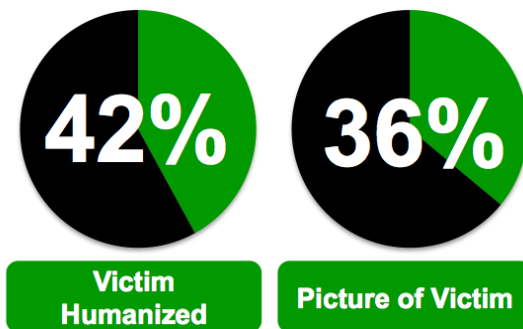


How Ontario Media Reports Femicide¹

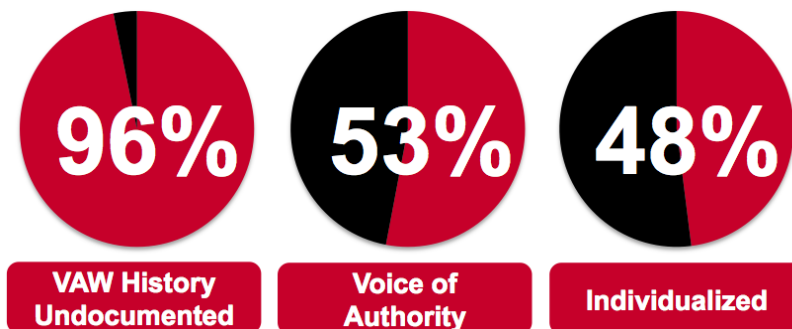
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The following summary provides an analysis of the way mainstream media reported on Ontario femicides during 2015-2016. A total of 29 femicide cases were examined by studying 73 news items from three media sources (i.e., mainstream national newspapers, local newspapers, and TV news). Findings were categorized in terms of positive or negative framing, as identified through previous research.

Strengths (Positive Frames):²



Areas to Improve (Negative Frames)³:



Reporting Trends Comparing The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses' (OAITH) Femicide Lists (1990- 2015 and 2015-16)

¹ **Femicide** is commonly defined as the intentional murder of women because they are women (Garcia-Moreno, Guedes and Knerr 2012). Intimate partner femicide (IPF) is the murder of a woman by her intimate partner (e.g. husband/ex-husband, common law spouse/ex-spouse, boyfriend/ex-boyfriend and date) (Sheehan et al 2015). Most women in the 2015-2016 list are examples of IPF.

² **“Victim Humanized”** includes sympathizing with the victim and acknowledging how the woman impacted the lives of others. **“Picture of Victim”** indicates that the news source provided a picture of the femicide victim.

³ **“Violence Against Women (VAW) History Undocumented”**: The femicide is not contextualized by providing information about the woman’s experience of a history of power and control, abuse, and/or violence by the perpetrator. **“Voice of Authority”** refers to the use of traditional voices of authority for interviews, such as police, instead of close family or friends. **“Individualized”** refers to the portrayal of violence against women as an individualized problem rather than a gendered societal problem.

+ Positive & - Negative Framing	1990-2015 Analysis	2015-2016 Analysis
Humanize Victims	40%	42%
Picture of Victims	40%	36%
Individualized	N/A*	47% Individualized 4% Societal/Gendered
Victim blaming	8%	7%
Overuse of traditional voices of authority	52%	53%

X Use of **negative frames** like the ones above tends to reinforce gender and racial stereotypes that result in inaccurate information about femicide and violence against women. Lack of knowledge can negatively impact the public’s support for important public policy and resource allocation.

X **Leaving out the social context of femicide and women’s experiences of a history of violence** by the perpetrator fails to educate people about important risk factors and femicide prevention. According to the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee (2009-2016), an average of **70% of women who were killed via an intimate partner had a history of domestic violence** (Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario 2016). However, this is not reflected in the media coverage, as **96% of the cases we analyzed fail to acknowledge a history of violence**.

Recommendations for Future Reporting:

- Identify each case as a femicide & as violence against women.
- If identified, report on any history of intimate partner violence, & contextualize the gendered violence as part of a larger social problem.
- Provide personal information about the victim (to humanize each case).
- Use sources of information such as family, friends, violence against women experts, instead of relying on-traditional voices of authority such as police and government.
- Add information about available resources & supports for those experiencing intimate partner abuse/violence.

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* No “individualized” framing analysis was provided in the OAITH 1990-2015 report (Byrne et al. 2015).

Sheehan, B., Murphy, S., Moynihan, M. Dudley-Fennessey, E. and Stapleton, J. 2014. "Intimate Partner Homicide: New Insights for Understanding Lethality and Risks." *Violence Against Women*, 21(2):269-288.