

Université de Montréal

**Media Coverage outside the Courtroom:  
Public opinion of restrictions imposed on news  
journalists and psychological effects on crime victims**

par

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Cette thèse intitulée :

**Media Coverage outside the Courtroom:  
Public opinion of restrictions imposed on news  
journalists and psychological effects on crime victims**

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## Résumé

Comme les études sur la couverture médiatique ont démontré qu'elle influence pratiquement toute personne qu'elle touche, des consommateurs aux jurés aux témoins, les deux études de cette thèse doctorale ont respectivement examiné l'opinion du public sur l'imposition de restrictions sur les médias dans les palais des justices et l'impact de la couverture médiatique sur la santé mentale des victimes de crime.

Le gouvernement québécois a récemment introduit des restrictions sur les médias dans les palais de justice afin de minimiser l'influence des journalistes et des caméramans. Bien que l'affaire a atteint la Cour suprême du Canada, une étude préliminaire a trouvé que le public est largement favorable à ces restrictions (Sabourin, 2006). La première partie de cette thèse doctorale cherchait à approfondir ce sujet avec un échantillon plus représentatif de la population.

Deux cent quarante-trois participants comprenant six groupes expérimentaux ont rempli des questionnaires mesurant leur opinion de ces restrictions. Les participants ont été divisé en deux conditions expérimentales où ils ont visionné soit des clips audiovisuels démontrant une atmosphère de débordement dans des palais de justice ou des clips plutôt calmes. Un troisième groupe n'a visionné aucun clip audiovisuel. De plus, il y avait deux versions du questionnaire ayant 20 items où les questions ont été présenté en sens inverse. L'étude a trouvé qu'une grande majorité des participants, soit presque 79 pourcent, ont supporté la restriction des médias dans les palais de justice. Il est intéressant de noter qu'un des groupes n'a pas supporté les restrictions – le groupe contrôle qui a lu les énoncés supportant l'absence des restrictions en premier.

La deuxième composante de cette thèse doctorale a examiné l'impact des médias sur les victimes de crime. De nombreuses études expérimentales ont démontré que les victimes de crime sont particulièrement susceptibles à des problèmes de santé mentale. En effet, elles ont

trois fois plus de chances de développer un trouble de stress post-traumatique (TSPT) que la population générale. Une étude a confirmé cette conclusion et a trouvé que les victimes de crimes qui avaient une impression plutôt négative de leur couverture médiatique avaient les taux les plus élevés de TSPT (Maercker & Mehr, 2006). Dans l'étude actuelle, vingt-trois victimes de crimes ont été interviewé en utilisant une technique narrative et ont complété deux questionnaires mesurant leur symptômes du TSPT et d'anxiété, respectivement. Une grande proportion des participantes avaient des symptômes de santé mentale et des scores élevés sur une échelle évaluant les symptômes du TSPT. La majorité des narratives des participants étaient négatives. Les thèmes les plus communs incluent dans ces narratives étaient l'autoculpabilisation et une méfiance des autres. La couverture médiatique ne semblaient pas être liée à des symptômes de santé mentale, quoique des facteurs individuels pourraient expliquer pourquoi certains participants ont été favorables envers leur couverture médiatique et d'autres ne l'été pas.

Les résultats de ces deux études suggèrent que le public approuve la restriction des médias dans les palais de justice et que des facteurs individuels pourraient expliqués comment la couverture médiatique affecte les victimes de crime. Ces résultats ajoutent à la littérature qui questionne les pratiques actuelles qu'utilisent les médias.

**Mots-clés** : Média, crime, victimes, trouble de stress post-traumatique, couverture médiatique, effets psychologiques, santé mentale

## **Abstract**

As media coverage has been shown to influence virtually everyone that it reaches, from its consumers to jurors in cases with pretrial publicity to eyewitnesses, the two studies that comprise the present dissertation respectively investigated the public's opinion on imposing restrictions on the media in courthouses and the impact of media coverage on the mental health of crime victims.

The Quebec government recently imposed restrictions on the media in courthouses in order to reduce the interference of journalists and cameramen. While the issue reached the Supreme Court of Canada, the public were found to be largely in favour of these restrictions in a preliminary study (Sabourin, 2006). The first part of this dissertation sought to further investigate this topic with a more representative sample of the population. Two hundred forty-three participants in six experimental groups filled out questionnaires that measured their opinion of these restrictions. There were two conditions with audiovisual clips showing either a media circus-like atmosphere or relatively calm proceedings in Quebec courthouses. A third control group did not view any audiovisual clips. There were also two versions of the twenty-item questionnaire where the questions were presented in reverse order. This study also found overwhelming support for the restrictions; nearly 79 percent of participants supported restricting media presence in courthouses. Interestingly, one experimental group did not – the control group that read statements that supported an absence of restrictions first.

The second component of this dissertation examined the impact of the media on crime victims. Crime victims have been shown to be especially susceptible to mental health problems. Indeed, they are three times as likely as the general population to develop Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). One study confirmed this finding and found that crime victims who had negative impressions of the media coverage of their cases had the highest rates of PTSD (Maercker & Mehr, 2006). In the present study, twenty-three crime victims were interviewed using a narrative technique and completed two questionnaires that

respectively measured their PTSD symptoms and anxiety. A great proportion of participants were found to have mental health symptoms and high scores on the Impact of Events Scale-Revised (IES-R). The majority of the narratives of these participants were negative. The most common themes included in these narratives were self-blame and suspiciousness of others. Media coverage did not appear to be related to any mental health symptoms, although individual factors may explain why some participants were favourable towards the coverage and others were not.

The findings of these two studies suggest that the public approves of restricting media presence in courthouses and that individual factors may explain how media coverage impacts crime victims. These results add to the literature that calls current practices used by the media to gain coverage into question.

**Keywords:** Media, Crime, Victims, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Pretrial Publicity, Psychological Effects, Mental Health

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## Introduction

There are numerous media-related topics that have been the subject of extensive research; the presence of the media in courthouses and the impact of media coverage on crime victims, though, have received very little attention to date. Much research has been devoted to studying the effects of pretrial publicity (PTP). This research has demonstrated the impact that PTP can have on the judicial system. As cameras are disallowed in Canadian courtrooms, this literature is largely irrelevant in the Canadian context. No published studies have addressed the tactics used by journalists inside courthouses, which might also be posited to have similar effects. Furthermore, the effects of media coverage in crime victims have mostly been ignored in the extensive literature addressing the impact of media coverage on the public. As a result of the traumatic nature of crime, victims might be particularly susceptible to this coverage. This dissertation thus focused on these two aspects of media coverage and crime: the public's opinion of imposing restrictions on the media's presence and the psychological effects of media coverage on crime victims.

Crime is overrepresented in news media, representing about one quarter of news coverage, with particular attention allotted to stories of serious personal crimes and less to white-collar and property crimes (Chermak, 1998). Approximately 8.2 percent of Canadians watch the national news on a weekly basis, which translates to approximately 2.8 million people (BBM, 2010). Does this news coverage, then, impact its viewers in any significant way? Two main explanatory theories for the impact of the media on individuals exist. A first theory, agenda-setting, stipulates that the news media greatly impact their audience through their decision of which stories to cover. In other words, the media, in according attention to

certain news stories, transmits the importance of these issues to its viewing audience but not necessarily how to feel about such issues. Conversely, cultivation theory insinuates more prominent and specific effects of television on its viewers; according to this theory, television has first order effects, which lead individuals to overestimate societal phenomena based on coverage, and second order effects, which affect viewer perceptions and attitudes (Laughey, 2007).

A 2003 study found support for the agenda-setting theory but not the cultivation theory; the amount of time spent watching local news was associated with identifying crime as an important problem but not with the fear of crime (Gross & Aday). Evidence for the impact of the 'real world' on attitudes towards crime was found. A link was posited between socioeconomic status and beliefs about crime, which might be attributable to the living situation of these individuals. Essentially, females, younger individuals, African Americans, and individuals with fewer years of formal education, who may be more likely to live in a neighbourhood with more crime, are also more likely to identify crime as an important problem. In addition, individuals who were previously victimized by crime also believe that they are at a greater risk of crime in general, irrespective of the type of crime that was committed against them (Gross & Aday, 2003).

The notion that media coverage causes violence, though, has largely been discredited. Ferguson (2009), in a review of the existing literature on the topic, identified several problematic issues with research that has suggested a causal link between the two. The first such issue is equating aggression with violence, as researchers have used the terms interchangeably. Furthermore, although there is a belief that media violence and acts of

violence are related, violence has become more prevalent in the media over time whereas rates of violence in North America have been steadily declining. The author also suggests that there are no standardized, validated, reliable measures for measuring acts of violence. Ferguson (2009) highlights the fact that numerous studies that do not show a link between media violence and aggression are largely ignored. In research that does find such a relationship, other variables that may be linked to both attraction to media violence and aggression are not considered. These may include personality traits, exposure to violence at home, and genetic variables. Interestingly, despite similar portrayals of violence in the media, findings on this topic are not uniform across different countries, suggesting that there may be some cultural or environmental influence.

While some attention has been devoted to the content of media coverage, pretrial publicity was the subject of a great deal of research in the past two decades (e.g., Devine, Clayton, Dunford, Seying & Pryce, 2001; Fulero, 2002; Steblay, Besirevic, Fulero & Jimenez-Lorente, 1999). The essential issue at the core of this research was whether PTP impacted the judicial process in some way and if so, was it more important for the press to continue to cover court cases or for the judicial process to remain unbiased (i.e., Fair Trial-Free Press Debate). The most common answer to this dilemma in the literature was that media coverage does impact jury decisions; cases with PTP were more likely to have guilty verdicts than their counterparts, and the only way to lessen or eliminate this impact was to separate the case from the community where the media coverage exists (Fulero, 2002).

The O.J. Simpson case received an unprecedented level of attention from the media and was even dubbed the 'Trial of the Century' ("O.J. Simpson murder case", 2011).



Research has shown that individuals who read media coverage of this notorious case believed the media was more persuasive on others, in what is known as a ‘third-person effect’; this effect occurs when people believe that media coverage biases others but deny any influence on themselves. Individuals with higher levels of education were also more likely to support restricting the media during this trial (Salwen & Driscoll, 1997).

In the Simpson case, it has been posited that Simpson’s defence counsel successfully raised questions about information being presented in the media through creating suspicion about racially-driven motives. Indeed, the authors of a study on this topic found that creating suspicion was only successful at eliminating the prejudice of media coverage when race was identified as the reason for the coverage (Fein, Morgan, Norton & Sommers, 1997).

Whereas cameras are permitted in the courtroom in most U.S. states, they are not allowed in Canadian or federal American courtrooms. One Canadian case that received a great deal of media and research attention, and ironically also unfolded at the same time as the Simpson case, was that of Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka. During that case, Homolka pleaded to a lesser charge in exchange for testimony against her husband regarding the brutal sexual murders of two young women in the Greater Toronto Area. The sensational nature of the murders ensured that the case received national and even international media coverage (Riehle, 1996). Interestingly, though, the judge at Homolka’s plea and sentencing trial allowed representatives of the Canadian media in the courtroom but forbid them from publishing details of the trial in order to prevent any influence on Bernardo’s subsequent trial (Vidmar, 1996).

Bernardo's trial proceeded in a manner that was highly atypical of Canadian cases. After potential jurors were screened for their ability to commit to a four-month trial and to view sexually explicit photographs and videos of the murders, they were questioned in a 'challenge for cause' to identify their exposure to media coverage of the case (Vidmar, 1996). Examples of the eight questions posed to this group included: Have you read, heard or seen anything about this case in the media (that is newspapers, radio or television)?, Have you read, heard or seen anything about the accused's, Paul Bernardo's, background, character or lifestyle?, and Have you read, heard or seen anything about Karla Homolka or about her trial?. Two people were randomly selected to serve as the selection panel for the first juror; these two individuals selected a person whom they believed, on the basis of responses to the eight questions, to be impartial. After this first juror was chosen, he or she replaced one of the panel members and so on until the rotating panel had selected 12 jurors. Crown and defence counsel were each allotted 20 peremptory challenges, made solely on the basis of the physical characteristics and demeanour of the jurors. Counsel is not permitted to gain any further information on the jurors for two reasons: it is thought that individuals can put aside their biases or alternatively that any individual biases will be negated by the use of a group in jury deliberations. In the Bernardo case, 225 people were called before 12 impartial members of the jury were selected (Vidmar, 1996). This process in itself suggests that individuals may be biased in some way by media coverage; the need to have such a thorough process assumes that individuals will be biased by the news coverage to which they have been exposed.

Aspects of Canadian legislation reflect this belief that media coverage can be biasing. Section 11(d) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) declares that individuals have the right "to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law in a fair and public

hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal”, while Section 2(b) adds that the freedom of the press is a fundamental freedom of individuals. Furthermore, Section 486 (1) of the Criminal Code (1985) stipulates that:

Any proceedings against an accused shall be held in open court, but the presiding judge or justice may order the exclusion of all or any members of the public from the court room for all or part of the proceedings if the judge or justice is of the opinion that such an order is in the interest of public morals, the maintenance of order or the proper administration of justice or is necessary to prevent injury to international relations or national defence or national security.

The accused also has the right to request a publication ban during the preliminary inquiry phase and this request must be granted. A publication ban occurs when media is forbidden from publishing information about a case, either in printed or broadcast format (Riehle, 1996). In Bernardo’s case, this request was granted and a change of venue also occurred. In Canada, such changes are requested by Crown or defence counsel and awarded at the judge’s discretion, according to Section 599 of the Criminal Code (1985). Although the media in Bernardo’s case opposed the ban in a legal trial and argued that the ban infringed on the right to free expression, the courts deemed that media coverage would prejudice audiences and interfere with Bernardo’s right to a fair trial and upheld the ban (Riehle, 1996).

Despite the restrictions in Canada that prevent the media from filming trials, the methods that the media uses to obtain information about legal cases in courthouses have been called into question in Quebec. The Chief Justice of the Quebec Superior Court imposed restrictions on the presence of media in courthouses in 2005. This ruling was upheld by the Canadian Supreme Court. Essentially, the media argued for the right to freely move around courthouses and interview and film people of interest. However, the judicial system has ruled

to protect these people by limiting the media to certain restricted areas of the courthouse. Clearly, the media and the judicial system seem opposed in their views on this topic.

The public's perception of the presence of the media in the courtroom and the restrictions imposed by the Quebec government are the focus of the first part of this dissertation. No experimental findings have been published on media presence in the courthouse, although a preliminary study was performed to complement an expert testimonial for the court case where the media challenged these restrictions (Sabourin, 2006). Two sets of audiovisual clips of news coverage of courthouses during highly mediatised trials were developed for this study – one depicted a circus-like atmosphere and the other relative calm in the courthouse hallways. Groups of participants viewed either the 'circus-like' clips, the 'calm' clips, or simply completed the questionnaire without viewing any clips. A questionnaire was also developed for this study. Twenty questions addressing both support and opposition for the implementation of restrictions on the media were included. Two versions of the questionnaire were created, with the second half of questions being presented first in an alternate version. Overall, participants overwhelmingly supported restricting media access in courthouses with some variation between groups in the Sabourin study (2006). This public support for restrictions on the media will be examined in the next chapter.

One group of people that is particularly susceptible to harmful consequences of this coverage is crime victims. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is one reaction that crime victims have commonly been known to have. The DSM-IV criteria stipulate that a person must be exposed to a traumatic event where he or she experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury to himself

or herself or others and felt intense fear, helplessness, or horror. This event must be accompanied by three other types of reactions: re-experiencing the event, avoiding stimuli associated with the trauma and physiological symptoms. The re-experiencing criterion indicates that the person must either have recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, recurrent distressing dreams of the event, acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring, intense psychological distress when exposed to cues of the traumatic event, and/or physiological reactivity when exposed to a cue of the event. In addition, the person must avoid stimuli associated with the trauma in three or more of the following ways: avoiding thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma; avoiding activities, places, or people that remind the person of the trauma; an inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma; a marked decrease in interest or participation in significant activities; feeling detached or estranged from others; a restricted range of affect; and/or a sense of a foreshortened future. The criteria for physiological arousal, of which two must be present, include sleep difficulties, irritability or outbursts of anger, concentration difficulties, hypervigilance and/or an exaggerated startle response. As with other DSM-IV categories, the disturbance must last more than one month and must cause significant distress or impairment in functioning. There are three specifiers for PTSD. The illness can be either acute, if the symptoms last less than three months, or chronic, if the symptoms persist past the three-month mark. There is also a specifier for delayed onset in cases where symptoms appear at least six months after the initial trauma (American Psychiatric Association, 2003).

It is estimated that approximately half of the general population will experience a traumatic event in their lifetime (Kessler, 1995), and one quarter to one third of these people will develop PTSD (Brillon, 2004). In the general population, approximately 7 to 9 percent

will develop PTSD. While men are twice as likely as women to experience a traumatic event, it appears that women may actually have higher rates of PTSD than men (Kessler, 1995). This may in part be due to the type of traumatic events that each gender experiences. Men are more likely to be a victim of assaultive violence, such as being shot or stabbed; mugging; beatings and serious accidents or witness acts of violence; whereas women are more likely to be victims of sexual assaults and rape (Seedat, Stein & Carey, 2005).

Certain factors may explain why certain people are more or less likely to develop PTSD than others. War veterans who served in more wars, were in the military for longer periods of time, experienced more stress, were exposed to more dangerous scenarios and who served in combat for more time, for example, are more likely to have more severe symptoms of PTSD (Kaysen, Resick & Wise, 2003). Other factors have been found to explain higher rates of PTSD in victims of child sexual abuse, including duration of exposure to the perpetrator, duration of abuse, family cohesion, neglect, emotional abuse and perceptions of safety (Wolfe, Sas & Wekerle, 1994). Previously experiencing PTSD may also create some vulnerability; individuals with a history of childhood or adulthood interpersonal violence have higher rates of PTSD (Litz, Gray, Bryant & Adler, 2002). Furthermore, social support seems to play a protective role in the development of PTSD. Individuals with access to and who take advantage of a support network are less likely to develop PTSD (King, King, Fairbank, Keane & Adams, 1998). There is also some evidence that personality plays a role in the development of PTSD (Miller, 2003).

PTSD, like other psychiatric diagnoses, has a high rate of comorbidity. Eighty per cent of individuals with PTSD also meet criteria for at least one other disorder, with 40 percent

likely to meet criteria for at least two other disorders. These include but are not limited to major depressive disorder, other anxiety disorders, and substance abuse and dependence (Gill & Page, 2006).

Crime victims appear to be particularly susceptible to mental health problems. Victims are approximately three times as likely to have PTSD in their lifetime as the general population. Again, women are particularly vulnerable to being victimized, with 20.4 percent of women and 8.6 percent of men being diagnosed with PTSD following victimization (Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003). Furthermore, victims of violent crimes are more likely than victims of property crimes to have more severe symptoms of PTSD (Norris & Kaniasty, 1994).

Crime victims also have high rates of comorbidity. Significant numbers of crime victims have been found to suffer from depression, anxiety, substance abuse and other major mental illnesses, often in combination with PTSD. Recent victims of assault, for example, have been found to be over five times more likely to have a history of depression than non-victims. Nearly a third of assault victims met criteria for both PTSD and substance use disorders, although it is unclear in which direction this relationship occurs. Rape victims are also much more likely to have substance-related problems than individuals who have never been victimized by crime (Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003). Overall, crime victims appear to be considerably more likely than others to meet criteria for PTSD, depression, and other anxiety-related disorders such as agoraphobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and simple and social phobia (Boudreaux, Kilpatrick, Resnick, Best & Saunders, 2005)

Some aspects of the judicial process appear to impact on victims' mental health. Interactions with law enforcement, the adversarial and complicated nature of trials, the possibility of the case being settled outside of court, the relationship with Crown Counsel, and biases against certain groups may all influence the mental health outcomes of crime victims. At the same time, there are some practices that entail greater victim involvement, such as victim services, impact statements, and restorative justice, that may moderate these effects (Parsons & Bergin, 2010).

A study that directly examined victims' views on the criminal justice system found that the majority of crime victims reported negative impressions (Orth, 2002). Indeed, the legal process was viewed as a mechanism of secondary victimization whereby satisfaction with the outcome of the criminal proceeding and subjective opinions of procedural justice predicted whether individuals felt victimized. In other words, the legal process was viewed as causing a negative reaction that infringes victim rights in its role secondary to the crime itself, particularly when there is a negative outcome or the victims subjectively report injustices. Some individuals even stated that the criminal proceedings were more traumatic than the initial victimization while others characterized the legal process as "psychologically helpful" (Orth, 2002, p. 321). Thus, it appears that, for some individuals, taking part in the legal process can cause a secondary re-traumatization process.

Although re-experiencing a traumatic event in the context of psychological treatment has been established as an effective treatment for PTSD (e.g., Briere & Scott, 2006; Hembree & Foa, 2003), it is unclear what psychological effects reliving the trauma in other contexts can cause. One study posited that media coverage, like participating in criminal proceedings,



might re-traumatise crime victims (Maercker & Mehr, 2006). Unsurprisingly, a large proportion of the participants reported psychological distress related to being victimized. The results of this study suggest that victims generally view media coverage of their own cases as largely negative, although did not clearly support a re-traumatisation effect of media coverage. In addition, those who viewed the media coverage of their case more negatively appeared more likely to have symptoms of PTSD. The results suggest that there is a link between media coverage when it is viewed as negative and mental health in crime victims. This study seems to be the only published article to have investigated this issue.

Thus, the present research sought to examine two aspects of the relationship between media and crime: the public's views on media presence in courthouses and the impact of media coverage on crime victims. First, an article discussing a large-scale survey of Quebecers' opinions regarding recent restrictions that the provincial government imposed on journalists and cameramen in courthouses will be presented. The questionnaire aimed to obtain the public's opinion on the matter as they are ultimately the audience that the media is seeking information for. A second article addresses the impact of media coverage on post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychological symptoms in crime victims. This article sought to build on the literature suggesting psychological sequelae as well as a possible re-traumatization effect of media coverage. The implications of these findings on current media practices will be discussed.

## **Article 1**

### **Public Opinion on Media Presence in the Courthouse**

Nina Marie Fusco and Michel Sabourin

#### **Abstract**

Very little attention has been devoted to the public's opinion of media coverage of court cases despite extensive research on pretrial publicity (PTP). Following a provincial judgement to restrict media access in Quebec courthouses, a preliminary unpublished study found that the public was largely in support of these restrictions. This study sought to expand on this finding in a more widely generalizable sample. Nearly 80 percent of the 243 participants supported media restrictions. Although participants in the four experimental conditions and one of the control groups were largely in favour of the restrictions, one control group was opposed to the restrictions. The results suggest that the public prefers that journalists have restricted access to courtroom participants, resonating research on PTP and the Supreme Court's decision on the case.

While many facets of the relationship between media presence and the law have been closely examined [e.g., pretrial publicity (PTP), televising trials] one remains relatively under-investigated – the presence of news media *outside* the courtroom. A judicial decision made by the Chief Justice of the Quebec (Canada) Superior Court in the spring of 2005 to limit access of reporters and cameramen to specific areas in the courthouse triggered a strong reaction by Quebec media outlets. In fact, it was an issue that was debated and upheld in the Supreme Court (Lachapelle, 2009; Supreme Court of Canada, 2011). In this case, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that courthouses have the constitutional right to impose such restrictions under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to ensure the “fair administration of justice” (De Souza, 2011, p.1). The Court also acknowledged, though, that the ruling infringes on freedom of expression but deemed the restrictions necessary in order to protect the decorum in courts. Before such restrictions, journalists were given unrestricted access to courthouses without question, which the government argued disrupted courtroom activities.

Despite the conflicting views on this topic, there are no published findings on media presence outside the courtroom, nor any scientific information on the opinion of the very people that media outlets cater to – the general public. Indeed, neither the media nor the courts appeared to take the viewing public into consideration when forming their stance on this issue. It is the population in general, though, that is involved in all facets of this debate – witnesses and other courtroom participants are affected in the media’s gathering of information and the media’s audience are consuming the footage and images at the other end. Journalists at courthouses are working to get stories that will attract viewers; the very purpose that has them in court in the first place involves the viewing public. As the general public is greatly involved and impacted by the Court’s decision to restrict journalists, it is imperative to

explore whether the audience consuming the footage obtained prefer that the media have an “all-access pass” or whether it is preferable to protect the rights of courtroom participants. Thus, the present study sought to explore public opinion on restrictions on media presence outside the courtroom; *i.e.*, to determine whether or not the consumers of the product that the media creates are in favour of restricting media access.

The voluminous literature on PTP (e.g., Devine, Clayton, Dunford, Seying & Pryce, 2001; Fulero, 2002; Steblay, Besirevic, Fulero & Jimenez-Lorente, 1999) highlights the same fundamental issue that lies beneath the debate about media presence outside the courtroom: the freedom of the press versus the rights of those directly involved in the legal processes (also known as the Fair Trial-Free Press debate). The extensive literature that emerged in recent decades highlighted this discord but it has been the focus of interest in psychological research since its very beginnings. Indeed, PTP was the subject of one of the first experimental studies in forensic psychology. In his testimony at the trial of a man accused of murdering three women in Germany, Albert von Schrenck-Notzing affirmed that PTP created a process of suggestion that caused witnesses to suffer from “retroactive memory-falsification” (Schrenck-Notzing, 1897 as cited in Bartol & Bartol, 1999, p.5). Many investigators have since sought to answer the question of whether media presence has an impact on the judicial process.

In a review of the main findings on pretrial publicity, Fulero (2002) proposed the following conclusions. First, media coverage does indeed negatively affect jurors’ opinions. In cases where there is PTP, the verdict is more likely to be guilty than in cases without PTP. Neither the voir dire process nor judge’s instructions can alleviate this effect. Similarly, the only way to prevent these effects is to use jurors that have not been exposed to the media

coverage either by changing venues or by using jurors from out of town. However, this would be nearly impossible in cases with national and even international media coverage.

Whether PTP influences the outcomes of court cases remains a highly controversial issue. Brusckhe and Loges present an alternative viewpoint: “Defendants in criminal trials enter a system that is so fundamentally skewed against them that the added influence of pretrial publicity is negligible” (2004, p. xiii). Possible explanations for empirical findings on PTP include: 1 – research in a laboratory setting does not accurately simulate the courtroom; 2 – the remedies for this effect (i.e., voir dire, judge’s instructions) are studied in isolation but occur in combination in reality; and 3 – defendants may inadvertently benefit from PTP (Brusckhe & Loges, 2004). Furthermore, when PTP is studied in the field, ‘control’ cases that are similar to highly publicized trials but do not receive any coverage are nearly impossible to find (Kramer, Kerr & Carroll, 1990).

Associating the recall of PTP with an emotion might explain how PTP can impact opinions of guilt and innocence. Those who react emotionally to PTP are more likely to sympathize with the prosecution, less likely to approve of the defence’s argumentation, and more confident in guilt following prosecution and defence statements. This is not the case with strictly factual recall of PTP (Honest, Charman, & Levi, 2003). Indeed, a study of different remedies that are implemented to alleviate the effects of PTP found that continuances – or a delay between publicity and a trial – eliminate any bias for factual publicity whereas no effect was found for emotionally-arousing publicity (Kramer et al., 1990). Instructions to jurors and the deliberation process had no effect. Thus, emotionally-based PTP appears to be particularly influential.

Subjectively, the presence of electronic media in the courtroom has also been shown to impact witnesses and other courtroom participants. One study found that witnesses reported adverse psychological effects when electronic media was present, although objective measures suggested that their actual performance was not affected (Borgida, DeBono & Buckman, 1990).

In a 2001 report presented to the Supreme Court of British Columbia in the case of the Queen versus Dimitrios Pilarinos and Glen David Clark, Chopra and Ogloff summarized the findings on media coverage in the courtroom; they affirmed that “a review of the existing literature on the issue of electronic media coverage in the courtroom revealed no clear-cut conclusions” (p.1). They asserted that the existing studies all have methodological flaws and the results of these studies are thus inconclusive.

Although a review of the literature using PsycINFO did not yield a single experimental study on the public’s perception of media presence outside the courtroom, an exploratory study (Sabourin, 2006) was performed in the context of an expert testimonial in the court case challenging the ruling of the Chief Justice of the Quebec Superior court regarding the presence of cameras and journalists in Quebec courthouses and the distribution of this material. As there was no empirical evidence on this topic, this study was undertaken in order to assist the court in determining whether restrictions placed on the media infringed on freedom of expression, according to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982); the study was exploratory in nature and did not have any specific hypotheses. This unpublished study yielded some preliminary findings on the subject. There were six groups of participants in this study, with approximately 30 to 50 participants per group. First, participants were in one of three conditions in order to explore whether priming participants

with certain images influenced opinions. In a first condition, they were shown newsreel clips of footage taken at Quebec courthouses portraying a circus-like atmosphere. In these clips, reporters are seen chasing after defendants, there is heckling from the audience and loud questioning from reporters, cameramen are seen closely following people involved in the trial, etc. Participants in the second condition were also shown audiovisual clips of news reports but the atmosphere in these clips was relative calm. In the third condition, participants filled out the questionnaire without viewing any clips. Twenty questions were selected for the questionnaire from feedback of approximately 40 questions submitted to the six lawyers on the Defence counsel of the court case, representing the provincial and federal Departments of Justice, the Quebec Bar, and the Chief Justice.

Ten questions addressing support for the implementation of restrictions on the media were included as were ten questions addressing the opposition of these restrictions. These questions were scored on a four-point Likert scale in order to create forced siding. In order to control for the order of questions, two versions of the questionnaire were created, with the order of questions inversed in an alternate version. The two versions of the questionnaire were distributed in all three conditions, for a total of six groups. Thus, six groups of participants were created based on the audiovisual clips that were presented (or lack thereof) and two versions of the questionnaire. Three hundred twenty participants were recruited from a sample of university students in communication, psychology, and law classes at the University of Montreal.

Overall, participants in the Sabourin study (2006) overwhelmingly supported restricting media access in courthouses. Participants in all conditions were in favour of restricting media access in courthouses. Indeed, 75 percent of respondents were in favour of

placing these restrictions, 50 percent were very favourable and only 0.04 percent believed that there should be absolutely no restrictions. The order of questions in the Sabourin study did not have an impact on participants' opinions. Only one demographic variable seemed to have an impact on results: respondents that had more than two children tended to have more neutral opinions to the presence or absence of restrictions. Since there were very few subjects that met this criterion, this needs to be explored further and might be a statistical fluke. Those who did not see any video clips were significantly more favourable to restrictions than the other groups. The group that saw the clips with the circus-like atmosphere was the least favourable to restrictions, although they too supported the restrictions overall. This result was explained by a "voyeurism" or "sensationalism" effect in that they support media restrictions to a lesser degree because they are influenced by their own curiosity. As it was explained by Sabourin:

[...] a 'voyeurism' and/or 'sensationalism' effect": everyone claims to be against voyeurism and/or sensationalism, but when confronted with a situation where there actually is voyeurism/sensationalism, people have a tendency to put its importance in perspective. (p. 44)<sup>1</sup>

Although this effect was significant, but weak, – the majority of participants expressed views that were favourable towards restrictions – and a formal hypothesis on voyeurism/sensationalism had not been formulated, there may be some support for this explanation from current media practices, theory, and empirical studies.

News media outlets have increasingly relied on sensationalism in an effort to increase viewership (e.g., Scott & Gobetz, 1992; Slattery, Doremus & Marcus, 2001; Vettehen, Nuijten & Beentjes, 2005). Sensational has been defined as "arousing or tending to arouse (as by lurid details) a quick, intense, and usually superficial interest, curiosity, or emotional

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<sup>1</sup> This quotation has been translated into English from its original French.



reaction” (sensational, 2011). As the media struggles with ratings, standards are driven down by their attempts to increase profit (Sparks & Tulloch, 2000). The media, then, assumes that sensationalized news stories have greater appeal to its audience; it uses sensationalism in an attempt to attract more viewers to its coverage.

Two main models have been proposed to explain the relationship between sensationalism in news stories and emotional arousal, where emotional arousal is defined as: “the degree of excitation the viewer experiences while watching the news” (Vettehen, Nuijten & Peeters, 2008, p. 321). The activation model of information exposure (AM; Donohew, Lorch & Palmgreen, 1998) suggests that individuals have an optimal level of emotional arousal that is biologically-based. It explains how people try to reach and maintain this optimal level by regulating exposure to stimulation. Exposure is therefore a function of both the individual’s level of sensation-seeking and the level of stimulation from the media. Essentially, this model proposes that individuals dislike messages or news stories that have either too little or too much arousal. High sensation-seekers, according to this model, exhibit a need for and pay attention to messages that are novel, emotional, arousing, and highly sensory whereas low sensation-seekers have a need for and devote their attention to stories on the other end of the spectrum. The limited capacity model of mediated message processing (LCM; Lang, 2000) predicts a similar phenomenon. There are four basic premises to this model: 1 – processing audio-visual information requires the performance of a number of tasks; 2 – individuals have limited cognitive resources; 3 – an individual’s goals and the characteristics of a news story both affect how cognitive resources are allocated; and 4 – in cases where insufficient resources are allocated, cognitive overload occurs and information-

processing suffers. Under this model, a sensational news story will increase emotional arousal in its audience, but only to a certain extent.

The basic premise of both of these theories, that sensationalist news stories generate emotional arousal in an inverse U-shaped curve, was empirically shown to influence how much individuals like news stories (Vettehen et al., 2008). Indeed, emotional arousal was shown to mediate the relationship between sensationalism and appreciation for news stories. Different facets of sensationalism were shown to affect emotional arousal in different directions. Stories with negative subjects, for example, were shown to decrease emotional arousal in viewers and therefore decrease appreciation for stories, as were changes in background music. Changes in camera positioning and insertion of short interviews in news stories were shown to positively affect the level of emotional arousal (Vettehen et al., 2008).

These findings could provide an explanation to the findings in the study by Sabourin (2006) outlined above. The level of sensationalism in the circus-like media clips could have generated some level of emotional arousal, which in turn caused participants in that group to like the clips more and feel less strongly about imposing restrictions on journalists than those in the other groups. Alternatively, some other aspect about the clips in the ‘media circus’ condition, such as changes in camera angles, may also have led participants in that group to have greater appreciation for the clips and influenced their responses on the questionnaires.

Exposure to sensationalist media reports has also been shown to affect how individuals view the judicial system (Johnston & Bartels, 2010). Americans have been shown to have little knowledge of how the court system works that is, at least in part, due to the paucity of coverage that the courts receive in the media (Slotnick & Segal, 1998). In their

study, Johnston and Bartels (2010) hypothesized that the way in which individuals receive information about the courts impacts their opinion of the courts. Their study concluded that individuals who are exposed to sensationalist news coverage hold the American Supreme Court and state courts in lower regard than those who are not exposed to sensationalist coverage. These findings add another possible mechanism of the ‘sensationalism’ explanation of the results from the Sabourin study; individuals who viewed the sensationalist circus-like clips might have formed a more negative opinion of the courts than participants in other groups, which may have then led them to feel less strongly about imposing restrictions in courthouses.

A final evolutionary approach to sensationalism may explain why individuals seek sensationalist portrayals of news stories. A review of the front pages of newspapers from eight countries over 300 years concluded that the topics of the stories appearing on the front page have remained stable (Davis & McLeod, 2003). The themes that consistently make the front page have similar themes to those identified in evolutionary psychology: altruism, reputation, cheater detection, violence, reproduction, and treatment of offspring (e.g., Gaulin & McBurney, 2001; Palmer & Palmer, 2002). The authors of the review theorize that news stories with these topics are appealing from an evolutionary standpoint because they help to identify and protect humanity from physical threats to its existence as well as keep track of others that are competing for limited resources (Davis & McLeod, 2003). They hypothesize that sensationalism, like gossip, is an effective way of disseminating information and is thus an efficient way to inform people of threats to their survival.

The existing literature on voyeurism pertains uniquely to the consumption of reality television and suggests that certain personality traits are linked to the content of the television

programming they choose. Voyeuristic personality has been defined as “one who seeks stimulation by visual means” (Blazer, 2006, p. 379). As opposed to the models provided above, which posit that sensationalist media coverage generates a level of emotional arousal that must match audience members’ level of sensation-seeking, reality television programs are thought to satisfy the need of individuals with a voyeuristic personality (Nabi, Biely, Morgan & Stitt, 2003). In other words, personality traits, especially voyeurism, have been shown to predict how individuals choose television programming. This effect is independent of gender, which has also been found to significantly impact viewing preferences (Bagdasarov, 2010). This theory has not yet been applied to news coverage and would not likely explain the results of the Sabourin study, as groups of participants were randomly assigned to conditions. It therefore appears that a sensationalism explanation for the findings in the Sabourin study is plausible but that it is unlikely that the voyeurism explanation as identified in research on reality television programming applies.

The present study served to elaborate, extend, and improve this preliminary study as well as explore the sensationalism hypothesis in the context of media coverage of courthouses. Since the preliminary study consisted of university students taking courses that were directly relevant to the subject matter (i.e., communication, psychology, and law), the present study sought to have a more representative sample in terms of gender and interests by surveying students across many disciplines in order. Only students in continuing education classes were solicited for this study in an attempt to more closely approximate the general population in terms of age. Two questionnaire items were also modified in order to increase their precision. The current study also sought to further explore the ‘voyeurism/sensationalism’ put forth by Sabourin (2006).

The hypotheses of the present study were based on both the findings of the Sabourin study (2006) and the literature on sensationalism. Sabourin's results indicate that individuals are overwhelmingly supportive of imposing restrictions in the courtroom, although the media circus group showed the least amount of support for restrictions. Literature on sensationalism suggests that people have positive appraisals of sensationalist news coverage when it reaches an optimal level of arousal or alternatively when the characteristics of the presentation of clips are appealing. In other words, individuals will appreciate sensationalist media coverage, but only under certain circumstances.

The hypotheses of the present study are thus twofold: 1 – the majority of participants would support restricting the access of media (reporters and cameramen) in courthouses and 2 – the participants who do not view any audiovisual clips, because they are not primed with any clips that might cause emotional arousal or positive appreciation of news coverage, will be the most favourable to restrictions. Similarly, participants who view audiovisual clips, particularly those in the 'media circus' group, will be the least in favour of imposing restrictions on the media.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Two hundred forty-nine subjects were recruited from continuing and adult education classes (Faculté d'éducation permanente) at the Université de Montréal. Participants were sought from continuing education courses in order to obtain a sample that was more representative of the general population than regular university classes, which are typically comprised of full-time students in the same age group. After the University's Ethics

Committee approved this study, instructors from 24 continuing education courses offered in the winter 2009 semester of the Université de Montréal's continuing education program were contacted. Thirteen positive responses were received.

The average age of the sample was 28.1 years, with ages ranging from 18 to 65. Approximately half (53.5 percent) of the sample was female and 46.5 percent was male. With regards to educational background, less than one percent of participants had a high school education or were completing doctoral studies. The majority of participants were at the undergraduate level (60.6 percent), with 32.4 percent being at the CEGEP/college level and 5.4 percent in Master's degree programs. Most subjects did not have any children (74.3 percent), while 13 percent had one child, 8.7 percent had two children and 3.9 percent had three or more children. In terms of marital status, 33.9 percent of the sample was married or in a common-law relationship, 5.4 percent was separated or divorced, and 60.7 percent was single.

## **Measures**

The measures used in this study consisted of audiovisual clips and a questionnaire.

The audiovisual clips were the same as those used for the Sabourin study (2006); they were chosen from a bank of clips provided by the Minister of Justice of Canada from news reports on Quebec francophone television stations that preceded the legal restrictions by two to three years. They were then catalogued by the lawyers that took part in the case and were finally chosen and approved by Sabourin. The two sets of clips were chosen because they are of equal length (approximately 10 minutes each) and from similar and some identical news outlets. The details of these clips are listed in Appendix 1.

The questionnaire was developed by Michel Sabourin to determine participants' opinions of imposing restrictions on journalists and cameramen. The questionnaire consists of twenty statements; half address the opinions on the impact of unlimited access for journalists, cameramen and photographers in courthouses and the other half are directed towards feelings about imposing these restrictions. Each statement was rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), to 4 (strongly agree). Demographic questions were included at the end of the questionnaire. Since the target population was francophone, the statements used in this questionnaire were in French. Questionnaire items are included in Appendix 2. The original questionnaire was slightly modified and improved in order to be more specific – two items were shortened. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to be 0.860, suggesting that the scale has a high internal consistency.

Overall approval scores were calculated for participants so as to correspond to scoring used in the 2006 study. As previously explained, the questionnaire had 20 questions with possible scores ranging from 1 to 4. Ten statements indicate support for the presence of media restrictions and the other 10 signify support for the absence of restrictions. These two sets of 10 questions were tallied separately, resulting in two subtotal scores ranging from 10 to 40. The subtotal for supporting the absence of restrictions was then subtracted from the subtotal for supporting the presence of restrictions. The remaining total was then labelled as the overall approval rating. Thus, overall approval represents the degree to which participants support restrictions and do not adhere to the absence of restrictions. Scores varied from -30 to +30, with scores above 0 representing overall support for restrictions and scores below 0 representing overall support for the absence of restrictions.

## **Procedure**

Students from 13 classes were randomly assigned to groups in the study. These groups corresponded to the ones from Sabourin's study (2006) – 'media circus', 'calm', and control groups – with participants in each group filling out only one of the two versions of the questionnaire.

When the experimenter arrived in each class, participants were explained the anonymity of their participation, the nature of the study, and how to complete the questionnaire before beginning. Questionnaires were distributed and implicit consent was assumed for those who completed the questionnaire. Participants in the 'media circus' and 'calm' conditions were asked to refrain from completing the questionnaire until after the clips had been presented. Participants in the 'media circus' condition then viewed the video clips depicting a chaotic atmosphere in the courthouse whereas those in the 'calm' condition viewed clips of news reports where there is relative calm in the courthouse. They were then asked to answer the questionnaire. Subjects in the control condition did not view any video clips and were invited to complete the questionnaire immediately after the nature of the study was explained to them.

## **Design**

A between-subjects two-way design was used to examine the main and interaction effects of demographic variables and experimental condition on total approval of restrictions. There were six levels of the independent variable based on each pairing of the three experimental conditions and the two questionnaire versions (see Table 1). One group viewed audiovisual clips of a circus-like atmosphere and filled out a version of the questionnaire



where items supporting restrictions were presented first. A second group viewed the same clips but filled out a version of the questionnaire where items opposing restrictions were presented first. The third and fourth groups viewed the ‘calm’ audiovisual clips and filled out either version of the questionnaire, respectively. The final two groups did not view any clips and filled out either the questionnaire with statements supporting or opposing restrictions first, respectively. The dependent variable measured was labelled total approval, as was calculated according to the formula above. Although it was the class and the individual participants that were assigned to experimental conditions, a nested design was not chosen in this case because some conditions contained more than one class whereas others did not. In addition, students in some classes received the two different versions of the questionnaires in order to have similarly-sized groups.

**Table 1.** *Experimental groups.*

		<b>Experimental Condition</b>		
<b>Questionnaire Version</b>		<b>Media Circus</b>	<b>Calm</b>	<b>Control</b>
	<b>Items supporting restrictions</b>	Group 1	Group 3	Group 5
	<b>Items opposing restrictions</b>	Group 2	Group 4	Group 6

The hypotheses as identified above were the following: the majority of participants would have positive scores on total approval; and the first two groups (i.e., that viewed the media circus audiovisual clips) would have significantly lower total approval scores than the last two groups (i.e., the control groups that did not view any audiovisual clips).

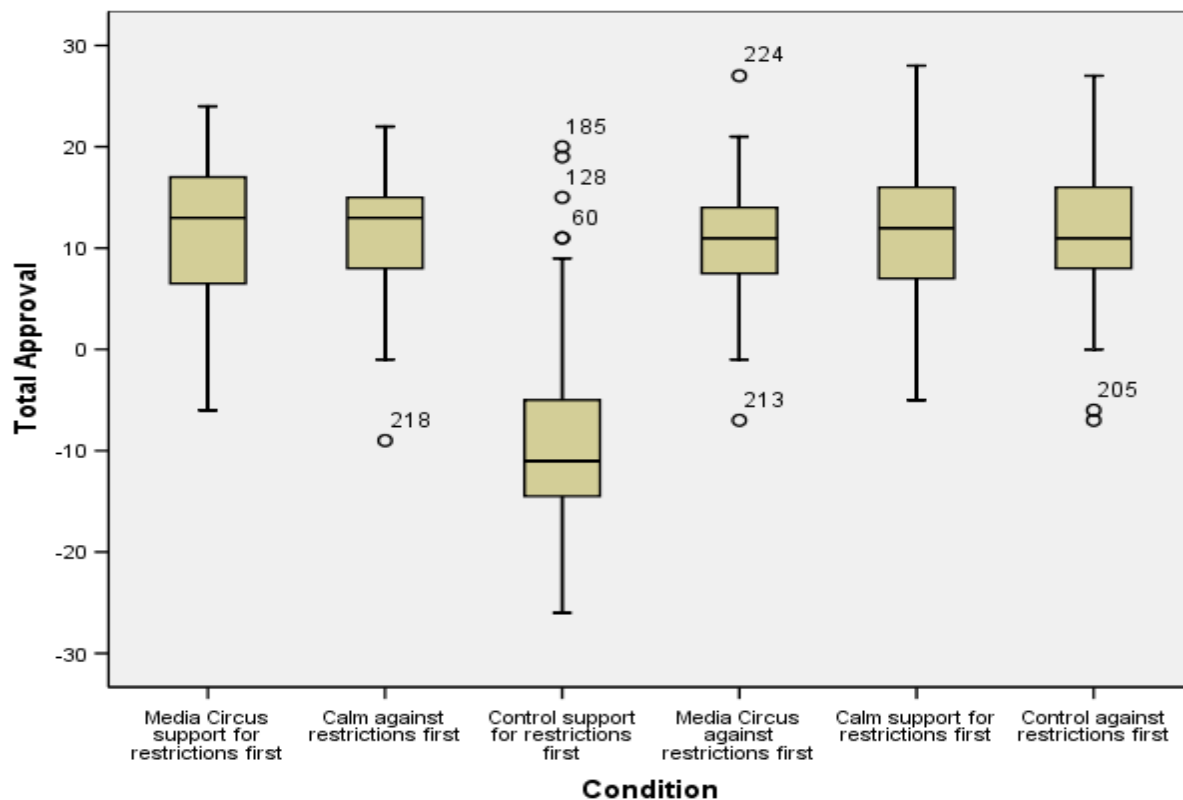
## Results

Data was analyzed using two-way between-groups ANOVAs in order to examine whether there was a main effect for experimental procedure on total approval scores, whether the differences among the six groups were statistically significant, the effect of demographic variables, and the interaction of each demographic variable with total approval scores.

### Preliminary analyses

Preliminary analyses revealed that the data followed a relatively normal distribution; kurtosis and skewness values ranged from -1.218 to +0.746 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). An analysis of outliers was conducted using Mahalanobis distance and box plots (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Box plot of Condition by Total Approval



Participants with scores that deviated by more than three standard deviations from the variable mean and showed a Mahalanobis distance greater than the exclusion criterion set at  $p < .001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) were first identified. Only one participant fell into this classification. Analyses were conducted with and without this outlier. Results did not significantly differ by the presence of this participant and so this data was included the sample. Levene's test for homogeneity showed that the assumption of equality of variance among the six groups was not violated (1.91,  $p = 0.094$ ). Six participants were removed from analyses because more than 50 percent of their values were missing. Thus, 97.5 percent of the initial sample of 249 participants was retained for analyses.

With regards to the first hypothesis, whether total approval scores were impacted by the experimental condition, total percentages indicated that 78.8 percent of respondents supported media restrictions (i.e., had scores greater than 0) and the remaining 22.2 percent were neutral or against media restrictions (i.e., had scores lesser than or equal to 0). The distribution of scores is illustrated in Figure 2. Scores ranged from -26 to 28, with positive scores representing support for restrictions and vice versa.

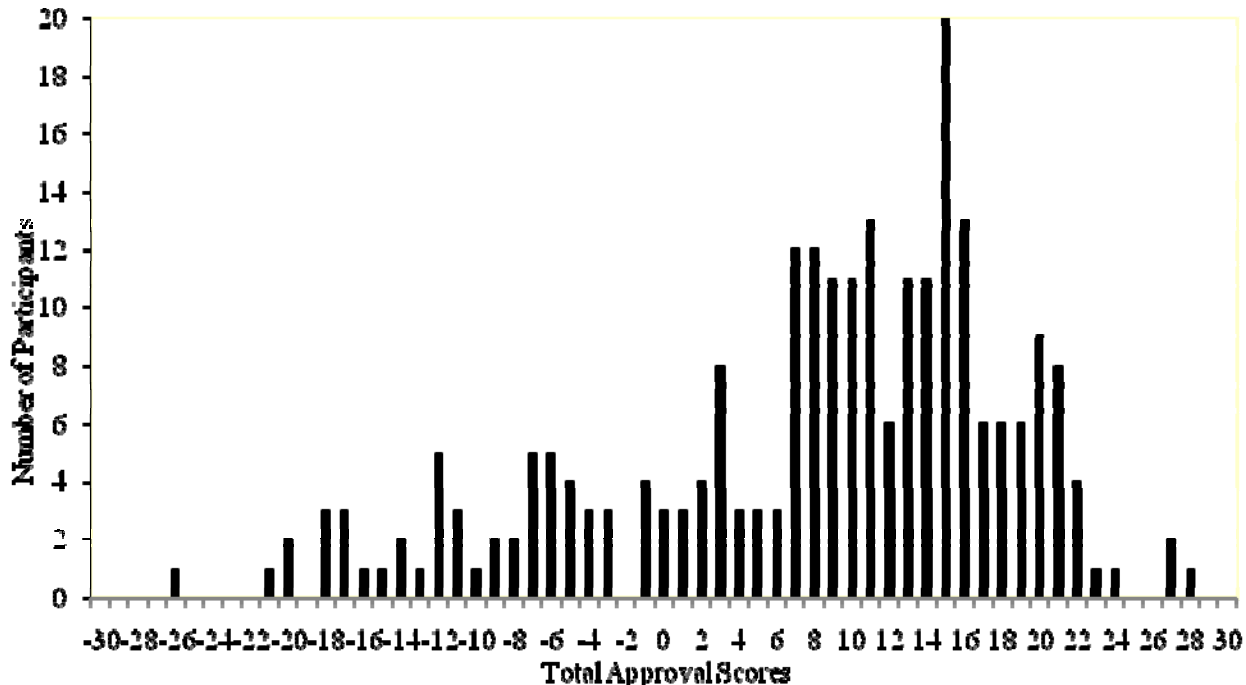
### **Main analyses**

Using SPSS 19, two-way between subjects analyses of variance (ANOVA) were performed to determine whether the experimental condition affected questionnaire scores while simultaneously examining the relationship of scores with demographic variables.

### **Main hypotheses**

With respect to the second hypothesis positing that individuals in the control groups

**Figure 2.** Distribution of overall approval scores (N=243)



would have the highest scores on the questionnaire, a two-way ANOVA found a significant main effect of condition,  $F(5, 241) = 39.7$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.46$ . A Scheffé post-hoc test was conducted and indicated that the control group that answered questions addressing the opposition of restrictions first (group 6) was statistically significantly lower than each of the other groups (see Table 2).

#### Sociodemographic variables

No significant main effects were found for any of the demographic variables. The interactions between gender and condition, age and condition, and civil status were also found to have no significant differences. A significant effect was found for the interaction between education level and condition,  $F(9, 241) = 2.621$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.09$ . As there were fewer than two participants that had only high school or doctoral-level studies and only 13 participants that had completed a Master's degree, the analyses were performed without these

three subgroups. After these small groups were removed, the interaction between education and condition was no longer significant,  $F(5, 224) = 1.588$ ,  $p = .165$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ . Thus, it appears that these small subgroups were skewing the results.

**Table 2.** Mean overall approval scores (-30 to 30) for media restriction ( $N = 243$ )

<b>Experimental condition</b>	<b>Order of questions</b> (indicates which statements appear first)	<b>Overall approval*</b>
Media circus	Absence of restrictions	11.15
Media circus	Imposition of restrictions	11.51
Calm	Absence of restrictions	11.61
Calm	Imposition of restrictions	11.59
Control	Absence of restrictions	-8.04 <sup>§</sup>
Control	Imposition of restrictions	7.78

\*The Scheffé test was used as the post-hoc method

<sup>§</sup> Significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level

With regards to sociodemographic information, it was not possible to statistically compare the means from the current study, Sabourin's study (2006), and the Quebec population in general because only the overall means are available for the latter group. The simple comparisons that can be calculated, though, suggest that the sample used in the present study more closely resembles the general population. In terms of age, Quebec census data from 2010 shows that 49.6 percent of the population is male whereas 50.4 percent is female (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2010). The numbers from the current study are similar – 53.5 percent are women and 46.5 percent are men. However, in Sabourin's study (2006), only 28.9 percent were male and 73.1 percent were female. Although some comparisons can be made for age, data are skewed slightly because the predefined categories of the data available for Quebec and Sabourin's study (2006) differ. Despite being closer to the Quebec figures

than the data from the preliminary study, the numbers from the present study differ from the actual population (see Table 3). Marital status could not be compared as categorical differences made it impossible. No other demographic data was available for comparison for the Quebec population.

**Table 3.** *Percentages of each age group by comparison group*

Age categories	Quebec percentages (n = 6 171 064)	Age categories	Current study (N = 237)	Age categories	Sabourin study (2006) (N = 318)
0 – 19*	22	---	---	---	---
20 – 24	8.1	18 – 25	50.2	18 – 25	58.5
25 – 34	17.5	25 – 35	34.2	25 – 35	28.6
35 – 44	17	36 – 45	12.7	36 – 45	10.1
Over 45	57.4	Over 46	3	Over 46	2.8

\*This category was removed and not analyzed because only adults were sampled in both experimental studies.

## Discussion

This study sought to investigate whether the general public support unlimited media access to courthouses or resonate with Albert von Schrenck-Notzing and others over the past 100 years that believe that media access is unnecessary and even detrimental to the judicial process. A second objective was to investigate sensationalism in relation to the public's opinion on media access. Participants were expected to support restricting the access of media in courthouses and the control group to be the most favourable to these restrictions in line with past research and theory.

Nearly 80 percent of all participants did, in fact, support restricting media access in courthouses. This finding supported the first hypothesis and reiterates the notion that the

public largely believes that the media should not have unrestricted access in courthouses. Demographic variables did not appear to impact support for media restrictions. Thus, unlike in Sabourin's preliminary study (2006), the number of children of participants did not influence their views on this topic lending support to the notion that this was a statistical fluke.

No support was found for the sensationalism hypothesis. According to this second hypothesis, participants in the control group should show the most support for restricting media access. This theory suggests that sensationalist portrayal of news can lead to positive appraisals of news coverage but only to a certain optimal extent. Particular objective characteristics of the coverage can also influence people's appraisals of news coverage. In the only other study that has addressed media access in courthouses, Sabourin (2006) used this hypothesis to explain his findings. The results of that study showed that participants that saw footage that depicted a circus-like atmosphere, although still in favour of imposing restrictions on journalists, were the least supportive of them. The sensationalism hypothesis, if used to explain this finding, would suggest that the audiovisual clips presented to participants in the 'media circus' groups generated some level of emotional arousal or had certain characteristics that caused them to have positive appraisals of the Court, and in turn show less support for changing the status quo. In the current study, participants in the media circus conditions did not significantly differ from the other groups in their support for restrictions or lack thereof. In fact, participants in one of the control groups showed the least support for restrictions, although this may be due to the order of questions and not to the experimental condition.

Interestingly, participants who read statements about the absence of restrictions first were less likely to be in favour of these restrictions, though only for the control group. One

possible explanation for this finding relates to the primacy effect in social psychology (e.g., Asch, 1964; Baron, 2008). It is possible that participants who read statements supporting the absence of restrictions first were more likely to endorse them because they were more salient whereas those who read statements regarding the imposition of restrictions first were more likely to support restrictions because those first statements were more salient. If this is the case, it is possible that the effect was nullified in the experimental groups because of the presentation of the audiovisual clips.

Another aim of the present study was to improve on the findings of the preliminary study by more closely resembling the general population. To do so, participants were only recruited from continuing education courses at the Université de Montréal as opposed to sampling students from regular university classes in domains that pertained to the research goals. This was done in the hopes that students in a multitude of disciplines would represent a broader array of interests as well as more diverse demographics than the preliminary study. While the availability of data on the Quebec population was limited and thorough analyses could not be completed, some comparisons were possible. It appears that the current study met this objective for gender but made only minor progress for age. The gender composition of the present study more closely resembled the composition of the Quebec population than the sample in the preliminary study. This is particularly important as gender has been shown to have a significant impact on television viewing preferences (Bagdasarov, 2010). The population sampled in the current study was still much younger than the population in general, but was an improvement over the population in the Sabourin (2006) study.

Although the results of the current study are slightly different than the findings of a preliminary study, participants in both studies overwhelmingly supported the Quebec Court's



decision to impose restrictions on journalists in courthouses. Not only does the literature on PTP suggest that media coverage of cases can have deleterious effects on jurors, but the present study shows that the public is in favour of restricting media presence as well. Since there is evidence to suggest that media has a negative impact at the very least on jurors (pending research on other courtroom participants such as crime victims and the falsely accused, for example) and the public do not seem to care to have unrestricted media access, the newly implemented provincial governmental decision to limit media access to certain areas seems strongly warranted.

Moreover, a few cases in the United States demonstrate the extent to which media coverage can play a role in the judicial process. The O.J. Simpson murder trial of 1994, for example, was the subject of 2237 news segments over a three-year span (Dershowitz, 2004). The issue of whether cameras should be permitted in the court was contested during the trial, with the judge allowing video coverage of the entire trial. However, in Michael Jackson's 2005 trial, a gag order was issued to prevent any individual involved in the case from speaking with the media ("People v. Jackson", 2010). It, nevertheless, was widely covered in the media. The magnitude of media presence forced police to have a significant presence to monitor and restrict both fans and journalists. It may also have contributed to drug misuse that ultimately led to his untimely death (O'Shea & Hall, 2009). Regardless of the judges' decisions to allow or disallow cameras in the courtroom, cameras and journalists had strict restrictions on the nature of their coverage in both of these cases. These examples demonstrate the judicial system's support of restricting media access.

The present findings must be taken with some caution. While the participants in this study were chosen so as to be as representative of the population at large as possible, the

generalizability of the findings represents a limitation. The professors that accepted to have their students participate in the study taught classes where they felt that the study was relevant to the course material. Thus, the participants had an interest in the subject matter from the outset. However, there were a variety of different courses that were included, e.g., journalism, law, psychology, criminology, police studies. In addition, the population studied was limited to students in continuing education classes at one university. Despite this, the sample had a wider distribution of age and educational background than a typical university sample. As mentioned above, the sample in the current study closely resembled the general population in Quebec with regards to gender but not to age. This, therefore, also represents a weakness of the current research. Although seemingly more representative of the general population than the preliminary study, the participants in the present study still do not accurately represent the general population. One further limitation exists in the questionnaire used to measure the opinions as its validity is unclear.

These results suggest that, along with the Supreme Court of Canada's support of the ruling that enables the Court to restrict journalists to conducting interviews in limited areas in the courthouse, the public seem to support restricting media access. Historically, research on PTP and judicial decisions for specific highly mediatised trials also echo the need to impose some restrictions on the media's access to trials and the individuals involved in such cases. If the judicial system disfavours unrestricted media access, research on PTP suggests potential deleterious effects on jurors and other courtroom participants, and the audience that the media are seeking to attract are all in favour of the restrictions, then perhaps these restrictions should serve as an example as a way to limit the unnecessary impact that media might have on the different players in the judicial system. Indeed, the Quebec Court procedures may serve as an

example to other jurisdictions – limiting media access in courthouses may displease journalists but will protect courtroom participants with the public’s overwhelming support.

## **Article 2**

### **The Psychological Effects of Media Coverage on Crime Victims**

Nina Marie Fusco and Michel Sabourin

#### **Abstract**

Crime victims are particularly susceptible to mental health problems, including PTSD. A link between media coverage and PTSD has also been posited. This study investigated the effects of media coverage on PTSD in crime victims using a narrative approach. The participants had a great deal of mental health symptoms, high scores on a measure of PTSD symptoms and generally negative attitudes towards their victimization. No specific link was found between media coverage and PTSD symptoms. Individual differences may explain this variance. Further examination is crucial to elucidate the potentially harmful consequences that media coverage can have on crime victims.

Despite a great deal of research examining the separate topics of crime victims and the effects of media, the relationship between the two has only been sparsely investigated. As the media is commonly thought to have an impact on its audience (e.g., Dill, 2009; Tal-Or, Cohen, Tsfati & Gunther, 2010), the same might be said about a specific subgroup of that audience – crime victims. The present study explores the possibility that news coverage of the crime of which one is the victim exacerbates the stress experienced following a traumatic event.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, develops, by its very nature, after a traumatic event is experienced; the principal distinguishing feature of PTSD is that it occurs in individuals who experience a traumatic event where there is a threat of death or serious injury. The other symptoms listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV-R (DSM IV-TR) include persistent avoidance of stimuli related to the event, intrusive reminders of the trauma (e.g., distressing thoughts and/or dreams of the event, reliving the event, distress when exposed to reminders of the event), and increased physiological arousal to reminders of the trauma that last longer than one month and impact everyday functioning.

A recent large-scale Canadian study found that Canadians have a lifetime prevalence of PTSD of 9.2 percent (Van Ameringen, Mancini, Patterson & Boyle, 2008). Canadian women were significantly more likely than men to meet the criteria for both full and partial PTSD both at the time the study was performed and in their lifetime. Over two-thirds sought professional help for their symptoms. Interestingly, a high rate of comorbidity with other

psychological disorders was found, including Major Depressive Disorder, and Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Dependence.

Crime has been associated with various symptoms of mental health problems. Recent victims of assault have been found to be over five times more likely to have a history of depression than non-victims. Rape victims are also much more likely to have substance-related problems than individuals who have never been victimized by crime (Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003). A relationship between anger and PTSD symptoms has also been identified. It appears that crime victims report the most anger towards the perpetrator, followed by self-directed anger (Orth & Maercker, 2009).

Symptoms of anxiety appear to be the most common ones reported by individuals who have been victimized by crime (Morrall, Marshall, Pattison & MacDonald, 2010). Indeed, depression and panic seem to be typically experienced by crime victims (Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003). These mental health symptoms exist regardless of the type of crime that was perpetrated (Kilpatrick et al., 1985). Anxiety symptoms may lead victims to avoid reminders of the trauma, one of the key symptoms of PTSD. Fear of anxiety, or the fear of experiencing symptoms of anxiety, is an important measure of anxiety sensitivity that has been found to be highly correlated with PTSD (Reuther, Davis, Matthews, Munson & Grills-Taquechel, 2010).

Crime victims appear to have higher rates of all anxiety disorders, such as PTSD. Overall, crime victims appear to be considerably more likely than others to meet criteria for PTSD, depression, and other anxiety-related disorders such as agoraphobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and simple and social phobia (Boudreaux, Kilpatrick, Resnick, Best & Saunders, 2005). While the population rate for lifetime PTSD is 9.4 percent, 25.8 percent of

crime victims will be diagnosed with this disorder. This difference is especially evident in female victims: 20.4 percent of women developed PTSD after experiencing a trauma whereas only 8.6 percent of men did. The type of crime also seems to affect who gets diagnosed with PTSD, depending on the gender of the victim. Rape, molestation, and any sexual or physical assault or abuse are more frequently associated with PTSD in women whereas warfare and witnessing violence are the most common precipitants in men. (Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003). Not only do victims of crime show more severe symptoms than people who have not been victims of crime – those who are victims of violent crime demonstrate more severe symptoms than victims of property crimes (Norris & Kaniasty, 1994). Prior victimization has been identified as a possible factor that makes individuals more likely to develop PTSD (e.g., Brewin, Andrews & Valentine, 2000; Johansen, Wahl, Eilertsen & Weisaeth, 2007).

With regards to media coverage, a number of aspects of crime stories may help to explain which stories receive media attention. Surprisingly, one study found that the type of weapon, the location of the crime, victim characteristics such as age, sex and status, and the status of the defendant did not influence how much space and attention a news story was allotted (Chermak, 1998). The number of victims and crimes covered did significantly affect the space and attention given to the news story as did the type of crime; murder received the most space and attention as determined by various aspects of newspaper coverage with property crimes receiving the least amount of space and attention. Offender characteristics also had an impact – older adults and female defendants received more attention and space than younger, male offenders. Overall, the best predictor of attention and space given to a newspaper article was the number of victims, regardless of the size of the city where the article appeared. However, the author noted that other factors may explain whether or not an

article ever makes it into the newspaper. The availability of information about the case, the link of the crime to prior events, and whether it is a 'slow news day' were suggested as possibilities (Chermak, 1998).

The authors of an investigation of reactions to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, suggested that media coverage of the attacks caused an increase in the rates of PTSD in its viewers (McNally & Breslau, 2008). They concluded this on the basis of increased rates of the disorder not only in New York City (Galea et al., 2003), where the actual attacks occurred, but also throughout the United States of America (Schlenger et al., 2002). However, they did qualify this finding. The authors indicated that an alternative explanation could be that those with a pathological response sought to expose themselves to the traumatic television coverage. They also posited that the response was more reflective of temporary and normal distress reactions because of the rapid decrease in rates of PTSD. Finally, they admitted that the surveys used did not directly correspond to the DSM criteria of the disorder. A response to this article emphasized the unique nature of these terrorist attacks because Americans were able to watch it and the subsequent media frenzy, military mobilization, national alerts, anthrax attacks, governmental vigilance, and so forth, that ensued happening live (Marshall, Amsel & Suh, 2008). They also showed further support for the phenomenon, though, by highlighting similar findings in the United Kingdom and Israel following terrorist attacks in those countries. A separate study suggested that some subsets of the population might be more susceptible to PTSD; bipolar patients were found to have a higher rate of PTSD (20 percent) following the terrorist attacks than the general public (0.6 percent) as late as one year after the attacks (Pollack et al., 2006). Thus, while it seems clear that the media has some effect on PTSD symptoms, there appear to be individual differences in reactions to media coverage of



traumatic events. No evidence has been found to suggest any positive effects of media coverage on viewers.

Another facet of media effects and PTSD has been examined in only one experimental study: the reaction of crime victims to media reports. Maercker and Mehr (2006) investigated the psychological effects of media reports of crime on the victims of the crimes that were covered. The majority of victims in this study had a negative emotional reaction to the report, although they believed the reports to be accurate. The authors found that this subgroup was also more likely to report negative views on the news coverage of their crime.

Treatment for crime victims suffering from PTSD includes methods such as in vivo and imaginary exposure where re-experiencing emotional and cognitive reminders of the trauma is thought to be therapeutic as they evoke a robust emotional reaction (Amstadter, McCart & Ruggiero, 2007). While re-exposure to reminders of the trauma in a controlled environment appears to have beneficial effects for crime victims, it is unclear what effects exposure to reminders of the trauma has when it is unanticipated. Maercker and Mehr's study (2006) did not find a relationship between longer-term PTSD symptoms and media reporting although victims did have strong negative reactions to the reports. The authors hypothesized that the reaction might be more negative in the short-term as they also found a correlation between negative appraisals of the media coverage and the severity of symptoms. Other empirical evidence in fact suggests that crime victims may be susceptible to such a re-traumatisation effect. The criminal trial, for example, can not only remind the victim of various aspects of the crime but can itself be a traumatic experience (Combalbert & Vitry, 2007). Individual differences may exist in this reaction, though, as other findings show that victim support workers and public prosecutors believe that participation in the judicial system

can be interpreted as therapeutic in some instances; they agreed that victims who were shown recognition and respect or who felt validated by the process would deem the process to be beneficial (Wemmers, 2008).

The present study sought to more closely examine the psychological effects of media coverage on crime victims. In order to explore the subjective experience of crime victims and enable these individuals to tell their 'stories', a narrative, qualitative approach was used. This technique was chosen based on certain underlying principles of narrative theory. Specifically, narrative identity, or an "individual's internalized, evolving, and integrative story of the self" (McAdams, 2008, p. 242), stems from the assumptions that individuals define themselves in terms of stories that are reconstructed from the past. In addition, the narrative process involves integrating events into a coherent picture. It was thought that this approach would be particularly informative for this study in order to gain insight into how crime victims integrate this potentially traumatic event into their life stories. Furthermore, the topic of media and victimization is particularly suitable for narrative research because it involves a temporal process and a subjective interpretation by individuals who are privy to a unique perspective as the subject of a news story (Sandelowski, 2007). It is this subjective response that was of concern in the present study. Due to the difficulty recruiting participants and the paucity of research on this specific topic, the narratives of participants were analyzed using a qualitative approach while looking at more objective data from questionnaires measuring mental health symptoms to complement this data.

Stemming from the extensive research that shows that crime victims suffer from a number of psychological consequences, it was expected that many participants would discuss mental health problems, particularly PTSD. Furthermore, it was thought that participants

would show higher levels of trait anxiety because of the relationship demonstrated between anxiety disorders and crime. Based on past research, the negative appraisal of media stories of a crime that was committed against oneself was also expected to be associated with more severe symptoms of psychopathology.

The hypotheses of the current study are therefore as follows: 1 – crime victims would spontaneously discuss mental health symptoms experienced after being victimized; 2 – participants would have higher rates of trait anxiety and trauma symptoms than the general population; and 3 – victims with negative views of news coverage of the crimes committed against them would report the highest and most severe mental health problems.

## **Methods and Design**

### **Participants**

Participants were enlisted from Crime Victims Aid Centres (Centre d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels; CAVAC) throughout the province of Quebec, Canada. Initially, a poster was placed in the waiting rooms of these facilities; only one person responded to this poster and subsequently chose not to participate in the study. Eight months later, the CAVAC from the Bas-St-Laurent region of Quebec mailed a letter to individuals who received their services within the last two years inviting them to respond by telephone should they wish to participate. The CAVAC of the Quebec City and Chaudière-Appalaches region sent a similar letter six months later to those who had received services in that region. A total of twenty-three participants were thus recruited.

## Measures

The Impact of Events Scale Revised (IES-R; Weiss and Marmar, 1997) was administered to participants. This questionnaire has 22 items that address the three symptom groups that correspond to the criteria for PTSD in the DSM-IV-TR – avoidance, intrusive reminders, and physiological arousal. Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale. As the IES-R is not intended to be used as a diagnostic tool, no cut-off score exists that represents the presence or absence of PTSD. The French validation of this questionnaire showed comparable internal consistency to the original English version (Brunet, St-Hilaire, Jehel & King, 2003). Correlations between the subscales and the total score were all found to be high and significant at the 0.01 level. The French translation also had high Cronbach's coefficients for the subscales and total scores (intrusion = 0.86, avoidance = 0.86, hyperarousal = 0.81 and total = 0.93).

Participants were also given the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults (STAI; Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970) to distinguish between temporary anxiety that might result from re-traumatisation and anxiety as a more permanent trait that might make individuals more susceptible to developing PTSD. There are twenty questions for each of these aspects each rated on a four-point Likert scale, for a total of forty items.

## Procedure

Interviews were conducted by telephone. A consent form that explained the nature of the project was first read to each person; a copy of this form was also sent by mail along with the compensation for participating in the study (\$20).

Participants were then asked to “Tell the story of the crime that was committed against [them], including a beginning, middle, and end”. This method of interviewing participants was inspired by the McAdams Narrative technique (2008) to allow participants to select the elements they deemed to be the most important. Participants were told that they would be able to tell their story from start to finish without interruption, with all questions being left to the end. Only questions of clarification were then asked. If participants did not spontaneously address media coverage of their case, they were asked if any existed. If they responded affirmatively, they were asked to describe the coverage and their reactions, thoughts or feelings. All interviews were performed, transcribed and coded by the first author.

Following the initial interview, the two questionnaires were verbally administered. Participants were first given the IES-R, followed by the STAI. At the end of the interview, demographic information was collected of each participant.

### **Coding scheme**

Interviews were coded and analyzed using QDA Miner 3.2. Interviews were first coded for the type of media coverage (when present, newspaper, radio or television). Interviews were then given an overall code of either positive or negative for the valence of their narrative. The general attitude of the storyteller was coded as was subjectively interpreted by the coder.

Next, the psychological reactions that are most commonly found in crime victims were identified: traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety. When any of the symptoms of these psychological disorders were mentioned by the victim, they received the corresponding code.

There was also an “other” category for all other psychological symptoms expressed that did not fit into any of the expressed group.

McAdams (2008) has outlined various ways that people use to narrate negative life events. He described three forms of one such way of narrating negative life events: discounting the event. These three forms of discounting the event were coded: repression, denial, and dissociation. As McAdams does not provide his own definition of these mechanisms, modifications of Gabbard’s definitions (2005) were used to define codes in the present study. The code for repression was used when it appeared that participants were expelling thoughts of the incident by blocking certain ideas from entering their consciousness. Denial was coded when it appeared that participants avoided awareness of aspects of external reality that were difficult to face. Dissociation was coded when a participant described a disruption in her identity, memory, consciousness, or perception in order to retain the illusion of psychological control following the crime. McAdams (2008) indicated that a less extreme form of discounting the event is through the use of positive illusions, where individuals overlook negative aspects of events and overemphasize their positive meaning. Thus, ‘positive illusions’ was included in the coding scheme. Another approach that people can have when narrating life events is resilience – putting the event behind them and moving forward instead of ruminating on it. Resilience was coded using this definition. These codes are described in further detail below.

McAdams (2008) has identified two modes of storytelling. He defined dramatic storytelling as occurring when “the storyteller makes frequent use of nonverbal signals, employs vivid quotes and dialogue, and attempts to re-enact the original event in the telling” (p. 246). The reflective mode occurs when “the storyteller spends relatively little time

describing what happened in the event and focuses instead on what the event may mean or how the event made the person feel” (p. 246). These definitions were used to code these forms of storytelling in the present study.

Since all the participants were females, the majority of the thematic categories were taken from an analysis of common themes found in trauma narratives told by women (Krause, DeRosa & Roth, 2002). These authors have highlighted the importance of understanding trauma and PTSD through investigating the meaning that individuals attribute to the traumatic experience. They concluded that some themes may predict PTSD and be targets for treatment. They have identified cognitive-affective categories that correspond to such themes in females; these themes were used to code the interviews in this study. The first two of these categories are positive illusions that people use to cope with traumatic events (overlook negative aspect, exaggerate positive meaning), and ways of being resilient in the face of a traumatic event (put it behind, move forward) that also correspond to the broader categories identified by McAdams (2008). A variety of cognitive affective reactions expressed by victims were coded according to the suggestions made by these authors. The definitions for these codes were adapted from these authors’ definitions, as is outlined in Table 4.

## **Results**

### **Demographic data**

A total of 23 individuals participated in the study, all of whom were female. The average age of the sample was 46.35, with a standard deviation of 11.25. Participants’ ages ranged from 31 to 63 years. The time that had elapsed since the crime ranged from six months to four years.

**Table 4.** *Definition of interview codes*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Prototypical definition</b>
Helplessness	a feeling that someone else has absolute power over you
Rage	a feeling that your rage will be emotionally overwhelming
Fear	behaviour that is phobic and protective
Loss	a feeling that a traumatic experience stole something from you
Self-blame/guilt	a belief or feeling that you are in some way responsible for abuse perpetrated against you
Legitimacy	a feeling of being deviant in your reaction to abuse
Shame	feelings of humiliation for having been exposed to abuse
Alienation	a feeling of being different and set apart from other people
Benign/meaningful world	a belief that the world is unsafe, unrewarding and/or unjust
Trust	an expectation of others being unhelpful, capable of deception, betrayal and exploitation
Self-worth	a sense of being flawed or damaged
Reciprocity	a feeling of being unworthy of giving and receiving love

**Valence**

The majority of participants had a negative outlook when recounting the story of their crime – only 17.4 percent had an overall positive recounting of the crime while the remaining 82.6 percent of narratives were largely negative. Quotations that provide examples of positive valence from the current sample include:



“I have to say, I was one of the luckier ones”<sup>2</sup>

“I was proud and it was because of my description and I kept my cool... I am happy about that at least”

“I had the satisfaction of knowing that he had been caught”

Examples of excerpts that were coded as negative included:

“For sure I was angry”

“If I had wanted to save myself, I couldn’t have”

“I didn’t want to live what I was going through”

### **Narrative style and modes of storytelling**

With regards to the ways in which the stories were told, it proved difficult to identify many of these attitudes towards the event. Indeed, the more positive forms of discounting the event were most readily identified. Examples of this moving forward include: “I have to say I was one of the luckier ones” and “after that, things went well”. One woman who exemplified that she had put the incident behind her stated “I didn’t want to be hurt anymore”. In one narrative coded as containing dissociation as a form of discounting the event, the participant simply stated, “I played the strong woman”. Finally, repression was coded in one case where the participant explained that she had found evidence of a murder. This woman explained that since the legal case was terminated, she “didn’t really need any follow-up. We try to forget it”. None of the other codes were used (i.e., denial, overlooking negative aspect and exaggerating positive meaning).

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<sup>2</sup> Quotations have been translated from French to English by the first author.

Three narratives were told with a dramatic style. These accounts of the crimes were very detailed and recalled dialogue that occurred during the incident. One participant, for example, recounted the following exchange between her and the perpetrator as she was attempting to open a safe:

“He told me: “this is your first and last warning. I’m going to cut a finger off if not.” I told him “If you were in my shoes, wouldn’t you be nervous?” I was screaming, crying. I told him where our silver collection was, where all the nicest pieces of silver were [...]”

In contrast, another woman, whose narrative was coded as reflective, began her story by stating: “well, I never thought I’d be where I am”. This example is illustrative of the way in which she emphasized her personal feelings towards the event rather than describing details of the incident. A total of nine narratives were coded as reflective. The other participants’ narratives did not fall neatly under either of these categories.

### **Mental health**

In terms of mental health, 21.7 percent of the victims in this study spoke directly to symptoms of traumatic stress. One participant, for example, said, “It was difficult to go through that [media coverage]. It made me relive things.” One woman spontaneously detailed her symptoms in the following manner:

“Since then, I have nightmares of the rape. They’re always the same. I have flashbacks of all the things that I went through. I am seeing a psychologist. I don’t go out at night. I don’t turn on the lights. I don’t eat very much [...], I have no family left.”

Anxiety-related symptoms were described by 17.4 percent of participants. One participant recounted, “That’s where the stress comes in [...] it’s very stressful”. Another person described a physiological symptom of anxiety – “I was trembling”. Thirteen percent mentioned depressive symptoms, such as thoughts and attempts at self-harm and depressed

mood. One participant explained, for example, “I think about suicide. I missed twice”. Another person recounted how she was “really sad”. An additional 8.7 percent discussed other symptoms related to mental health.

Surprisingly, these symptoms appeared to occur in isolation; only one participant expressed symptoms of both traumatic stress and depression in the interview. As detachment, numbing, and restricted range of affect as well as dissociation are symptoms associated with PTSD, it is not surprising that 8.7 percent of participants described dissociative phenomena in their narratives.

### **Cognitive affective categories**

Trust was most prevalent not only out of cognitive affective categories but indeed of any code. Just over one quarter expressed rage and fear; one third of participants spoke or made some mention of alienation and shame. Table 5 outlines the total number of times each code was used, the total proportion of all codes, the number of participants whose narratives include this code as well as the proportion of all participants whose narratives had each code.

The crime victims participating in this study used very poignant statements that illustrate the cognitive affective categories. One excerpt that was coded as shame illustrated how the woman felt humiliated: “I felt like a servant and a whore”. With regards to the alienation code, one participant indicated, “It was as if I was the bad one”, while another explained how she was labelled. One woman affirmed: “everyone was gossiping [about me]”. The loss code was used in one case where the woman described how the perpetrator “took everything from me”. Examples of cases where trust was coded include: “I didn’t get any help

**Table 5.** *Percentages for Cognitive Affective Categories (N=23)*

Code	Number of times coded	Percentage of all codes	Number of cases containing the code	Percentage of cases containing the code
Helplessness	4	2.6	4	17.4
Loss	6	3.9	4	17.4
Rage	12	7.8	6	26.1
Self-blame	8	5.2	4	17.4
Fear	12	7.8	6	26.1
Shame	7	4.6	7	30.4
Trust	18	11.8	12	52.2
Reciprocity	2	1.3	2	8.7
Alienation	7	4.6	7	30.4
Legitimacy	2	1.3	2	8.7
Benign/ meaningful world	4	3.6	2	8.7

at all from the police,” and, “Those people don’t like me. They were digging in my business”.

The following example reveals the view that the world is unjust that was coded under the benign/meaningful world category: “justice believes more in men than in us women”.

### **Analysis of coding**

An analysis of the sequence of codes revealed a strong probability of the temporal association of trust with other codes. In other words, trust was often addressed close in time to

other codes. The most notable probabilities for codes frequently associated in time with each other were: .633 for anxiety/trust, .633 for the sequence of reflective/trust codes and .667 for self-blame/trust. All probability scores are outlined in Table 6.

### **Results of questionnaires**

Scores on the IES-R ranged from 3 to 88 out of a possible total of 88, with a mean score of 49.62 and standard deviation of 28.9. This mean was significantly different than the mean found in the French validation of the IES-R ( $\bar{x} = 11.8$ ;  $t(244) = 11.77$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The IES-R showed high internal consistency in the present study; Cronbach's coefficient was 0.97 for the total scale, 0.94 for intrusion, 0.92 for avoidance, and 0.96 for hyperarousal.

The scores on the trait section of the STAI ranged from 43 to 69, with an average of 53.35 (SD = 7.66), whereas scores on the state section varied from 39 to 61, with a mean of 48.33 (SD = 6.2).

Only one participant had high scores across the IES-R and STAI. The crime in question was an assault by a known perpetrator that was never pursued by the authorities because of a lack of evidence. A single participant had elevated IES scores in isolation. This person was a victim of long-standing conjugal violence who expressed a strong fear that her husband would return to harm her upon release from custody. Two victims had scores of 3 on the IES-R – the lowest scores of the group. Both of these participants were victims of domestic violence, which had occurred over a long period of time. One also had media coverage that she depicted as difficult to deal with.

**Table 6.** Probability Scores for Sequence of Codes (N =23).

	Traumatic stress	Depression	Anxiety	Other	Repression	Dissociation	Put it behind	Move forward	Helplessness	Loss	Rage	Self-blame	Fear	Shame	Trust	Reciprocity	Alienation	Legitimacy	Benign/meaningful world	Newspaper	TV	
Alienation													.052		.465							
Anxiety			.062												.633							
Benign/ meaningful world											.279					.051						
Denial																						
Depression										.077												
Dissociation																		.026				
Dramatic		.124									.279									.237	.171	
Fear								.112			.521		.521	.344	.713							
Helplessness							.148								.394							
Legitimacy															.221							
Loss		.181				.076							.387									
Move forward																				.126		
Newspaper	.280																					.038
Other												.102										
Put it behind												.102										
Rage	.430	.329		.146											.579		.430		.272			
Reciprocity														.089								
Reflective	.312		.349						.191		.480	.349			.633		.312				.418	
Repression																						
Self-blame			.416						.233	.330				.374	.667							
Shame										.213		.275									.333	
TV	.280												.435				.280				.377	
Traumatic stress	.280										.435		.435		.584							
Trust			.640		.221		.037				.554		.554	.589	.610				.395			

## **Media coverage**

With regards to media coverage, 43.5 percent of all participants had newspaper coverage, 30.4 percent had television coverage but no one was aware of any radio reports of the crime committed against them. There did not appear to be any overt differences between the group of participants that had media coverage and those who did not.

There appeared to be a great deal of variability with regards to the effects of media coverage on participants. Two victims were aware of media coverage but purposely avoided it altogether. Four participants identified stigmatization as the main consequence evoked by media coverage of their case. An example of this experience was particularly salient in one woman, who indicated that her story was all over television news as well as print media. She explained that her picture was in the newspaper. She stated:

“It’s not obvious – you get labeled. There’s a story behind it [the news coverage]. You’re not allowed to make a mistake.”

In this case, the participant explained how she felt as though her voice was silenced behind the coverage. She went on to describe how it was difficult to cope with the impressions people formed from reading or watching this news coverage.

Three others felt that the media coverage validated their experience. One participant in particular, who was a victim of armed robbery, explained that the recognition of her role in apprehending the perpetrator that was publicized by the media had somehow negated the trauma she had experienced. She explained this by saying:

“They said that a woman had been assaulted but did not name anyone. [...] As a result of my detailed description, they were able to arrest him. I watched it [the news coverage], read the newspaper. I even kept the article.”

Another participant indicated that she had been affected by the presence of the media. She described the presence of journalists in court and admitted that she was “shyer to see people taking notes when I was telling all the details of what happened”. She added that she would have preferred being “all alone”. Similarly, one victim stated that the news coverage, coupled with having to assist the police sketch artist, was “difficult”. She added,

“It makes us relive lots of things, seeing the story in all the newspapers, in the convenience stores, and in the shops”.

## **Discussion**

As has been consistently found, crime has a largely negative impact on victims. It was not surprising that the great majority of participants’ narratives in the present study were generally negative considering that being victimized by crime has been found to have a plethora of negative consequences. This was also reflected in the results of mental health symptoms; more than half of all participants overtly described symptoms of either depression, anxiety, traumatic stress or other mental health disorders. These symptoms were irrespective of the type of crime that they experienced and the amount of time that had elapsed since the crime.

Although the IES-R is not a diagnostic instrument, the participants in this study had an average score that was significantly different from that found in the French validation sample. Thus, the finding that crime victims have a significantly higher proportion of PTSD than other populations exposed to trauma was supported in this study. In other words, this study also reiterated the finding that crime victims are particularly vulnerable to developing PTSD following their victimization.



No support was found for the main hypotheses of this study; no differences in scores on the IES-R or STAI were found between participants who had media coverage of their cases and those that did not. Furthermore, no differences were apparent between those with and those without media coverage with regards to the content of their narratives. Instead, individual differences in these participants appeared to explain variations in both their narratives and test scores. Evidently, not all stories received media coverage. Of those that did, participants had mixed reactions. Some felt stigmatized, others validated, and some avoided the media coverage altogether. It is clear that media coverage does have some impact, although the explanation for this variance remains unknown. These findings coupled with the research available on the media coverage of terrorist attacks from September 11, 2001 in particular and other traumatic phenomena in general suggest that the effects of the media on traumatic stress should be considered and the subject of further investigation.

One new finding in the present study that has not been addressed in prior research is the possibility that media coverage may actually have a positive impact on some crime victims. In this investigation, a small group of participants described the media coverage of their case as positive. One woman, for example, explained how she kept the newspaper article of the crime and felt that she played a key role in the perpetrator's arrest. As a result of the small sample size in the present study, it is not possible to hypothesize why these three individuals had positive reactions to media coverage. It would therefore be useful to have future research more closely scrutinize positive reactions to media coverage.

While the present findings did not appear to support the conclusion that media coverage is associated with increased psychological suffering, there may also be individual protective factors

that explain these differences. Feeling safe from a specific perpetrator, for example, may attenuate some mental health symptoms. Social support may be another reason why some crime victims have fewer psychological consequences, as is suggested from past research (King et al., 1998).

The belief that others are unhelpful, capable of deception, betrayal and exploitation was one of the themes that was most distressing for participants. Indeed, this theme was the most commonly coded theme. The notion of trust in others and the fundamental belief that the world is a benevolent, meaningful place has been shown to be disturbed in crime victims (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). The prevalence of this distrust of others in the current study supports this idea.

Another possible explanation for this lack of trust stems from research that showed that anger towards the perpetrator and the self were prominent in crime victims (Orth & Maercker, 2009). Victims referring to this lack of trust in others also frequently discussed anxiety-related symptoms. Furthermore, there was a strong association between this distrust of others and a reflective narrative style, where the storyteller reflected upon the crime committed against them. Interestingly, self-blame was often associated with distrust in others. It appears that victims who blame themselves are also wary of others – this may indeed be due to a general negative attitude that crime victims have developed as a result of being victimized. It seems plausible that this distrust of others, or expectation of others to be unhelpful, capable of deception, betrayal and exploitation, might also extend to views of the media.

One additional fascinating finding from the study of these narratives was that the women with the highest and lowest scores on the IES-R were victims of domestic violence. One possible

explanation for this phenomenon was that some adaptive response to the abuse was developed by these women, which prevented the experience from being interpreted as traumatic. However, in the case of the women with the highest score, the fear of reprisal may have reinforced the traumatic nature of the abuse. Another explanation for this finding is that those who experience more acute and unexpected traumas have more symptoms in the short-term. The participant with the highest scores across all measures knew the perpetrator but the person was never charged because of a lack of evidence. These findings, coupled with past research on the individual course of PTSD, suggest that there may be unique, individual characteristics of each case that explain different reactions to crime, of which media coverage appears to be only one; the type of crime, the relationship to the perpetrator and the outcome of the judicial process may be some factors that might explain these differences.

These findings reiterated the need for further investigation to be done into this area of research. Several factors limited the findings in the present study. Because of difficulties particular to recruiting crime victims, the sample size was small. In spite of this, the findings of this study pointed towards areas that need to be investigated in future research and possible hypotheses. Further research could also more systematically address diagnoses and symptoms of comorbid psychological difficulties, as it was not possible to do so in the present study. In addition, the majority of the cohort was solicited from smaller communities, where media coverage and familiarity may differ from larger cities. Only one coder was used to analyze the narratives. While this may offer some advantages, such as high reliability of codes, it also poses a disadvantage in that it limits the objectivity or validity of codes. The variability in time that had elapsed since the incident also poses a limitation, as time may have affected the intensity of

reactions. The narrative technique utilized for this group has its own limitations. In this case, though, it was utilized in order to shed some light on a topic that has only been the subject of one previous study. More increased insight into this topic will enable more specific themes to be explored.

Although there were mixed findings with regards to the impact of media coverage on crime victims, this study underscores some important points and highlights the need for future attention both in policy and in clinical practice. The participants in this study, despite their involvement with victim's aid and the time that had elapsed since their victimization, showed high levels of psychological distress, particularly traumatic stress and anxiety. In some cases, it appeared that media coverage may have aggravated this distress while in others it was positively construed. As crime victims are a vulnerable population who are clearly experiencing psychological distress, it is imperative that any actions that might be potentially harmful to this population be more closely investigated, particularly the impact of media coverage.

## Conclusion

The present research sought to examine two facets of media coverage and crime that have previously received very little attention. A first study examined public opinion on restrictions that the Chief Justice of the Quebec Superior Court imposed on the presence of media in courthouses. The second study evaluated the psychological impact of media coverage on crime victims, a group that has been shown to be prone to mental health issues. Both of these studies yielded some interesting and unexpected findings.

The media has been shown to have widespread and diverse effects at every level of the judicial process. Individuals who regularly watch the news have been shown to more readily identify crime as a societal problem than those who do not (Gross & Aday, 2003). The audiences of coverage of the terrorist attacks from September 11, 2001 have also been shown to experience some symptoms of PTSD (McNally & Breslau, 2008). Media coverage has even been shown to impact the outcome of court cases; cases with PTP have been shown to have more guilty verdicts (Fulero, 2002). The presence of cameras in the courtroom has also been shown to affect both witnesses, by making them more nervous, and jurors' perceptions of witnesses (Borgida et al., 1990). An interesting study highlighted another important aspect related to media coverage of court cases: the psychological effects of witnessing an execution on the journalists covering this story (Freinkel, Koopman & Spiegel, 1994). The results from this investigation suggested that witnessing an execution in the context of preparing a news story for the public may lead to some dissociative symptoms. Essentially, the work that is required when preparing news stories may itself be traumatic. In sum, the media has been

shown to have a considerable effect on its viewers, the outcome of court cases, witnesses testifying in legal cases and even those whose job it is to create the news stories.

The first article that was the subject of this dissertation found that the public is not in favour of some of the methods used by the media to cover these news stories. A survey of the public's opinion of the newly imposed restrictions to journalists and cameramen in Quebec courthouses found that the public overwhelmingly supported these restrictions. Only one of the six experimental groups did not support these restrictions – the group that did not view any video clips of the media coverage and who answered the version of the questionnaire with statements supporting the absence of restrictions before statements about imposing restrictions. A hypothesized explanation for these findings is the primacy effect whereby the participants in this condition, not having viewed any experimental stimuli, would be most influenced by the statements that they read first.

Essentially, this study demonstrates how, in the Fair Trial-Free Press Debate, the public leans towards the side of fair trial. In other words, people are largely supportive of limiting media access in order to ensure the fairness of the judicial system. This study also suggested that the public stands behind the Court's belief that unrestricted media presence can negatively impact the legal process. In addition, the public support for restricting media access also parallels the Court's position on this issue in relation to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982). This study further confirmed Sabourin's findings (2006) with a sample that more closely reflected the general population in Quebec.

The second article found detrimental effects of media coverage in crime victims. Participants in this study were interviewed to determine the psychological impact of newspaper, television, and radio coverage of the crimes for which they were victims. The narratives of these individuals were largely negative. Participants were also found to have a variety of symptoms of mental disorders and high rates of PTSD. The participants expressed a great deal of self-blame and suspiciousness of others. Regardless, no support was found for a re-traumatisation effect or a direct link between these symptoms and media coverage. The small size of the present sample, though, did not allow for a more detailed investigation of individual or group differences between subgroups of victims. Indeed, it appears that there may be other factors that interact to explain the relationship between media coverage and various symptoms.

The recent Quebec case of Guy Turcotte has attracted a great deal of media attention. Turcotte, a cardiologist, admitted stabbing his two children to death, claiming that it occurred in the context of a suicide attempt. His ex-wife testified how she first heard of her children's deaths through media coverage of the case on the day after the murders (Lee, 2011). Media coverage was also the subject of scrutiny when a publication ban was issued after a member of the jury was removed for allegedly admitting to having strong beliefs about the verdict in this case before all evidence was presented (Canadian Press, 2011). These two facets of the Turcotte case further illustrate how media coverage of court cases is a complex, multi-faceted issue.

There are times, though, when media coverage can be helpful and even crucial. Informing the public when a dangerous offender is at large or when a suspect is sought are examples where media coverage can be beneficial. In this case, public safety is deemed to be more important than maintaining the neutrality of the judicial process (Allen & Allen, 1993). AMBER alerts (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response), the system developed to rapidly transmit information about missing persons through to media to the public, has also been successful at recovering abducted children (Griffin, Miller, Hoppe, Rebideaux & Hammack, 2007). It therefore appears as though media coverage may be deemed acceptable by the public under certain specific circumstances (Allen & Allen, 1993). The specific contexts in which the public and the courts believe that media coverage should be limited warrants further investigation.

With the prevalence of internet use, which brings with it widespread and instant accessibility of news stories in new formats, the issue of the impact of media is of even greater importance. The internet has contributed to the 'privatization of the public', whereby elements of private life are increasingly made public (Landert & Jucker, 2011). Reality television programs and news stories that include clips of interviews with members of the public affected by the story are also examples of this movement. Thus, the issue of the impact that media coverage specifically has on crime victims becomes more salient and perhaps more problematic as private details about the offence are made accessible to the public through internet and news coverage.



This new phenomenon gained prominence during the Bernardo trial in 1995. The publication ban issued by the Judge extended to all forms of media coverage, including electronic media. This ban was enforced in numerous ways. University servers erased all mentions of the Homolka and Bernardo cases, even when the information did not violate the ban. The geographical proximity of the trials to the United States complicated the publication ban. Indeed, 61 people were detained as they tried to cross the border with copies of news articles of the case. The limitless boundaries of the internet create a situation where it is far less simple to monitor internet access to this information and violations to the ban. The accessibility of the internet has certainly added a new dimension in maintaining the integrity of the judicial process.

Facebook and other social media sites are also contributing to the privatization of the public and further calling publication bans into question. A Facebook group with 7000 members became infamous when it was suggested that the group commemorating the murder of a two-year old-boy violated a publication ban. The ban was eventually lifted in this case but reignited the debate about the feasibility of internet bans in an era of electronic information transmission.

The findings from these two articles warrant further investigation; they represent topics at the intersection of media and crime that have largely been neglected to date. The first study suggests that the public prefer to protect the rights of those involved in the judicial process over the rights of the media to freely access courthouses. The findings imply that the methods that the media uses to obtain information in order to inform the public might not be

necessary. However, there may indeed be certain circumstances where the public would support publicizing certain details that could compromise the integrity of the judicial process, such as in cases where children have been kidnapped or when the public's safety in general is at risk. Moreover, the findings of the second article, that some crime victims are negatively impacted by media coverage, deserves further exploration. Specific factors may explain why some individuals react constructively to media coverage while others are disturbed by it. In an era where media coverage and blogging about news stories is increasingly widespread and readily available, the specific contexts and nuances of media coverage on crime victims need to be investigated. It is clear, though, that media coverage negatively affects some crime victims. Along with previous literature that suggests that media coverage influences the outcome of court cases and negatively affects witnesses, journalists, and audiences, the results of these two studies taken together call into question current media practices. If the public believes it is better to restrict the media in courthouses and some crime victims report detrimental effects of this coverage, then perhaps it is necessary to alter the way crimes are covered in the news media and impose greater restrictions.

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# Appendix 1

## Content of Audiovisual DVD clips

### Condition 1: Media circus

1) *Report on Robert Gillet and Yves Doyon cases*

Type of case: Sexual exploitation of a minor

Station: TQS

Length: 1:11

2) *Report on Robert Gillet case*

Type: Sexual exploitation of a minor

Station: TVA

Length: 4:36

3) *Report on Robert Gillet case*

Type: Sexual exploitation of a minor

Station: TVA

Length: 2:34

4) *Report on Yvan Cloutier case*

Type: Sexual exploitation of a minor

Station: TQS

Length: 0:53

5) *Report on Jean-François Guay case*

Type: Sexual exploitation of a minor

Station: TVA

Length: 0:34

6) *Report on François Houle and Yves Doyon cases*

Type: Sexual exploitation of a minor

Station: RDI

Length: 0:37

**Total Length: 10:25**

**Condition 2: Calm**

1) *Report on Thomas Arsenault case*

Type: Case of road rage

Station: TVA – LCN

Length: 1:26

2) *Report on Guy Croteau case*

Type: Murder in the 1st degree

Station: TVA – LCN

Length: 2:08

3) *Report on Monique Goulet-Fournier case*

Type: Murder in the 1st degree

Station: TVA – LCN

Length: 1:43

4) *Report on Vito Rizzuto case*

Type: Release/extradition

Station: TVA – LCN

Length: 2:31

5) *Report on Vito Rizzuto case*

Type: Extradition

Station: TVA – LCN

Length: 2:11

**Total Length: 9:59**



## Appendix 2

### Statements from questionnaires<sup>3</sup>

#### Media restrictions

*(1) Le fait de limiter l'accès des médias à des endroits précis du palais de justice permet de s'assurer que les débats judiciaires se feront sereinement et dans la dignité, tout en permettant au public d'être bien informé.*

Limiting media access to specific areas in the courthouse ensures that judicial debates will be performed with serenity and dignity, while allowing the public to be well-informed.

*(2) On devrait permettre aux journalistes, caméramans et photographes de presse d'exercer leur métier, mais uniquement dans des endroits précisément identifiés du palais de justice.*

We should allow journalists, cameramen, and press photographers to practice their profession, but only in specifically identified areas of the courthouse.

*(3) Il est possible que le stress engendré par la présence des journalistes et des caméramans un peu partout dans les couloirs des palais de justice, à la fois avant et après la comparution des témoins, aient des effets perturbateurs sur ces témoins ou sur leur témoignage.*

It is possible that the stress generated by the presence of journalists and cameramen all over the hallways of the courthouse, both before and after witnesses appear, has disruptive consequences on these witnesses and their testimony.

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<sup>3</sup> The original French questions are in italic characters; an English translation is included below each item.

(4) *La seule façon de prévenir un débordement possible des médias lors d'un procès est de limiter le va-et-vient des journalistes, photographes et caméramans à l'intérieur du palais de justice.*

The only way to prevent a possible media circus at a trial is to limit the comings and goings of journalists, photographers, and cameramen inside the courthouse.

(5) *Il est possible que le stress engendré par un témoignage hautement médiatisé ait des effets négatifs à plus ou moins long terme sur le vécu d'un témoin, par exemple, sur la qualité de son sommeil ou sur ses performances au travail.*

It is possible that the stress generated by a highly mediatised testimony has negative consequences that are more or less long-term on the witness's experience, for example, on the quality of sleep or on work performance.

(6) *La diffusion d'extraits audio de témoignages enregistrés en cour ne rend pas toujours justice au témoin, car hors contexte, il est possible que l'extrait qui est retenu de la voix du témoin soit trop court pour être représentatif.*

Broadcasting audio excerpts of testimony that was recorded in court does not always do justice to the witness because, out of context, it is possible that the excerpt that is chosen is too short to be representative.

(7) *Le fait de diffuser les propos d'un témoin enregistrés lors de sa comparution pourrait inciter celui-ci à modifier la poursuite de son témoignage afin d'éviter d'être mal interprété.*

Broadcasting a witness's comments from his or her appearance could incite this person to modify their upcoming testimony in order to avoid that it is misinterpreted.

(8) *Il est raisonnable d'interdire la diffusion d'extraits d'enregistrements audio de témoignages rendus à la cour, car cela pourrait influencer négativement la poursuite du témoignage ou le témoignage ultérieur du témoin entendu.*

It is reasonable to ban the broadcast of excerpts of audio recordings of courtroom testimony because this could negatively influence the upcoming or remaining testimony of a witness.

(9) *Il est raisonnable d'interdire la diffusion d'extraits d'enregistrements audio de témoignages rendus à la cour, car le sensationnalisme inhérent à cette pratique pourrait inciter des victimes à ne pas porter plainte pour éviter d'être soumises à la diffusion publique de leur voix.*

It is reasonable to ban the broadcast of audio recordings of courtroom testimony because the inherent sensationalism of this practice could incite victims to not come forward in order to avoid being subjected to the public broadcast of their voice.

(10) *On devrait permettre aux journalistes, caméramans et photographes de presse d'interviewer les gens au palais de justice uniquement s'ils consentent à être interviewés.*

We should allow journalists, cameramen and press photographers to interview people in courthouses only if they consent to be interviewed.

### **Absence of media restrictions**

(1) *Lors d'un procès, la liberté de presse et le droit du public à l'information, qui sont des droits qui appartiennent à la collectivité, devraient l'emporter sur le droit à la vie privée des individus.*

During a trial, the freedom of the press and the public's right to be informed, which are rights that belong to the collectivity, should supersede the individual right to privacy.

(2) *Le fait d'entendre un extrait de la voix d'un témoin au cours de reportages à la radio ou à la télévision, au lieu d'un résumé de ses propos par le journaliste, permet au public d'être mieux informé de ce qui se passe lors d'un procès.*

Hearing an audio excerpt from a witness in radio or television coverage, as opposed to a summary by a journalist, allows the public to be better informed of what happens during a trial.

(3) *Il est normal que les caméramans, les photographes et les journalistes puissent circuler comme bon leur semble dans les corridors des palais de justice.*

It is normal that cameramen, photographers, and journalists circulate however they want in the hallways of the courthouse.

(4) *Le fait de permettre aux médias d'offrir une couverture médiatique sans aucune restriction lors d'un procès permet de mieux renseigner le public sur le fonctionnement du système judiciaire.*

Allowing media to offer unrestricted media coverage during a trial enables the public to be better informed on the functioning of the judicial system.

(5) *Le fait de voir des prises de vue croquées sur le vif à la sortie d'une salle d'audience permet au public d'être mieux informé de ce qui se passe lors d'un procès.*

Seeing quick snapshots of the exit a courtroom allows the public to be better informed about what happens during a trial.

(6) *Il est normal que les médias cherchent à obtenir des images et des déclarations de gens accusés d'avoir commis un acte criminel, mêmes si ceux-ci ne sont pas d'accord, car les médias ne font que donner suite au droit du public d'être mieux informé.*

It is normal that the media seeks to get images and statements from those who are accused of committing a criminal act, even if they are not in agreement, because the media is only following through on the public's right to be better informed.

*(7) Le public, qui est généralement absent lors d'un procès, a le droit d'en savoir le plus possible sur les gens qui sont accusés d'avoir commis un acte criminel. Il faut donc accorder toute la latitude voulue aux journalistes pour leur permettre de faire leur travail.*

The public, which is generally absent during a trial, has the right to know as much as possible on those that are accused of having committed a crime. We should thus give all of the latitude to journalists to allow them to do their job.

*(8) Un témoin dans un procès doit normalement s'attendre à ce que les médias cherchent à obtenir ses commentaires et il serait injuste, en regard du droit du public à l'information, que ce témoin s'objecte à être interviewé.*

A witness in a trial should expect that the media seeks to get his or her comments and it would be unfair, with regards to the public's right to being informed, for the witness to object to being interviewed.

*(9) Tout effet perturbateur de la présence des médias sur un témoin est généralement de très courte durée et entraîne rarement des effets négatifs à long terme.*

Any disruptive effect of the presence of media on a witness is generally very short-lived and rarely leads to negative effects in the long-term.

*(10) Diffuser dans les médias électroniques (radio, télévision) des extraits oraux de témoignages n'est pas différent du fait de rapporter ces mêmes propos par écrit.*

Broadcasting verbal excerpts of testimony in electronic media (radio, television) is not different than reporting these same facts in writing.

## Appendix 3

### Impact of Event Scale – Revised (IES-R)

*Instructions:* The following is a list of difficulties people sometimes have after stressful life events. Please read each item, and then indicate how distressing each difficulty has been for you *during the past 7 days* with respect to the disaster. How much were you distressed or bothered by these difficulties?

		Not at all	A little bit	Mode- rate- ly	Quite a bit	Ex- treme- ly
1	Any reminder brought back feelings about it.	0	1	2	3	4
2	I had trouble staying asleep.	0	1	2	3	4
3	Other things kept making me think about it.	0	1	2	3	4
4	I felt irritable and angry.	0	1	2	3	4
5	I avoided letting myself get upset when I thought about it or was reminded of it.	0	1	2	3	4
6	I thought about it when I didn't mean to.	0	1	2	3	4
7	I felt as if it hadn't happened or wasn't real.	0	1	2	3	4
8	I stayed away from reminders about it.	0	1	2	3	4
9	Pictures about it popped into my mind.	0	1	2	3	4

10	I was jumpy and easily startled.	0	1	2	3	4
11	I tried not to think about it.	0	1	2	3	4
12	I was aware that I still had a lot of feelings about it, but I didn't deal with them.	0	1	2	3	4
13	My feelings about it were kind of numb.	0	1	2	3	4
14	I found myself acting or feeling like I was back at that time.	0	1	2	3	4
15	I had trouble falling asleep.	0	1	2	3	4
16	I had waves of strong feelings about it.	0	1	2	3	4
17	I tried to remove it from my memory.	0	1	2	3	4
18	I had trouble concentrating.	0	1	2	3	4
19	Reminders of it caused me to have physical reactions, such as sweating, trouble breathing, nausea, or a pounding heart.	0	1	2	3	4
20	I had dreams about it.	0	1	2	3	4
21	I felt watchful and on guard.	0	1	2	3	4
22	I tried not to talk about it.	0	1	2	3	4

## Appendix 4

### State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)

#### SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

STAI Form Y-1

*Directions:* A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then circle the appropriate number to the right of the statement to indicate how you feel *right now*, that is, *at this moment*. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your present feelings best.

	Not at all	Some- what	Mode- rately so	Very much so
1. I feel calm.....	1	2	3	4
2. I feel secure.....	1	2	3	4
3. I am tense.....	1	2	3	4
4. I feel strained.....	1	2	3	4
5. I feel at ease.....	1	2	3	4
6. I feel upset.....	1	2	3	4
7. I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes.....	1	2	3	4
8. I feel satisfied.....	1	2	3	4
9. I feel frightened.....	1	2	3	4
10. I feel comfortable.....	1	2	3	4
11. I feel self-confident.....	1	2	3	4



12. I feel nervous.....	1	2	3	4
13. I am jittery.....	1	2	3	4
14. I feel indecisive.....	1	2	3	4
15. I am relaxed.....	1	2	3	4
16. I feel content.....	1	2	3	4
17. I am worried.....	1	2	3	4
18. I feel confused.....	1	2	3	4
19. I feel steady.....	1	2	3	4
20. I feel pleasant.....	1	2	3	4

### SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

#### STAI Form Y-2

*Directions:* A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then circle the appropriate number to the right of the statement to indicate how you *generally* feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe how you generally feel.

	Not at all	Some- what	Mode- rately so	Very much so
21. I feel pleasant.....	1	2	3	4
22. I feel nervous and restless.....	1	2	3	4
23. I feel satisfied with myself.....	1	2	3	4

24. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be.....	1	2	3	4
25. I feel like a failure.....	1	2	3	4
26. I feel rested.....	1	2	3	4
27. I am “calm, cool, and collected”.....	1	2	3	4
28. I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them.....	1	2	3	4
29. I worry too much over something that really doesn’t matter.....	1	2	3	4
30. I am happy.....	1	2	3	4
31. I have disturbing thoughts.....	1	2	3	4
32. I lack self-confidence.....	1	2	3	4
33. I feel secure.....	1	2	3	4
34. I make decisions easily.....	1	2	3	4
35. I feel inadequate.....	1	2	3	4
36. I am content.....	1	2	3	4
37. Some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me.....	1	2	3	4
38. I take disappointments so keenly that I can’t put them out of my mind..	1	2	3	4
39. I am a steady person.....	1	2	3	4
40. I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests.....	1	2	3	4