams in this way reproduced established assumptions about female offenders and ascribed gender roles in society. The assumption of a feminine frailty and instability in media explanations of crimes by women is a theme identified by Naylor (1995).

Unstable and wild bohemian.

During the trial, Williams admitted that she had been drunk on the night she was alleged to have assaulted one her pupils. The result of her admission was that the image of a drunken sexual predator became a predominant theme through which she was subsequently portrayed by the media both during and after the trial. For example:

‘Sex case teacher ‘too drunk to climb stairs’ (*Independent* 6 November 1999)
(headline)

‘Drama teacher was weird but fun. Free spirit thought she was in wrong job’ (*The Times*, 11 November 1999) (headline)

‘After the charges were brought, and suffering from stress and alcoholism, she checked into a Bournemouth clinic during which she had a long relationship with another patient’ (*The Sunday Times*, 14 November 1999) (news text)

‘Renate Williams was as much a rebel as some of the children she taught. As a youngster ...she rejected her parents’ middle class lifestyle...And as a spiky haired teenager she knocked out her front teeth in an accident on her boyfriend’s motorbike...But by 16 she was a drama student causing a stir at Poole Art College by smoking cannabis in the canteen,...she loved to strip off and swim naked’ (*The Mirror* 11 November 1999) (news text).

These depictions were reinforced by citing anonymous sources who all claimed to have known Williams. She was described as a 'former dance artist', 'a failed trapeze artist', while a news report also stated that her friends described her as 'impulsive and unpredictable'. One of the anonymously cited friends of Miss Williams from her college days described her as one who "exuded sexuality and loved attention from men" (*The Sunday Times*, 14 November 1999). The *Sunday Mirror* also claimed that a former patient of a sex addiction clinic where Williams was reported to have sought therapy described her as "disruptive and manipulative" (14 November 1999). The following depiction from *The Sunday Times* combines both discursive strategies that were employed in presenting her as mentally and emotionally unstable.

'They did not know that the flipside of William's spontaneity was a deep-seated emotional instability. She was brought up by her grandparents, Basil and Betty, a quiet middle class couple [...] William's real mother is their daughter Linda, whom she knew as her sister. Williams father is a Frenchman who ran off when she was a baby and did not see her for 22 years. Her grandparents who had adopted her have told friends they believe her "free spirit" and wanderlust is inherited from him. Even as a child, she was a show off who would perform plays for visitors. Later on at Poole art College, she was known for being "wild", tearing around in a motorbike with a boyfriend called Yeti and living in a caravan. She smoked cannabis in the canteen, drank and began to go barefoot, a habit she still has. [...] She has never settled. Flitting from job to job...?' (*The Sunday Times*, 14 November 1999).

This is a particularly pathological construction of Williams and could possibly enable the perception of Williams as likely to commit the crime. Her upbringing and her free spiritedness are implicitly used as modes of focus to frame her as defective. The stress on William's background as being brought up by her grandparents and her tendency to show off, reinforce the position that she came from a broken home and was perhaps volatile. Such framing replicate one of the myths about child sexual abuse that its perpetrators come from poor background or broken/unstable families (Driver, 1989). Closely related to the theme of 'a wild and free spirited' woman is that which characterised Williams as a seductress.

The Offender as Seductress

Certain accounts also demonstrate how readily sections of the press assumed the 'seductress' metaphor of construction female offending. The following headline on the front page of *The Mirror* illustrates this (See Figure 7.2): 'INNOCENT. Court clears the attractive 32-year old teacher who got drunk and swam naked with her 15-year-old boy pupils, then wondered why they made up sex fantasies about her (*The Mirror* 11 November 1999).

Figure 7. 2: *The Mirror* 11 November 1999



News stories similarly highlighted Williams' look: 'A **pretty drama teacher** seduced a 15-year-old pupil after swimming naked in the sea as he and his classmates...' (*Daily Mail*, 5 November 1999) and; 'Although proud of her unconventional image, the **attractive brunette** admits to...' (*Daily Mail*, 11 November). After the trial, Williams' sexual history still became the subject of media scrutiny when it emerged that she had received treatment at a sex addiction clinic in June that year. This prompted headlines such as: 'Cleared teacher's sex clinic shame' (*Sunday Mirror*, 14 November 1999) and 'Miss

sex addict' (*The Mirror*, 15 November 1999). Implicit from such headlines is the suggestion that Williams was capable of the crimes for which she had been acquitted. Such construction can be related to the Madonna/whore explanation that Naylor (1995) identified in the presentation of violent women. Whereas, in such instances, a woman's sexual history was invoked to put her credibility into doubt, in this instance, her sexual history as well as her looks is implicitly used as a means to ascribe culpability.

Results from the content analysis indicated the only editorial that focused on the case appeared in *The Mirror*. Deacon et al, (1999) have observed that 'the links between news and editorial opinion are developed most powerfully through the thematic structure but strategically supported by the discourse schema of the news narrative' (Deacon et al, 1999: 173). The thematic structures examined so far have emerged from different newspapers but combined to produce a news discourse that saw Williams as frail, unstable, thoughtless and probably capable of criminality. *The Mirror's* editorial reflected and supported this general thematic structure. Its position was that: 'This was a ridiculous behaviour for any woman. But for one with responsibilities of a teacher it was outrageous' (*The Mirror*, November 11 1999). It has been noted elsewhere that more than any other genre of news stories, editorials represent the views of the media as an institution (Booth, 2000). *The Mirror's* editorial encapsulates and reflects the news framing of Williams during her trial. On a wider context, it also signals the readiness with which women's criminality is perceived in the context as having breached normal gender expectations. The social relations on which women's role in society have been built do not easily tolerate deviant or even 'different' women.

How lexical choices support the thematic structure

The overall thematic structure (sexualised presentation of Williams) is supported mainly through the categorisation of Williams as devious and reckless. Categorising people and phenomena are part of the world of the popular press (Fowler, 1991). In the course of the trial, Miss Williams' identity quickly merged into a noun phrase with the word "drama" being a recurrent feature. News headlines and texts frequently described her as a 'drama mistress', 'drama teacher' and or 'drama queen'. The choice of this particular lexical metaphor though informed by Williams' career as a drama teacher, became central to the

portrayal of Williams. Its being repetitively used throughout coverage of the trial, possibly connote an extreme personality - the 'unreal' and 'exaggerated'. As Fowler (1991) observed 'category labels such as these provide a good deal about the structure of the ideological world represented by a newspaper or a certain type of newspaper. In a simple way, they provide a list of preoccupations of the paper...' (Fowler, 1991: 93). The fact that she was a drama teacher is almost used to underline her being guilty by default.

The Crime

Naylor observed that discussions that emphasise women's mental frailty also 'permit the denial of responsibility in (some) cases of battered women who kill, and women who kill their children' (Naylor, 1995: 86). This observation is partly reflected in the coverage of Williams. Though the news texts did indicate that she had indecently exposed herself to the pupils, throughout the trial, news headlines predominantly referred to her crime as a 'seduction' or an 'affair' (presuming a relationship):

'Boy, 15, tells of **romps** with magical seductive Ren aged 32'; 'Lads kept asking miss for **nookie**' (*The Sun*, 9 November 1999); 'School boy of 15 '**seduced** by his skinny dipping drama teacher' (*Daily Mail* 5 November 1999); 'She is also accused of **romping** with the boy in the studio after they **canoodled** in a field by the Worcestershire school' (*The Sun*, 6 November 1999). Similar words were still used at the end of the trial: 'CLEARED: Nude Miss innocent of sex **romps** with boy, 15' (*The Sun*, 11 November, 1999); 'Skinny-dipping school mistress cleared of **seducing** 15-year old pupil' (*Daily Mail*, 11 November 1999). Although it could be reasonable to argue that these particular constructions are characteristic of tabloid media language, it is important that such constructions are challenged because the particular choice of words not only minimises sexual offending against children, but also in this case portray the crime as particularly feminine. Such words would rarely be used in reporting a similar offence if the offender was an adult man and the victim an adolescent teenager.

An exception to this particular representation is that offered by the *Sunday Mirror*, which actually perceived William's crime as molestation: 'The drama teacher cleared of **molesting** a schoolboy was thrown out of a sex addiction clinic' (14 November 1999).

The Victim

News accounts were not particularly sympathetic towards Williams' alleged victim either. News reports described pupils in Williams' school as recalcitrant: 'She found the boys disruptive and aggressive, and faced a barrage of sexual innuendo' (*Independent on Sunday* November 14 1999); and 'He [the accuser] was described as "looking like the Harry Enfield character of the truculent adolescent". With prominent buck teeth and lank black hair, he wore a floppy hat, baggy T-shirt and combat trousers.' (*The Times*, November 11 1999). This image of the truculent, disruptive, and sexualised teenager not only indicated that the boy's allegations should not be taken seriously, but typified some of the contradictory images of children that run in the media. Whereas media accounts of children in the 1980s and characterised them as "victims", the 1990s has seen an increase in media accounts of children as "villains" (Franklin, 2002).

Writing in *The Independent*, author Dave Hill, advanced the suggestion that the fact that the boy was an adolescent entering puberty possibly explained his actions: 'Children's earliest sexual fantasies - usually utterly harmless and naïve - are often about teachers. It is hardly a secret that these feelings can develop into crushes. So, when children enter their late teens, may it not be almost logical for them to feel attracted to a person they respect and trust and who may not be many years older than they are? And does any adult person, teacher or otherwise, honestly believe that children of a late school age cannot communicate a sexual allure?' (*The Independent* 13 November 1999). Two meanings can simultaneously be drawn from these particular representations of adolescent boys: It could, on the one hand, serve to challenge the credibility of the victim (an image already established by the image of the aggressive and delinquent teenager), whilst, on the other hand can be understood as broader social concern about contemporary adolescent masculinity. Within this conception of adolescent masculinity, 'boys in secondary schools are often ferociously sexist as a way of demonstrating their masculinity' (Dave Hill in *The Independent* 13 November 1999). Williams' teenage pupils having been depicted as 'disruptive and aggressive' amply demonstrate this. The latter understanding is a concept that needs further theorising.

Media representations of children as deviant, irresponsible and anti-social are one of two contradictory images of children that Franklin (2002) identified. When not represented in this way, children were presented as passive, dependent and vulnerable

(Franklin, 2002). The characterisation of Williams' accuser as 'disruptive and aggressive' partly reflects Franklin's observations. The image of the delinquent and highly sexual teenager is increasingly central to the construction of children as "villains"²². In fact as shall be demonstrated, the subsequent summation of the judge in trial of Gary Glitter that 'there is 14 and there is 14' would come to encapsulate and reflect this contradictory social construction of children. As Franklin (2002: 38) forcefully argued, such continuing media representation and public perception of children promote a 'continuing emphasis on containment and control in criminal justice policy'. This was evidenced in a Home Office consultation document on reforming the law on sexual offences – *Setting the Boundaries* in July 2000. It recommended amongst others the introduction of an offence of 'sexual activity between minors', and non-criminal interventions for under 16s who mutually agree to underage sex (Home Office, July 2000).

Discussion

This analysis of the press coverage of this case has reflected on the reporting and the characterisation of sex offending by a woman. Particular attention has been paid to the representation of the female sex offender. Semantic analyses of the headlines indicated a preference for themes that emphasized and appalled at 'female criminality'. The media accounts of Renate Williams trial pre-empted guilt particularly on the first day of coverage. Her representation throughout the trial was highly sexualised with many of the articles emphasising that she had been sexually provocative and focusing on the fact that she had 'seduced' her pupil. Though subsequently acquitted, she remained 'guilty' in the media. Despite her acquittal, coverage of Williams during and after the court trial significantly focused her gender ('young and slim', 'attractive brunette'), her background and her reputation ('weird, wild and wacky').

It is evident that sexism partly informed and sustained the coverage of Renate Williams'. News headlines drew attention to two concepts: her gender and marital

²² For instance 'Sex at 11, Mum at 12-A story to shock Britain' (*The Sun*, 4 July 1997); 'Dad, 13 and his twins: story that shames Britain' (*News of the World*, 5 December 1999); 'Internet pervert aged 13' (*The Sun* 15 May 2001); 'Girl of 12 put under court order for sex attacks' (*The Independent* 9 November 1999); 'Girl, 12, on sex offender list' (*The Times*, 9 November 1999); 'Boy, 11, held over rape of 12 year old' (*The Mirror*, 7 February 2000); 'Forbidden love affair: pet shop owner faces sex charges after a 12 month relationship with a 14-year-old girl' (*Sheffield Star* 14 August 2001).

status. This theme was prevalent in the coverage throughout her trial and even after her acquittal, when some news coverage still portrayed her as guilty and reckless. Such coverage can be explained by broader society-wide values that found Williams in breach of both normal expectations of teacher-pupil relationships and gender expectations. A highly sexualised discursive representation of Williams paralleled with that of 'disruptive, aggressive and highly sexual' teenage boys combined to produce a discourse that in essence challenged the severity of the offence whilst blaming both the offender and the victim. Thus, even when the expression of disdain toward Williams was implied, this was actually toned down by her action being characterised as a 'romp'. It perhaps demonstrates how particularly sexualised and gendered discourses in the media representation of female sex offenders, function to produce a discursive structure that condemns the criminal woman whilst minimising her crime through labels like 'nookie' and making her look silly. In representing Williams as an attractive brown-haired woman with a wild bohemian past, readers are encouraged to see her as capable of such a crime.

While one could reasonably argue that, compared to other incidents of child sexual abuse where there was actually some form of physical contact between the perpetrator and the victim, Williams' offence was considerably less serious than that of similar female offenders²³, this particular framework implicitly functioned to shift media attention from the crime to Williams herself. The resultant news discourse perpetuated and reinforced stereotypes of women sex offenders as mentally unstable and possibly mad or bad. These stereotypes are derived from broader societal perceptions that consider women as incapable of crime. Explaining women's offending in terms of irrational behaviour and gender is one of the assumptions that have been challenged by feminists because such explanations can potentially permit the denial of responsibility for actions (Naylor, 1995).

²³ For instance Amy Gering who was cleared of sexually assaulting a pupil in January 2002 but later confessed to having had sex with another people in a previous school. In September 2000, Frances Edmonds was sentenced to a year in jail for having sex with two 14-year old boys: 'A year in jail for housewife who seduced 14-year-old boys' (*Daily Mail*, 29 September 2000). These all point towards a difference in the degrees of offensiveness in child sexual abuse incidents.

CHAPTER 8

THE CASE OF GARY GLITTER

Background

The pop star Gary Glitter was first arrested for downloading and possessing child pornography from the Internet in 1997. A damaged home computer he had taken for repairs to a PC World store was found to have large files of pornographic pictures of children. Following his arrest and subsequent charge in 1997, a former girlfriend came forward with allegations that she had had a sexual relationship with the pop star since she was 14. Glitter was subsequently charged for sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl. During his trial on under-age sex charges, it was revealed that following a deal with the Sunday tabloid *News of the World* in 1997, his accuser stood to make £25,000 if Glitter was found guilty. This disclosure rendered the woman's evidence questionable and the judge subsequently directed the jury to consider that. On November 12 1999, Glitter was cleared of the sexual assault charges but pleaded guilty to 54 counts of downloading child pornography from the Internet. He was convicted and given a four-month jail sentence. The trial and events surrounding it raised profound questions not only about child sexual abuse, but also about the ethics of chequebook journalism, specifically the commodification of witness testimonies. It also highlighted the nature and context in which intrafamilial abuse occurred. The publicity surrounding the trial and its verdict, owed much to the combination of sex and the image of a glam rock icon/celebrity. Despite the exhaustive press coverage, whether the story would have received the attention it did, if Gary Glitter had not been the main character, remains questionable. Had it not been for the accidental discovery by the PC World technician servicing his computer in 1997, it is doubtful if the private consumption of child pornography would ever have received such publicity.

Amount and Range of coverage

The trial of Gary Glitter received comparatively more coverage in the newspapers than the trial of Renate Williams (see Table 8.1). Amongst the sampled papers, only *The Sunday*

Times and the *Mail on Sunday* did not carry any stories related to the trial or its verdict. Of the 87 articles analysed, 18 appeared in *The Sun* representing 20.7% of the sample. *The Mirror* closely followed this with 17 news stories representing 19.5 % of the sampled news stories. Once again the statistics indicate that amount of coverage in *The Times* was closely matched by that observed in the daily tabloid newspapers. The number of news stories in the paper (15) accounted for 17% of the entire coverage and surpassed the amount of coverage in the *Daily Mail*.

The greatest amount of news coverage was on the 13th of November 1999 following Glitter's conviction. Given that Glitter's conviction took place on a Friday, the story was still newsworthy enough to make it to the Sunday publications. However, only the *Independent on Sunday*, the *Sunday Mirror* and *News of the World* published any stories related to the trial.

Table 8. 1: Count of News Stories within Newspapers during the Time Frame

	The Times	The Indi.	IOS	DM	The Sun	NoW	The Mirror	SM	Total
10.11.99	2			1	3		2		8
11.11.99	1	1		2	1		1		6
12.11.99	1	1		1			1		4
13.11.99	6	2		5	9		10		32
14.11.99			6			5		5	16
15.11.99	2				1				3
16.11.99	1	1		2	1		1		6
17.11.99				1					1
18.11.99	1	2		1	2		1		7
20.11.99					1		1		2
21.11.99						1			1
23.11.99	1								1
Total	15	7	6	13	18	6	17	5	87

Forty-six percent (N=40) of the news items were hard news articles. A further 24.1% were brief news items whilst 16.1% were feature-length pieces. Opinion columns and editorials made up 8% and 5.7% of news coverage during the trial of Gary Glitter. *The Independent on Sunday*, *The Sun*, *News of the World*, *The Mirror* and the *Sunday Mirror* were the only papers to offer editorial comments about the trial and sentence. However, there was variation in the editorial focus of each newspaper.

During Glitter's trial, it was revealed that following a deal with *News of the World* his alleged victim Allison Brown stood to earn £25,000 if Glitter was convicted. *The Independent on Sunday's* editorial of 14 November 1999, headlined 'Cheque-book justice' highlighted the inadequacy of press self-regulation in areas such as the payment of witnesses in trials. On the same day, an editorial in the *News of the World* attempted to explain and justify the paper's payment to Allison Brown: 'The truth about Glitter witness and our £25,000' (*News of the World*, 14 November 1999). Both *The Mirror* and the *Sunday Mirror* however focused on the need to regulate the access and distribution of child pornography online:

'Act to net pervert's like Glitter' (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999)

'Crack down on this web of child porn' (*Sunday Mirror*, 14 November 1999)

Under the headline 'Evil pervert', *The Sun*, in condemning the sentence handed to Glitter, advocated that 'those who watch child computer porn should be jailed for 20 years. And evil men who make it should be locked away forever' (*The Sun*, 13 November 1999)²⁴. The variation in editorial focus highlights the varying agenda of each newspaper. Respective newspaper agendas have been identified as significant in determining the reporting of stories (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001). These identified agendas are equally significant in determining the stories that get editorial treatment. *The News of World's* editorial approach can be understood within the context of its involvement in the case by way of having previously paid Glitter's accuser for exclusive rights to the story.

Prominence of Coverage

Analysis of the location of news articles, indicated that the majority of news stories on the Glitter trial (N=58) were published on the inside pages of the newspapers, representing 66.7% of the sampled stories. A further 15 news stories related to the trial were placed on the second pages, whilst only nine of the news articles surveyed were positioned on the front page. Glitter's celebrity status, the particular context of his trial (retrospective incidence of underage sex) and subsequent conviction on charges of child pornography as

²⁴ This stand is significant in that when *News of the World* launched its campaign for Sarah's Law (part of which advocated a life sentence for convicted paedophiles), *The Sun* did not offer its support for this.

well as the debate about chequebook journalism which developed from the case, accounted for the prominence of news stories related to his trial and conviction.

Content of Coverage

Main focus

Table 8.2 indicates that within the entire sample of newspapers, a significant amount of total coverage was focused on the trial, conviction and subsequent sentencing of Gary Glitter (41.3%). Given Glitter's celebrity status and the nature of his crimes, attention to his profile as a rock musician and the nature of the crime of Internet pornography were the focus of 20 news items. There was little variation in the main focus of coverage across the different newspapers.

Table 8. 2: Focus of News Articles

	Frequency	Percent
Conviction/sentence	19	21.8
Offender Prosecution	17	19.5
Offender profile	10	11.5
Child pornography	10	11.5
Press regulation	6	6.9
Victim profile	5	5.7
Official inquiry	3	3.4
Police investigation	3	3.4
Offender acquittal	2	2.3
Existing law	2	2.3
Retrospective case	2	2.3
Other	2	2.3
Court ruling	1	1.1
Proposed law	1	1.1
Specific incidence of CSA	1	1.1
Offender death	1	1.1
Victim death	1	1.1
Child protection	1	1.1
Total	87	100.0

Categorisation of the Offence

Glitter was not convicted for the sexual abuse charges brought forward by Allison Brown, but was found guilty of downloading over 4000 images of child pornography. In reporting the trial, a significant majority of news articles (N=70) identified the nature of abuse that Glitter was said to have perpetrated. In view of the fact that Glitter had first been arrested for possessing child pornography on the Internet in 1997 and was subsequently convicted on related charges, child pornography was the most frequently mentioned type of abuse.

Table 8. 3 First type of abuse mentioned in news articles

	Frequency	Percent
Pornography	34	39.1
Not applicable	17	19.5
Sex	13	14.9
Sexual assault	12	13.8
Indecent assault	5	5.7
General (sexual abuse)	3	3.4
Indecent exposure	2	2.3
Kissing	1	1.1
Total	87	100.0

Fifty-nine news articles (67.8%) referred to the specific charges brought against Glitter. Of these, 64.4% mentioned charges related to child pornography. Charges of indecent assault and of sexual assault were identified in a further 27.1% and 23.7% of news articles respectively. Terminology such as 'underage sex' 'serious sex offending' and 'serious sexual assault' were used to describe the charges of abuse brought by Allison Brown. Previous research has observed that newspapers frequently used the language of criminal justice system when describing crimes by individuals than say in reference to corporate defendants. In research examining media coverage of corporate crime fixing, Evans and Lundman (1983) observed that the language of criminality was used more frequently in articles concerning individuals and less frequently when the criminal actions involved corporate defendants. This finding appears to reflect that view. It also signals a trend toward the employment and reflection of the language of criminality within the news media.

News Sources

Unlike the trial of Renate Williams, the most frequently cited source in news stories during the trial of Gary Glitter was the judge (see Table 8.4).

Table 8. 4: first news source quoted

	Frequency	Percent
None quoted	17	19.5
Judge/magistrate	17	19.5
Victim	11	12.6
Defence lawyer	7	8.0
Other	7	8.0
Prosecution lawyer	4	4.6
Minister	4	4.6
Journalist/editor	4	4.6
Offender	3	3.4
Police	2	2.3
Victim's relatives	2	2.3
Offender's relatives	2	2.3
Charity organization	2	2.3
Document/memo	2	2.3
Individual citizen	1	1.1
Interest group	1	1.1
Government spokesperson	1	1.1
Total	87	100.0

Further analysis indicated that the high percentage of news quotes from the judge was a result of coverage on the 13th of November. This was mainly because of comments made by the judge in summing-up before the jury considered its verdict on under age sex charges against Glitter²⁵. In fact, the judge's comments became news in their own right²⁶.

²⁵ In summing-up, the judge told the jury 'there is 14 and there is 14. Some 14-year-olds look like sophisticated young ladies, a nightmare for publicans. And some 14-year-olds still look like little girls. You may wish to consider which category the girl was in'. His comments infuriated interest group campaigners such as the Children's Society, which insisted that a 14-year-old regardless of her looks was entitled to legal protection as stipulated within child protection laws (*The Sun*, 13 November 1999).

²⁶ 'There is 14 and there is 14' (*The Observer*, 14 November 1999).

Distribution of coverage: Implications

The trial of Gary Glitter received significantly more coverage than that of Renate Williams. Although the bulk of the coverage was found in the daily tabloids, coverage in *The Times* was found to closely match that in the tabloids. The similarities between coverage in *The Times* and tabloid newspapers was equally observed in the analysis of the extent of coverage given to the trial of Renate Williams.

The trial of Renate Williams occurred shortly before that of Gary Glitter. Given the timing and bearing in mind the fact that adult sexual offending against children thematically linked both trials, it is possible to make comparisons in the way the media covered both trials. The two incidents, though thematically linked, were different mainly because of the protagonists involved and the context and nature of abuse charges each faced. Williams' case was unusual in that she was a woman and child sex offending by women is comparatively rare than similar offending by men. Secondly, she was a teacher, meaning she was in a position of trust in relation to her adolescent pupils. These factors ensured that her trial received intense media coverage. A similarly intense coverage accompanied the trial of Gary Glitter. The context here was that he was a celebrity and though he was being tried on charges of under age sex, his involvement with Internet child pornography was already in the public domain following his arrest in 1997. Although Glitter was tried of having under-age sex with a 14-year-old, it was his conviction and sentencing on child pornographic charges that led to the greatest amount of coverage. Moreover, the fact that he was sentenced on a Friday made the story current enough for the Sunday publications to cover. Consequently, Sunday newspaper coverage was comparatively higher than that observed in the case of Renate Williams and the North Wales inquiry. News coverage during the trial mainly focused on the retrospective allegations brought against Glitter as well as his fading profile as a rock star.

These respective circumstances informed the extent and nature of coverage of each case in the media. Consequently, though Williams' was acquitted, her gender and her status in relation to the victim ensured intense news media coverage. However, compared to Williams, Glitter was a celebrity figure and Internet child pornography for which he

was subsequently convicted was by then a relatively new crime²⁷. Consequently, Glitter's trial received more prominence in the media than that of Williams. In addition, more newspapers expressed editorial viewpoints about Glitter's trial and sentencing than was the case with Renate Williams. In Glitter's case, linking his conviction to broader debates about controlling the Internet was a central focus. It is equally possible to speculate that coverage of both cases might have been influenced by the fact that, the evidence of the main witness in both cases became questionable because of their presumed motives. Both cases equally significantly underscored the manner in which both men and women are framed as victims and offenders.

To identify and discuss the dominant discursive strategies in media coverage of Glitter's trial, a qualitative assessment of the tone and nature of coverage given to the case, the offender and the victim during the trial is undertaken in the subsequent section.

Textual Analysis of the trial of Gary Glitter

The quantitative content analysis indicated that prominence was given to the criminal justice process (the trial, conviction and sentencing) as the major news focus in the Gary Glitter case. Accordingly, both news headlines and texts reflected these themes. Within the sampled news stories, the headlines can be categorised into the following themes: Glitter's guilt and conviction, the pitfalls of chequebook journalism, particularly with regards to witnesses in criminal proceedings, the internet as a dangerous technology facilitating child abuse, the demise of Glitter's pop career. Generally, the analysis of the headlines indicated a preference for topics that focused on Glitter and his crime and less on the role of the media in jeopardizing the trial.

Glitter as sexual predator

The content analysis indicated that Glitter's prosecution, conviction and sentencing was the major focus in 41.3% of the news stories. The prominence of this particular topic was reflected in news headlines the day after the trial: Glitter 'used besotted girl fan for sex'

²⁷ Some researchers actually credit Glitter with enabling internet child pornography to assume a high profile in public conscience (Gavin Sutter, 2000).

(*The Times* 10 November 1999); Glitter 'sexually assaulted' fan aged 14 for years (*Independent* 10 November 1999); Glitter put me through sex hell at 14 (*The Sun*, 10 November 1999); I told Gary I was a virgin. he just got on top of me while I lay still (*The Mirror*, 10 November 1999); 'Sex abuser Gary Glitter betrayed the trust of a besotted fan of 14' (*Daily Mail* 10 November 1999). These headlines served to define the situation and reflect the main crime Glitter is accused of (sex with an underage fan). Following his acquittal on underage sex charges, the *News of the World* still printed news stories to point towards him being a sexual offender: 'Glitter and Cuban girl, 11' and 'Beast 'raped me aged 8 in his girl's bed'' (14 November 1999) He is actively identified as agent in all the headlines. Although the use of quotes and paraphrasing in the headlines function to mitigate the accusation by indicating that it was a statement from another participant involved in the case (i.e. prosecutor, accuser, victim), they can nevertheless result in the intrinsic framing of Glitter in the minds of the audience as 'having done it'. Evident from the above headlines is the portrayal of Glitter as one who had breached his position of trust in relation to a teenage girl.

Although Glitter was cleared of underage sex charges, he was convicted of downloading child pornography on the Internet. Following his conviction, headlines assumed different perspectives. Headlines in *The Independent*, *The Mirror* and the *Daily Mail* simply focused on the fact that Glitter had been sentenced to jail: 'Glitter is jailed for 4000 child pornography images' (*The Independent* 13 November 1999); and 'Glitter jailed for evil obsession' (*Daily Mail* 13 November 1999). Reporting Glitter's conviction in more sensational tabloid styles, a full front-page article accompanying a close-up picture of Glitter, in *The Mirror* was accompanied by the headline 'DEPRAVED' in bold uppercase letters with a close up photograph of Glitter accompanied by three sub-headlines describing his sentence (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 8. 1: Front page of *The Mirror*, 13 November 1999



Headlines in *The Times* and *The Sun* focused in the perceived leniency of the sentence: ‘Child porn sentence condemned’ (*The Times*, 13 November 1999). *The Sun*’s headline also focused on the perceived inadequacy of the sentence in a rather sensational tone (‘Fury as Glitter gets only 4 months’ *The Sun*, 13 November 1999).

The “evil monster”-characterising the child sex offender

The discursive ‘othering’ of child sex offenders is an issue identified by previous research and reflected in this analysis (Kitzinger, 1999). During the trial, sentencing and subsequent release of Gary Glitter, he was variously described as: ‘pervert’, ‘depraved’, ‘evil’, ‘monster’, and a ‘sicko’. These characterisations, predominantly evoked in the tabloid

press, stressed the 'otherness' (implying unusual, different, abnormal) of sexual offenders like Glitter who abuse children.

These stereotypes render child sex abusers to be seen as not normal, a different calibre of human being. It places abusers outside society (Kitzinger, 1999). Significantly, from the feminist perspective, such framing confines the discussion of child sexual abuse to issues other than adult male sexuality and control (Kelly, 1996). The predominant use of the narratives of 'otherness' in the discourse about child abuse promotes the view that child sexual abuse is perpetrated by a group of people with deviant sexuality. The resultant narrowing of public debate about the prevalence of child sexual abuse also minimises the fact that most sexual offenders are known to their victims. A fact made even more apparent by the case itself-Glitter being a family friend of his victim.

This failure critically to examine the social construction of masculinity, male sexuality and the family is a feature of press coverage previously identified as characteristic of child sexual abuse news (Kitzinger and Skidmore, 1996). In a subsequent examination of media coverage of 'paedophiles-in-the-community', Kitzinger (1999) argued that defining those who sexually abuse children as 'beasts' and 'evil monsters' enables the media to focus on abusers as society's outcasts and not part of society. Categorising the paedophile as one who is outside society and not within it has implications for policy in that 'the fact that most children are assaulted by someone they know virtually disappears from the debate and policies which would be deemed unacceptable if applied to 'ordinary men' become allowable' (Kitzinger, 1999: 218). This is possibly informed by a broader social context where 'the ontological importance given to the heterosexual "family" as an institutional course for the preservation and reproduction of moral order has been central to a discursive construction of the Social *per se* within modernity' (Collier, 2001: 237). Within this collective concern to promote and protect marriage and the family as the norm, discussions about familial abuse are sidelined.

Related to the characteristic 'othering' of Glitter was the construction of his upbringing as coming from a working-class background. He was illegitimate, and had been cared for by his grandparents who, unable to cope, had sent him into care. He had in later life suffered a broken marriage:

‘Glitter was born plain Paul Gadd to a charlady mum Margarita and an unknown father who already had a wife and six children. He and his half brother Tony-also illegitimate -were brought up by his granny. They later went into a children’s home. He went on the club circuit and at 19, he married Ann Murton. They had two children Paul, 35, and Sarah, 33. But the marriage was over by 1972.’ (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999: 5).

Emphasis on his background as coming from a broken home, and the blaming of his mother was not only confined to the tabloids as the following examples illustrate:

‘Paul Gadd, the illegitimate son of a cleaning lady and a father he never knew had transformed himself into the godfather of glam rock, king of comebacks...’ (*The Times* 13/11/99: 3).

‘Born to Paul Francis Gadd of Banbury, Oxfordshire he was illegitimate and never met his father. He was brought up by his grandmother and mother, who could not always cope. At the age of 10 he and his brother were put into care. He ran away constantly to London and at the age of 12 was performing in clubs such as La Condor, owned by the Krays’ (*The Independent* 13 November 1999)

He was considered an ‘ageing rocker’ whose drug use and heavy drinking had led to a divorce and a bankruptcy declaration in 1980. Being the illegitimate son whose father was unknown and whose mother was a cleaning lady leaving him to be brought up by his grandmother, Glitter was different because he lacked something which legitimately born children brought up by employed (middle-class) parents have. Moreover, the fact that ‘Glitter’s girlfriend is seven years younger than his daughter’ (*The Mirror*, 13/11/99:5), served to highlight his “otherness”. Similarly, in the boxer Mike Tyson’s case mentioned earlier (Chapter 4), press portrayal highlighted his upbringing, detailing the poverty he faced in a childhood in Brooklyn, his orphaned life on the streets, his criminal record as a child and the time he spent in reform school.

The use of class stereotypes in the discussion of Glitter’s background perpetuates the myth that sexual abuse is a working-class phenomenon. Therefore, being rich/upper or middle-class, married and an achiever excludes one from being an abuser. This inextricable linking of class and background to Glitter’s current standing, served to explain away and possibly excuse his actions.

Blaming the Internet

Events leading up to the trial and Glitter's conviction for possessing child pornography was also an opportunity for the media to construct and reinforce anxieties about the Internet: 'When browsing is an offence' (*The Times* 22 November 1999); 'So why is internet pornography so hard to control?' (*Independent on Sunday* 14 November 1999); 'Twisted secrets of the web' (*The Sun* 13 November 1999); '1M NASTY PICS' (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999). An article in *The Times* further claimed that: 'As the internet becomes more affordable, it has become a favourite venue for paedophiles and child pornographers to both promote and feed their sexual cravings. Networks of paedophiles have been discovered where they swap experiences and tips on foreign destinations' (*The Times*, 15 November 1999).

Such constructions problematise and blame the Internet, rather than the men and adolescent boys who deliberately download and distribute child pornography. It equally reflects and promotes a society-wide reluctance to acknowledge that adults can commit such crimes against children. Such constructions can be traced to a history of shifting blame from the perpetrators of abuse to other factors or incidents (e.g., heavy handed social workers (Franklin, 1991), false memories (Kitzinger, 1998) and cycle of abuse (Kelly, 1996)). Such concerns are, in turn deliberately exploited by the media to advocate more legislation: 'Act to net perverts like Glitter' (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999), 'Crack down on this web of child porn' (*Sunday Mirror*, November 14.2000). The day after Glitter was sentenced and article in *The Mirror* claimed:

'The Internet makes it easy for paedophiles to indulge their perversion. They can access more than a million sick images of child sex abuse from the relative safety of their homes. Internet insiders say 2,000 new images of youngsters are being added every week. And more than 27,000 people tap into the many depraved sites daily. One website uncovered by *The Mirror* yesterday dealt solely in sickening images of child bondage. It had been visited by three quarters of a million people world wide' (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999: 2).

On the same day the paper's editorial demanded to know 'Who is policing the Internet - and why are they doing such a bad job? [...] If he can do it, we can be sure there are more like-minded perverts who also use computers to feed their sick cravings. What,

we demand to know, is being done to stop them?’ (*The Mirror*, 13 November 1999: 6). This demand for action can be likened to the ‘something must be done’ aspect of moral panics.

Profiling the Internet by associating it with risks confuses and narrows the debate about child sexual abuse, while at the same time instilling fears and panic in the public about the new media. This expression of technophobia is indicative of contemporary fears over spaces unknown and beyond control in society. Furthermore, this particular discursive representation presumes the home as a crime-free environment polluted only by the presence of the computer and the Internet. The construction that emerges is one that seeks to attribute blame on the Internet rather than question the abusive use of adult masculine sexuality and power over children.

From Glam Rock Icon to Sham Rock

The elite-centred nature of news implies that elite actions/activities are more consequential and hence more newsworthy (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Sex and violence are in themselves powerful constructs in deciding news worthiness. Combine these with a pop icon and it makes the perfect mixture for media frenzy! A key aspect of the portrayal of Glitter during the trial was attention to his bruised public image and the damage to his pop career with him being variously described as a ‘shamed idol’ and a ‘once much-loved glam rock star’ (*The Mirror*, 13 November 1999:1), and a ‘disgraced glam rocker’ (*Independent* 18 November 1999). This focus on his celebrity image was most common in tabloid papers. There was both anticipation of his demise and revelling in his humiliation: ‘SHORN OF GLAM ROCK’ (*The Mirror*, 13 November 1999); ‘Tawdry truth about Gary’s Glitter’ (*Daily Mail* 15 November 1999); ‘Old rocker hams it up’ (*The Mirror* 10 November 1999); ‘Fans could not believe idol was evil’ (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999); ‘Appetite for porn ends comeback king’s reign’ (*The Times* 13 November 1999).

Despite considering him a ‘monster masquerading under the mask of glam rock’ (*Daily Mail*, 18 November 1999:60), his celebrity status was even used to explain the pretext of his behaviour: ‘what however, should not be underestimated were the temptations put in a rock star’s way. He could expect to find a giggling girl waiting in his

hotel bed, or shut in the wardrobe, or pursuing him to his home' (*Daily Mail*, 18 November 1999: 60)); and, 'if he had gone down for charges of sex with a besotted, underage fan, then he would have been forgiven- at least by his fans' (*The Mirror*, 13 November 1999: 4). Implicit in such characterisation, is the perception that one form of abuse - having sex with a besotted underage fan can be tolerated if not by the male perpetrators then at least by some sections of the society- the Glitter fans - 'these were people with drab lives who fed on Glitter's glamour and refused to stop believing in him' (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999).

A similar combination of a sports celebrity and charges of sexual assault was evidenced in media coverage of the trial of American boxer Mike Tyson in 1992 on rape charges (Lule, 1997). Such particular constructions demonstrate the role of journalistic news values such as personality, rarity and drama in the framing of news.

The Victim

Throughout the trial, the press maintained the anonymity of Glitter's accuser on underage sex charges. However, following Glitter's acquittal, his accuser decided to waive her anonymity to go public on a national talk show. Her decision to go public had apparently been because she stood by the allegations she had made against Glitter.

Even though coverage during the trial adopted an evil offender/innocent victim dichotomy, certain depictions of Allison Brown were critical of her. Under the headline 'Woman goes public over Glitter sex case' (*Independent* 16 November 1999) the lead sentence read 'The woman who reignited the row over chequebook journalism by giving evidence in a sex abuse case against Gary Glitter in return for £25,000 yesterday waived her right to anonymity to explain why she sold her story' (*Independent* 16 November 1999). Not only does the sentence imply that Allison Brown's evidence in court was money-driven, the involvement of *News of the World* 'in the row over chequebook journalism' or its convincing her to sell exclusive rights to her story, is virtually ignored.

In framing Allison Brown in this way, the media not only able to blamed Brown but conveniently moved attention from itself to the individual in society who is sometimes exploited by press in its quest for exclusivity in a highly competitive media environment.

This individualisation meant the complex issue of chequebook journalism was sidelined and not seen as a problem for which the media itself was partially responsible.

Little Seductress

Driver (1989) noted that ‘the myth that children are seductive is the commonest device by which a defensive society can rationalise the occurrence of child sexual abuse, and operates in much the same way as the notion that adults who get harassed must have ‘asked for it’ (Driver, 1989: 31). This particular constitution of the victim has been observed in previous studies examining the coverage of rape (Lees, 1995). The image of the victim as a seductress is one that emerged in an article in *The Mirror*. The day after the verdict, a feature article based on interviews with a friend of Allison Brown- Glitter’s accuser on underage sex charges- published in *The Mirror* was headlined ‘Pervert’s Princess’ (13 November 1999). Invoking the image of a princess in the headline appears to emphasise not only the physical but also appeals to notions of innocence, purity– and in this context one who is innocent especially of adult sexuality. Nevertheless, within that same article, the following description was made about that ‘princess’: ‘The teenager paraded at one birthday party in a low-cut pink silk ball-gown, which was a present from her mum. Another time she wore white hot pants and a skimpy white top’ (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999: p.4).

Indeed, the following observations from Lees, would hold true for this instance: ‘...in focusing on the complainant and her assumed provocative and manipulative behaviour, the alternative possibility of rape by the defendant is not even seriously entertained...’ (Lees, 1995:112). The reference to what Ms. Brown wore as a child, subtly minimises the abuse and by implication worked to exonerate the perpetrator of the assault because he was presumably provoked by her dressing and parade. Such depictions should be challenged mainly because by attempting to present Glitter as a victim of provocation by the “little seductress”, the text perpetuates the old myth of blaming the (female) victims of sexual assaults (Driver, 1989, Naylor 1995).

The image of the ‘collusive’ mother is found in Allison Brown’s mother who gave her the low-cut ball gown as a present. Such representations reinforce and sustain the myth of a dysfunctional family as a cause of abuse-a myth whose central theme is the

blame of mothers (Driver, 1989). It equally reflects the ease with which women are frequently blamed as victims, offenders and mothers of offenders (Howitt, 1998: 120) or, as in this case, mothers of victims. However, in this instance, both parents are made to feel partially responsible for Glitter's actions because they were inattentive and failed to protect their daughter: 'Perhaps the excitement this ordinary couple felt at being friends with a celebrity clouded their judgement. Perhaps, too, they should have been more protective of their young daughter'. (*Daily Mail* 20 November 1999: 16). Being friends with Gary Glitter was an error of judgement that exposed their inadequate parenting skills. They therefore failed in their duties as parents. This further elucidates the gendered and individualised nature of crime and its representation in the media in particular and society in general.

Chequebook Journalism and the Criminal Justice Process

During Glitter's trial, it was revealed that the witness who had made allegations of child abuse against Glitter had been paid £10,000 and stood to make £25,000 more from *News of the World* if Glitter was found guilty, leaving *The Mirror* to question: Who is the liar? (*The Mirror* 11 November 1999). It also prompted an editorial in the *Independent on Sunday*, 'Cheque-book justice' (14 November 1999), in which the paper sided with the Lord Chancellor's view about the inadequacy of self-regulation in catering for payments to witnesses. As the quantitative analysis indicated, 6.9% of the news coverage during the trial centred on issues pertaining to the regulation of the media, specifically the payment of witnesses in criminal proceedings. This is a relatively small proportion considering the impact that this particular dimension of the case had on the outcome of the trial, and the subsequent debate it triggered about the role of the media in criminal justice proceedings: 'Press cash 'prompted Glitter accusations'' (*The Times*, 10 November 1999); 'Inquiries into paper's cash deal' (*The Sun*, 13 November 1999); 'Probe over £25,000' (*The Mirror* 13 November 1999); 'Glitter case judge attacks newspaper's £25,000 offer' (*Daily Mail*, 12 November 1999) 'Tabloid defends its role' (*Independent on Sunday* 14 November 1999).

Only the two broadsheets reported 'the decision by the Metropolitan police to launch an inquiry into the deal between *News of the World* and Allison Brown: 'Police to examine Glitter press deal' (*The Times* 18 November 1999); 'Police launch inquiry into

Glitter case payout' (*The Independent* 18 November 1999). Nevertheless, the *News of the World* in an editorial headlined 'The Truth about Glitter witness and our £25,000' defended its payment of the witness stating that

'...she was a victim and rightly received help to rebuild her shattered life. Also, at the time, it was our belief other charges relating to a different girl could be brought against Gadd, which is why our agreement referred to a further payment of £25,000 on publication of a story should he be convicted of child porn or any other charges related to sex with underage girls. It was not intended to relate to charges concerning the girl who eventually became witness' (*News of the World*, 14 November 1999).

The Guardian appeared to support the paper's position:

It would appear that *News of the World* didn't break the editor's code of practice which outlaws payments to witnesses in "current criminal proceedings" because at the time it agreed the contract with Mrs X she had not approached the police. However, the paper conceded, "with hindsight perhaps we should have tried to break it". That is undoubtedly true although, ironically, to tear up the agreement might well have led to the legal action for breach of contract. (*The Guardian-Media* 15 November 1999)

The *News of the World's* agreement with the complainant had specifically contributed to the collapse of the sexual assault case brought by Allison Brown against Gary Glitter. However, this was not a view clearly articulated in the media - perhaps signalling an unwillingness by the press to admit its own wrongdoings.

This particular aspect of the case was significant in the subsequent ramifications that developed about the media's self-regulation and the commodification of witness testimonies- an issue decidedly placed within the remit of the Press Complaints Commission²⁸.

²⁸ In March 2002, the Lord Chancellor announced plans to criminalise media payments to witnesses or potential witnesses in criminal trials. The government considered it an appropriate means to deal with the threat posed to the proper administration of justice where such offers and promises of payments have been made by newspapers to witnesses. The Press Complaints Commission vehemently opposed the proposal describing it as a 'futile gesture to deal with a largely illusory problem'. However, in August 2002 the government backed down on the initiative requesting a toughening of the press's voluntary code of practice. 'Irvine backs off curbs on chequebook journalism' (*The Guardian*, 30 August 2002).

Discussion

The analysis has explored the media coverage of the trial of Gary Glitter. The analysis has reflected some of the findings of Soothill and Walby (1991) about news coverage during stages in criminal trial proceedings. Coverage during the courtroom trial in the case of both Renate Williams and Glitter entailed a dual focus on the criminal and deviant nature of the offender, whilst coverage of the sentencing focused on the sentence and the comments of the judge. Coverage of Glitter's sentencing simultaneously focused on the level of the sentence as well as the judge's comments. In both the trial of Williams and Glitter, thematic emphasis seems to have been on the crime (repetitive description of the crime and its impact on the victims), the trial (legal proceedings and evidence in court) and a focus on the participants and processes (this often entailed mainly focus on the defendant, e.g. their childhood/background and their crime, the victim's background). The nature of coverage directed towards Glitter, particularly his childhood and his celebrity status, as well as news framing of him as a 'beast' and 'evil monster' combined to present Glitter as different from normal men.

The analysis also presents evidence of how news values operate. The newsworthiness of an event is decided by its satisfying one or more conditions (Harcup and O'Neill, 2000). The combination of a celebrity person, charges of sexual assault, Internet pornography and the context of the unfolding of events provided precise elements for the intense media coverage of the trial. As *The Sun* subsequently summed it up, this was 'Britain's most famous pervert' (12 January 2001). Two dominant images of Glitter emerged from the press narratives of the trial: that of an 'evil' 'sick' child abuser who used the Internet to feed his obsession, and that of a victim of social circumstances. To achieve the first, press reporting during the trial, repetitively focused on the story of his crimes and the impact on his victim. To achieve the second, press coverage of his biography stressed his childhood and upbringing as well as his faltering music career.

Focus on the Internet as 'promoting the abuse of children' implicitly meant a failure to acknowledge the deliberate nature of Glitter's actions. In associating the Internet with risks and profiling it as a dangerous place for children, the discursive construction of child sexual abuse within this context failed to take account of the substantial body of feminist influenced-research that has demonstrated that sexual abuse is much closer to home. In this, the Internet emerged as the villain in the distinction between the "normal"

(‘twisted’ and ‘evil monster’) paedophile and the “cyber” (‘twisted’ and ‘evil monster’) paedophile/predator. This only reinforces the case for taking into account feminist perspectives in the reporting of sexual abuse

The focus on the Internet, while reflecting the changing definition of spaces where children face danger, also detracts from addressing the sexual access that men have to children. The nature of representation signals a society-wide anxiety about children in public (cyber) space while at the same time facilitating and maintaining some of the discourses of blame that have characterised coverage of child sexual abuse in the past. Consequently, the family as a site of abuse and the role of adult masculine sexuality in the abuse of children remains unchallenged. In presuming the home as a crime free environment, what emerges from part of the media construction is a discourse significantly directed at the new media, which is framed as creating a new venue for the abuse of children. The policy implication here is that far from seeking solutions that attempt to confront the problematic nature of the adult male power and sexuality in the lives of children, attention becomes directed towards regulating the Internet. For instance, as part of its remit, a Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, set up by the Home Office in March 2001, also undertook a ‘1.5 million awareness campaign to alert people to the potential dangers that young people may face online and help them surf in safety’²⁹. The task force also recommended the introduction of a specific criminal offence of ‘grooming’ children by paedophiles on and off-line’.

The National Criminal Intelligence Survey (NCIS) has set up a Paedophile Intelligence Section that is part of its Specialist Crimes Unit. The aim of this specialist network amongst others is to provide both British and foreign law enforcement agencies with high quality and relevant criminal intelligence designed to lead to the arrest of paedophiles and/or the dismantling/disruption of their criminal activities or organisations; combat organised paedophile activity in the UK and abroad³⁰. It also maintains a database of known and suspected paedophiles. An Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has been in existence in the UK since 1996. Through its ‘hotline’, members of the public report illegal material they find on the Internet.

²⁹ Speech by Home Office Minister Hilary Benn on 16th July 2002 at a conference on Policing Child Abuse on the Internet at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College.

³⁰ For more information, see www.ncis.co.uk

Paradoxically, the problematisation of the Internet as fostering the sexual exploitation of children, within popular discourse, is accompanied by a concurrent discourse that positions the Internet as the technology of the future. Thus, on the one hand the Internet is demonised as ‘twisted’ while simultaneously being embraced collectively as an essential medium of modern communication: ‘The future’s e-shaped’ (*The Mirror*, 17 February. 2000), ‘Children chose teachers on the web’ (*The Times* 9 November 1999) and ‘Every home should have one’ [a computer] (*The Times Interface*, 1 November 1999). In fact, the web has so much potential that fathers are encouraged to bond with each other online! (‘Fathers turn to the net for advice and solace’ (*The Times*, 26 January 2001).

CHAPTER 9

LOST IN CARE: THE REPORT OF A PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO CHILD ABUSE IN NORTH WALES

Introduction

Thus far, the qualitative analysis of news media coverage of child sexual abuse has examined news coverage in relation to particular criminal prosecutions. The analysis in this chapter differs in that it relates to policy discussions about sexual offending against children- particularly child protection and offender treatment. Examining coverage of child sexual abuse outside the context of a criminal justice process offers an opportunity to examine the role the media play in debates and policies related to sexual offending against children. Social policy is central to government agenda and is equally a key concern for the media (Franklin, 1999). Coverage could potentially influence public opinion, social policy, social workers and their clients. Child abuse policy issues arose from the *News of the World* campaign but also from the publication of the inquiry into abuse in children's homes in North Wales.

The abuse of children in care or under protection of local authorities represents a small but important proportion of the total number of childhood abuse cases (Itzin, 2000d). Official inquiries, independent reports and reviews into the abuse of children have a long history in Britain. *The Inquiry into Child Abuse in Cleveland in 1987* was one of the major inquiries into child abuse the late 1980s. The inquiry provided substantiated allegations of familial abuse in Cleveland. In February 2000, the *Inquiry into Abuse in Children's Homes in North Wales*, reported findings of its investigation into abuse in care institutions in parts of Wales. Informed by previous media interest in and coverage of previous abuse inquiries, the tribunal provided special warnings to the media regarding reporting of the proceedings. Any publication on radio, newspaper or television identifying 'any living person as a person by whom or against whom an allegation of physical or sexual has been made or is likely to be made in proceedings before the Tribunal' was to be regarded as a contempt of court (Waterhouse, 2000: 1). Such was the significance of the report and its findings that the BBC produced a drama *Care-Child Abuse*

in Wales (BBC2 17 February 2000) based on the stories of victims. The role of the media in reacting to and responding to the inquiry is the subject of the following section.

Background

For several years in the late eighties, there had been growing speculation about serious physical and sexual abuse in care homes managed by the former Clwyd County Council in the 1970s and 1980s. A major police investigation led to the prosecution and conviction of six former care workers in 1991 (Waterhouse, 2000). In December 1991, a report in the *Independent on Sunday* suggested that 'children's homes throughout Wales had been infiltrated by an organised paedophile ring which included police officers' (Webster, 1998:45). The paper claimed that the police force charged to investigate the scandal was covering it up.

Other newspapers subsequently picked up the story. Speculation about the actual scale of abuse in these care homes persisted with retrospective allegations against care workers by adult survivors. In January 1994, Clywd County Council commissioned an investigation into the management of Clywd Social Services Department from 1974 onwards. The investigation was to pay particular attention to what had gone wrong with the care of children under the council's management. Led by John Jillings, the non-publication of the report's findings in 1996 (on advice) led to a lot of public concern (Waterhouse, 2000).

The decision not to publish the report's findings led to a campaign by the *Independent on Sunday* and *The Independent* respectively in April 1996 to 'expose the truth' (Webster, 1998). In May 1996, a report commissioned by the Secretary of State for Wales William Hague, disclosed serious shortcomings in the provision of child care service in Clywd and Gwynedd. William Hague subsequently announced an official inquiry into abuse in care homes in North Wales in June 1996. Chaired by Sir Ronald Waterhouse, the inquiry began hearing evidence in February 1997. The tribunal probed into allegations of the abuse of children in care in the former county areas of Gwynedd and Clywd from 1974 as well as the response of agencies responsible for the care of the children.

Unlike the previous cases examined in the research so far, an analysis of the newspaper reporting of the findings of this inquiry provided the opportunity to examine

coverage of child sexual abuse outside the immediate context of individual child sexual abuse prosecutions. Official inquiries provide such an opportunity.

Amount and range of Coverage

The sample frame produces 88 news stories about the inquiry into abuse in North Wales. Analysis of the frequency of coverage across the different newspapers reflected a pattern already observed in the previous cases. The highest number of news stories within the time -frame analysed came from *The Times* (N=20) representing 22.7% of the total coverage of the inquiry (See Table 9.1). Coverage in the other broadsheet daily newspaper, *The Independent*, made up 12.5% of total news coverage (N=10) during the period analysed. The comparatively low range of reporting in *The Independent* is particularly significant given that in the Spring of 1996 the *Independent on Sunday* and *The Independent* had both embarked on 'the fiercest and most powerful campaigns' (Webster, 1998: 47) supposedly to expose the truth about widespread abuse in North Wales in the 70s and 80s. Both papers were leading campaigners in demanding a public inquiry into abuse within care homes in North Wales. Table 7.11 also indicates that the bulk of coverage (53.5%) came from the three daily tabloids. Coverage in three Sunday publications accounted for 11.4% of the total news sample. Only the *Mail on Sunday* and *News of the World* did not publish any article related to the inquiry.

Table 9. 1: Coverage across Newspapers

	Frequency	Percent
The Times	20	22.7
Daily Mail	18	20.5
The Mirror	16	18.2
The Sun	13	14.8
The Independent	11	12.5
Independent on Sunday	5	5.7
Sunday Mirror	3	3.4
The Sunday Times	2	2.3
Total	88	100.0

The majority of the articles analysed were hard news articles (62.5%). Brief news items, features and editorials each accounted for 10.2% of the sample respectively. It is significant that the majority of editorials came from the tabloid newspapers with *The Sun*,

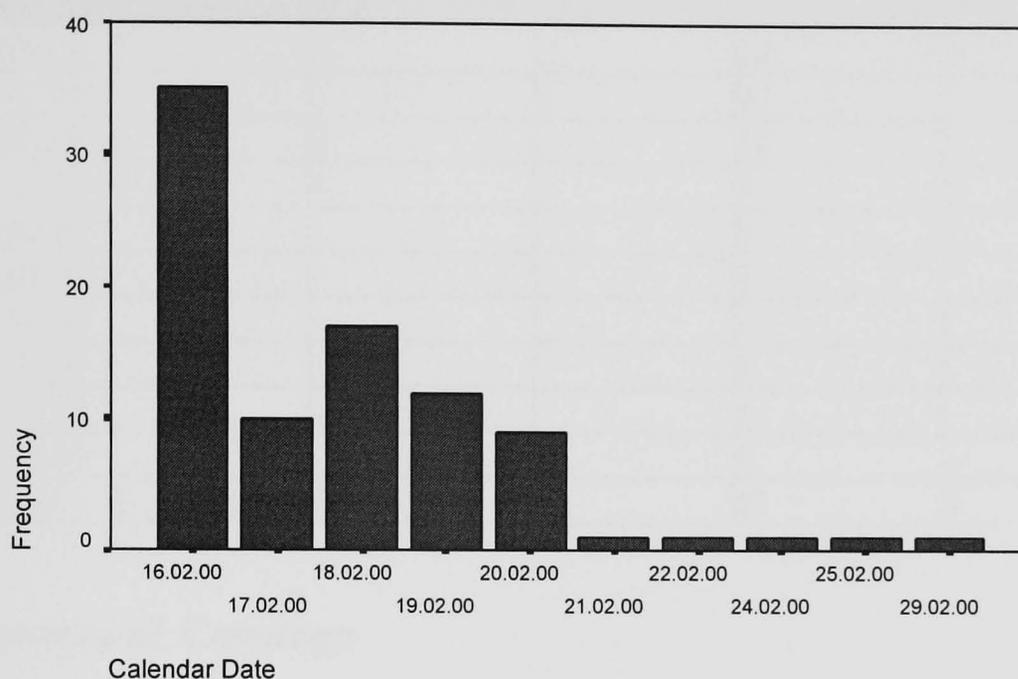
the *Daily Mail* and *The Mirror* each featuring two editorials on aspects of the inquiry. This finding reflects the previous analysis that indicated coverage from tabloid newspapers was significantly higher than that in broadsheets (see Table 9.2).

Table 9. 2: Crosstabulation Indicating Newspapers and the Genre of News Item

	Hard news	Editorial	Feature	Opinion	Brief news	Total
The Times	14	1	2	2	1	20
The Sunday Times	1			1		2
The Independent	9	1		1		11
Independent on Sunday	2		3			5
Daily Mail	11	2	2	1	2	18
The Sun	6	2	2		3	13
The Mirror	11	2			3	16
Sunday Mirror	1	1		1		3
Total	55	9	9	6	9	88

Sustained coverage in the sampled newspapers lasted several days. The highest amount of coverage was on the 16th of February – the day after the official publication of the tribunal’s findings. Unlike the case studies of Renate Williams and Gary Glitter which, being court trials, ensured almost daily coverage, in the case of the North Wales Inquiry, coverage was shaped by a number of different factors: the fact that the findings of the inquiry was a media event in itself, the nature of the 4-year investigation as well as the recommendations of the tribunal. Moreover, the human interest factor (suffering children) and the decision to publicly name some of those identified during the tribunal’s inquiry as perpetrators of child abuse, considerably sustained news interest in the report. These explain why aspects of the inquiry were still of interest to the three weekly Sunday publications (20th of February) as demonstrated by Figure 9.1. The magnitude of the report (the largest inquiry into institutional abuse) further explains the extent of news interest in its findings.

Figure 9. 1: Amount of Coverage during the time Frame



Prominence

As a measure of prominence, front-page coverage was taken as single news items appearing on the front page of the newspaper or items which began on the front page and continued on subsequent pages inside the newspaper. Using this approach, front-page news coverage accounted for 13.6% of news articles whilst the bulk of the news coverage of the publication of the inquiry was located on the inside pages (see Table 9.3). As the newsworthiness of the story decreased over ensuing days, prominence also diminished. Between February 16th and February 19th, 12 news articles appeared on the front pages. Thereafter, the front-page prominence accorded to the story, ceased. In terms of the various publications, the publication of the inquiry and its findings made front-page news in at least two editions of all the daily newspapers.

Table 9. 3 Location of article over time

	Front page	Second page	Third page	Inside page	Front and inside page	Total
16.02.00	2	2	2	26	3	35
17.02.00	1		1	8		10
18.02.00	3	3		11		17
19.02.00	2	1		8	1	12
20.02.00				9		9
21.02.00				1		1
22.02.00				1		1
24.02.00				1		1
25.02.00				1		1
29.02.00				1		1
Total	8	6	3	67	4	88

Content of Coverage

Main topic

Table 9.4 indicates that the main focus of the news stories was on the inquiry's report and its related findings and recommendations. The inquiry had listened to evidence of former residents of care homes in the North Wales. There were no significant differences between newspapers in terms of the prominence accorded to news topics. Many of the references to exposing offenders were related to the Department of Health's decision to identify and locate offenders named in the inquiry. As a result, a significant amount of the subsequent press coverage was to focus on the search of the offenders named in the report. The offenders identified in the reports were name in both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers: 'CAUGHT Mirror confronts pervert named on abuse scandal list' (*The Mirror* 18 February 2000); 'The 40 monsters who must be found' (*Daily Mail* 16 February 2000); 'Faces of the suspects' (*Daily Mail* 18 February 2000); 'MP: I'll name 50 perverts' (*The Sun* 21 February 2000); 'After two years of inquiry, why social services got until 5pm today to find these 28 people?' (*The Independent*, 17th February 2000). In most cases, photographs or last known addresses of these offenders accompanied these reports.

Table 9. 4: Main Focus of Article

	Frequency	Percent
Retrospective case	13	14.8
Official report	11	12.5
Official inquiry	10	11.4
Offender search	9	10.2
Police investigation	9	10.2
Proposed law	7	8.0
Offender death	5	5.7
Exposing paedophiles	5	5.7
Consequences of CSA	4	4.5
Offender profile	3	3.4
Victim profile	3	3.4
Vigilante action	2	2.3
Victim death	2	2.3
Child protection	2	2.3
Offender Prosecution	1	1.1
Conviction/sentencing	1	1.1
Existing law	1	1.1
Total	88	100.0

News Sources

A total of 71 news stories in the sample analysed cited at least one news source. Victims were the most frequently cited sources (N=15). This finding significantly reflects the fact that the inquiry was into retrospective cases, as a result, many of the victims were now adults who could be interviewed and were willing to be interviewed by the newspapers. When not quoted as first news sources, victims were cited as sources in only 13.6% of news articles. The second most frequently cited first news source was government ministers, quoted 10 times in this way (see Table 9.5). Compared to the case studies examined so far, this was the first instance where authoritative sources such as ministers and the police were frequently cited, demonstrating the predominant use of official sources in news. The inquiry's report itself was quoted as a first news source in nine news articles. News sources cited in the first instance, rarely included interest groups, charity organisations or medical professionals. Further analysis comparing the use of sources across newspapers indicated a variation between the newspapers. *The Mirror* was most likely to cite victims as first news sources in news items related to the inquiry (N=6) whilst

the most frequently cited first news source in *The Times* was the inquiry report (N=7). The most frequently cited first news source in *The Independent* and the *Daily Mail* was a minister. Where source gender could be identified, analysis indicated that 50% of first news sources cited were male. The victims cited in the news articles were all men³¹.

Table 9. 5: First News Source Quoted

Source	Frequency	Percent
None quoted	17	19.3
Victim	15	17.0
Minister	10	11.4
Document/memo	9	10.2
Police	6	6.8
Social worker	6	6.8
Individual citizen	6	6.8
Offender	4	4.5
Police spokesperson	3	3.4
Inquiry chairperson	3	3.4
Charity organisation	2	2.3
MP	2	2.3
Victim's relatives	1	1.1
Medical professional	1	1.1
Council official	1	1.1
Interest group	1	1.1
Government spokesperson	1	1.1
Total	88	100.0

Nature of abuse

Unlike the cases of Renate Williams and Gary Glitter, which respectively involved specific types of abuse, the North Wales inquiry revealed different forms of child sexual abuse. Analysis of newspaper identification of the offence indicates that whilst 34 of news stories (38.6%) did not specify a form of abuse, the bulk of news stories (N=47) specified the nature of abuse. Rape was the most frequently named type of abuse (N= 18); this was followed by physical abuse (N=10). Sex, buggery, molestation and murder were the least of abuse mentioned. This finding might suggest that coverage of the specific nature of abuse could have been influenced by the particularly homosexual undertones of the story

³¹ Teenage boys were the main residents of the care homes that were the subject of this inquiry.

(abuse in institutions where young boys were kept). However, the inquiry's report itself provided details on the specific nature of abuse that had been carried out in the care homes. This finding indicates that there was an attempt by the news media to reflect these findings by specifying the exact nature of abuse perpetrated on victims and pointed out by the report.

Recommendations Cited in News Stories

The inquiry made 72 recommendations. The creation of a children's commissioner for Wales, the institution of appropriate complaints procedures, better recruitment and training for staff as well as vigilance in the recommendation of foster parents were among some of these recommendations. An average of four in ten news articles (43.2% N=38) mentioned one or more of the recommendations put forward in the report, suggesting that coverage was focused on other aspects of the inquiry's findings such as the experience of victims and less on the recommendations of the tribunal. Within the 88 news articles, the most frequently mentioned recommendation for ensuring child protection was the creation of a children's commissioner (N=11). The training of individuals who work with children was cited eight times in the entire sample while the need for better complaints procedures was cited in just nine news articles. Two news articles mentioned recommendations pertaining to the monitoring of offenders. Four news articles cited life sentence for offenders as a means of protecting children and curtailing abuse. This was not a recommendation made by the inquiry but one expressed by individual newspapers.

Summary

Though individual cases and incidents provide the opportunity for widespread news reporting about child sexual abuse, it is important to examine the coverage given to issues related to child sexual abuse outside the immediate context of a particular case. These give an opportunity for broader discussion about general issues of concern including child protection policies, the prevention of abuse, as well as the prevalence and nature of abuse. The scale and focus of inquiry into abuse in care homes in North Wales in the 1970s

provided a context for media coverage on the social institutions or governmental bodies responsible for child protection.

The findings suggest that whilst significant coverage focused on the report's findings, a significant amount of news coverage was concentrated on the adult survivors who had been victims of abuse whilst in care. Among the cases examined so far, coverage of the North Wales is the only one where news coverage mentioned a proposed remedy for child sexual abuse. However, this media engagement with matters of law and policy was partly because of the nature of the remit of the tribunal, which was to make recommendations about future child protection policies. News coverage was equally sustained by interest in 28 people named in the report. This significantly demonstrates how quickly news interest shifted from the institutional structures (Gwynedd and Clywd Council) to the individuals who abuse children. The most frequently cited news sources were victims and authoritative sources (ministers). This, as well as the intense focus on the recommendations of the tribunal, indicated the media's preoccupation with political solutions to preventing child abuse and ensuring the protection of children in care.

Textual Analysis of News Coverage

News Headlines

The quantitative content analysis indicated that the publication of the inquiry and its findings made front-page news in at least two editions of all the daily newspapers. The quantitative analysis also indicated that the victims' retrospective descriptions of the abuse they suffered, was the main news topic in 14.8% of the 88 stories analysed. The tribunal and its findings were the main topic in approximately 24% of the stories. During the period of analysis, news headlines generally reflected the following themes: victims' experiences, criticism of the institutions directly involved in the care of children, and a focus on the abusers named in the report. On 16th February (the day after the publication of the report) there was, however, a difference in thematic focus between the newspapers as demonstrated in the respective newspaper front pages presented below (see Figure 9.2)

Figure 9. 2: *The Mirror* 16 February 2000



The use of the word 'damned' in *The Mirror's* main headline can be read as a reference to the social services condemned in the report or a summation of the victims' experience of the care system in general.

The front-page news in *The Times* also focused on the report's main findings as demonstrated in Figure 9.3.

Figure 9. 3: The *Times*, 16 February 2000



However, the broadsheet *Independent's* front-page news focused on victim experience, choosing to lead with a photograph of one the victims (See Figure 9.4).

Figure 9. 5: *The Sun* 16 February 2000



However, unlike the other papers, the *Daily Mail's* front-page headline combined all three themes (see Figure 9.6). Its headline was a single word BETRAYAL over the photograph of five siblings whom the paper captioned as having 'suffered an horrific fate at the hands of paedophiles'. Its main lead-in (which appeared over the single word headline) was: 'These four brothers were horrifically abused in care. Two were to die in torment. Yesterday an inquiry concluded that, in all, 650 children-appallingy let down by social workers-were victims of Britain's worst-ever paedophile scandal...and that 40 of the monsters are still at large' (*Daily Mail* 16 February 2000). Its front-page photograph of five siblings clearly demonstrating the paper's ideological orientation towards the family.

Figure 9. 6: *Daily Mail* 16 February 2000



These visual illustrations of respective front pages show the prominence accorded to the publication of the tribunal's report. In the case of the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun*, respectively it revealed the papers' respective news and ideological orientation. For *The Sun*, it was the sex crime focus whilst the *Daily Mail's* front page displayed the paper's established position in promoting and protecting the institution of the family. Newspaper front pages orientate readers to events (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1998). The use of visual layout in positioning pictures and arranging texts on the page facilitates this. This happens because 'writing may remain dominant, with the visual fulfilling a 'prosodic' role of highlighting important points, and structural connections', texts can also 'diminish in importance with the message articulated primarily in the visual mode and the words serving as commentary and elaboration' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1998: 187). The front pages of *The Mirror*, *The Independent* and the *Daily Mail* respectively articulated the major theme/message through a symbiotic combination of the visual mode and texts, particularly the headlines. However, the demonstrated variance in front-page news focus at the beginning of news coverage of the event is significant in that it reflected the combination of themes in which the inquiry was subsequently predominantly positioned in the media. In some cases, the front pages reflected each

paper's frame of coverage. For instance, the *Daily Mail's* front page only reproduced and reinforced the paper's existing interpretive framework of adverse coverage of social work and social workers - an issue identified by Aldridge (1994).

Most of the victims of abuse in care homes were boys. Although news headlines failed clearly to identify the gender of the victims, accompanying photographs to news stories made the gender of the victims obvious. Examples of headlines reflecting the experience of victims included the following: 'At 12, they took turns kicking me in the chest' (*The Independent*, 16 February 2000); 'This man has spoiled my life..he has degraded me' (*The Mirror*, 16 February 2000); 'Unimaginable horrors that were just too much to bear' (*Daily Mail*, 16 February 2000).

Attention was also paid to the effects the abuse had had on their lives: 'Monsters stole my childhood' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000); 'I lived in fear of perverts on staff' (*The Mirror*, 16 February 2000); 'A life sentence for the victims: my tormented childhood' (*Daily Mail*, 16 February 2000); 'The lost children suffered 20 years of abuse' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000). 'The child entered the system bewildered, and left it brutalised, sexually damaged and abandoned' (*The Independent*, 16 February 2000). For some the abuse suffered had led to tragic consequences: 'The deaths linked to the scandal' (*Daily Mail*, 16 February 2000).

Understanding victims experience is a significant step toward understanding the nature of abuse and developing policies that counter abuse and these headlines reflected and sympathised with the experience of victims. Nevertheless, they simultaneously facilitated a framework for the subsequent news focus on 'hunting' the offenders named in the report.

Participants and Processes

The Social Services

The inquiry's report was most critical of the Clywdd and Gwynedd councils and their respective social service departments for failing to stop the spread of abuse in care homes. This finding from the inquiry served to provoke further unfavourable media coverage of social work and social workers: 'Why scandal was hidden for so long' (*The Times*, 16 February 2000); 'Hundreds of lives ruined by cult of silence' (*The Times*, 16

February 2000); 'Decade of innuendo and conspiracy is ended' (*The Times* 16 February 2000); 'Homes of share evil' (*The Mirror*, 16 February 2000); 'Complacency and a picture of evil' (*Daily Mail*, 17 February 2000 Editorial); 'Why did it take 14 years, asks whistleblower' (*Daily Mail*, 16 February 2000). These headlines though were conceptually unspecific in that they did not identify a particular agent.

Reading the individual news stories, however, indicated that whilst local politicians in the county councils and the council insurers were criticised in news reports, the most criticism within the media was directed at social workers: '... 650 children-appallingly let down by social workers-were victims of Britain's worst-ever paedophile scandal' (*Daily Mail* 16 February 2000). They are described as 'bungling officials' (*Daily Mail* 16 February 2000). Some press accounts of social workers characterised them as both incompetent and impertinent: 'And they got away with it because social workers and local politicians were too complacent and incompetent to notice what was going on' (*Daily Mail* 16 February 2000). Such criticisms were not limited to the *Daily Mail* known for its critical coverage of social work practice (Aldridge, 1994). Critical coverage of social workers came from the broadsheets as well: 'Social workers visited rarely and inspections and visits from outside were grossly inadequate; the abusers were left to carry out their crimes unchecked' (*The Times*, Law 29 February 2000), '... senior managers seemed to "live in a cloud of unknowing"; ignorance was bliss. Even now there still seems to be a reluctance to acknowledge the enormity of what has happened, thus ensuring that there can be a repeat' (*The Independent*, Editorial, 16 February 2000). Simon Jenkins commenting in *The Times* took a further sideswipe at social workers: 'Recent revelations about adoption have been shocking: a Victorian swamp of dogmatic staff impeding placements to protect their foster empires' (Simon Jenkins, *The Times*, 18 February 2000).

Franklin and Parton's (2000) examination of media reporting of social work and child abuse in national daily and Sunday newspapers found similar trends in media reporting of social work. They identified social work relating to children as the most covered aspect of social work in the press and concluded that adverse media representations served to reinforce existing stereotypes about social workers as bungling officials. For Franklin and Parton, this narrowed focus on professional involvement with children as well as the critical nature of press coverage, generated two contradictory

stereotypes of social workers-that of social workers as wimps and that of social workers as bullies. Given the context of the report, the particular media criticism of the social workers seemed predictable. The image of the social workers as wimps was most evident in news coverage following the publication of the Waterhouse report. Even the care scene in general, an area in which social workers are heavily involved, was blamed: 'Abuse grows out of care scene in general, which is a damp, dark and emotionally dingy place where little light comes in and where carers and the children have little expectations of each other' (Yasmin Alabhai-Brown in *The Independent*, 17 February 2000). It was also purported to have opened itself to abuse: 'Partly as a result the self esteem of those working in childcare is low and thus vulnerable to infiltration by abusers' (Simon Jenkins in *The Times* 18 February 2000).

Implicit from the outlined media criticism is the notion that the abuse of children would have been preventable if only the departments concerned had been better managed, and the authorities involved possessed more expertise and were more experienced. Yet, in Cleveland (1987), Rochdale (1990) and the Orkney Islands (1991), social workers were criticised for intervening too much. News reports rarely mentioned one of the key recommendations of the inquiry's report -increased resource, training and vetting of people, who work with children. The repeated focus on 'grotesque bungling' by social services in the respective county councils, meant little attention was paid to the role of other institutions such as the police. This can possibly be understood within the context of theoretical models that see the media allying themselves with the institution of law and order in society (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1991). However, the effect was to imply that social services should have intervened more. The nature of reporting from the columnists observed above also confirms Franklin's, (1999: 6) observations about the tendency of columnists to vilify individuals and to rarely offer measured analysis and discussions of social policy³².

³² Opinion columns are a rapidly growing trend in journalism. In fact, writing in the *New Statesman*, Nick Cohen (1998: 18) stated that 'Today, if you want to get ahead [in British journalism] get a column, preferably with a blurred picture of your unprepossessing face on the top of it'. Tunstall, (1996) highlighted, the rise of newspaper columnists describing them as 'heavy-weight opinionated thinkers' who not only readily cover allocated slots within the newspaper, but through their position and potential reach (a weekly or bi-weekly national audience),

Despite the press criticism of social services, the role of Alison Taylor, the social service worker who turned whistleblower on the care institution in Wales, provided impetus for relatively sympathetic news coverage of social work. Alison Taylor had first expressed reservations about the abuse of children in care to the social services department of Gwynedd County Council in 1986. She was subsequently suspended and dismissed. A dossier she compiled in 1991 had resulted in a police investigation, which saw four men convicted of abusing young boys in 1994. The inquiry praised Alison Taylor commending her as a role model for all social workers. She is described as 'a brave mum' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000).

Research on the media and social work has identified critical media coverage of social work practices and decisions as particularly evident in instances of social work decisions and practices affecting children (Aldridge, 1999; Franklin and Parton, 2001). Franklin and Parton, (2001) located the explanations for such adverse media coverage of social work within certain contexts: the conflict nature of social work which entails balancing individual client interests with that of society and the state. The changing economic, political and ideological context in the 1970s and 1980s in which economic recession increased the number of people requiring welfare services and saw the emergence of the New Right in British politics, also led to a number of newspapers challenging social work emphasis on collective; and public instead of private and individual solutions to social problems. Equally, general news values that underpin the selection of news, journalistic practices in newsgathering and sourcing, combined to produce particular images of social work in the media. The news values here was not simply the human interest focus on the suffering of vulnerable children but also those that emphasized drama and conflict, in this case provided by the ready availability of a scapegoat, and the perceived failure of institutions. In fact Hills (1980) quoted in Franklin and Parton, 1991a: 49) claimed that child abuse inquiries offered a 'ritual purification' and a 'public execution of the 'guilty parties'- the social workers' (Hills: 1980:19).

centre themselves into national debates. Recognized, in this way, one can begin to grasp the potential significance of the comments of such 'heavy weight opinionated thinkers'.

In addition to these, adverse media coverage of the social services following the publication of the inquiry into abuse in North Wales can be traced to the strong criticism directed at the social services in the report itself. Equally government response to the report, which was to announce a 'shake up' of the adoption process provided the catalyst for critical media coverage of social workers as 'grotesque bungling' officials. Such reporting influences and potentially creates tension within the child protection system. It also influences and creates a climate of mistrust between the public, policy makers and politicians on the one hand and child protection work on the other (Ayre, 2001).

Offenders

News reports of the inquiry characterised the child sex abusers as 'monsters', 'fiends' 'evil', 'perverts', 'depraved beast', and 'twisted paedophile'. '**Monsters** stole my childhood' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000); 'Care home **fiend** opens his garden to kiddies' (*The Sun*, 20 February 2000); 'Boast of the **pervert**' (*The Mirror*, 18 February 2000); 'BETRAYAL The 40 **monsters** who must be found' (*Daily Mail*, 16 February 2000); 'Naming names, the **evil men** at the centre of web of abuse' (*Daily Mail* 16 February 2000); 'Mirror confronts **pervert** named on abuse scandal list' (*The Mirror* 18 February 2000). Within news reports, similar words were used: 'Bungling officials let **pervert** Roger Saint be a foster carer-even though he had a conviction for child abuse [...] The **depraved beast** hunted down many of his victims by searching through the adverts in magazines like Be My Parent-produced by the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering'. Frequently, in the popular tabloids, these words preceded the names of offenders. For example 'PERVERT Albert Dyson' (*The Mirror*, 18 February 2000); 'pervert Stephen Norris' (*The Mirror*, 16 February 2000), 'Brute Paul Wilson...' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000), 'sex monster Roger Saint...' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000). As observed in chapter 8, similar words were used to describe Gary Glitter during and after his trial. This stereotypical depiction of child sex abusers as different from ordinary men has been identified by previous research.

Kitzinger (1999), Kelly (1996) and Bell (2002) have all highlighted how media portrayals of child sex offenders characterised them as 'paedophiles' and 'evil' and

emphasised that such discourses of abnormality alters the recognition of abusers as ordinary men to 'other' men. Kelly (1996) argued that 'unlike 'child abuser', or 'child molester', the word 'paedophile' disguises rather than names the issue and focuses our attention on a kind of person rather than kinds of behaviour' (Kelly 1996: 45). The representations of the child sex offender as 'Other (to "family" men, to the heterosexual community) would certainly appear to cleanse the social body through the sacrifice of a particularly dangerous individual' (Collier, 2001: 241). The implication of such representation can be the shifting of focus from the society itself to a few dangerous individuals within it (Kitzinger, 1999). The consequence of such depictions in the media could not only be the narrowed focus on child sex offending but could potentially lead to poorly thought-out political solutions, particularly those that address masculine power.

The inquiry's report named 200 people whom it found as responsible for the prevalence of abuse in Wales. Following its publication, the Department of Health compiled and distributed a list of 28 people named in the report to local authorities around the country. The list was apparently composed of those identified in the report as having been convicted of offences against children or simply been found to be unsuitable to work with children. The distribution of this list to health and local authorities meant media and public attention rapidly shifted to the named 28 abusers. All the national daily papers published the names (and in some instances photographs) of those named in the report either as abusers or as unfit to work with children. In some instances, the names of those who had been exonerated of offences were also printed in the newspapers: 'Missing 28 include known paedophiles' (*The Times*, 17 February 2000); 'After two years of inquiry, why have social services got until 5pm today to find these 28 people?' (*The Independent*, 17 February 2000) and 'Faces of evil' (17 February 2000). *The Sun's* approach was characteristically sensational '28 child abusers still on the loose'.

Whilst the broadsheets concentrated on naming offenders, the tabloids adopted a more vigorous and alarmist approach by actively pursuing those individuals named in the report: 'Care home fiend opens his garden to kiddies' (*The Sun*, 18 February); 'CAUGHT Mirror confronts pervert named on abuse list' and 'Mask of an abuser' (*The Mirror*, 18 February 2000). *The Sun* even included a phone number for

readers to phone in and report the known whereabouts of 'the perverts named in the Waterhouse report and still on the loose' (18 February 2000).

Implicit in such news focus on a group of individuals named in the report was the presumption that those missing were all convicted child sex offenders. Within two days, 'the deadly result of naming and shaming' (*Independent on Sunday*, 19 February 2000) was evidenced by the murder in a vigilante style attack of a known child sex offender living in London. His murder was not unconnected to the 'hunt for the missing 28' that had been a central focus of the week's newspaper coverage and the newspapers were quick to relate both events: After 'tracking down' one of the 28 suspects named in the report, a bold full front page one word headline "**CAUGHT**" (18 February 2000) announced that the paper had found one of those named in the report (see Figure 9.7). The following day, *The Mirror* headline seemingly endorsed this murder with its front-page headline "**AVENGED**" (19 February 2000) (see Figure 9.8). Its editorial noted that 'no parent or neighbour will shed a tear over the death of the twice convicted child rapist in an apparent contract killing'.

Figure 9. 7: *The Mirror* 18 February 2000



Figure 9. 8: *The Mirror* 19 February 2000



The murder of William Malcolm was equally reported in the other papers with several making the connection between his death and the public concern instigated by the naming of offenders identified in the inquiry report: 'Paedophile shot dead on doorstep' (*The Times*, 19 February 2000); 'Child sex pervert is murdered by gunmen "avengers"' (*Daily Mail*, 19 February 2000). *The Sun's* coverage of the murder was similar to *The Mirror's*. Next to its front page bold headline 'GUN MOB KILL CHILD SEX BRUTE' the murder was reported as follows: 'A CHILD SEX beast shot on his doorstep was executed by vigilantes, it was reported last night. Monster William Malcolm...was blasted in the head by a gang after walking free from court on a technicality. The brute-accused of a string of horrific attacks-was linked to the paedophile ring which murdered nine kids including Jason Swift' (*The Sun*, 19 February 2000).

The publication and distribution of a list of people named in the report provided a catalyst for a public naming of these individuals and for the tabloids in particular, provided impetus for a witch-hunt of these 'paedophiles'. The result was news media coverage that rapidly shifted focus from the report itself particularly its recommendations. The extent to which this preoccupation with "the 28" provided a context for reporting is illustrated in the editorial focus of the two popular tabloids: 'The least we can do for the victims is hunt these fiends down and bring them to justice. Then throw away the key' (*The Sun*, Editorial, 16 February 2000). The stress on locking up convicted offenders for life was equally a suggestion in one editorial in *The Mirror* during the period of analysis: 'The Mirror welcomes government plans to bring down in open-ended sentences for paedophiles. They cannot be brought soon enough. *The only way to lift the atmosphere of terror and revenge which settles on communities where perverts live is to lock them up for life*' [Newspaper's emphasis]. For two rival publications traditionally and politically opposed to each other, it is striking that both adopted a similar standpoint on how to treat convicted child sex offenders.

From further reading of the media coverage, it is reasonable to conclude that outrage in the media and disgust expressed at the offenders was not just because of their having abused the trust of young children but owed as much to the fact that they were not the "normal" working-class scruffy-looking child sex offenders. Despite the characteristic 'othering' of these offenders as 'monsters', 'perverts' and 'depraved beasts' their simultaneous representation as ordinary and in some cases respectable individuals in

positions of authority, demonstrated the characteristic 'normality' of child sex offenders as a whole. One of the offenders named in the report and whose picture was printed in the papers, 'owned a string of homes in North Wales, a cottage in the Cotswolds, a French villa and a half share in a yacht' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000) and another 'rose to become a social services inspector with the Welsh Office, had been responsible for children's homes and 'children's issues' for the whole of Wales' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000), while another was married and had 'even worked his way up until he headed a panel in charge of vetting would-be foster parents' (*The Sun*, 16 February 2000).

Linking Abuse to Homosexuality

The publication of the inquiry's report coincided with ongoing debates about lowering the age of consent for homosexuals and the repeal of Section 28³³. Some news accounts during the period of analysis positioned the report's findings in the context of the debates about sexuality. This was most common in the right-wing *Daily Mail* where two news articles in the paper situated the prevalence of abuse in the care homes to homosexuality.

'The report focuses mainly on individuals already convicted and some critics will be disappointed that it rejected the idea that a widely-organised paedophile ring was involved.

It did however; carry a harsh criticism of homosexual equality campaigners, which is likely to inflame the debate over Section 28, the law that forbids councils from pushing homosexual propaganda and the move to cut the age of consent for gays from 18 to 16. Sir Ronald named a local branch of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality as a key link in a paedophile ring. Unscrupulous members used it to target young boys. He also highlighted the damaging abuse suffered by one boy, which would not have been prevented by proposed new laws to safeguard teenagers after the age of consent is lowered. (*Daily Mail*, 16 February 2000 p 4).

On the same day, in another article headlined 'Equality group used as a front for abuse', the paper reported that: 'Rumours of the involvement of a national paedophile ring

³³ Amendments to the Local Government Act in 1988 had effectively banned local councils from funding, books, plays, leaflets or films depicting homosexual relationships as normal, implicitly prohibiting the promotion or encouraging of homosexuality through teaching or published material in schools. The labour government considered its repeal a significant step to eliminating intolerance.

in the case were dismissed by Sir Ronald, who instead pointed the finger at a gay equality group based in Chester' (16 February 2000). The involvement of the homosexual interest group was equally outlined in one news article in *The Times*:

The report exposed the activities of a group of men who in the 1970s, used the Chester branch for CHE- the Campaign for Homosexual Equality- as a front to prey on vulnerable teenagers for their own sexual gratification. Youngsters from homes near Wrexham were introduced to the branch members at homosexual parties and orgies in private houses, and it was claimed were bought and sold for sex (*The Times*, 17 February 2000).

New Labour's commitment to establishing an equal age of consent for both heterosexual and homosexual individuals had been a fundamental part of its social reform agenda. Ideologically informed by a particular political agenda that was committed to social justice, tolerance and equality, the Labour government's initiative on lowering the age of consent for homosexuals was a conflicting policy issue challenged by many Conservative politicians and right-wing newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* a newspaper directed at a 'middle England' readership which despite its inherently conservative constituency had been actively courted by the Labour government. The *Daily Mail's* columnist Simon Heffer encapsulated the paper's particular framework in his opinion column:

Politicians have condemned those who let this [institutional abuse in North Wales] happen. But there is a contradiction here that it would be simply irresponsible to ignore. In a country where such evils still happen - and yesterday's Mail story about a child-abuse ring with up to 11,000 victims just compounds the horror - our Government has, for all its self-righteous words on this issue, a peculiar set of priorities. We are dealing with the exploitation of children and teenagers, mostly boys, by older people, mostly men. We are being confronted with the shocking facts of this exploitation at a time when the Government is doing all it can to allow the encouragement in schools of 'alternative' sexual activities, among children of the same ages as those who have been abused. It also wishes to reduce the homosexual age of consent to 16. I do not for a moment believe that any but a small proportion of homosexuals are child abusers. I accept it may be the same as the proportion of depraved heterosexuals who commit sex offences.

However, there is clear evidence in Sir Ronald's report that the main motivation of those who committed the crimes in Wales was homosexual, and that, unlike heterosexual abuse, it was on a systematic scale supported by a network. (Simon Heffer in the *Daily Mail*, 19 February 2000).

The implication of such representation can be problematic because of the extent to which situating the inquiry's report within policy debates about homosexual age of consent and sexual education, can create and reinforce stereotypes of child sexual abuse as a homosexual crime. Creating prejudices against certain groups of people in society potentially narrows consideration of child sexual offending to be seen as an act predominantly undertaken by homosexual men and not one perpetrated by ordinary men to both boys and girls whom they know. Home Office research on sex offending against children indicates that 80 per cent of perpetrators of abuse against children are known to their victims and that such abuse takes place within the home of either the offender or the victim (Grubin, 1998). The same research also found that the majority of these offenders (70%) target only girls whilst between 20 and 33 percent targeted boys. Children of either sex are targeted by an estimated 10% of child sex offenders (Grubin, 1998).

Feminist Views on Child sexual Abuse

Feminists have maintained that child sexual abuse is a crime that takes place mainly within the home (Kelly, 1988 & 1996, Cossins 1999, Itzin 2000d, Armstrong, 1996 and 2000 and Bell 2002). These feminist perspectives have equally been critical of media and public discourses that fail to contextualize abuse in this way. Though child abuse in North Wales was distinctly abuse in an institutional rather than a familial setting, it is, however, significant to note that certain news articles articulated the existing feminist knowledge pertaining to the prevalence of abuse in the home. This minor acknowledgement was most common in the broadsheets through the use of sources or opinion columns: 'Ms Taylor had a warning for childcare experts who claim that the scandal could never be repeated because the children's homes that attracted paedophiles in the Seventies have gone. Problem children are now usually put into foster care. She said that foster homes can be more dangerous for children because it is harder to vet the many adults who have access to them' (*The Times*, 16 February 2000). A subsequent news article in the paper cited the view of the director of an interest group organisation who expressed the view that 'children are no safer in private families than they are in homes. Adult abusers live in family homes too' (Felicity Collier, director of British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (Baaf) in *The Times*, 18 February 2000). In a brief piece for the *Sunday Mirror*, the director of a children's charity stressed a similar position. 'Children in foster homes can be just as lonely and

isolated. We cannot assume that they are safe because they are not in an old-style children's home' (Mark Taylor, NSPCC Director writing in the *Sunday Mirror* 20 February 2000). Although both individuals cited above represent organisations, working with children, acknowledgement that abuse was more prevalent at home, was equally expressed by columnists:

'Since it was set up just 13 years ago, more than 1m children have telephoned ChildLine, the national helpline for children in trouble. Of those, 11,000 children have been given counselling each year because they were being abused. Nine of 10 of them know their attackers; they are either members of their own family or close family friends. So here is where the problem begins: in our own homes' (John Humphries in *The Sunday Times* 20 February 2000).

Humphries' reiterated the view of abuse as most prevalent within the family in his column three times. Roger Dobson in the *Independent on Sunday* expressed a similar view

'There are some, of course, who say that the best and safest place for children is tucked up with their own family. But in the past decade, around 1,000 children have been abused and killed by their own families. Alas, as the statistics prove, children are at far greater risk from their kin than from strangers and care workers' (20 February 2000).

In the context of the publication of an official inquiry into abuse in care institutions, the presence of feminist views, though predominantly expressed in the broadsheet newspapers, is significant. It confirms the gradual recognition in media discourses of the substantial body of feminist-influenced research that has argued that the perpetration of child sexual abuse is much closer to home and that perpetrators are largely known to their victims. Also, the role of pressure groups within the child protection sector in inserting this particular view about the prevalence of abuse by family members and carers into the media discourse has become increasingly evident, particularly in the way that journalists here used their views and statistics in feature length reports. Nonetheless, such well informed 'views' are overwhelmed by mainstream and routine accounts which seek to make child sexual abuse both 'other' and 'newsworthy' by presenting sex offenders as strangers.

Discussion

Compared to the media coverage of abuse in Cleveland in the late 1980s where the voice of victims was rarely heard, the voice of victims was given ample space in media coverage of the inquiry's report. The fact that most of the victims were now adults facilitated this. Particular sections of the report, dealing with its recommendations, were only given prominent coverage on the first day of news coverage. What is particularly significant about the press coverage of this inquiry report is the readiness with which media coverage of the inquiry's findings and its recommendations in particular were quickly outpaced by stories concentrating on a particular group of individuals named in the report. This focus on 'hunting the 28' can equally be seen to reflect a particular media agenda whereby personalising news stories by focusing on 'the 40 monsters who must be found' (i.e., the dangerous individuals within society) was easier than critically examining the policy options about children's rights, child protection and social work resources recommended by the tribunal. Franklin (1999) pointed out the consequences of such a news focus:

Journalists' coverage of policy concerns seems increasingly to be distorted by the prism of human interest which, in tandem with news values emphasising sensational and sometimes ill-measured commentary, articulates a clear moral and political agenda. In these circumstances, media may obfuscate rather than clarify policy choices; press partisanship, the influence of news sources and journalists' news values may combine to systematically exclude certain policy options rather than setting the widest possible policy agenda before media audiences (Franklin, 1999: 9)

In the case of this inquiry, news focus predominantly expressed outrage at and condemned offenders. At the same time, issues to do with resources and funding of the social services, children's rights, and the general organisation of the care system received relatively less coverage. As the columnist Yasmin Alabhai-Brown summarised it, '... it is so much easier (even more exciting, in a sick kind of way) to gorge on outrage and to condemn those demons who used their positions to hurt and destroy vulnerable young people. But they would not have been able to do that if we had a healthier culture in children's homes and if we genuinely respected the rights and lives of our children' (*The Independent*, 17 February 2000).

Public reaction to the naming of these abusers was manifested in the vigilante style murder of a child sex offender in London - an act directly connected to the public naming

of offenders identified in the report and in the media. Significantly, the report's recommendations were not mentioned in mainstream news reports beyond the first day of coverage. Notably, the recommendation that a children's commissioner be created for Wales and UK, was relatively low keyed in the media in relation to the impact such a proposal had for children's rights. The proposal in itself was problematic for the Labour government. The United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 had created a Committee on the Rights of the Child to monitor the implementation of the convention in different countries. One of the recommendations of this body was the creation of independent bodies to implement and monitor the convention (Lansdown, 2002). Successful UK governments have been reluctant to implement this convention³⁴. Lansdown (2002) noted that under the leadership of Neil Kinnock, the 1992 Labour Party manifesto contained commitment to the introduction of a Children's Rights Commissioner. This explicit commitment was however, dropped by Tony Blair when he took over the party's leadership. Despite a review by a Select Committee on Health in 1998 recommending the creation of a Children's Rights Commissioner, the government remained dissuaded about the idea claiming that existing inspection and regulatory mechanisms sufficiently covered this remit (Lansdown, 2002) The Care Standards Act 2000 however introduced provisions for the appointment of a Children's Rights Director for England with a remit limited to regulating the provision of residential care for children³⁵. However, following the political devolution process, a Children's Rights Commissioner has been set up in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively³⁶.

The immediate government response of announcing a shake up of the existing adoption system helped divert attention from the key recommendations of the report. In fact *The Times* suggested 'The announcement this week that Britain's asphyxiating adoption laws are to be radically overhauled is the first ray of hope to appear after the horrors of the child abuse scandal in Wales' (*The Times*, 19 February 2000). *The Sun* with its pro-marriage

³⁴ The government's reluctance over the issue continues to come under criticism: 'Youngsters urge children's rights commissioner' (*The Guardian*, 11 June 2002); 'Cherie Booth attacks government's record on children's rights' (*The Guardian*, 25 September 2002). In October 2002, a United Nations report condemned the UK government's record on child protection particularly its failure to meet obligations under the UN Convention on the rights of the child.

³⁵ In April 2002, the establishment of a National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) extended the remit of the Children's Rights Director to include older people and social care services.

³⁶ See www.crights.org.uk

agenda, also approved of the initiative in an editorial: 'The Sun welcomes the PM's admission that children are best brought up in a stable relationship by a loving mother and father. No mention of marriage, sadly. **But with divorce rates at record levels, maybe it's the best we can expect**' (Newspaper's emphasis) (*The Sun*, 16 February 2002). The view of adoption as a means of preventing further abuse of children in residential care is particularly worrying given the recognised prevalence of abuse in the home.

Several significant factors possibly account for the nature of media coverage. The perceived failure of statutory political institutions and policies substantially informed media coverage. Moreover, the publication of the report took place against the background of a pre-existing discourse about the threat of 'the paedophile'. The frame that had emerged from particular events such as the release of paedophiles into the community in the late 1990s (Kitzinger, 1999). The panic, anxiety and subsequent public protests following the proposed release of Sidney Cooke and re-housing of Robert Oliver had created an environment of fear and anxiety about the child sex offenders in the community. From covering previous and similar incidents, interpretive frames become established within the media. These previous events had created particular fears about the threat of the 'paedophile'- a threat that had positioned the child sex offender outside society and not within it. In establishing such precedence, one can begin to read how particular images of 'the paedophile' had possibly been constructed in the minds of the public.

The perception of the social services as representing the state, and in taking over the protection of children, assuming the responsibility traditionally allocated to the family, was significant to criticisms of the social services as 'bungling and incompetent' officials. Furthermore, the ongoing political debates about advancing homosexual rights through the repeal of Section 28 and equalising the age of consent were significant in providing a context for reporting particularly in the right-wing press. The decision by the government to compile and circulate a 'wanted' list of 28 people out of those named in the report provided catalyst for vengeful media coverage that sought to 'track down' these offenders. Overly sensational media coverage narrowed the message by shifting it to dangerous individuals rather than the policy recommendations in the report. News values that emphasise personalisation of stories ensured a dominant news focus on the evil and dangerous individual - 'the ultimate neighbour from hell' (Kitzinger, 1999) - rather than the discussion policy issues.

CHAPTER 10

'FOR SARAH': A MEDIA INITIATED CAMPAIGN TO CHANGE THE LAW

Background

In July 2000, whilst playing with her siblings in a field in Sussex, 8-year old Sarah Payne was abducted. Despite personal pleas by her family for her safe return and a massive police search, on July 17th, her naked body was discovered in fields near Sussex. Suspecting that a child sex offender had carried out her abduction and subsequent murder, on July 23rd 2000, the leading Sunday tabloid, *News of the World* embarked on a campaign to name and shame 'proven' (its word) paedophiles living in the community. The paper called the campaign 'For Sarah' and even subsequently redesigned its masthead to carry the special logo: 'For Sarah'. It considered her abduction and murder as proof that police monitoring of sexual offenders had failed. The campaign positioned itself as a new 'crusade' against paedophiles that would set '...the biggest ever public record of child sex offenders ever seen in this country' (*News of the World*, 23 July 2000). It reported a poll conducted by MORI on behalf of the paper, which indicated that 88% of the public were in favour of naming and shaming paedophiles (N= 614).

Readers were encouraged to help name and shame convicted child abusers by sending the names and addresses of offenders to the paper. Over the next three weekends, the paper printed various feature articles and news stories naming convicted and known child sex offender and outlining proposals for the institution of a law providing controlled access to the Sex Offenders Register. 'Sarah's Law' as it was later termed, was also to include a clause making life sentences for child sex offenders mean 'life'. The proposed law was modelled on an American equivalent Megan's Law³⁷.

As the intensity of the paper's campaign focused national attention to the threat posed by 'paedophiles', it provoked a series of public protests and vigilante actions in different

³⁷ Megan's Law was named after seven-year-old Megan Kanka who was raped and killed by a convicted child sex offender who had moved to her neighbourhood. Outrage following her death and a concerted campaign by her mother led to the introduction of Megan's Law giving parents the right to access information on offenders who move into their area after being released from prison. In some places, the law permits names and addresses of released offenders to be published in the press or on the Internet (West, 2000). Jenkins (1998) observed that the social construction of child sexual abuse in the US and policy responses to it was imported to other parts of the world especially Britain. The campaign for Sarah's Law typifies this importation of ideas between the two cultures.

parts of the country. Other media subsequently began reporting on the campaign and its consequences. Although it pledged not to relent on its efforts, following a meeting with various child protection agencies, the *News of the World* eventually dropped the naming of child sex offenders on August 4th. In the course of the campaign, the newspaper had printed the photographs of 49 child sex offenders and related news stories concerning child sex offenders, child protection and child safety. News analysis of such a campaign provides the opportunity for a broader discussion about the coverage of issues related to child sexual abuse, particularly child protection and offender treatment.

Amount of Coverage

Unlike the other cases examined so far, this campaign received coverage in all the newspapers. A frequency count to measure the total number of news stories covered in each of the sampled newspapers indicates a variation in coverage between the tabloid and broadsheet newspapers with the tabloid news coverage accounting for 66.4% of the sample compared to 34.6% in the broadsheets. These findings closely reflect those observed in the overall sample. During the timeframe analysed, coverage in *The Times* and *The Independent* was quantitatively similar.

Table 10. 1: Amount of Coverage Across Newspapers

	Frequency	Percent
The Times	16	15.0
The Sunday Times	4	3.7
The Independent	16	15.0
Independent on Sunday	1	.9
Daily Mail	13	12.1
Mail on Sunday	2	1.9
The Sun	8	7.5
News of the World	19	17.8
The Mirror	25	23.4
Sunday Mirror	3	2.8
Total	107	100.0

Given that the campaign was initiated by a rival publication, it is significant that *The Mirror* carried the highest number of stories representing 23.1% of the sample. Following the launch of the campaign by *News of the World*, *The Mirror* like *The Sun* had given the campaign no coverage at all. However, recognising the intensity of public opinion about the problem, on August 3rd *The Mirror* decided to join the campaign, coming out with a full

front-page lead declaring: 'WE BACK SARAH CAMPAIGN. And if you want to know why, read our astonishing interview with her parents inside. It will make you cry, smile and despair. AND ANGRY. VERY VERY ANGRY'. Over the next two days the paper focused on public backing for its call for 'Sarah's Law'.

Few differences were observed between popular and broadsheet papers in the genre of news story. Hard news stories represented 62.5% of articles in *The Times* and 68.8% of articles in *The Independent* respectively. Hard news stories accounted for 52% of stories analysed in *The Mirror* while for *The Sun*, 50% of news articles related to the 'For Sarah' campaign were hard news stories (see Table 10.2)

Table 10. 2 Crosstabulation of Newspaper and Genre of News Item

	Hard news	Editorial	Feature	Opinion	Filler	Total
The Times	10	1		3	2	16
The Sunday Times	1		2		1	4
The Independent	11	2	2	1		16
Independent on Sunday	1					1
Daily Mail	7	1	2	3		13
Mail on Sunday	1		1			2
The Sun	4		1	1	2	8
News of the World	9	2	3	2	3	19
The Mirror	13	5	3	2	2	25
Sunday Mirror	3					3
Total	60	11	14	12	10	107

Of the 11 editorials featured in the sampled newspapers during the time frame, 5 of these editorials appeared in *The Mirror*. This represented 20% of the paper's coverage and 45% of editorials written in newspapers during the period analysed. Editorial headlines in *The Mirror* included:

'Police must warn parents of monsters' (*The Mirror*, 25 July 2000)

'Crackdown on perverts long overdue' (*The Mirror*, 27 July 2000)

'Why Britain must have a 'Sarah's law'' (*The Mirror*, 3rd August 2000)

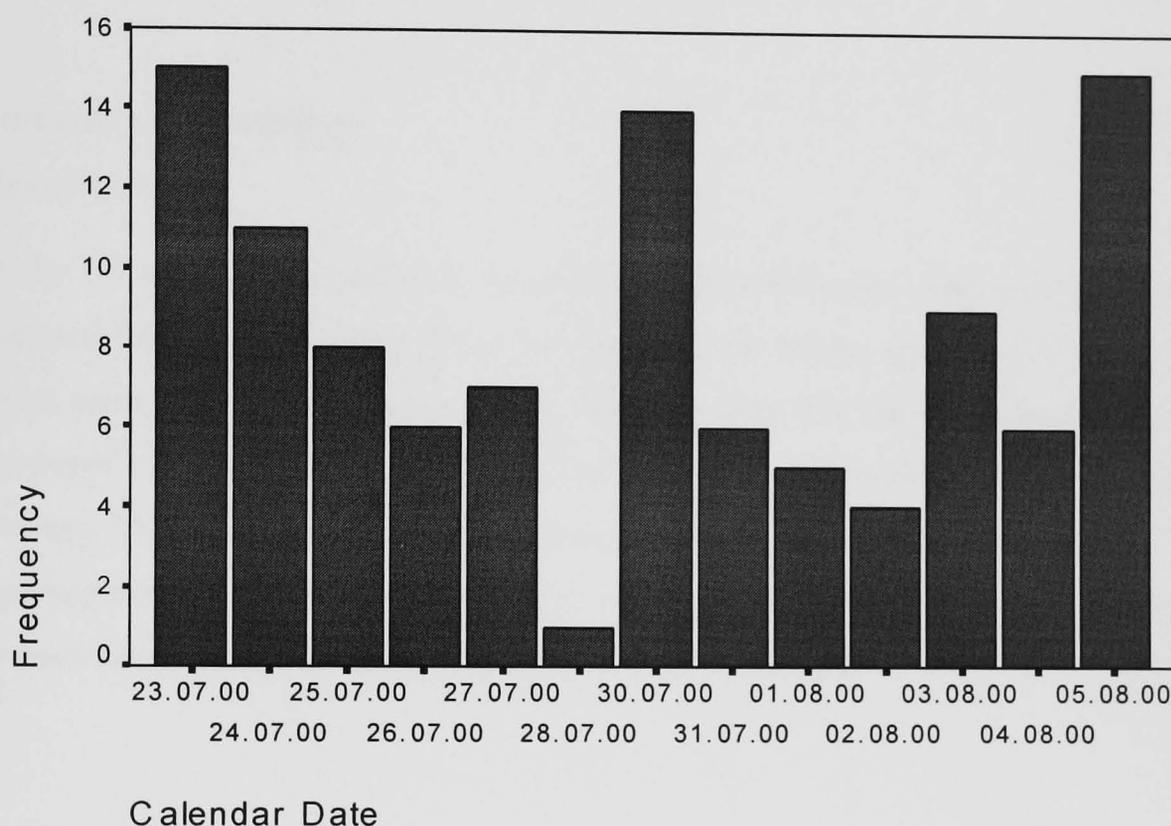
'Parents have spoken..now we must act' (*The Mirror*, 4th August 2000)

'At last push for Sarah's Law victory' (*The Mirror*, 5th August 2000)

This again reflects the intensity of coverage in *The Mirror* that was first observed when an analysis of the 323 news stories in the entire sample was conducted. However, the greatest coverage of the campaign was on Sundays the day *News of the World* was published. In

comparison to the previous case studies examined so far, this is the only instance where the actual count of related news stories published on a Sunday newspaper surpassed those published on a weekday. A look at the range of news coverage across the timeframe (see Table 10.1) indicates that the most coverage was on Sunday. The fact that the paper leading the campaign was a Sunday publication, accounts for this.

Figure 10. 1: Range in Coverage within the Timeframe Analysed



Prominence

In terms of prominence, approximately 70% of all news stories appeared on the inside pages of the sampled newspapers (N=78). Thirteen news articles were published on the second and third pages. Of the 15 stories that appeared on the front page, three were from *The Independent*, 2 from *The Times*, 7 were from *The Mirror*. The only front-page article featuring in *The Sun* during the period of analysis related to the murder investigation and not to the *News of the World's* campaign. This again signifies the low profile the campaign received from *The Sun*, which is a sister publication to the *News of the World*. Both editions of the *News of the World* included in the sample led with full front-page articles on the campaign. The variation in prominence indicated by front-page location of news articles,

should be treated with caution as the tabloid papers' front-page stories were highly prominent owing to their use of larger fonts, space, pictures and the overall placement of stories (see Figure 10. 3). For instance, the front-page headline of the *News of the World* on the day it launched its campaign was 'NAMED SHAMED.' The font size used in the headlines was 6cm in height and the headline occupied half of the paper's front page. Thus, typographic differences between broadsheets and tabloids can be significant in distinguishing the prominence given to news stories.

Content of Coverage

Main Focus

Of the 107 news stories analysed, the campaign initiated by the *News of the World* and its proposed 'law' were the main focus for 38.4% of the stories (N=41). Of these, stories whose main focus was on the campaign, five were from *The Times* representing 31.3% of that paper's coverage while 7 were from *The Independent* representing 43.8% of that paper's coverage. The campaign was also a secondary topic in 32.7% of the news stories. Issues regarding the vigilante actions provoked by the campaign were the major focus in 8.4% of the news sample and a secondary topic in 23.4% of the sample.

Table 10. 3: Main Focus of Article

	Frequency	Percent
Media initiated campaign	22	20.6
Proposed law	19	17.8
Police investigation	11	10.3
Vigilante action	9	8.4
Offender arrest	7	6.5
Victim death	7	6.5
Other	6	5.6
Offender treatment	4	3.7
Child protection	4	3.7
Existing law	3	2.8
Consequences of CSA	2	1.9
Offender release	2	1.9
Statistics on child sex offenders	2	1.9
Victim profile	2	1.9
Offender acquittal	1	.9
Court ruling	1	.9
Official report	1	.9
Offender death	1	.9
Exposing paedophiles	1	.9
CSA statistics (victims)	1	.9
Press regulation	1	.9
Total	107	100.0

Little coverage was given to issues related to the regulation of the media. This is significant given that the major criticism of the campaign from the media and politicians was that it had created a moral panic about paedophiles and had led to a series of vigilante actions in certain parts of the country. The campaign was essentially seen as inciting violence and only helping drive offenders underground. Even when *The Mirror* decided to support a campaign for Sarah's Law, it still criticised the tactics used by the *News of the World*.

Sources

The most frequently cited news sources were victims relatives (mostly the parents of Sarah Payne), authoritative sources (police and government ministers) as well as sources within the media (journalists).

Table 10. 4: First News Source Quoted

	Frequen cy	Percent
None quoted	23	21.5
Victim's relatives	17	15.9
Police	14	13.1
Journalist/editor	9	8.4
Minister	7	6.5
Individual citizen	7	6.5
Interest group	5	4.7
Other	5	4.7
Prosecution lawyer	2	1.9
Police spokesperson	2	1.9
Childcare expert	2	1.9
MP	2	1.9
Document/memo	2	1.9
Judge/magistrate	1	.9
Victim	1	.9
Offender	1	.9
Offender's relatives	1	.9
Social worker	1	.9
Academic expert	1	.9
Medical professional	1	.9
Charity organisation	1	.9
Probation officer	1	.9
Government spokesperson	1	.9
Total	107	100.0

The premise of the media campaign was an attack on authority for a perceived failure to protect children from abuse. This probably explains the relatively higher number of authoritative sources cited in news stories, than in the other case studies. Interest group organisations frequently quoted during the trial included the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO), the Association of Chief Police Officers

(ACPO), the Association of Chief Probation Officers (ACOP) and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

Type of abuse

Given that the context which prompted the *News of the World's* campaign to be launched was the murder of Sarah Payne, the most frequently cited types of abuse in news stories were abduction (N=20) and murder (N=26). Nevertheless, other forms of abuse such as rape, sexual intercourse, indecent assault and buggery were also mentioned in news stories.

Table 10. 5: First Type of Abuse Mentioned in News Story

	Frequency	Percent
N/A*	34	31.8
Murder	26	24.3
Abduction	20	18.7
Rape	5	4.7
Indecent assault	5	4.7
General (sexual abuse)	4	3.7
Sex	3	2.8
Pornography	2	1.9
Sexual assault	2	1.9
Molestation	2	1.9
Buggery	1	.9
Indecent exposure	1	.9
Physical abuse	1	.9
Other	1	.9
Total	107	100.0

* NA-Not applicable

Although some researchers have observed that making distinctions between the types of abuse renders some less serious than others (La Fontaine, 1990), it is worth noting that mentioning specific types of abuse not only reflects the experience of victims but can significantly enhance understanding and debate about the nature and dimensions of child sexual abuse.

Offenders and Victims

Victims

The news sample established that female children were more likely to become victims of sexual abuse than were males with 49.5% of victims identified in news stories as girls, while 2.83% of news stories identified boys as victims (see table 10.6). The analysis further showed a disparity between multiple victims and single victims. Two or more children were identified as victims in 20 news articles while 51 news stories cited incidents where the offender assaulted just one child. This represented 47.7% of the news sample (see Table 10.7).

Table 10. 6: Victim Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Female	53	49.5
Not applicable	35	32.7
Not stated	11	10.3
Female and male	5	4.7
Male	3	2.8
Total	107	100.0

Table 10. 7: Number of Victims Mentioned in News Stories

	Frequency	Percent
No victim	16	15.0
1	51	47.7
2	4	3.7
3	5	4.7
4	1	.9
5+	10	9.3
Not applicable	20	18.7
Total	107	100.0

Offenders

Although the bulk of the articles analysed did not refer to incidents of child sexual abuse where a specific offender was identified (55.1%), a significant proportion of news (39.3% N=42) stories identified adult males as offenders. Female child sex offenders were not

identified in any of the news stories during the sampled period. This demonstrates how coverage was concerned with general issues about child sex offending and not just specific cases. Within the news stories that identified men as offenders, the majority of victims identified were adolescent girls (N=25) while only three victims were identified as male. Male offenders who targeted both female and male victims were mentioned in four news articles.

Table 10. 8: Gender of Victim's in News Stories that Identified Abusers as Men

	Frequency	Percent
Female	25	59.5
Not stated	7	16.7
Female and male	4	9.5
Male	3	7.1
Not applicable	3	7.1
Total	42	100.0

Despite the disparity in the proportion of female and male victims identified in news stories, it is possible to conclude that victim gender was not so significant in determining news reporting of child sexual abuse. However, as already acknowledged elsewhere in this work, child sexual abuse is a gender specific problem (i.e., one committed mainly by adult men and adolescents boys against both male and female children). The identification of offender and victim gender in news coverage during the *News of the World's* campaign can be seen as reflecting this. The majority of stories identified only one offender (33.6% N=36). Only three news stories identified more than five offenders within the news stories. The offender age ranged from 21- above 60 with offenders within the 41-50-age group most represented in news stories.

Recommendations cited in news stories

Half of the sampled news article (N=54) mentioned suggestions toward preventing child sexual abuse. Of these, parental access to child sex offenders registers and community notification of paedophiles in the community as well as life sentence for convicted paedophiles were the most frequently cited recommendations to ensure child protection - 40.7% (N=22) These were the key positions advocated by the *News of the World* in its

campaign. Reflecting the leading positions assumed by *The Mirror* and the *News of the World* during the campaign, the majority of these recommendations were most likely to be cited in the other papers. By coincidence the campaign occurred at the time when the Home Office was undertaking a review of sexual offence laws in which homosexual relations, rape and child sexual abuse were amongst the issues being considered. But there was little citing on this review.

Table 10. 9: Newspapers Citing Proposals about Child Protection

	Frequency	Percent
The Mirror	16	29.6
The News of the World	13	24.1
The Independent	9	16.7
The Times	4	7.4
The Sunday Times	4	7.4
The Daily Mail	4	7.4
The Sun	3	5.6
Sunday Mirror	1	1.9
Total	54	100.0

Summary

The key event which triggered the wave of media coverage was not the abduction and murder of Sarah Payne (the event in itself not an unusual occurrence in Britain), it was the sensational campaign launched by *The News of the World* that triggered the amount of coverage that ensued. As demonstrated by the quantitative content analysis, the launch of the campaign took reporting to another level where providing sensational details of another crime was simply not enough but constructing news through the initiation of a campaign of this is. Campaigning for legislative changes to the existing governance of sex offenders became a priority. This explains why despite being a weekly publication, the amount of coverage in the *News of the World* surpassed that of many of the dailies.

However, the quantitative content analyses indicates that coverage in *The Mirror* was significantly more intense in terms of the overall number of news stories and the genres of news stories. The paper had the largest number of editorials referring to issues related to the campaign and the proposed changes in the law. It is reasonable to consider the *Mirror's* coverage was an attempt to compensate for its not having led the campaign in the first

place. Unlike the other previous three cases analysed, this is the first instance where coverage in the daily broadsheets equalled each other. Significantly, *The Sun* which is the daily sister publication of the *News of the World* gave little coverage to the latter's campaign. News coverage of child sexual abuse during the period of analysis was significantly prominent with many newspaper editions according it front-page news stories, editorial comment and opinion columns. Coverage generally reflected the gendered nature of abuse as well as the different types of abuse perpetrated on children.

The *News of the World's* campaign can be understood within the context of contemporary media agenda setting where the media attempted to pre-empt a reform in policies directed at preventing child abuse and ensuring child protection. The petition signing firstly by readers of *New of the World* and subsequently by readers of *The Mirror* as well as the opinion polls conducted by MORI on behalf of the *News of the World*, and the ensuing demonstrations in parts of the country, demonstrated public backing for the media initiated campaign to change the law. This populist support fuelled the paper's drive even more but put the media agenda directly in conflict with the government, which rejected proposals for access to sex offender's registers. The subsequent textual analysis examines this dynamic in more detail.

Textual Analysis of the News of the World's Campaign

Structure of the Campaign

Launching the campaign, the Sunday tabloid pledged to begin the biggest public record of child sex offenders ever seen in the country by naming all 110,000 child sex offenders living in Britain. On its first day, the campaign named 'For Sarah' stated its aim as seeking a change in the law on the sentencing and release of child sex offenders: 'Today, too, we campaign for a major change in the law: child sex perverts jailed for life must NEVER be released. They must NEVER get parole. Life must mean life' (23 July 2000). Its editorial stressed that 'we are taking the first step to publish the names and addresses of known sex offenders, simply so that parents will know who are the monsters in our midst. [...] That is not all. We are demanding that, in future, life must mean life for the worst child sex perverts. No more early release. No more soft options. No more freedom for the fiends.' (23 July 2000: 6). In another feature length article headlined 'LOCK THEM UP FOR

LIFE' the paper outlined the backing it had received for its campaign: 'The devastated parents of murdered Sarah Payne last night supported our 'For Sarah' crusade to make a life sentence mean just that...a whole life behind bars'. (23 July 2000).

Thus, began the paper's naming of convicted child sex offenders. Structurally, at its inception, the campaign was aimed at making sure convicted child sex offenders got life imprisonment. In the first week, 40 offenders were named and in some cases, photographs accompanied these. Given the different types of crimes they had each committed and their different location in the country, the offenders were identified according to the respective counties in which they were located. As the paper sought to build its 'database of the nation's paedophiles', it did not distinguish between offenders going on to list people convicted of accessing child pornography, alongside child rapists, and those who operated 'paedophile' rings. By the second week, the campaign had been restructured with the paper now calling for the introduction of what it called 'Sarah's Law'. Informed by a similar existing legislation in America known as Megan's Law, 'Sarah's Law' advocated legislation allowing communities to be notified when child sex offenders moved into their area. The original idea of a life sentence for convicted offenders became secondary to a new proposal of granting parents the right to know if convicted offenders lived in their community. Accompanied by a close-up photograph of Sarah Payne, the paper's front page included a petition to the Home Secretary, which it urged its readers to cut out, sign and post to the paper. The petition called for the introduction of Sarah's Law, which according to the newspaper would:

- 1/Give everyone the right to know the identity of convicted child sex offenders in their area
- 2/Ensure a life sentence means life³⁸ (*News of the World*, 30 July 2000).

The paper also went ahead to 'publish more names and photographs of child sex offenders living near you' (*News of the World*, 30 July 2000). This change of tactic demonstrates the paper's reaction to and reflection of the build up in public concern that the first day of the

³⁸ In December 2001, following the conviction of Roy Whiting (a convicted child sex offender) for the kidnap and murder of Sarah Payne, the *News of the World* briefly renewed its campaign. It was aided by the Metropolitan Police's decision to request the paper's assistance in tracing some child sex offenders. It asked the paper to publish some four convicted sex offenders missing from the Sex Offenders Register. In that edition, *News of the World* went on to claim triumph in its campaign stating the measures implemented by the government as a result of the paper's advocacy. It even had a scoop in an invited commentary from the Home Secretary.

campaign had stirred. At the launch of the campaign, the paper never stated a desire for a so-called 'Sarah's Law'. It had simply set itself the goal of publicly naming all convicted child sex offenders in the country. In fact, it was not until August 6th that the paper articulated the tenets of its proposed law to its readers: 'SARAH'S LAW: What it's going to mean for our children'.

As the campaign progressed, the newspaper found support amongst many of its readers who clearly identified with the paper's objective (i.e. through petition signing and letters to the editor). Simultaneously, it encountered deep opposition and criticism from other sections of the media notably 'the out-of-touch INDEPENDENT' (*News of the World*, 6 August 2000) as well as the government and organisations working with offenders. Consequently, public opinion became central to its rhetoric. A MORI poll commissioned by the paper was used to demonstrate that the campaign had the full support of the public: '88% SAY NAME AND SHAME'. A subsequent MORI poll cited by the paper referred to a 76 per cent (N=1004) support for knowledge of convicted child sex offenders living in the community. Besides the MORI poll conducted on behalf of the paper, and the petition signing it initiated for its readers, it cited support from other polls: 'Polls on Carlton's London Tonight, ITV Teletext, Sky TV and *The Mirror* were swamped with a wave of support for our campaign for Sarah's Law. An overwhelming 98 PER CENT answering a Teletext Poll said we were RIGHT, while 92 per cent backed us on Carlton's poll, 85 per cent in Sky's and over 90 per cent in *The Mirror*' (*News of the World* 6 August)³⁹. Such public support not only became the paper's evidence in justifying its campaign but also permitted it to assume a mediating role between public opinion and official bodies (Bell, 2002).

The support notwithstanding, in the face of criticism from other sections of the media and official bodies, the *News of the World* eventually retreated from its originally stated intention not to stop 'until all 110,000 [child sex offenders] have been named and shamed'. Following discussions with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO) as well as the Association of Chief Officers of Probation (ACOP), on August 4th, the paper announced a

³⁹ Two weeks later, *The Independent* cited an ITV Teletext poll claiming that 68 percent of 2,491 respondents thought *News of the World* should be prosecuted for their actions ('Shame on you, News of the World' -*The Independent* 15 August 2000).

halt in its campaign claiming victory in that it had taken the decision to suspend naming offenders after the authorities had 'publicly pledged to crusade for Sarah's Law' (*News of the World*, August 6th).

Reactions to and consequences of the Campaign

The Public

The most apparent sign of public reactions to the campaign was through petition signing (400,000 signatories) as well as subsequent public protests and vigilantes action against named or suspected child sex offenders as demonstrated by the headlines: 'Pervert who tempted kids flee mob' (*The Mirror*, 5 August 2000); 'Abuser named by paper held after going to ground' (*The Independent*, 4 August 2000) 'Vigilante attacks increase as paper meets its critics' (*The Independent*, 3 August 2000); 'Mob attacks man mistaken as paedophile' (*The Times*, 25 July 2000); 'Dead man named as paedophile' (*The Times*, 25 July 2000) 'Paedophile vigilantes attack the wrong man As photographs of sex offenders are published in the wake of Sarah the Payne's killing, outpouring of grief that recalls the tributes to Diana' (*Daily Mail*, 24 July 2000), 'Innocent families flee mob: paedophile vigilantes defy police pleas to halt the attacks' (*Daily Mail*, 10 August 2000).

Within a week of the campaign, anti-paedophile protests began in an estate in Paulsgrove, Portsmouth where about four of the offenders named by the paper were said to be living. A group calling itself Peaceful Protesters of Paulsgrove (PPP) organised nightly demonstrations and compiled a list of 20 suspected paedophiles that they wanted evicted from the estate. Five families had to be moved from the Paulsgrove estate in Portsmouth following a week of demonstrations in the area. In Greater Manchester, similar demonstrations saw a group of protesters converge outside the home of a man suspected of being a 'paedophile'. Even those who happened to have similar names to those named by the newspapers were attacked, as were families of former offenders. In one instance in Newport, a paediatrician was forced to flee her house after protesters confused the word 'paediatrician' for 'paedophile' and her house was daubed with graffiti spelling the word 'paedo' (see Figure 10.2)

Figure 10. 2: *The Mirror* 30 August 2000

Page 2 THE MIRROR, Wednesday, August 30, 2000

Mirror Today
 FROM THE MIRROR
 4-PAGE SPECIAL INSIDE

Miracle man survives 6m volt lightning bolt
 PAGE 10

INSIDE
 Your No.1 guide to money and finance

Sue Carroll
 Andrew Parker and Claire Montgomery...
 Page 9

Mirror Weather
 Sunny spells but risk of showers

British Today
 NORTHWEST ENGLAND...
 EAST ANGLIA...
 SOUTHERN ENGLAND...
 Temp: abroad Temp: home

PAEDOPHOOLS
PAEDIATRICIAN driven from her home by mob who think she's a PAEDOPHILE
 By VICKY BAKER
 A paediatrician has been driven from her home by ignorant thugs who confused the word with paedophile. The doctor, Paula, was 27 years old and lived with her husband and two children in a house in the village of...
 The doctor's husband, David, said: "I was shocked and angry. I don't know how the police could let this happen. It's a disgrace." Paula said she was "scared and angry" but was determined to stay in her home. She said she had been told by a friend that she was being targeted by paedophiles. She said she had been told that she was being targeted by paedophiles. She said she had been told that she was being targeted by paedophiles.

Fightback by Camelo
 By JOHN POTTER
 A MIRROR article in 1997, which reported on the...
 The article was written by John Potter, a journalist for the Mirror. It reported on the...
 The article was written by John Potter, a journalist for the Mirror. It reported on the...

Labour eur plea to Blair
 By NIGEL HARRISON
 Labour's...
 The article was written by Nigel Harrison, a journalist for the Mirror. It reported on the...

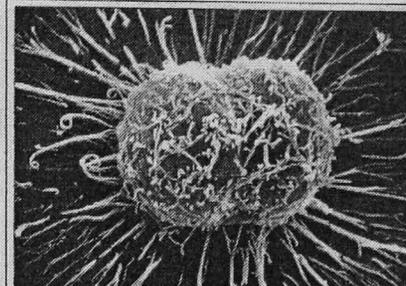
BSE fear is 'no problem'
 By JOHN VAN BARNWELL
 A...
 The article was written by John Van Barnwell, a journalist for the Mirror. It reported on the...

Reggie has vital surgery
 By ANNE HUGHES
 A...
 The article was written by Anne Hughes, a journalist for the Mirror. It reported on the...

A VACCINE FOR CANCER?
 FROM PAGE ONE
 The...
 The article was written by a journalist for the Mirror. It reported on the...

JILL PALMER Medical Correspondent
 The...
 The article was written by Jill Palmer, a medical correspondent for the Mirror. It reported on the...

KILLER: A close-up of a cancer cell which may soon be destroyed by a vaccine, US scientists claim



The repercussions of the ensuing vigilantism was not only the thwarting of professional rehabilitation schemes ('Abuser named by paper held after going to ground'- *The Independent*, 4 August 2000) but also led to fatalities. Two suspected child sex offenders committed suicide. John Potter, a 49-year-old suspected of indecently assaulting two boys killed himself at his home in Kent, ('Millionaire sex suspect is found shot dead'-*The Daily Telegraph* 10 August 2000) while 54-year-old James White whose home was attacked by a group of anti-paedophile protesters in Oldham, took a drug overdose. He had been facing seven charges of indecently assaulting young girls ('Man accused of paedophile offences kills himself after vigilante attack'-*The Independent*, 9 August 2000). Equally, in separate instances in Manchester and Newcastle respectively, child sex offenders on trial walked free from court after the respective judges cited adverse publicity sparked by the *News of the World's* campaign: 'Paedophiles freed after 'shaming' (*The Times*, 11 August 2000). Bell (2002) extensively and critically examined the context of the protests and the negative response to the protests in the media, arguing the campaign itself and the protests could

be politically contextualised as challenging the contemporary governance of child sexual. For in undertaking to name and shame convicted offenders and advocating life sentence for offenders, the campaign demonstrated a perceived lack in confidence in the government's regulation of child sex offenders- a challenge nevertheless worrying for a Labour government that had reconstituted itself as capable to be 'tough on crime, (and) tough on the causes of crime'. Nevertheless, vigilantism is a problematic issue. As Cowburn and Dominelli (2001: 409) argue, its sole concern is with the protection of one community 'not to rehabilitate the sex offender or to stop him from abusing others outside their residential area. As a result, the problem of safety is exported from one neighbourhood to another without safety ever being achieved. As a result, the idea is perpetuated that children remain the primary responsibility of their parents'. Whilst not downplaying the harm of child sexual abuse, the media campaign itself, which portrayed an increase in sex offending against child, and these public demonstrations, were at odds with research that has shown a lower recidivism rate amongst such offenders (Marshall, 1994; Hedderman and Sugg, 1996; Grubin, 1998; Sample, 2001). Grubin (1998: vi) noted that over a 20-year period, only 20% of those convicted of sexual offences against children were reconvicted for similar offences. This was a much lower recidivism rate than for offenders generally which was, 50% over two years and 60% over four years respectively.

Government

Another aspect of the process of moral panics is the reaction of authorities and opinion leaders. In fact, the *News of the World's* campaign was premised on a perceived 'immense gap between public opinion and public policy' (Rebecca Wade, Editor of *News of the World*, 13 August 2000). Government response, put forward by the Home Office Minister Paul Boateng, criticised the campaign and stressed that access to detailed information about child sex offenders was best left to the police and other statutory bodies. This was significant in establishing the government's control over policy matters. As Bell (2002) suggested, 'in countering the fundamental challenge that the newspaper and the protesting parents represented, their response was to present the campaign and the protests as themselves the danger, both to individuals and to democratic justice' (p. 90). Nevertheless,

following an article in *The Sunday Times* by opposition leader William Hague advocating mandatory life sentences for repeated offenders and tighter supervision of child sex offenders as well as the inclusion of British citizens convicted abroad in the Sex Offender Register ('Life for paedophiles must be an option'- 13 August 2000), the government subsequently indicated that it was looking into ways of extending the sentences of child sex offenders: 'Prescott backs life terms for paedophiles' (*Independent*, August 14 2000).

It is worth noting that the campaign itself framed the issue of child sexual abuse in a way that excluded current policy considerations from the range of possible remedies. In fact, the quantitative analysis indicated existing legislation was the main focus in only about 3% of 107 sampled news articles in the media while only 10% of articles mentioned such existing laws as a secondary topic. Shortly after the campaign began, a Home Office consultation report *Setting the Boundaries* was published (Home Office, July 2000). The report which proposed reforms in areas such as child prostitution, rape and sexual encounters between homosexuals, also proposed the creation of four new offences that significantly covered child sexual abuse: persistent child abuse, voyeurism, trafficking for sexual exploitation and familial abuse. Heavier sentences were to accompany these new offences. Though the report clearly signalled the government's preoccupation with restructuring existing legislation to prevent child sexual abuse, the Sunday tabloid's mention of the report came in a single column length article which readily dismissed the report as too lengthy a process ('Jack's way will take three years' (30 July 2000)) again ensuring that the campaign's themes and aims were advanced at the expense of opposing views. Initiating a campaign and translating public reaction as a feedback, the tabloid paper was able to position itself as the voice of the public and maintain its particular agenda on the law governing sex offenders.

The media

Initial response to the campaign came from the daily newspapers particularly the broadsheet *Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph*. *The Guardian* likened the *News of the World's* actions to giving a child a box of match asking: 'If children are given a box of matches and told not to light a fire, do we blame the child for burning the house down or the person who supplied the kid with matches?' (*The Guardian*, 31 July 2000). *The*

Independent similarly described the campaign as ‘deeply distasteful’, ‘irresponsible’ and ‘an invitation to people to take the law into their hands, which will discourage potential child abusers from seeking help and force people with past convictions to go underground’ (24 July 2000, Editorial). The *Daily Mail*’s criticism of the campaign was expressed mainly through a hard news story quoting source organisations that opposed the public naming of offenders: ‘Paedophile warning. Naming and shaming could put more children in danger, newspaper is told’ (*Daily Mail*, 24 July 2000). An invited comment in the paper by Dr. Anthony Daniels, also warned about the dangers of vigilantism which such a campaign could prompt ‘Beware giving revenge mobs a target’ (*Daily Mail*, 24 July 2000). Significantly, *The Times* and *The Sun* (whose parent company News International, also owns *News of the World*) did not mention the campaign or give it any editorial treatment. However, an article in the *News of the World* headlined ‘The people who are backing us in our battle for Sarah’, claimed that it had support from *The Sun*, *The Mirror* and *The Guardian* respectively (*News of the World* 6 August 2000).

Indeed, support for the newspaper’s campaign came from the unusual quarters. Though it had earlier refused to endorse the campaign on the grounds that ‘it should not be for newspapers to enforce the law’, *The Mirror* had voiced sympathy toward the spirit behind the campaign (Editorial, July 27 2000). On August 3rd, the paper which is market and political rival to *News of the World* came out in support of the campaign. Although the paper used an interview with the parents of Sarah Payne to contextualise its support for the campaign, it restricted its support of the institution of ‘Sarah’s Law’. Nevertheless under the headline ‘Why Britain must have a ‘Sarah’s Law’’, its editorial opinion applauded the political commotion which the initiative of its rival had caused:

‘There has been a lot of nonsense talked about the campaign by *News of the World* to change the law. The paper has been condemned by almost every body for their supposedly reckless and irresponsible decision to name and shame paedophiles. We don’t happen to think it’s the best way to solve this problem. We would prefer the police to do it. **But one thing is certain.** Without the furore caused by the naming and shaming, this issue would already be forgotten’ (*The Mirror*, 3 August 2000).

It is possible that the paper’s coverage that surpassed that of *News of the World*, could have been its own way of making up for not leading the campaign in the first place. However, it

is also reasonable to locate *The Mirror's* support of the campaign within the context of the paper's recognition of the substantial public support generated by its rival's campaign. From Cohen's (1973) model of a moral panic, public concern is fundamental to the development of a moral panic. It is characterised by an intense wave of public anxiety over something perceived as a threat to society. Although public concern can sometimes begin without any direct media influence, sensational media constructions and or distortions can act on these concerns with the result that public anxiety is heightened. The *News of the World's* campaign not only exploited existing public fears but also provided a catalyst and created an environment for ensuing public reactions. Both *The Mirror* and the *News of the World* differed in their approach to the issue. Whilst the *News of the World* actively sought to 'name and shame paedophiles' in its bid to achieve a law allowing police to notify the community if a convicted child sex offender moved to the locality, *The Mirror* supported the premise of community notification of 'paedophiles' but remained opposed to their public naming.

The paper's campaign did resonate abroad as well: 'NAME THE FIENDS SAY ITALIANS' (*News of the World*, 27 August 2000). The death of an eight-year-old girl who had been abducted and sexually abused by a sex offender had, according to paper, left 'terrified Italian parents[...] begging their newspapers to follow the News of the World's example and identify paedophiles' (*News of the World*, 27 August 2000).

Little or no coverage was given of other issues concerning child sexual abuse such as: the prevalence of abuse and the varying contexts in which abuse took place. Within the ensuing debate, little interest was shown toward pursuing theoretical explanations of child sexual abuse as largely perpetrated by adult men known to their victims. Similar to the case of the inquiry into abuse in North Wales, such discourses when they did emerge came from the opinion columns, editorials and letters pages of broadsheet newspapers. For instance David Aaronovitch in *The Independent*⁴⁰ and a letter from a retired judge in letters to the editor in *The Times*⁴¹

⁴⁰ 'Analysis of the figures would show Paulsgrove Woman that her greatest fears should not reside in total strangers, but in close male relatives, or men who woo single mothers in order to get access to their children' ('Why I am so scared of Paulsgrove Woman' *The Independent* 11 August 2000).

⁴¹ 'In my last seven or eight years on the bench, I had the depressing tack of having to try case after case where the sexual abuse of children was alleged. I understand from former colleagues that that is still so. It was my experience that by far and away the greatest number of alleged abusers were within the family or are trusted

Only one story in the *News of the World's* entire campaign discussed the treatment of child sex offenders. Even then, the story focused on the fact that 'paedophiles' were incurable. The depiction of child sexual abuse as an incurable disease played on and reinforced public anxiety. Government policy proposals about ensuring child protection and sentencing offenders received significantly little coverage as did existing treatment and rehabilitation schemes for child sex offenders: 'How offending by child sex abusers has been cut by a quarter' (*The Independent* 31 July 2000). Suggested information guidelines about protecting children were not mentioned by the *News of the World* until the third week of the campaign when excerpts from NSPCC guidelines on child protection were published in the paper 'How to protect your children' (*News of the World*, 6 August 2000). This significantly demonstrated how sensational and stereotypical media focus about social problems can potentially conceal reasoned debate on the problem. With a narrative thrust of exterminating the 'dangerous convicted paedophile' posing a threat to community, discourses about the most common form of abuse - that by adults known to their victims - became sidelined.

Moral Panic over Child Sex Offenders

Several readings can be drawn from the *News of the World's* campaign and the reactions to it. An examination of media response to the newspaper's campaign demonstrates how the image of a child can be invoked to command the attention and the support of the public (Buckingham, 2000). The campaign not only brought child sexual abuse to the fore of the political agenda, but provoked a crisis in the relationship between the press and government (Cricher, 2002b) and demonstrates some of the shortcomings of media agenda setting - what Franklin (1989) described as 'legislation by tabloid'.

Having established the general structure of the Sunday tabloid's campaign, the analysis next outlines how the campaign and reactions to it fitted the model of moral

neighbours. Usually men of no previous convictions, often pillars of their local community...' (*The Times*, Letters, 16 August 2000).

'Since 80% of child sexual abuse cases occur within the family by people known to the family, why are we concentrating on the other 20%'. During my career as a child-protection social worker (now retired), I found that with the increased number of low-income single mothers, the children in these homes were an easy target for convicted paedophiles' (Julia Sullivan, Letters, *The Sunday Times* 3 August 2000p.18).

panic first advanced by Stanley Cohen (1973). The concept of moral panic considers media over-representation, exaggeration and distortion in coverage of certain events and issues as creating public perceptions that subsequently develop into moral panics. Cohen's pioneering analysis of the confrontations between the subcultures of 'mods' and 'rockers' in the early 1970s first advanced the thesis of a moral panic. Grounded in assumptions about the media's ideological role, and how the media actively constructed certain kinds of meanings, Cohen described a moral panic as occurring when:

'a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible' (Cohen, 1973: 9).

Though seen to be generated and being acted upon by the dominant social order, moral panics vary in nature and patterns of occurrence. Some panics can be society-wide such as AIDS (Vass 1986; Potter 1986 cited in Jenkins, 1992)) while others are simply restricted to certain groups or categories in society (for instance, blacks, women, welfare cheats or dole scroungers (Golding and Middleton cited in Jenkins 1992). More recently single mothers, immigrants and 'paedophiles' have variously assumed the figures of threat to societal values and interest, within some press coverage, clearly demonstrating the shifting sites of moral panics. Sensational and misleading media constructions of these problems potentially create public perceptions that might perpetuate a moral panic in society. A moral panic can quickly die down while in some cases it can leave lasting implications such as the changes in legislation and social policy. Taking into account Cohen's definition, as a model on the development of moral panics, one can establish how the *News of the World's* campaign fitted the classic moral panic (See Table 10.10).

Table 10. 10: *News of the World's* Campaign as a Model of a Moral Panic.

Elements of Moral Panic (Cohen 1973)	News of the World's 'For Sarah' Campaign 2000
Condition, episode, person or group is defined as a threat to society's values and interests	'Paedophiles' in the community (The 'folk devil')
Threat presented by the media in a stereotyped form.	Naming and shaming of paedophiles 'living near you'. <i>News of the World's</i> campaign for Sarah's Law
Rapid build up of public concern	Petition signing, protests /vigilante action For example <i>News of the World</i> readers, residents at Paulsgrove estate.
Mounting moral barricades by editors and other 'right thinking people'	Backing from Sarah's parents, 'children' champion Esther Ratzen, from judges, from police officers, from churchmen, from social workers, and from many more in the front line of the fight against crime' (<i>News of the World</i> , Editorial: 23 July 2000); as well as other newspapers (<i>Daily Mail</i> and the <i>Mirror</i>) and charities such as the NSPCC*, Childline and Kidscape.
Response from authorities and opinion leaders	Summit meeting of expert organisations (NACRO, ACOP, ACPO, NSPCC), and <i>News of the World</i> , responses from politicians: William Hague (Opposition Leader), Home Office Minister Paul Boateng, Deputy PM John Prescott, and Members of Parliament.
Panic recedes or results in social change	Campaign recedes without delivering any obvious changes in policy. <i>News of the World</i> backed down on August 4 th after two and a half weeks of the campaign saying it will continue to lobby for a change in the law. In September, the government announced a series of measures giving the police and probation officers more powers in managing the risks posed by convicted child sex offenders. Still it ruled out granting the public access to the Sex Offender Register.

* The NSPCC subsequently distanced itself from the campaign saying their remarks had been taken out of context.

Public reaction to the campaign became most evident in the subsequent protests that erupted in parts of the country. Recent revisions of the moral panic thesis by Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) identified five elements that characterise a moral panic: concern

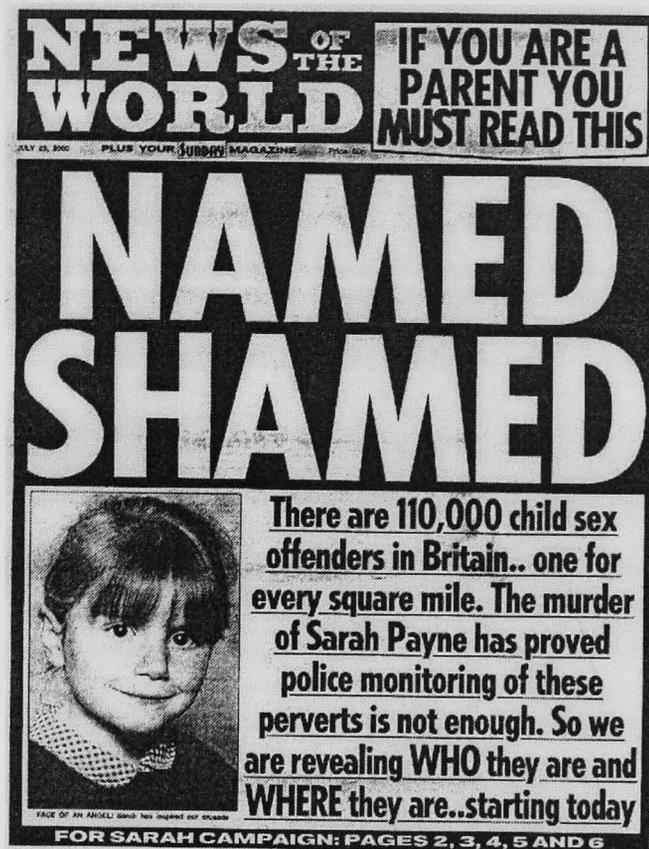
(different from fear); hostility (an “us and them” dichotomy); consensus (agreement); disproportionality (degree of public concern compared to concern about other more damaging actions); and volatility (erupting suddenly, transient). These elements were variously present during the *News of the World's* campaign. The hostile reactions to both suspected and convicted child sex offenders, the demonstrated consensus following the ‘For Sarah Summit’ that ‘there are important arguments to be had’ and the subsequent decline of the newspaper’s campaign, simultaneously reflect the moral panic model advanced by Goode and Ben-Yehuda.

The volatility of moral panics is a significant point that Goode and Ben-Yehuda’s model add to the conceptualisation of moral panics, which Cohen’s model failed to include. The problem of ‘paedophiles in the community’ was not new but one that had been identified following the introduction Sex Offenders Registration in 1997 (Kitzinger, 1999). Newspaper coverage of the Waterhouse report into abuse in North Wales in February that year had established a precedence for naming offenders and publishing their pictures. Similarly, public vocalisation against released child sex offenders was evident in the case of Sidney Cooke in 1998. The campaign receded without much concession on the part of the government besides a plan to look into the concerns expressed.

Headlines and the vocabulary of Panic

Further examination of the paper’s campaign reveals a particular vocabulary of fear and anxiety that could possibly explain the subsequent public protests which emerged in parts of the country. The paper’s front page on the first day of the campaign illustrates this (See Figure 10.3).

Figure 10. 3: *News of the World* 23 July 2000



Other inside page headlines were framed in a similarly panic language: 'DOES A MONSTER LIVE NEAR YOU?'⁴² (P.2). In a story headlined '10 facts to shock every parent' the paper revealed "the most spine chilling statistics' that 'there were officially more than 110,000 convicted paedophiles in England and Wales, around seven in every 1,000 men aged over 20'. It cited Scotland Yard sources that had revealed 'that 64 per cent of paedophiles re-offend four or more years after their first conviction' (*News of the World*, 23rd July 2000). The paper even claimed that such offenders were never cured: 'Their evil is incurable says crime expert' (July 23 2000: 3).

⁴² Throughout the campaign, the *News of the World* seeks to command and maintain public support by addressing its readers as parents and members of the community. It is a tactic reflected in headlines such as 'If you are a parent, you must read this' (23 July 2000, Front Page); 'Parents must have right to protect their children' (23rd July 2000, p. 4); '10 facts to shock every parent' (July 23, p.2); 'Parent power can change the law' (30 July p. 2). In equal vain, those who question the paper's campaign are vilified – 'NAMED AND SHAMED The MPs who won't back Sarah's Law' - as supporting 'paedophiles'.

Headlines in the second week of the campaign expressed similar alarm: 'EVIL THAT PREYS ON OUR CHILDREN' (30 July 2000: 4); 'More names and photographs of child sex offenders living near you' (30 July 2000:1) (see figure 10.4).

Figure 10. 4: *News of the World*, 30 July 2000



An article in *The Mirror* the day after the campaign was launched claimed that '...paedophiles walk free from court four times more often than other accused' (*The Mirror*, 24 July 2000). Even when *The Mirror* joined the campaign, its headlines were similarly couched in anxious phraseology as demonstrated below (see Figure 10.5).

Figure 10. 5: *The Mirror* 3 August 2000



The paper's enthusiasm for the campaign almost matched that of its rival. The following day, it dedicated its full front page to the campaign by boasting about the amount of 'public' support it had garnered (See Figure 10.6).

Figure 10. 6: *The Mirror* 4 August 2000



And on the 5th of August, the day after a meeting between statutory organisations and the *News of the World* had led to the latter agreeing to end the naming and shaming; *The Mirror* proclaimed victory to its readers by announcing on its front page: 'YOU'VE DONE IT' (*The Mirror* 5 August 2000) (see Figure 10.7).

Figure 10. 7 *The Mirror* 5 August 2000



As the campaign evolved, the *News of the World* even used the rhetoric of war, describing its campaign it as a 'crusade' and a 'battle': 'As a tribute to Sarah we have named our campaign the "For Sarah' **crusade**' (23 July 2000); '...our **crusade** to persuade the government to introduce 'Sarah's Law' in memory of murdered Sarah Payne' (30 July 2000); 'This is a **battle** that the News of the World is determined to win' (30 July 2000: Editorial); 'A high level summit to discuss the News of the World's **crusade** for the introduction of Sarah's Law is to take place on Tuesday' (July 30 2000). The use of language such as 'crusade' and 'battle' to characterize such a moral campaign created and reinforced the image that convicted child sex offenders were like enemies who had invaded the society-'the ultimate neighbour from hell' (Kitzinger, 1999). The rhetoric of the campaign therefore seemed to suggest that, under siege from 'paedophiles in the

community', the nation had to fight off and expel these 'paedophiles', like enemies are fought off in battles.

Even when the *News of the World* claimed it was promoting vigilance and not vigilantism, the sensational headlines, the language and overall tone of the campaign worked to achieve the opposite effect: a public panic that soon escalated into vigilante actions, witch hunts and misidentification of individuals in different parts of the country. Moreover, the sensational headlines, the selective use of sources, the selective use of opinion polls⁴³, and the exaggeration of statistics in the overall presentation of the campaign served to justify the paper's own agenda while at the same time playing on and exploiting public anxiety to justify its call for more stringent sentencing and offender control (i.e., Sarah's Law). While the campaign rejected vigilante actions and mob rule, its central themes and the language itself combined to perpetuate panic in the public ('paedophiles are everywhere-one per square mile'). The use of such language encourages and sustains fear and panic and potentially limits responses to the kind of public protests and the vigilante actions that ensued. As a result, even when the newspaper's campaign actively portrayed itself in favour of 'vigilance not vigilante' (*News of the World*, 30 July 2000), this vocabulary implicitly projected a contradictory message that vigilantism not vigilance was needed in dealing with paedophiles in the community.

The Representation of Offenders

As with the other cases studied within this research, throughout the campaign, the *News of the World* consistently described child sex offenders as: 'perverts', 'monster' and 'evil': 'Does a monster live near you?' (*News of the World* 23 July 2000); 'WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A **PERVERT** ON YOUR DOORSTEP' (*News of the World*, 23 July 2000); 'OUR WEBSITE MAPS THE **BEASTS**' (*News of the World*, 23 July 2000); '**EVIL** THAT PRAYS ON OUR CHILDREN' (*News of the World*, 30 July 2000); '**FIEND** COPS DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE' (*News of the World*, 30 July 2000); These characterisations stress the 'otherness' (implying unusual, different, abnormal) of sexual offenders who abuse children.

⁴³ A MORI poll subsequently showed 58% of people disapproved of the paper's naming and shaming of paedophiles. (www.mori.com) Accessed 6 February 2001.

Feminist analyses have repeatedly contested these representations, which render child sex offenders to be seen as sexually aberrant (Kelly, 1996; Kitzinger, 1999; Bell 2001), making them different from ordinary human beings. Pathologising the offender as 'Other' in the discourse about child abuse narrows the debate and minimises the fact that most sexual offenders are known to their victims (Kitzinger, 1999). Significant from the feminist perspective, is that this framing confines the discussion of child sexual abuse to issues other than adult masculine sexuality and control (Kelly, 1996; Cowburn and Dominelli, 2001). This failure to critically examine the social construction of masculinity, male sexuality and the family as an institution, is a feature of press coverage that has previously been identified as characteristic of child sexual abuse news. When aspects of feminist analysis of child sexual abuse surfaced in the media, they mainly came from the letters and opinion pages of broadsheet newspapers. The fact that discussions about familial abuse do not fit comfortably in a society eager to promote marriage and the family as the norm, partially accounts for such coverage (Greenslade, 2000; Bell 2002). In fact, Bell (2002) observed that having constituted 'the paedophile' as existing outside the home, where children face the most danger, this media discourse ensured that the home and family emerged in tact. Bell (2002) equally cites the relative lack of feminist journalists as a factor contributing to the sidelining of feminist commentary about child sexual abuse in the media.

Press coverage, particularly tabloid media coverage not only constituted the offenders as 'Other' but, in many instances, these offenders and their offences were particularly presented as a working class phenomenon. Based on interviews with a criminology research Professor Colin Pritchard of the University of Southampton, an article written in *The Mirror* said, 'Children caught in the poverty trap are the most vulnerable, according to the professor'. Professor Pritchard went on to tell the paper 'Children from poor backgrounds are the more likely victims of paedophiles' (*The Mirror* 24 July 2000). This framing of offenders as working class or coming from a poor background is a feature already noted in the coverage of Gary Glitter.

The *Daily Mail* seemed to draw a distinction between child sex offenders who happened to be working class and those that were middle class, when the paper gave space for a full inside page commentary by 'a middle-class professional man' who classed himself as a 'self-confessed paedophile' to explain why he thought society's attitude

toward people like him was counter-productive particularly in terms of preventing people like him from seeking help. Headlined 'Why I loathe myself', the lead-in paragraph introduced him as follows:

'Simon Thomas, 32, a middle-class professional man, was convicted last year of possessing 7,000 images of child pornography and sentenced to four months' imprisonment, of which he served two before being released for good behaviour. A self-confessed paedophile, he believes society's attitudes can prevent people like him seeking help-and here explains why...'*(Daily Mail, 27 July 2000)*.

Thomas' profile as a middle class professional, much suited that of the average *Daily Mail* reader and perhaps explains the paper's decision to grant him space to explain his 'condition' which Thomas explained as follows:

'I have suffered from an unnatural interest in images of children since the age of 14. I use the term 'suffered' deliberately. [...]. I couldn't even get help; after all, if I hated myself because of my problem how would other people look at me if they found out? [...] I am fortunate, in some ways that I suffer from what is known as a 'learned response'-my reaction to children is as a result of experiences in my youth-rather than 'cognitive distortion', which is the more dangerous form of disorder. People with a cognitive disorder can believe that sex with children can be acceptable and that children enjoy it. Such people, with their distorted twisted reasoning are much less open to being treated than people like me. My problem relates only to images: I have never, ever wanted to have sex with a child. I would rather die than do that.'*(Daily Mail 27 July 2000)*.

For a mainly middle-class readership, such representation not only constituted child sex abusers as working-class, but also as 'Other' to a middle-class type of abuser. Such representation potentially works to legitimate one form of abuse whilst pathologizing others.

As opposed to the popular tabloid and middle-class conservative constitution of 'the paedophile', an opposing 'liberal' depiction understood the convicted child sex offender as an individual who possessed civil liberties despite the nature of their crimes. Respect for individual liberties demanded that such individuals take part in rehabilitation schemes where available and without being publicly named and shamed. Within the sampled news story, this liberal discourse was represented by *The Independent*, which opposed the campaign- 'Naming and shaming of sex offenders will not protect your

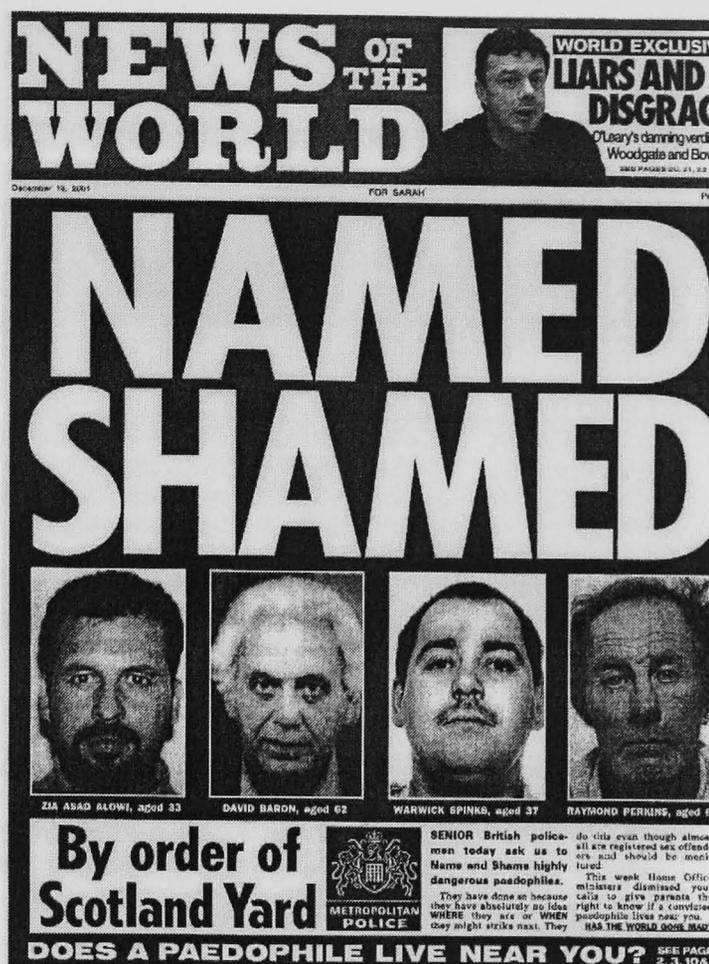
children' (24 July 2000, Editorial)- and cited institutional sources to indicate that 'naming and shaming' sex offenders put children at risk. In contrast to the *News of the World's* highlighting of various instances in America where public access to sex offender registers had saved many children from child sex offenders, *The Independent* viewed the proposed Sarah's Law as unworkable: 'Megans Law doesn't work there and won't work here: If Anne Widdecome refuses to jump on the bandwagon then there must really be something wrong with it' (8 August 2000). Despite the dominant popular media premise of re-offending by convicted child sex abusers, an article in *The Independent* was at pains to highlight existing offender treatment and rehabilitation programs: 'How offending by child sex abusers has been cut by a quarter' (*The Independent*, July 31 2000).

Discussion

This examination of the structure and content of the campaign against convicted child sex offenders launched by the *News of the World* in the summer of 2000 has demonstrated how the media attempt to influence social policy. Whilst the campaign and reactions to it fitted the procedural model of a moral panic as advanced by Cohen (1973), it also highlighted the inherent contradictions and flaws of attempting 'legislation by tabloid'. Such contradictions arise from the structure and focus of the policies advocated by the campaign. Its limited focus on those already convicted of abuse excluded the greater proportion of child sexual offenders (that is offenders known to their victims and those still abusing children). Although the campaign heightened public attention to the problem of child sexual abuse, it is worth noting that the naming and shaming of paedophiles was not news because it was new. The "outing" of sex offenders by the press is an issue noted by Kitzinger (1999) in her analysis of the debate about the release of convicted child sex offenders in the late 1990s following the introduction of the Sex Offender Register. Equally, from the previous chapter, in February 2000 following the publication of the report inquiring into abuse in care homes in North Wales, the issue of disclosing the names and pictures of child sex offenders had gained prominence during newspaper coverage of the report's findings. These incidents had implicitly established some precedence which subsequently became legitimated 'by order of Scotland Yard' in December 2001 when in a bid to help track down four convicted child sex offenders

missing from the Sex Offender Register, the Metropolitan Police asked the *News of the World* to publish the photographs of these offenders (See Figure 10.8).

Figure 10. 8: *News of the World*, 16 December 2001



As already noted, a facet of moral panic is that a phenomenon that has been in existence suddenly appears in the limelight. The naming and shaming of paedophiles was only presented as new by the *News of the World* in order to set an agenda for public debate and in the process, perhaps sell more papers. This usefully demonstrates how news values such as cultural resonance, continuity and newspaper agenda (Harcup and O'Neill, 2000) operate. An event becomes familiar and easier to interpret once it is established as headline news and remains in the media (Harcup and O'Neill, 2000).

The campaign's challenge to existing government policies on child sex offenders and child protection could by extension be understood as a challenge to New Labour's rhetoric on crime – 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' – the response from the law and order establishment to a crime perceived in popular and public discourse as on the increase. Public, media and government responses to the campaign, demonstrated the

varied nature of contemporary understanding and approaches to child sexual abuse and offenders. There was a distinct tabloid/broadsheet divide, as the popular tabloids remained supportive of the campaign whilst the broadsheets remained critical. The latter adopted a mainly liberal approach of foregrounding offender treatment programmes and condemning the campaign as circulation seeking and driving offenders underground. In fact, Goddard and Saunders, (2001) point out that in its criticism of the campaign, a paper like *The Daily Telegraph* pursued *News of the World* with the same determination as the latter had been using to pursue child sex offenders. Interestingly both sides justified their respective positions by claiming it best-ensured the protection of children.

The tabloids, which asserted having public opinion on their side, repeatedly focused on the recidivism of child sex offenders. Viewing current legislation governing these offenders as inadequate, the popular tabloids advocated public access to information pertaining to the location of released offenders. In the short term, the campaign receded with the government rigidly rejecting the proposal for 'Sarah's Law' ensuring that the state was able to reaffirm 'its role as the provider of a general context of public security, and of sober, non-emotive, rational, modern democratic government' (Bell, 2002:93). However, in September 2000, the government announced a series of measures focused on managing the risks posed by convicted child sex offenders amongst which was the introduction of risk assessment and monitoring programmes for offenders to be undertaken by the police and probation officers. The police were also given powers to issue general details pertaining to the number of offenders in an area, the assessment of risks posed to the community by the sexual offender, and the measures taken to ensure the safety of the community. Police were also to notify neighbours and head teachers about a released offender. Probation officers were given the statutory power to ask victims if they wanted to be informed of an offender's release. Regardless, that these measures were part of an ongoing governmental reviews on the sentencing of child sex offenders, the measures were largely claimed by the *News of the World* as victory for of its campaign ('Almost won: our fight to protect your children'-*News of the World*, 16 December 2001)⁴⁴. Nevertheless, coming at the time they did, Critcher (2002a) rightly suggests these procedural reforms

⁴⁴ See www.forsarah.com (A website launched by the *News of the World* when it first began the campaign for 'Sarah's Law'. It has recently been updated with the inclusion of the photographs of Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells and the names of other victims of child abuse and murder. Accessed 12 November 2002.

were indeed an indication of the government's shift in position and concession to some of the concerns raised by the campaign. Writing for the *News of the World* in December 2001 when the paper briefly resumed its campaign, the Home Secretary David Blunkett admitted that the *News of the World's* campaign had 'identified a range of measures and the Government has already implemented seven eights of them' (*News of the World*, 16 December 2001: 9). At the same time, these short-term procedural measures, ensured the government could carry on with more significant long-term measures. As part of the measures announced by the government in September 2000, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were subsequently introduced in April 2001 giving the police and probation officers statutory powers to manage risks posed by sex offenders released in the community.

The analysis also found that within the debate itself, little interest was shown in possible feminist, psychological, and cultural assertions on the characteristics and prevalence of the child sexual abuse. Throughout the campaign, construction of the child sex offender was limited to a perception that he was an omnipresent monster threatening the community through his propensity to re-offend. Whilst acknowledging that particular feminist readings of child sex offenders might not have been useful here, (especially given the limited investigative leads about Sarah Payne's killer at the time) the configuration of 'the paedophile' during the *News of the World's* campaign as omnipresent, different from rational and normal human beings, and irredeemable (Haug, 2001), not only rendered it difficult to include feminist critique that consider abuse as more prevalent in private rather than public places, but such representation was central in stirring antagonism and the vigilante actions that ensued. By confining their attention to child sex offenders and defining them as evil monsters, the campaign limited its discussion about child sexual abuse to a few 'dangerous', 'sexually deviant' and 'possibly irredeemable' individuals – a reinforcement of existing discourse of child sex offenders. In this way, the presence of adult males in the lives of children and the family as a site of abuse remained unquestioned. As Greenslade (2000) suggested, the uncomfortable truth of the prevalence of abuse by familial males conflicts with the 'desire to play on fears of the itinerant bogeyman who represents a potential threat to the life of the every child. To run a campaign against the monster lurking in the home would probably cause a boycott of the paper' (Greenslade, 2000: 74).

Although the paradigm of a moral panic offers a useful context to understand the *News of the World's* campaign and reactions to it, at the same time, the events of summer 2000, can be situated within the broader prevailing political ideologies particularly those pertaining to crime, offenders, risks and childhood. As already discussed elsewhere in this work, the governance of crime underpins much of New Labour's law and order rhetoric and the campaign reflected that need for stronger law and order policies and more control to curb (re)offending. The campaign also exemplified an instance of the invocation of the image of the child as a persuasive means of commanding public attention and support (Buckingham, 2000). Buckingham notes that in the past, campaigns against homosexuality have seemingly been classed as a campaign against paedophiles, whilst campaigns against Satanism are redefined as one against ritualistic child abuse. Existing debates about children dominantly associate childhood with innocence and 'a precious realm under siege from those who would rob children of their childhoods' (Jackson and Scott, 1999: 86). These contemporary debates are equally accompanied by intense anxiety about the risks faced by children, and an anxiety over the future of children (Buckingham, 2000). The resultant discourse is that:

Children are thus constituted as protected species and childhood as a protected state, both become the loci of risk anxiety: safeguarding children entails keeping danger at bay; preserving childhood entails guarding against anything which threatens it. Conversely, risk anxiety helps construct childhood and maintain its boundaries-the specific risks from which children must be protected serve to define the characteristics of childhood and the 'nature' of children themselves (Jackson and Scott, 1999: 86).

Such a perception helps to construct the boundaries of childhood (often in relation to adulthood). The media representation is implicated in this because the media are an important arena where these debates about the changing nature of childhood occur (Buckingham, 2000). Davis and Bourhill, (1997) noted media representation of children both as perpetrators and as victims of crime, was central to the creation and reinforcement of public perceptions of childhood. However, the continued focus on the child as threatened and endangered (Buckingham, 2000) simultaneously reinforces a discourse of childhood innocence and children's dependence on adults. Buckingham rightly argues that the varying cultural representation of childhood derived from these discourses says more about adults than it says of children.

CHAPTER 11

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, THE MEDIA AND POLICY

Focusing its analysis on sampled key events, this thesis has examined the coverage of child abuse in the British press relating this to broader socio-political articulations regarding childhood, child protection, risks, law and order, the family and the governance of sex offenders. Constructed according to news values such as elitism, personification, drama, deviance and cultural consonance, the emanating news discourse of child sexual abuse was found to routinely individualise the crime and fail to critically challenge the broader social context in which such abuse occurs. Such a failing leaves intact hegemonic masculinity within patriarchy, and an established understanding of childhood as innocent and vulnerable, with the associated moral panic about the perceived threat of 'the paedophile' within a socio-political climate in which the family takes precedence over other institutions as the legitimate site for child protection. All this occurs within a changing political and social environment where an increased reporting of incidents by victims, accompanied by public action against offenders have all significantly influenced media coverage and policy changes. Equally significant in influencing media attention in recent times are the retrospective revelations of abuse in childhood and the changing sites and experience of child sexual abuse particularly the increased use of the Internet by offenders to download child pornography or access potential victims.

At the same time, increased competition within the newspaper market and changing news values has prompted a rise in sensational news and more sexually-oriented news content (Howitt, 1998; Holland, 1998). As Kitzinger (1996: 320) notes, journalists 'are not in the business of faithfully recording the most common events, they are in the business of finding, constructing and selling "news"'. Where sex crimes were once the staple of a few notorious and prurient publications like *News of the World*, increasingly sex-crime news is found in contemporary newspapers (Howitt, 1998) (that is broadsheets and mid-market tabloids). In the UK, this sexualisation is part of a broader orientation toward 'soft news' that amuses and appeals to the emotion as much as it does to the intellect (Holland, 1998). Such entertainment values are particularly evident in the popular press such as *The Sun* and *The Mirror* that base their appeal on

‘irreverence, scandal, ‘saucy’ humour and sex’ (Holland, 1998: 17). However, citing the case of the US media, (Van Zoonen, 1998) outlined how the increasing use of colour, the inclusion of graphics, the shortening of stories as well as the increased attention to more lifestyle features and news considered useful to audiences instead of traditional political news, were all symptomatic of the market driven nature of journalism.

News values and Journalistic Discourse

The intensity and tone of coverage varied with each case and between newspapers. However, in some instances, quantitative differences did not readily emerge between tabloid and broadsheet news coverage, which clearly demonstrated the influence of news values and newspaper editorial priorities. These equally ensured the development of particular frames in coverage.

In the case of Renate Williams, her gender, profession and background were variously used as an interpretive frame. In the case of Gary Glitter, his celebrity image, his childhood as well as a developing social anxiety about the Internet as promoting such a crime, were significant discursive frameworks employed by the media. A prior existing news frame of adverse coverage to social work related to children (both tabloid and broadsheet) characterised by a distinct fault and blame-oriented reporting, also ensured that coverage of the Waterhouse report into abuse in North Wales, focused on ‘incompetent and bungling’ social workers whom the conservative press saw as having taken over the role of the family and also representing the ‘nanny’ state. Creating and maintaining a discourse of blame (‘how could this happen?’ and ‘Not again!’) is a significant element in news discourse on child sexual abuse, particularly where social workers are involved. It is interesting that in most cases of child sexual abuse, individuals are blamed⁴⁵. In the case of abuse in care home, it is a profession that is blamed suggesting that the context of abuse does not necessarily affect the how blame is encoded (Clark, 1992). Important to the encoding of blame in the case of North Wales was the perceived failure of the care system and the contemporary debates about the lowering of the age of

⁴⁵ Clark, 1992 uses *The Sun's* representation of sexual crimes against women to explicitly demonstrate how the linguistics of blame works. Blame is encoded through particular labelling of both offenders and victims and through the use of particular linguistic devices such as transitivity –a finding replicated here in the examination of child sex offenders.

consent for homosexuals and the repeal of Section 28 seemingly helped the interpretative frame for conservatism. Significant was the naming and subsequent 'hunt' for 28 of those named in the Waterhouse report-an issue taken up by broadsheets and tabloids alike. Therefore, by the time, the *News of the World* campaigned 'For Sarah', the issue of 'paedophiles in the community' (Kitzinger, 1999) and the figure of 'the paedophile' as the dangerous individual to be exterminated from society had variously surfaced and was well established within factual media discourse (although not on a similar scale). Challenging the existing governance of child sex offenders, the setting of a public and political agenda by the newspapers, also served to preoccupy the journalists in the "silly" season as August is sometimes referred to by journalist because of the low output of political news in the parliamentary recess and holiday period.

News values, particularly those that prioritise cultural consonance, conflict, rarity and personality, immediately facilitate a discourse where the community fear of child sexual abuse and sex offenders is news. Nevertheless, what obtains is that 'in this climate, care is not easily dealt with at all in news, although its absence makes the headlines. Community fear of child abuse is news; teaching how to sustain a culture of care is not. The consequence is news rarely reports what may be learned from instances of child-abuse by parents, carers and children themselves. There is no editorial urgency about preventative policies' (Hartley, 1997:69). Similarly, within that context, opportunities to examine the actual prevalence and contexts in which such abuse occurs are rarely taken as they go against the grain of not only journalistic practice but also commercial pressure.

Coverage of the Waterhouse Report into abuse in North Wales and the *News of the World's* campaign demonstrated the role of the media in responding to and shaping policy in child sexual abuse. Both cases highlight the different contexts in which child sexual abuse policy issues are covered in the media. The publication of the report into abuse in homes in North Wales prompted adverse criticism of social workers and intense debate about child protection policies and dealing with abuse in care institutions. In that instance, there was a predominant focus on social services at the expense of other institutions criticised in the report. However, the case of a newspaper-initiated campaign to change the law pertaining to convicted child sex offenders, shows that the press assumed both an agenda setting and policy prescription role. This had implications for public opinion and attitudes towards offenders. In both cases, media reporting tapped

into existing community fears about a presumed 'paedophile crisis'-itself possibly fuelled by the media other than any other local prevalence of 'dangerous strangers'. Hence, the overwhelming focus on 'hunting the abusers' or 'rooting out the beasts'. In both cases, the dominant constitution of the child sex offender as the 'Other' missed the fact that most offenders are ordinary men and overlooked the prevalence of familial abuse.

Constructing Child Sex Offenders

Throughout the analysis the recurrent image of the child sex offender is that of a dangerous individual who is abnormal, evil and should be kept out of society. The *News of the World's* campaign capitalised on this presentation to articulate a more stringent governing of convicted child sex offenders. Following this thesis, protecting the innocence and vulnerability of childhood and restoring social order, would require the extermination of dangerous individuals or their removal from society. The consequence of this is not only the failure to challenge hegemonic masculinity despite the pain it causes women and children but the perpetuation of myths about the recidivism of child sex offenders, and the stereotyped presentation of a bygone era of an innocent, crime free childhood. The distinction between normal and 'other' men is equally problematic in the face of research that continues to show that abuse in familial settings is most prevalent. Attitudinal research of 'normal' adult men has equally shown that a substantial population of adult men thought it acceptable to carry out sexual assault (Hanson and Bussiere, 1998 and Cowburn, 1998 cited in Cowburn and Dominelli, 2001) and that child sex offenders frequently have relationships with adult partners.

The identification of some members of society or a category in society as problematic to the rest of society or segments of it is a central tenet of the concept of moral panic (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994). As the journalist Libby Brooks suggested 'every generation has its sexual demons. We are bound by what we revile. From the prostitution scandals of the 1950s to the debates around the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the [19]60s and the women's movement focus on rape in the [19]80s, sexual difference and deviance has bubbled into the nation's consciousness testing moral convention and the responsiveness of our laws' (*The Guardian*, G2, 21 June 1999: 2). The 'paedophile' seems to have emerged as the new hate figure, the 'folk devil' in competition

if not filling a position variously occupied by 'welfare scroungers', immigrants, homosexuals, single mothers and 'asylum seekers'. This cultural resonance framework explains the contemporary public and media panic about the menace of 'paedophiles' - an issue well captured by the Channel 4's spoof *Brass Eye* programme on 26 July 2001 that satirised the media treatment of the issue⁴⁶.

Collier (2001), however, suggests that 'the paedophile can, in short, be seen to have become a canonical figure within a broader masculine dangerousness at the end of the twentieth century' (Collier, 2001: 226). In the 19th Century, this dangerousness was personified by the drunken, physically abusive working class man (Carter and Thompson, 1997) as opposed to the upper-class male. Now as then, what is being displayed is hegemonic masculinity that is white, middle-class and heterosexual. The dangerousness of the demonised "Other" within the popular discourse is informed by the perception of the child sex offender as 'an individual who puts at risk the security and well-being, not just of other individuals, but of society and sociality itself' (Collier, 2001: 231). Within this particular configuration, it becomes easy to locate the 'paedophile' as different (outside) and not normal (within) society. The consequence is the potential diverting of attention from the problematic nature of adult masculine presence in the lives of children especially in familial settings. It also has consequences on the way the public including policy makers perceive child sex offenders and offending (Sample, 2001), and the kinds of policies directed at offenders (For instance focusing on longer sentences and less on offender treatment and rehabilitation programmes). Media explanations of problematic events are significant in identifying the nature of deviation and defining the consensus (Naylor, 1995). The consensus here seems to be that the 'dangerous evil paedophile' should be kept outside the boundaries of society. Significantly, the journalistic discourse also project particular understandings of childhood and the risks faced by children.

⁴⁶ Coincidentally the programme produced the same kind of hysteria that it had satirised. *News of the World* described the channel as 'channel filth' and called for the writers and producers of the programme to be sacked. Reactions from the government came from the Home Secretary, the minister in charge of child protection, and the Culture Secretary respectively. The Child Protection Minister Beverly Hughes (who had not even seen the programme) condemned the programme as 'unspeakably sick' while the Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell said she was raising the issue with the Independent Television Commission

Conceptualising Childhood in the Twenty first Century

From my analysis, it is evident that a central tenet of contemporary media discourse on child sexual abuse is informed by a prevalent ideology about childhood. Adult anxiety about children and childhood has been the focus of a significant body of work (Holland, 1992; Davies and Bourhill, 1997, Jackson and Scott, 1999; Buckingham, 2000) Buckingham, (2000) describes this ideology of childhood as 'a set of meanings which serve to rationalize, to sustain or to challenge existing relationships of power between adults and children, and between adults and themselves'. These ideologies are reflected in debates about children and television where a dominant focus on the negative effects of television viewing has seen television largely blamed for provoking children to imitate violence, for corrupting children's imagination, and leading to a deterioration of family life⁴⁷. They are also reflected in debates about the representation of children in the media where media representation of children both as perpetrators and as victims of crime has been identified as central to the creation and reinforcement of public perceptions of childhood (Davies and Bourhill, 1997, Buckingham, 2000). Quite often what is missing from these debates are children themselves (Barker, 1997, Buckingham, 1993). Buckingham's (1993) study of children's understanding and use of television and more recently Livingstone and Bovill's (2001) edited collection of articles examining children's meanings and uses of new media and communication technologies, are attempts to redress this imbalance. They offer substantial insights into the place of the media in the lives of children.

It is evident that the social construction of childhood is itself fraught with competing discourses about children. Reports and investigations of child sexual abuse and child murder exemplify the notion of childhood as threatened (by sexual risks) and endangered whilst an equally concurrent discourse of violent, anti-social children, perceive of children as threats to adults (Buckingham, 2000). The former view is also driven by a 'construction of childhood as an age of innocence and vulnerability which adults have a duty to protect (Jackson and Scott, 1999: 95). These varied discourses of childhood are reflected in the analysis of press reportage in this research: for instance the disruptive,

⁴⁷ These debates seem to be replicated with emerging technologies such as video games and the Internet. For more on the television effect debates, see Barker's (1997) critique of the Newson Report (1994).

'out-of-control' and aggressive boy in the case of Renate Williams, the seductive girl in the Gary Glitter case and the victimisation of the 'little angel' in the case of Sarah Payne. The concept of childhood can itself be employed for political uses (Barker and Putley, 1997) as evidenced in the case of the *News of the World's* campaign. Constructions of childhood appeared to change with the context of each case but the overriding concern about the status of childhood and childhood as in need of protection stayed the same. In her examination of the shifts in perspectives in the representation of children, Holland (1992: 14) suggested the representations of childhood reflects the continuous effort of adults to gain control over children, the desire to use childhood to secure the status of adulthood – often at the expense of children themselves'. Hence, these anxieties and fears about childhood can be a reflection of concerns about adulthood. Focus on the child (as reflected in stories about child sexual abuse) is partly a reflection of adult fears and anxiety about children and the risks they face.

In comparison with previous historical periods, childhood increasingly appears to be insecure, permeable and unsafe in ways previously unimagined (Collier, 2001). However, the sexual exploitation of and abuse of children has long existed in society (see Parton, 1979; Finkelhor, 1984; Kempe and Kempe 1984; Jenkins, 1992) alongside a commonsense (adult) view of children as innocent and asexual. Newspaper reportage of child sexual abuse seems to reflect adult discomfort about the vulnerability of children and the loss of sexual innocence. On the other hand, knowledge of the prevalence of sexual abuse shows us that adult male sexuality and violence continues to intrude on this innocence. As Nicci Gerrard puts it, 'at some very deep level we all desire for childhood to be an Eden, yet we fill that Eden with serpents.' (*The Observer*, Review Section, November 14 1999: 1). The expectation of childhood as an ideal environment and defined by innocence almost necessarily demands adult intervention to protect children (as reflected by the television effects debates). However, Stainton-Rogers and Stainton-Rogers, (1992) suggest that the very attribution of childhood to innocence is what makes children targets of those who abuse them (the adults). The dominant newspaper representation of child sexual abuse, presumes the home as a crime-free environment. The seeming reconstitution of the family as safe, was also evident in the government's announcement of a shake up in adoption laws following the publication of the Waterhouse Report, only reinforced media and popular conceptions of child abuse as

carried out outside the family. The emphasis on the family and traditional values continues to shape New Labour's ideology (Jordan, 1999). Jordan rightly argued that notions of strong and responsible communities underpinning New Labour's ideology sustain a campaign very similar to the traditional values and anti-crime ideas that characterised the Thatcher/Major years⁴⁸. The danger of such constructions is that they can potentially limit reasoned debate and the development of policies to counter sexual violence against children. This is problematic because within such a framework, it increasingly becomes impossible to discuss the prevalence of sexual abuse by adults known to their victims and to question (adult) masculine sexuality particularly its role in the sexual abuse of children.

The continued focus on the child as threatened and endangered (Buckingham, 2000) by 'Others', 'strangers' 'monsters' and 'perverts', reinforces a discourse of childhood innocence and dependence on familial adults by children. Within such a framework, it increasingly becomes impossible if not unnecessary to query (adult) masculine sexuality and the prevalence of familial sexual abuse as these lie outside of the popular frames of reference.

Dangerous Spaces

The media construction of sex offenders infiltrating teenage chat rooms to solicit potential victims as well as that of abusers using the Internet to access and distribute child pornography reflects a different pattern in news interest about child sexual abuse. Although there is clearly a need for more work in this area, its development can be located within the wider context of a heightened public attention towards protecting children particularly children who use the Internet. Implicit in this development is the acknowledgment of the changing directions from which threats to children emerge, the risks faced by children in society and the status of childhood in general. The mapping of safe and dangerous places for children is equally an issue that occupies a significant framework in child sexual abuse discourse.

In this regard, the Internet as a site where 'paedophiles prowl' and 'groom' children has become a significant aspect of news discourse both about the child sexual

⁴⁸ In fact, the stress on the family and good (better) parenting as a means of maintaining law and order in society was exemplified in the Parenting Orders introduced following the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998.

abuse and about the Internet itself. As one journalist put it, 'because of an Internet chat room, I had to roll up my children's innocence and stash it away like an old sleeping bag' (Cressida Connolly, *The Independent on Sunday*, October 29 2000). The issue of child sexual abuse and the Internet again achieved prominence in August 2002 in news coverage of missing school girls Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells in Soham. In the rush to seek clues and possibly attribute blame, the news media was quick to cease on the fact that the two friends had used the Internet prior to going out. For days, journalists pondered on whether the children had been victims of a 'chat room pervert'. In today's electronically mediated world, the Internet, positioned against the family, is seen as a technology, which if not properly regulated, represents a site of danger and high risk to children. This particular discursive representation was prominent in the coverage of Gary Glitter's trial. It has subsequently been reflected in news coverage of 'paedophile raids' carried out by police to arrest individuals suspected of accessing child pornography on the Internet.

The seeming anonymity of the Internet as well as the ease with which images could be downloaded or potential victims approached via chat-rooms, certainly highlights the prevalence of sexual interests in children by adult men. As with other crimes, a few commit very many acts. Although precise statistics are unavailable in the UK, research in America has shown that of 4000 cases of child sexual abuse handled each year, only 0.13% involved the Internet in one way or another (Chicago Child Advocacy Centre research quoted in Kincaid, 2000). It would therefore seem that the degree of concern is greater than the actual prevalence of the problem. In focusing on cyber-paedophiles and casting the problem mainly in terms of the 'world wide web of depravity', the discursive construction of child sexual abuse within this context fails to take account of the substantial body of research that has shown that sexual abuse is much closer to home. The coverage equally signals the emergence of a particular category of 'paedophile' within popular discourse-the 'cyberpredator' or what Jenkins (2001) described as 'cyberstalkers'. Significantly, this coverage suggests that threats to children are from strangers-the 'lonely hunted monster'- lurking in cyberspace.

Grounded in anxiety, the discourse extends to schools being told 'why the internet in schools is putting children at risk' (*Daily Mail* 24 January 2001), and parents ordered to 'ban the computer from your child's bedroom' (*Daily Mail* 21 March 2001). By news accounts, in placing itself within the home, the Internet is fostering the sexual

exploitation of children. The presence of the computer in the school and at home is considered as rendering these respective environments no longer safe for children. Nevertheless, the spate of school killings in America in the late 1990s and the killing of 16 children and their teacher in Dunblane, demonstrated the growing vulnerability of children in the school environment (Walkerdine, 1999). Though media coverage of such drama can be understood, the mapping of safe and dangerous places for play and learning has consequences 'for children's use of space, where they are allowed to go and the places they themselves feel safe in, frightened or excited by' (Jackson and Scott, 1999:101). The mythically supported need to safeguard 'vulnerable' children is fed by such news leading to constraints, anxiety and even the electronic tagging of children -'Girl to get tracker implant to ease parents' fears' (*The Guardian*, 3 September 2002).

The realisation that children could be/stay within the 'safety' of the home and still remain far from the protective reach of the family significantly informs and sustains this particular framing of child sexual abuse. Such an account of child sexual abuse has its antecedence in earlier media effects debates that focused on the media and children like 'video nasties' (Barker, 1984) and computer games (Walkerdine, 1999; Sutter, 2000). Media technologies such as television and the VCR were once seen as exploiting the vulnerability of children and presenting a threat to the sanctity of the family. Whilst highlighting the fears about children in public places- in this case, virtual space, the contemporary media discourse in itself underscores the changing notion of spaces where abuse occurs. Chris Jenks, has previously noted how 'the social spaces occupied by adults and children have changed, not just in place but in character, and the spaces previously allocated to fixed identities of adults, and children, and families have transmogrified' (Jenks, 1996: 104). The World Wide Web is a virtual space. And unlike the fenced school play ground where children can be under the watchful gaze of adults and can easily stay away from the dodgy man in an anorak with a bag of sweeties, the fluidity of virtual space, limits adult control over children and creates even more uncertainty about the safety of children. Cyberspace therefore enters the list of dangerous spaces from which children should be kept.

Simultaneously informing this discourse is 'the ontological importance given to the heterosexual "family" as an institutional source for the preservation and reproduction of moral order...' (Collier, 2001: 237). This mythologizing of a locale informs the

construction of 'dangerous places' in contemporary Britain (Collier 2001). Within such a discursive context, the presence of the Internet at home and at school is the significant factor used to distinguish these respective environments as sites of danger. Profiling child sexual abuse by associating its prevalence to the Internet confuses and narrows the debate about the varying nature and context within which the sexual exploitation of children of children occurs. As one journalist put it, 'the idea of childhood innocence [...] is a convenient myth that we parents need in order to maintain that image of ourselves as members of a contented, loving family...' (Matt Seaton, *The Guardian*, G2, 13 March 2001) and perhaps a scheme used to re-invent, reify or repress our own familial experience to suit our adult selves. Profiling child sexual abuse by associating its prevalence on the Internet confuses and narrows the debate about the varying nature and context within which the sexual exploitation of children occurs.

Conclusions

This thesis set out to examine the contemporary media representation of child sexual abuse in the British press. The major research questions were: how is child sexual abuse represented in the press? How does reporting relate to other social discourses? Combining a theoretical understanding and critique of news and journalistic output as a social and cultural practice where language is important, the original research aims of this thesis outlined at the beginning have been addressed by focusing on a cluster of case studies. Such case studies concretely highlight the nature and contexts of media coverage. The key findings from this research has generated new knowledge.

Describing the contemporary news coverage of child sexual abuse has demonstrated the varied contexts within which child sexual abuse is covered in the media, what topics are covered, sources cited, genres of stories and the prominence accorded to child sexual abuse news. Victims are frequently cited in news stories in their capacity as witnesses in criminal proceedings or in retrospective allegations of abuse, in which case the victims have become adults. Male authoritative sources are frequently cited more than female sources. This contributes to wider debates about the masculine character of journalism (Hartley, 1992; Kitzinger and Skidmore, 1995, Kitzinger, 1998; Van Zoonen, 1998; Wykes, 1998).

A substantial variation was found in the types of news stories with hard news stories forming the bulk of the sample. The analysis also indicated a considerable focus on issues related to the criminal justice process⁴⁹ and changes in the law. A variation was found in the amount of attention given to proposals for increased child protection as only a third of the sampled stories mentioned existing child protection legislation or suggested other measures to prevent child sexual abuse. The most cited measure was life sentences for offenders. The *News of the World's* campaign which took life sentences for dangerous offenders and the introduction of a law allowing public and parental access to Sex Offender Registers as its major point, partially accounts for this skew.

Comparing news coverage across different newspapers has contributed to existing understanding of how readership orientation, market segmentation and partisan allegiances influence journalistic reporting. The study established a variation in coverage between the tabloid and broadsheet newspapers with the tabloid newspaper coverage accounting for 63.4% of the sample compared to 36.6% in the broadsheets. This reaffirms research that has identified a significant increase in the number of 'sex crime news' stories in popular daily newspapers (Soothill and Walby, 1991; Carter, 1998; Naylor, 2000) and a general emphasis in sexual crimes in crime news reports (Ditton and Duffy, 1983). The tabloid press orientation towards drama and titillation combined by a high focus on the visual, almost means that these are the most likely to report sexually-related crimes. Individually, and from the entire samples *The Mirror* published substantially more news articles related to child sexual abuse than any other paper (N=68). Its coverage accounted for 21.1% of the overall sample. It also published the most editorials on the subject. Quantitatively, *The Mirror's* coverage was closely matched by the *Times*. In fact, from the overall sample, coverage in the *Times* quantitatively surpassed those of the tabloid papers such as the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun*.

Explaining the nature of news coverage has reflected on how journalistic practice underpinned by news selection processes, journalistic practices, the broader socio-political context (policy and social relations) intertwine to create and normalise particular discourses of child sexual abuse. This is important in understanding how

⁴⁹ This general trend might have been affected by the fact that two of the events analysed involved prosecution for offences related to child sexual abuse. Nevertheless, focus is almost always on the criminal justice process since it is seen as key sources of routine, reliable, authoritative news for journalists.

certain discourses emerge and why some become more prominent than others do. Paying close attention to news discourse is equally important because of the consequences such constructions have on the treatment of offenders and on policy makers' perceptions of child sexual abuse and offenders. As Ayre (2001) notes, each child abuse scandal is followed by an unholy trinity of:

- the aggressive public pillorying in the mass media of those agencies deemed responsible;
- the publication of ever more detailed recommendations to welfare agencies resulting from public inquiries convened to look into the tragedies;
- the issuing by central government of increasingly intricately wrought practice guidance intended to prevent recurrence. (Ayre, 2001: 888)

Within the framework of exploring news discourse of such a major social problem, relating this to the practices and ideologies of news production, this thesis also described and highlighted some of the dominant frames in reporting child sexual abuse trials. These include the focus on the offender as 'evil', 'sicko' and 'wierdo', the repetitive narration of the crime, the trial itself (prosecution and defence manipulations) and the attempt to explain why the crime occurred (background of the defendant). The press is overtly limited in its ability to examine explanations beyond the 'dangerous stranger' largely because of the constraints imposed by news values such as personifiability, drama rarity, and consonance. In addition, the broader concerns in the media to entertain and retain valuable audiences with short sharp 'stories' and a dominantly masculine journalistic profile and macho workplace, inhibits criticism of fathers and families.

Owing to its central role in the dissemination of information to a wide section of the public, the media are significant in constructing a model of social reality. Although coverage has sometimes undermined, and obscured broader understanding of the problem the media's role in inserting child sexual abuse into public discourse and stimulating policy discourses remains significant. Analysing the representation of a crime like child sexual abuse is therefore significant in understanding the role of the media in both the social construction and the maintenance of meanings about social problems.

News narratives can shape public understanding of child sexual abuse, which in turn shapes other discourses, behaviours and beliefs.

The importance of some of the issues outlined in this research is reflected in recent developments within the policy area. Updated recommendations from the Home Office consultation document *Setting the Boundaries*, became the key to legislative proposals concerning sexual crimes announced by the government in a white paper in November 2002. Clearly informed by the public concerns following high profile cases in the media notably that of Sarah Payne and the subsequent conviction of Roy Whiting (as the report itself admitted), the proposals contained in *Protecting the Public* (Home Office, November 2002), broadly aimed to reform the law on sexual offences whilst strengthening the protection of the public and children from sex offenders.

The proposals were largely constituted within a framework of managing the risks posed by convicted sex offenders released into the community. This was mainly through measures tightening the Sex Offenders Act 1997. Offenders would be required to re-register annually and to provide current photographs, fingerprints and national insurance details. The white paper proposed a new offence of adult sexual activity with a child: children under 13 would not be capable of consenting to sex and any sexual activity with such a child would be considered as rape; adult sexual activity with a child between 13-16 even if consensual was also to be criminalized. Prevailing concerns about the Internet as fostering the sexual abuse of children was reflected in the creation of a new offence of 'grooming' a child for sexual activity (on-line or off-line). It aimed 'to catch those aged 18 or over who undertake a course of conduct with a child leading to a meeting where the adult intends to engage in sexual activity with the child' (*Protecting the Public*. pg 25). A new offence of sexual exploitation of a child (to cover children up to the age of 18 from activities such as child prostitution and pornography) was equally one of the measures proposed. Therefore, focus was broadly on protecting children from the dangerous stranger and containing the known child sex offender.

Significantly, in the area of child sexual abuse, the white paper proposed replacing the offence of incest with a broader offence covering familial sexual abuse of a child, extending its definition of the family to mean anyone within the household unit with a position of trust or authority over the child. The offence will cover children below 18 and would carry a maximum of 14 years imprisonment. The changed

definition of incest implicitly acknowledged that familial abuse could be carried out by parent, step-parents, adopted parents, foster parents and siblings or adults in a quasi-marital relationship. Implicitly, it acknowledged the prevalence of abuse by offenders known to their victims. However, news coverage failed to reflect this variously focusing on the elements of the reform dealing with rape, gay sex and 'paedophiles who prowl the net'. *The Sun* was initially triumphant in reporting the changes claiming 'Victory for Sun on Child Sex Law' (*The Sun*, 19 November, 2002) on a huge front page spread whilst also maintaining that the revamp of the sex crime laws made 'Gays free to 'cruise' as sex law relaxed' (*The Sun*, 20 November 2002). Other newspapers also focused on the boldness of measures in 'overhauling Victorian sex laws': 'Blunkett plans major change to 'archaic sex laws' (*The Independent* 20 November 2002) s 'Tougher rape law in sex crime revamp' (*The Guardian*, 19 November 2002); 'Stricter law to convict 'date' rapists (*The Daily Telegraph* 20 November 2002: Front page); 'Blunkett targets paedophiles who prowl the Internet' (*Daily Mail* 20 November 2002); 'Gay laws are scrapped' (*Daily Mail* 20 November 2002). The dominant media frame was on the laws governing homosexuality, the managing of risks posed by sex offenders in the community, and the 'grooming' of children by 'paedophiles' on-line; who for the most part compose the minority of offenders. Nevertheless, such a routine and narrow frame of reference implied little attention was given to the most prevalent form of abuse: that occurring within the family- an issue recognized by the proposals. Such a limited media focus obscures wider understanding of the prevalence of child sexual abuse.

In reflecting on the research process, one point of focus that come mind is the method of analysis used. The content analysis employed in this thesis produced a descriptive account of aspects of news stories such as topics covered, sources cited and the location of stories. Its use meant all news stories were subjected to the same categories of analysis for coding. Content analysis usefully provided the research with a systematic and rigorous quantitative description and comparison of patterns of representation across different newspapers. Whilst there was little similarity in the news coverage of each of the cases examined here, what emerged from the analyses were the contexts and intensity with which child sexual abuse is covered in the press, and the dominant ways in which child sex offenders are framed. However, as a method, content analysis is of limited use in deciphering the discrete elements that form the narrative

structure of a text and ultimately meaning. The quantitative focus (counting and statistical analysis) can itself be time consuming and is of limited use when more meaning and inferences can be derived from textual analysis. Given the focus on news texts, the application of complex multivariate analyses was limited because some of the results were not particularly meaningful to the overall analysis. The use of discourse analysis as a second method countered such weaknesses and offered a more in-depth textual analysis, which ensured a valuable means of relating press texts to meanings, social practices and journalism. Using content analysis in combination with more in-depth textual analysis demonstrably reinforced the significance of combining content analysis with other methods. In the case of news analysis, such a combination is invaluable in linking texts to discursive and social practice in meaning production. Conducting a detailed and systematic analysis of headlines, and news texts about child sexual abuse has expanded knowledge about language in news texts particularly how various gender and power relations within the media are manifested in news discourse.

This thesis contributes to knowledge and scholarship on child sexual abuse and the media, through its examination of news reporting of contemporary cases of child sexual abuse related issues. Such an exploratory and comparative coverage of varied cases of child sexual abuse related events (that is, criminal prosecutions, the publication of an official inquiry and a media-initiated campaign), implicitly renders the work more ambitious than previous work. The analysis and conclusions provided here not only inform the wider debates about the media and social policy, but also the body and focus of work on child sexual abuse. Combining the rigorous methodological approaches of quantitative content analysis and discourse analysis, with theoretical insights of news values, journalistic practices, the profile of the profession crime news and child sexual abuse news in the media as well an understanding of child sexual abuse itself, enabled me to draw some general conclusions about media coverage and socio-political ideology.

Reflecting on the research process and conclusions also points the way toward further work that expand knowledge on media accounts of social problems and the consequences on social policy. A comparative examination of routine press news about child sexual abuse would source out any existing disparities in coverage of key events such as the cases examined here and routine accounts of child sexual abuse. Such

analysis could extend to court based studies logging cases of child sexual abuse and comparing the discourses with the popular discourses evident in the media. It would equally advance theoretical discussion of news values and journalistic practices particularly why some child sexual abuse cases receive more attention in the media than others do.

Analyses of news coverage of child sexual abuse has largely been conducted in developed countries such as the UK (Kitzinger and Skidmore, 1995), Australia (Goddard and Saunders, 2001), New Zealand (Atmore, 1996), and Canada (Doyle and Lacombe, 2000) China (Hesketh and Lynch, 1996). In a wider consideration of the construction of such a social problem, there is need for more cross-cultural studies examining parallels and differences in news reporting of child sexual abuse in non-Western contexts such like Africa and Asia, reflecting how the distinct historical, social and cultural attributes within these societies impact on news reportage of child sexual abuse. This will productively advance the theoretical debates about the media, sexual abuse, sexuality and childhood.

The research also points to the need for more ethnographic research on newspaper journalists and news editors particularly those who routinely report child sexual abuse. Such a contemporary examination would illuminate some of the particular processes and decisions that inform the production of child sexual abuse news in the new century. Such ethnographic work can further explain some of the findings reported here. Ethnographic research on audiences (the public, victims, offenders and voluntary child protection organisation and lawmakers) would provide useful insights into perceptions of child sexual abuse with the added benefit that these perceptions can be compared with analyses of media coverage.

Despite the 'child abuse fatigue' that was noted in the 1990s (Kitzinger and Skidmore, 1995) this research has noted as one of the anticipated developments in the field, the increased association of the Internet with child abuse. Such a development point the way for more work examining how this new angle of coverage relates to and/or differs from previous news coverage of child sexual abuse. Further work is needed in this area especially in relation to how news framing particularly amplifies the risks posed by the Internet and limits discussion of real child sexual abuse.

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED CODING FRAME

IDENTIFICATION

1/ Story ID Number: Case number for each news story beginning with 001.

2/ Newspaper: Newspaper in which story is published

The Times	01
The Sunday Times	02
The Independent	03
Independent on Sunday	04
Daily Mail	05
Mail on Sunday	06
The Sun	07
News of the World	08
The Mirror	09
Sunday Mirror	10

3/ Date: Calendar date. Date, month and year of publication

4/ Headline: Write our story headline

RANGE OF REPORTING

5/ Genre: this category seeks to distinguish different formats of articles that appear in newspapers in order to count and compare e.g. news from opinion columns, and editorials. Hansen, Negrine and Newbold, (1998) observed that 'different media formats/types/genres set different limits for what can be articulated, by whom, through what format/context' (pg. 107). Any examination of media content must therefore bare in mind that the genre of a news article impacts on the overall nature of coverage.

Hard news story	(01)
Editorial	(02)
Feature	(03)
Opinion column	(04)
News in brief/filler	(05)
Other	(06)

6/ Location: This variable measured the prominence given to child sexual abuse stories. The assumption here was that news considered important would be included on newspaper front pages. The page number and number of pages on which the article runs are also measures of prominence given to such stories. Given that this category was designed to measure prominence the major distinction was between front page and inside page news stories. Stories appearing after page 3 are coded as 'inside page'.

Front Page	(01)
Second Page	(02)
Third page	(03)
Inside Page	(04)

TOPIC

This interpretive variable measured the main subject matter or topic of an article. What is the main thrust of the story? The main subject matter can be derived from the headline, the lead-in paragraph or the story as a whole. To ensure that other aspects of the story are equally covered, and in view of the pyramid structure of Western news (ordering of themes/subject matter), allowance is given for the appearance of multiple topics within one story. Consequently, a subsequent variable codes the secondary topic in the story. The categories within this variable also tried to distinguish between stories which describe a single incident and those that describe a process or a generic situation. Based on prior engagement with the data through the pilot study and the subsequent application of the draft coding frame to a random selection of news stories, the following topics were identified for coding.

7/ Main focus of news article:

- (01) Offender arrest: The arrest of a child sex offender. Where a police investigation is mentioned but is not related to the offender, this is coded under category 32.
- (02) Offender prosecution: Stories relating to a court trial or criminal proceeding.
- (03) Offender conviction/Sentence: This involves stories focusing on the sentencing of an offender.
- (04) Offender acquittal: The acquittal of an offender after a trial.
- (05) Court ruling or order: Other court rulings not necessarily related to the prosecution of an offender. For instance court orders relating to victims, or the media as well as special court adjudications.
- (06) Existing Law: The story mentions an existing law regarding child protection.
- (07) Proposed law: The story mentions proposed changes to legislation or simply new proposal introduced or being considered by the government in Green Papers and White Papers respectively. Proposals could also be from the newspaper or journalist.
- (08) Sex offender's register: The specific mention of the Sex Offender Register
- (09) Specific incident of CSA: Where an incident of or allegation of child sexual abuse is described. This category is different from that of retrospective incidents of abuse.
- (10) Consequences of CSA: Story mentions the effects of child sexual abuse on the victims or the victim's relatives.
- (11) Retrospective allegation/case: Stories an incident of abuse that happened during the childhood of an individual who is now an adult. For instance, allegations of abuse during the 1970s, 1980s or 1990s.
- (12) Official Inquiry: Focus is on an official inquiry into child sexual abuse
- (13) Official report: Other official report such as that of an inquiry or a government backed research.
- (14) Other research: Research from academics or voluntary child welfare organisations such as the NSPCC, ChildLine, Barnados or Kidscape.
- (15) Media initiated campaign: Story focuses on a newspaper campaign. This is with specific reference to the *News of the World's* 'For Sarah' campaign.

- (16) Offender search: Police search for a child abuse offender or suspected offender. Where a police investigation is mentioned but is not related to the offender, this is coded under category 32.
- (17) Offender release: The release of an offender from jail.
- (18) Offender death: Death of an offender
- (19) Offender profile: Story focuses on the background of an offender citing demographic elements, employment status and upbringing.
- (20) Offender recidivism: Where a story mentions re-offending by a specific offender or cites issues related to the recidivism of offenders.
- (21) Offender treatment: Story focuses on existing offender treatment programmes or makes suggest how offenders can be treated/rehabilitated.
- (22) Paedophile ring: specific focus on a ring of child sex offenders operating in an area.
- (23) Exposing paedophiles: This category specifically refers to 'name and shame' stories whose sole purpose is to 'out' a child sex offender stating their name, address and possibly using their photographs. This category is particularly relevant to stories during the publication *Lost in Care* and during *News of the World's* campaign.
- (24) Child abuse statistics (victims): Story cites statistics on the victims of child sexual abuse.
- (25) Statistics on paedophiles: Statistics on child sexual abuse offenders.
- (26) Internet child pornography: Focus on Internet related child pornography
- (27) Anti-paedophile protest Public protest against child sex offenders.
- (28) Diagnosing child sexual abuse: Focus on how to spot child sexual abuse.
- (29) Criticism of social services: Where the focus is mainly a criticism of social services.
- (30) Interest group campaign: Campaign by an interest group concerning child sexual abuse. It could be a group backing victims, offenders or the social services.
- (31) Vigilante action: Focus on illegal law enforcement actions undertaken by individual members of the public or groups acting together.
- (32) Police Investigation: Police investigation not related to the search or arrest of an offender (as coded in categories 01 and 16).
- (33) Victim death: Focus on the death of a victim of child sexual abuse.
- (34) Victim profile: Demographic information about a victim.
- (35) Child protection: Issues pertaining to the protection of children from risk of getting abused by sex offenders (For instance, child protections initiatives and policies aimed at preventing abuse).
- (36) Community safety: Story concerned with issues about community safety for instance awareness of danger, security in public places, alertness, and mention of policies to maintain safety within the community.
- (37) Children's rights: Focus on issues pertaining to children's rights. Any mention of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or a Commissioner for Children's Rights, also coded under this category.
- (38) Press regulation: Focus on the media itself particularly in an instance where media ethics and regulatory issues are raised. Also incorporates stories that cite proposals for regulating the media or question existing regulatory mechanisms.
- (39) Other: Other topic mentioned in article that is not applicable to any of the categories above.

8) Other topic mentioned in news story: Secondary and other topics mentioned in the story. Use the categories of 7 above and code as many as applicable.

0= No (Not mentioned)

1= Yes (Mentioned)

NEWS SOURCES

Source and gender: This variable measures the differential presence of various social and political groups in the news. Coding considers actors who quoted directly or paraphrased. It has been documented that despite the potentially available variety of news sources, journalists often limit themselves to the use of press releases and interview quotations from sources (Chermak, 1995).

9) Number of news sources:

None (0) (F/M/U)*

1-2 (01) (F/M/U)

3-4 (02) (F/M/U)

5+ (03) (F/M/U)

F= Female

M=Male

U=Unclear

10) First news source quoted in item:

None	(00)
Judge/Magistrate	(01) (F/M/U)
Prosecution Lawyer	(02) (F/M/U)
Defence lawyer	(03) (F/M/U)
Police	(04) (F/M/U)
Police spokesperson	(05) (F/M/U)
Victim	(06) (F/M/U)
Victim's Relatives	(07) (F/M/U)
Offender	(08) (F/M/U)
Offender's relatives	(09) (F/M/U)
Social worker	(10) (F/M/U)
Academic Expert	(11) (F/M/U)
Medical professional	(12) (F/M/U)
Charity Organization	(13) (F/M/U)
Childcare expert	(14) (F/M/U)
Politician (MP)	(15) (F/M/U)
Politician (Minister)	(16) (F/M/U)
Inquiry chairperson	(17) (F/M/U)
Journalist/newspaper	(18) (F/M/U)
Individual citizen	(19) (F/M/U)
Council official	(20) (F/M/U)
Probation officer	(21) (F/M/U)
Interest group organisation	(22) (F/M/U)
Government spokesperson	(23) (F/M/U)
Document/memo	(24)
Other	(25) (F/M/U)

11/ Other news source cited:

Other source cited in the story. Use the source outlined in 10 above and code as many as applicable.

0= Not cited

1=Cited

TYPE OF ABUSE

This codes the precise form of abuse mentioned in news reports. Coding a specific form of sexual abuse is appropriate to capturing the variability abusive encounters and whether these are specified in press accounts. This category acknowledges that abuse varies in the degree of physical intrusion and in the significance of the perpetrator as a figure to the victim's life. Some of these categories overlap. Where no specific type of abuse is cited (that is the article uses the generic 'child sexual abuse' 'child sex offending' 'child abuse' or 'abuse'), code as 'general'.

12/ First type of child sexual abuse mentioned in story:

General/ Not Specified	(00)
Rape	(01)
Sexual intercourse	(02)
Buggery	(03)
Pornography	(04)
Indecent assault	(05)
Sexual assault	(06)
Indecent exposure	(07)
Touching/fondling	(08)
Incest	(09)
Kissing	(10)
Abduction	(11)
Sex murder	(12)
Molestation	(13)
Physical abuse	(14)
Other	(15)

13) Other type of child sexual abuse mentioned (0=no; 1=yes):

Rape	(0) (1)
Sex	(0) (1)
Buggery	(0) (1)
Pornography	(0) (1)
Indecent assault	(0) (1)
Sexual assault	(0) (1)
Indecent exposure	(0) (1)
Touching/fondling	(0) (1)
Incest	(0) (1)
Kissing	(0) (1)
Abduction	(0) (1)

Sex murder	(0) (1)
Molestation	(0) (1)
Physical abuse	(0) (1)

Charges: In news stories that concern a criminal proceeding against an offender, this category codes the mention of the specific charges brought against an offender. Quite often, the language of the law differs from that of journalism. This category attempts to measure the frequency with which the media reflected the criminal charges brought against an offender. These categories were developed by examining the range of charges often brought against child sex offenders during criminal prosecutions (Selfe and Burke, 2001; Hill, B. and Fletcher-Rogers, 1997). Where news stories were not directly about criminal proceedings but referred to these charges by citing examples, these are also coded.

14/ Nature of charges against offender (0=no; 1=yes).

Rape	(0) (1)
Indecent assault	(0) (1)
Sexual Assault	(0) (1)
Possessing/distributing child pornography	(0) (1)
Abduction	(0) (1)
Molestation	(0) (1)
Murder	(0) (1)
Gross indecency	(0) (1)
Buggery	(0) (1)
Violence/cruelty	(0) (1)
Corruption of a minor	(0) (1)
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor	(0) (1)
Soliciting	(0) (1)
Assault	(0)(1)
Other	0) (1)
Not charged	(0) (1)

OFFENDER INFORMATION

The following variables code the offender profile (demographic information) mentioned in news stories and the relationship between the offender and the victim. Where the article an offender is not mentioned, code 0 for 15 and 1 for 16 respectively.

15) Number of offenders:

None	(0)
1	(1)
2	(2)
3	(3)
4	(4)
5+	(5)

16) Relationship between Offender and victim (0=no; 1=yes):

Not stated	(0)
Father	(0) (1)
Stepfather	(0) (1)
Foster father	(0) (1)

Grandfather	(0) (1)
Brother	(0) (1)
Mother	(0) (1)
Family friend	(0) (1)
Teacher	(0) (1)
Carer(s)	(0)(1)
Clergy	(0) (1)
No relation/stranger	(0) (1)
Other	(0) (1)
No offender	(1)

17) Offender Gender

Not stated (00)
 Male (01)
 Female (02)
 Male and Female (03)

18) Offender Profile (0=no, 1=yes)

Employed (0)(1)
 Unemployed (0) (1)
 Heterosexual (0) (1)
 Homosexual (0) (1)
 Married (0) (1)
 Single (0) (1)
 Divorced (0) (1)
 Separated (0) (1)
 Priest/clergy (0) (1)
 Convicted paedophile (0) (1)

19) Offender Age (0=no; 1=yes)

10-20 (0) (1)
 21-30 (0) (1)
 31-40 (0) (1)
 41-50 (0) (1)
 51-60 (0) (1)
 Above 60 (0) (1)

VICTIM INFORMATION:

This variable coded the number of victims as well as the general information given about a victim in the news story. Where no victim is mentioned, code 0 in 20.

20) Number of victims

None = (0)
 1= (1)
 2= (2)
 3= (3)
 4= (4)

5 + (5).

21) Victim Age (0=no, 1=yes)

Below one	(0) (1)
1-3	(0) (1)
4-6	(0) (1)
7-11	(0) (1)
12-15	(0) (1)

22) Victim Gender

Not Specified	(0)
Male	(1)
Female	(2)
Male and Female	(3)

ABUSE SETTING

This variable codifies the setting where an incident of child sexual abuse mentioned in a news story, occurred.

23) Place where abuse occurred:

Not stated	(00)
Offender's Home	(01)
Victim's home	(02)
Offender and victim's home	(03)
Playground/park	(04)
School	(05)
Care home	(06)
Virtual /Internet pornography	(07)
Other	(08)

RECOMMENDATIONS

News media coverage of issues frequently relate to policy matters. This variable measure the types of policy issues related to child sexual abuse that are mentioned in the various news stories. These policy issues could be derived from official government sources or simply ones suggested by the newspaper or journalist.

24) Proposed Remedy for protecting children:

Therapeutic care for offenders	(0) (1)
Longer sentences	(0) (1)
Offender treatment (medical castration)	(0) (1)
Community notification of paedophiles	(0)(1)
Monitoring of offenders	(0)(1)
Internet monitoring	(0) (1)
Creation of a children's commissioner	(0)(1)
More resources for social services	(0)(1)
Training for people who work with children	(0) (1)
Vetting of people who work with children	(0) (1)

Amendments to sex offender register	(0) (1)
Better complaints procedure	(0) (1)
Inspection of care homes	(0) (1)
Remove victim from home/related environment	(0) (1)
Compensation for victim/relatives	(0) (1)
Other change in the law	(0) (1)
Other	(0) (1)

HELP INFORMATION

This category seeks to measure how often news articles assist in promoting help seeking behaviour by providing further help details to victims such as phone numbers for support groups

25) Help information provided for victim or relatives

Help line number	(0) (1)
Victim support group meeting	(0) (1)
Website information	(0) (1)
Access to counselling	(0) (1)
Seeking compensation	(0) (1)

APPENDIX 2: HEADLINES OF STORIES CODED

CASE OF RENATE WILLIAMS

The Times	
Drama mistress is accused of seducing boy on school trip	5/11/99 p. 3
Drama teacher 'bribed boys to conceal affair'	6/11/99 p. 7
Spurned pupil 'made up seduction claim'	9/11/99 p. 3
Teacher admits nude swim shame	10/11/99 p.7
Teacher cleared of seducing pupil	11/11/99 FP and p. 4
Drama teacher was weird but fun	11/11/99 p. 4
Hundred face false claims	11/11/99 p. 4
Sex scandal at school spark parents' revolt	12/11/99 p.3
The Sunday Times	
Lessons from the DRAMA QUEEN	14/11/99
Miss Ugly taught me a lessons I'll never forget	14/11/99
The Independent	
Female teacher 'had sex with pupil, 15'	5/11/99 p.5
Sex case teacher 'too drunk to climb stairs'	6/11/99 p.11
Drama teacher cleared of seducing teenage pupil	11/11/99
Hundreds leaving teaching due to false abuse claims	12/11/99
Independent on Sunday	
A victim of school boy fantasies	14/11/99
The Sun	
School miss accused of seducing boy, 15/ School miss, 32, 'bedded boy, 15 after a naked romp in the sea'	5/11/99 FP and p.4-5
Miss 'had sex in cupboard'	6/11/99 p.7
Lads 'kept asking Miss for nookie'	9/11/99 p.24
CLEARED: Nude Miss innocent of sex romps with boy, 15	11/11/99 p.13
The Mirror	
My teacher took of her clothes, ran into the sea and begged me to have sex with her	5/11/99 p. 3
Miss sent me weird card	6/11/99 p.7
Boys put bets on who'd be the first to bed their teachers	6/11/99 p. 7
Pupils turned me into target for sex	9/11/99 P. 21
I lied, I was ashamed of myself, I was drunk	10/11/99p 19
INNOCENT Court clears the attractive 32-year old teacher who got drunk and swam naked with her 15-year-old boy pupils, then wondered why they made up sex fantasies about her.	11/11/99 FP
WEIRD, WILD, WACKY	11/11/99 p. 4-5

Voice of The Mirror	11/11/99 p. 4
JUSTICE HASN'T BEEN DONE	12/11/99 p. 7
Miss sex addict	15/11/99 p.21
Sunday Mirror	
Cleared teacher's sex clinic shame	14/11/99 p. 23
Daily Mail	
School boy of 15 'seduced by his skinny dipping drama teacher	05/11/99 p. 3
School boys 'placed bets' on sleeping with staff	06/11/99 p. 23
Beach party teacher 'too drunk to get upstairs'	06/11/99
Boys made up stories because I refused them sex	09/11/99 p. 7
Why a male colleague help me undress by dram mistress	10/11/99 p. 21
Anguish of drama teacher cleared on sex charge	11/11/99 FP
Who will give me a job now?	11/11/99 p. 3
Fantasy world of teenage no hopes	11/11/99 p. 3
How could I have seduced a 14 -year old boy?	13/11/99 p.8-9
Mail on Sunday	
Four new scandals at school where teacher swam	14/11/99

CASE OF GARY GLITTER

The Times	
Glitter 'sexually assaulted' fan aged 14 for years	10/11/99 p. 7
Glitter 'used besotted girl fan for sex'	10/11/99 p
Press cash 'prompted Glitter accusations'	11/11/99 p 7
Glitter delay	12/11/99 p 2
Glitter jailed for child porn	13/11/99 FP
Appetite for porn ends comeback king's reign	13/11/99 p 3
Gary keeps wig minus glitter	13/11/99 p. 3
Images of torture	13/11/99 p 3
Irvine orders report on witness payments	13/11/99 p 3
Child porn sentence condemned	13/11/99 p. 3
Glitter's accuser goes public	16/11/99 p 3
Police to examine Glitter press deal	18/11/99 p 11
Cashing in on evidence	23/11/99 Law p. 12
Havana is haven for sex tourists and paedophiles	15/11/99 p. 8
Police prepare for Net battle with porn rings	15/11/99 p. 8
The Independent	
Gary Glitter offers no evidence in sex trial	11/11/99 p. 5
Glitter jury sent home for the night	12/11/99 p. 18
Glitter is jailed for 4000 child pornography images	13/11/99: FP
As his career fade, Glitter obsessively collected images of	13/11/99 p. 5

children being abused	
Woman goes public over Glitter sex case	16/11/99 p. 4
Police launch inquiry into Glitter case payout	18/11/99 p. 13
Glitter will not appeal against his sentence	18/11/99
Independent on Sunday	
Web of filth runs out of control	14/11/99: pg 3
Law outdated, says ministers	14/11/99 p. 3
Tabloid defends its role	14.11.99 p. 3
So why is internet pornography so hard to control	14/11/99 p.3
Cheque-book justice	14/11/99 p. 28
Our criminal Obsession	14/11/99 p28
The Sun	
Glitter put me through sex hell at 14	10/11/99 FP and p 3
Glitter liked me to wear white undies and call him daddy: GIRL TELLS OF KINKY SEX ORDEAL AT 14	10/11/99 P. 2
Gary takes a glam rock to the dock	10/11/99 p. 3
NOT ONE WORD IN HIS OWN DEFENCE..and the jury can reach their own conclusions: judge	11/11/99 p. 4-5
FURY AS GLITTER GETS ONLY 4 MONTHS	13/11/99 FP
MONSTER OF ROCK	13/11/99 p. 2-3
Cleared of sex with girl, 14	13/11/99 p. 3
Inquiries into paper's cash deal	13/11/99 p. 3
Twisted secrets of the web	13/11/99 p. 4
The picture was of little girl in agony ...suddenly Gary's fans didn't feel like cheering	13/11/99 p. 4-5
Comeback king is finished	13/11/99 p. 5
Judge said of girls: 'There is 14..and there's 14'	13/11/99 p. 5
Evil pervert	13/11/99 p. 8
I was the first to see Glitter's hoard of porn	15/11/99 p 9
I am Glitter's victim	16/11/99 p. 15
Depraved Glitter: I won't be appealing	18/11/99 p. 7
Punish perverts not their victims	18/11/99 p 11
I NEVER slept with Gary Glitter	20/11/99 p. 13
News of the World	
Glitter and the Cuban girl, 11	14/11/99 FP
Glitter told Mariaelana he wanted to film her alone...then he would take to England	p.2-3
How net has become a sex sewer	p.4
Star weeps as inmates sing leader of the gang	p. 4-5
The truth about Glitter witness and our £25.000	p. 5
British justice loses its Glitter	21/11/99 p. 23

The Mirror	
I told Gary I was a virgin.. he just got on top of me while I lay still	10/11/99 p. 4-5
Old rocker hams it up	10/11/99 p.5
WHO IS THE LIAR?	11/11/99 p. 7
Glitter trial judge raps paper deal	12/11/99 p. 9
DEPRAVED	13/11/99 FP
REPULSIVE, FILTHY AND REVOLTING: Judge slams child sex pervert Glitter	13/11/99 p 2
1M NASTY PICS	13/11/99 p. 2
SHORN OF GLAM ROCK	13/11/99 p. 2
Fans could not believe idol was evil	13/11/99 p. 3
No tears if he dies in prison cell	13/11/99 p. 4
PERVERT'S PRINCESS: Rocker paraded Mrs X at parties	13/11/99 p 4-5
PROBE OVER £25.000	13/11/99 p. 5
Devoted girl by star's side	13/11/99 p. 5
Act to net pervert's like Glitter	13/11/99/ p. 6
Gary was sick	16/11/99 p. 4-5
Glitter U-turn	18/11/99 p. 16
'Scared' Glitter's jail hell	20/11/99 p. 15
Sunday Mirror	
Crack down on this web of child porn	14/11/99 p. 14
Sick life behind the Glitter	14/11/99 p. 8-9
Wanna be in my cell	14/11/99 p. 9
Now he could face more sex charges	14/11/99 p. 9
Glitter finds jail life hard to bear	21/11/99 p. 12
The Daily Mail	
'Sex abuser Gary Glitter betrayed the trust of a besotted fan of 14'	10/11/99 p. 17
Gary Glitter stays silent over sex charges	11/11/99 p. 21
Glitter case judge attacks newspaper's £25.000 offer	12/11/99 p. 43
Glitter jailed for an evil obsession	13/11/99 p 4-5
'Children were abused to satisfy perverted men like you'	13/11/99 4-5
A star stripped of all pretence	13/11/99 p. 4-5
Internet child pornographers are involved in ...	13/11/99
The Lord chancellor has ordered an investigation into...	13/11/99 p. 4-5
Tawdry truth about Gary's Glitter	15/11/99 p. 15
Snared by the star who said call me Daddy	16/11/99
Snapshots of a life tarnished by Glitter	16/11/99 p. 8
How we can kill this evil porn trade	17/11/99 p. 13
Pop, young girls and conspiracy of silence	18/11/99 p. 60
THE NORTH WALES INQUIRY	
The Times	

Youngsters in care still at risk, says abuse report	16/02/00
Why scandal was hidden for so long	16/02/00
The whistleblower	16/02/00
Hundreds of lives ruined by cult of silence	16/02/00
Life moves on but anger remains	16/02/00
Decade of innuendo on conspiracy is ended	16/02/00
Sorry is not enough, minister tells MPs	16/02/00
Hunt begins for missing abusers	16/02/00
Avoidable abuse	16/02/00
Hunt for 28 named in care scandal	17/02/00
Missing 28 include known paedophiles	17/02/00
Abuse victims want justice in wake of report	17/02/00
Toxic jobs nobody wants	18/02/00
New abuse scandal of London homes	18/02/00
Change in law will ease path to adoption	18/02/00
Abuse report woman traced to England	18/02/00
Lambeth child abuse victims 'may total 200'	19/02/00
Paedophile shot dead on doorstep	19/02/00
Sex abuse case's 250 suspects	22/02/00
Will no one pay for the abuse in Wales?	29/02/00
The Sunday Times	
Hysteria won't help to slay the monster of child abuse	20/02/00
Hitmen hunted over murder of child abuser	20/02/00
The Independent	
He will never forgive. Or forget. For Zak, a victim of our worst child-abuse scandal, sorry is not enough// At 12, they took turns kicking me in the chest	16/02/00
Child protection campaigners demand extensive new 'safety net'	16/02/00
'The child entered the system bewildered, and left it brutalised, sexually damaged, abandoned'	16/02/00
Sweeping changes to prevent more 'poisoned' lives	16/02/00
The scandal of children's homes in Wales is a problem for all Britain	16/02/00 Review p. 3
After two years of inquiry, why social services got until 5pm today to find these 28 people?	17/02/00 p. 3
Dark secrets of our children in fear	17/02/00 Review
Missing North Wales abuser has been working with children	18/02/00 FP
Paedophile network abused 200 children	19/02/00
Paedophile gunned down on doorstep	19/02/00
Children Act 'is a charter for abuse'	24/02/00
Independent on Sunday	
The North Wales Scandal: Childhood betrayed	20/02/00
Paedophile Scandal: Deadly result of naming and shaming:	20/02/00
Another 50 abusers to be named	20/02/00

Paedophile scandal: charities to offer care for children	20/02/00
Daily Mail	
BETRAYAL The 40 monsters who must be found	16/02/00
Care homes scandal: The Recommendations	16/02/00 p5
Equality group used as a front for abuse	16/02/00 p 5
A life sentence for the victims my tormented childhood	16/02/00
A life sentence for the victims Unimaginable Horrors That Were Just Too Much To Bear: The Deaths Linked To The Scandal	p.7
In my dreams, I hear the screams	p. 7
Naming names, the evil men at centre of a web of abuse	p. 8
Why did it take 14 years, asks whistleblower	p. 8
Complacency and a picture of evil	16/02/00
Blair pledge to hunt down abuse suspects	17/02/00
The trauma and the tragedy behind this photograph. TWO ARE DEAD. THE OTHERS LIVE IN FEAR OF PAEDOPHILES WHO MIGHT PREYED ON THEM	17/02/00
Faces Of The Suspects	18/02/00
<u>EVEN WORSE</u> detectives investigate shocking new child care scandal which may involve up to 11.000 victims	18/02/00 FP and pg 6
Adoptions Have To Be Quicker And Easier Says Blair	18 Feb 2000
Child sex pervert is murdered by gunmen "avengers"	19/02/00
Gay sex laws must stay now	19/02/00
When care seems almost a blasphemy	19/02/00
The pervert hotline	25/02/00
The Mirror	
DAMNED	16/02/00
HOMES OF SHARE EVIL	16/02/00
'This man has spoiled my life.. he has degraded me'	16/02/00
'I lived in fear of perverts on staff'	p. 5
The informer// The payouts	p. 5
12 people have died over this and they deserve justice	p. 6
We must not fail helpless kids again	p. 8
NAME THE 28	17/02/00
CAUGHT Mirror confronts pervert named on abuse scandal list	18/02/00
BOAST OF THE PERVERT	18/02/00
MASK OF AN ABUSER	p. 5
I'm no threat to kids any more	p. 5
AVENGED	19/02/00
We'll shed no tears	P. 4-5
Child abuse probe (Shamed worker's job ban)	p. 5
Keep these perverts in jail for good	p.6

Sunday Mirror	
Hunt goes on for perverts executioners	20/02/00
Report must not be left on dusty shelf	20/02/00
Ready supply of victims	20/02/00
The Sun	
I NAILED CHILD SEX PERVERTS Brave Alison exposed abuse scandal	16/02/00
Monsters stole my childhood	16/02/00
The lost children suffered 20 years of abuse	16/02/00
Sun says	16/02/00
Care home fiend opens his garden to kiddies	18/02/00
14 staff in new probe by police	18/02/00
Better care	18/02/00
MP: I'll name 50 perverts	21/02/00

FOR SARAH CAMPAIGN

The Times	
Material found at castle may be Sarah's dress	24/07/00
Paynes support paedophile list	25/07/00
Mob attacks man mistaken as paedophile	25/07/00
Taking liberties with naming and shaming	26/07/00
Dead man named as paedophile	26/07/00
Gay sex crimes likely to be abolished	27/07/00
Rape reforms will protect drunk women	27/07/00
Pressure to drop child sex campaign	31/07/00
US paedophile law 'like putting gasoline on fire'	31/07/00
The Home Office is to blame for the paedophile panic gripping Britain	31/07/00
Paedophile campaign thwarts police	02/08/00
In place of fear	03/08/00
Paedophiles exploit soft sentencing	03/08/00
Mob attacks flat	04/08/00
Paper to stop naming sex offenders	05/08/00
Trio jailed for killing of child abuse suspect	05/08/00
The Sunday Times	
Worst child molesters to be tagged for life	23/07/00
Prelate accused of abuse cover-up	23/07/00
Every parent's nightmare	23/07/00
The punishment according to Megan	30/07/00
The Independent	
Police say 'naming and shaming' paedophiles puts children at risk	24/07/00 p

Naming and shaming of sex offenders will not protect our children	24/07/00
Remember the other victims too	24/07/00
The name of the shame game	25/07/00
Laws against abusers to be tightened	27/08/00
Probation chief: paedophile claims are total nonsense	28/07/00
Police to meet editor over 'naming and shaming'	31/07/00
How offending by child abusers have been cut by a quarter	31/07/00
Sarah: Man held by police after discovery of new information	01/08/00
Vigilante attacks increase as paper meets its critics	03/08/00
Abuser named by paper held after going to ground	04/08/00
Tabloid ends its naming of sex offenders	05/08/00
Did the new editor realise she was unleashing a beast beyond control	05/08/00
'Stab him! Burn him! Kill him!' Two weeks of mob hysteria come to a vicious climax	05/08/00
The welcome end of a shameful campaign that subverted the rule of law	05/08/00
Three jailed for murder of abuse suspect	
Independent on Sunday	
Paynes call for open sex-offenders register	30/07/00
Daily Mail	
Paedophile warning	24/07/00 p.9
Beware giving revenge mobs a target	24/07/00 p.8
Sea of flowers at the shrine to poor little Sarah	24/07/00 p.8
Pilgrimage of love for mourners who simple could not stay away	25/07/00 p.23
Are we releasing feelings of loss we all bury	25/07/00 p.22
Prison suicide watch on Sarah 'suspect' after car theft arrest	26/07/00 p.28
One brave mother, one sad man...	26/07/00 p. 13
Why I loathe myself	27/07/00 p.14
Sarah: Man is held	01/08/00 p. 5
Police release Sarah suspect	02/08/00 p. 10
Why we back naming, by parents of tragic Sarah	03/08/00 p. 10
Paper Calls A Halt To Its Naming Of Paedophiles	05/08/00
A wise decision	05/08/00
Life for men who killed child sex suspects	05/08/00
Mail on Sunday	
Farmer drops cash claim	23/07/00
Tragic Sarah's family vows; we can't bear to go back to our old house	30/07/00
The Sun	

Sarah dress clue	24/07/00
Sad sister convinced Sarah is still alive	25/07/00
Did you murder her?	01/08/00
I am so shocked says ex wife of suspect	01/08/00
Suspect is freed by Sarah cops	02/08/00
Our goal is to protect the kids of this country	03/08/00
Victory in campaign for Sarah's Law	05/08/00
News of the World	
NAMED SHAMED/ Does a monster live near you	23/07/00
10 facts to shock ever parent	p. 2
What to do if there is a pervert on your doorstep	p. 2
Our website maps beasts	p. 2
LOCK THEM UP FOR LIFE Parents must have the right to protect their children	p. 4
Prey on our kids and law will follow you	p. 4
Scouting out the beasts	p. 5
Their evil is incurable	p. 5
88% SAY NAME AND SHAME	p. 6
Our aim is safety for our children	p. 6
More names and photographs of child sex offenders living near you	30/07/00
PARENT POWER CAN CHANGE LAW	p. 2-3
They took me for monster but I back you	p. 3
Social worker's child fear	p. 3
EVIL THAT PREYS ON OUR CHILDREN/ Fiend cops don't want you to see	p. 4
Vigilance not vigilante	p. 6
Child groups join our Sarah summit	p. 7
MPs have to do a lot more	p. 7
So much of protection	p. 7
Jack's way would take three years	p. 7
The Mirror	
Tests on Sarah clothes	24/07/00
TOLL OF DESPAIR 500000 victims of child sex	24/07/00
Queues at shrine to angel	24/07/00
Sarah suspect is held /My mobile rang and I knew then Sarah wouldn't be coming home	25/08/00
John Stalker fears naming sex fiends will create mob rule	25/08/00
Police must warn parents of monsters	25/07/00
Sarah mum's tears	26/07/00 p. 8
We let this little Sarah down, too	26/07/00 p. 9
Paedophiles will get life	27/07/00 p. 2
Crackdown on perverts long overdue	27/07/00 p.6
Final visit to Sarah shrine	31/07/00 p.4

Sarah man held again. Swoop after new lead	01/08/00
Sarah quiz is halted	02/08/00
We back Sarah Campaign / At least we got Sarah back. To go on hoping would have destroyed us.	03/08/00 FP and p. 2-3
We'll get law for our girl	03.08/00 p.4
I won't have babies	03.08/00 p.5
Why Britain must have a 'Sarah's law'	03.08/00 p.6
Did you back her?/ 30.000 back the campaign	04/08/00
If we had Megan's law. Tracing sex offenders in your area	04/08/00
Fairy tale farewell	04/08/00
Parents have spoken..now we must act	04/08/00
YOU'VE DONE IT	05/08/00
At last push for Sarah's Law victory	05/08/00
Its a good start	05/08/00
Pervert who tempted kids flee mob	05/08/00
Sunday Mirror	
Forget my £10.000	23/07/00
Thousands mourn 'the little princes'	23/07/00
£10 tax to trap the paedophiles	30/07/00

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