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## **Perpetuating Violence: An Analysis of Brazilian Newspaper Reporting of Gender-Based Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

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BSc Political Science: International Relations and Organizations  
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**Perpetuating Violence: An Analysis of Brazilian Newspaper Reporting of Gender-Based  
Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

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## **Abstract**

While gender-based violence (GBV) has long been prevalent in Brazilian society, it is often overlooked in broader discourses. The lockdown measures implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic brought several unintended consequences, such as the intensification of insecurities (e.g., financial and food insecurity). For many women that meant being stuck with their abusers at home, with reduced or no access to supportive resources for GBV survivors. Literature generally covers the perspectives of victims, service workers, and governmental responses to GBV. Yet, a critical gap remains in understanding the role of news media in shaping perceptions and responses to this issue. Acknowledging the role of the media as a major forum whereby social norms are spread or revisited, this thesis examines how newspaper articles reported on GBV in Brazil during the pandemic and whether its reporting reinforces or challenges gender norms that excuse/tolerate GBV, through qualitative content analysis. The findings were supportive of the hypothesis that Brazilian online newspaper media reporting of GBV reinforces violence against women through reinforcement of societal gender norms that tolerate or excuse such violence.

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## 1. Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is pervasive in our societies worldwide, with an estimated 736 million women being subjected to physical and/or intimate partner and non-partner sexual violence at least once in their lives (UN Women, 2023). However, GBV is frequently underreported, and existing coverage often fails to treat the matter in a nuanced and unbiased manner. Media portrayal of GBV has been shown to perpetuate societal norms that oppress women through the perpetuation of stereotypes and victim-blaming agendas (NSVRC, 2023). Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an alarming increase in the GBV rate globally, with lockdown measures and economic strains exacerbating risks for victims and altering patterns of reporting and response. The implementation of isolation measures had the unintended consequences of women being confined at home, often with their own abusers, intensifying the challenges of seeking assistance after being subjected to violence - as the presence of the abuser may inhibit their ability to safely reach out for help (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2020). In 2021, 4.3 million women aged 16 years or older in Brazil were subjected to physical violence, including slaps, punches, and kicks (Lima, 2021). These statistics reflect a distressing reality: during the pandemic, an average of 8 Brazilian women suffered physical assault per minute .

Through setting the agenda of societal discussions and (re-)framing social norms, media plays an important role in society (Arias, 2019). Yet, there is currently a literature gap on how Brazilian mainstream media reported the GBV issue during the pandemic, as existing studies only focus on social media and two notorious cases (Herscovitz, 2023; dos Santos et al., 2023). Accordingly, these studies are deemed insufficient to make inferences about the overall reporting (lack of generalizability).

Consequently, this thesis uses qualitative content analysis of 100 news articles to examine whether Brazilian media provided a balanced reporting of GBV during the pandemic in Brazil. It examines the association between insensitive media narratives and societal gender norms. Based on an extensive review of literature, the goal of this research is to bridge this gap and add to existing research with this specific research question:

*How does Brazilian online newspaper coverage of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic influence societal gender norms in media?*

## **2. Problem Statement**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, GBV in Brazil presents a multifaceted societal challenge, exacerbated by deeply rooted systemic issues (Vahedi et al., 2023). Despite extensive research focusing on the perspectives of victims, service workers, and governmental responses to GBV, a critical gap remains in understanding the role of news media in shaping perceptions and responses to this issue. This gap is particularly concerning given the influential role of media in shaping societal attitudes and behaviors (Herscovitz, 2023).

Importantly, Herscovitz (2023) work highlights the sensationalistic and problematic news coverage of victims of femicide in Brazil during Covid-19, misrepresenting the circumstances surrounding these crimes. Media wields considerable influence as a key actor in shaping public perceptions and social norms surrounding gender and violence (Yadav & Kalyan, 2024). Studies have highlighted the detrimental effects of media representations on attitudes and behaviors towards GBV (Sarikakis, 2013). The media's widespread tendency to objectify women, romanticize or trivialize violence against them, and downplay the significant consequences of such crimes collectively contribute to the normalization and societal tolerance towards these detrimental behaviors (Yadav & Kalyan, 2024).

In Brazil, 79% of individuals seek information online, with over 20% subscribing to digital platforms for news content (Lucena, 2023). The country's reliance on digital media platforms for information underscores the significance of the media's role in shaping public discourse. Despite its relevance, existing studies on media coverage are still limited. Only one study covered Brazilian news reporting of violence against women, with a limited focus on the two most notorious femicides of the pandemic (Herscovitz, 2023). The study calls for the need for more research into the media's role in GBV in perpetuating violence against women (VAW). This thesis aims to bridge this gap by providing a 'wider' analysis of 100 articles on GBV crimes.

Through examining reporting practices, this thesis aims to deepen our understanding of how media may contribute to the perpetuation of societal norms that oppress women, with several areas of relevance. Academic studies have underscored the importance of analyzing

media portrayals of GBV to develop more effective interventions and strategies for addressing this issue (Boyle et al., 2019). Through highlighting gendered narratives in insensitive reporting of GBV, this study can provide guidance for decision-making around policies and strategies aimed at alleviating the issue. Additionally, it aims to hold the media more accountable for its (often) poor and inadequate coverage on GBV (see Herscovitz, 2023; Menon et al., 2020).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

To contextualize this research, the following sections will engage with relevant literature and theories. Since the end of WWI in Western nations, gender inequality has become one of the most prominent social movements in response to one of the most pronounced forms of inequality worldwide (Benería et al., 2015). Gender inequality is marred by issues like the pay gap, unpaid care work, and GBV. GBV has been widely described as the most concerning challenge facing women and girls nowadays (Dlamini, 2021). Times of political, social, or economic crises worsen GBV, via socio-economic instability, structural power inequalities, and breakdown of safety and law enforcement (van Daalen et al., 2022). News of GBV during such periods is called into question in its role in perpetuating societal norms and behaviors that oppress women, ultimately “[...] bolstering the social permission structures that normalize this violence” (Fuentes et al., 2022. p.7).

#### **3.1 Gender-Based Violence**

Defined by the United Nations (UN) as “any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”, (Degener & Koster-Dreese, 1995). GBV can refer to violence against men, this research focuses on VAW as a sub-category of GBV (Terry, 2007). GBV can manifest itself as sex-selective abortion, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, across all stages of life in all societies (Palermo et al., 2014; Terry, 2007). GBV is a challenging topic to research owing to a majority of it happening out of public sight and being socially acceptable for many (Terry, 2007). Women at risk of being victims are usually marginalized and disproportionately affected by other societal issues due to factors such as class and race.

### 3.2 Gender-Based Violence & COVID-19

The global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic triggered significant amounts of attention by the scientific community, with GBV receiving considerable interest due global indications that the pandemic caused a spike in GBV (Vahedi et al., 2021; Stark et al., 2020). Social restrictions, travel restrictions and economic instability significantly impacted household and relationship related stressors (Decker et al., 2022). Kourti et al. (2023) systematic investigation of literature on GBV and COVID-19 outlines worldwide trends of domestic violence amidst the crisis. Research from North America, Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe and multi-state investigations highlighted an increase in domestic violence worldwide, particularly in the first week of lockdown (Kourti et al., 2023). The study provides quantifiable evidence supporting the notion that times of crisis under COVID-19 were accompanied by a second crisis for many women globally.

The roots of the relationship between crises and GBV in the context of COVID-19 is further explored in Mittal & Singh (2020) literature review on the rise of GBV during pandemics, pointing towards a historical trend of such violence spiking during times of crisis. Their research points towards the quarantine paradox, a theory stating that a negative social consequence of lockdowns aimed at protecting the general population is a higher frequency of psychological problems (Mittal & Singh, 2020). They indicate that COVID-19 resulted in an increase in GBV cases alongside making support networks inaccessible to victims, providing a critical basis for grasping how deeply rooted VAW is across social systems.

These systemic injustices do not confine themselves to being manifested through crime. In fact, recognizing the excess of solutions targeting an already overwhelmed healthcare system, responsible media reporting emerged as a strategy for overcoming GBV during COVID-19 (Menon et al., 2020). Unethical media reporting of GBV has been an issue during COVID-19 which contributes to societal threats experienced by women, supporting the motivation to further inquire about its role as an influential societal actor (Menon et al., 2020). Menon et al. (2020) propose recommendations with twin objectives to promote balanced reporting and awareness of the media's role in GBV prevention.

Investigations generally use countries as units of analysis and are most often focused on the increased prevalence of GBV and the loss of access to support services and programs for victims. Furthermore, many research approaches are grounded in critical feminism-linked

theories as an analytical lens for understanding the greater societal challenges revealed by the crisis of GBV during COVID-19 (Herscovitz, 2023; Khanlou et al., 2021). Looking at the framing of two of Brazil's most discussed femicides during COVID-19, Herscovitz (2023) calls into question the media's role in reporting GBV through a convergence of framing theory and feminist theory. The feminist analytical lens of intersectionality, a critical framework for researching how overlapping social identities (e.g. gender, class, race) influence economic and social inequalities, is applied to understand the role race played in the coverage of the femicides (Herscovitz, 2023). Therefore, this thesis adopts a combination of feminist and media framing theories.

An overwhelming majority of literature available on COVID-19 and GBV focuses on victims, support services and programs, or government responses and policies that impact the matter. Although the relevance of these parties cannot be understated, their frequency can drown out other important societal actors who also play a role in determining the fate of the safety of women in their homes. News and media outlets are not directly involved in the tragedies surrounding VAW and GBV during times of crisis, but their consideration for ethics and the victim's privacy can also play a role in perpetuating norms and behaviors that oppress women.

### **3.3 Media Representation of GBV**

Outlining current academic understanding of the media's representation of GBV is essential before diving further into the media's role in the COVID-19 pandemic. Easteal et al. (2015) comprehensive literature review on media representations of VAW provides a complete and concerning picture of the prevalent themes surrounding the issue. Sexual assault, sexual harassment, and family violence are consistently framed with a theme of mutuality of responsibility, potentially hampering feminist ambitions to protect women from violence and enable access to justice (Easteal et al., 2015). Portrayals of VAW can create breeding grounds for reproducing gender inequalities, with media messages around VAW found to be essentially conservative and perpetuating the patriarchy (Easteal et al., 2015). Social media and the internet have allowed activists to counter myths and stereotypes around GBV, but they also create new spaces for VAW and reinforce an already challenging landscape of GBV which makes women reluctant to report crimes (Easteal et al., 2015).

Further stressing the concerning effects surrounding media representation of GBV, studies on the effects of media containing VAW on young students have demonstrable and distinguishable impacts on young men and women (Malamuth & Check, 1981; Reid & Finchilescu, 1995). On one hand, women exposed to sexual films of a violent nature were found to be less accepting of intimate partner violence (IPV) and experienced heightened feelings of disempowerment (Malamuth & Check, 1981; Reid & Finchilescu, 1995). On the other hand, young men exposed to violent sexual films were found to have increased acceptance of IPV against women and “rape myths” (Malamuth & Check, 1981). These findings echo research conducted through an online survey that demonstrated the link between consuming media that objectifies women and attitudes supportive towards VAW (Wright & Tokunaga, 2015). Higher frequencies of exposure to lifestyle magazines and reality TV that objectify women alongside pornography resulted in stronger views of women as sex objects (Wright & Tokunaga, 2015).

These alarming effects around media and GBV can be to some extent explained and interpreted through the lens of agenda-setting theory. Initially introduced by McCombs and Shaw (1972) to study the ability of mass media to influence the 1968 US presidential election, the theory suggests mass media influences what is perceived and treated as a public issue (Neumann et al., 2014; Zain, 2015). It has since seen extensive use as a tool for analyzing media, due to its capacity for analysis beyond political uses in better understanding how the media frames and primes issues for public attention (Zain, 2015). The media’s ability to shape these issues also implies a level of responsibility on behalf of the media and how these issues are then perpetuated throughout society (Zain, 2015). This responsibility in the context of GBV can be seen as being indirectly complicit in the horrible crimes these victims suffer through consistently failing to report and diffuse information in a manner that respects them.

Drawing attention towards the position of the media as a dominant force in giving form to discourse on societal challenges, episodic reporting, rape myths, and blame/responsibility are identified as regular themes, aligning with issues brought forward by Easteal et al. (2015). Episodic reporting is event-based and ignores the social context of VAW incidents. Rape myths and misconceptions around VAW are frequently perpetuated in media, alongside excessive amounts of news stories indirectly or directly blaming victims. Although there is a wide variety of guidelines and frameworks available for responsible reporting, Sutherland's work highlights

the absence of input from journalism and media experts when it comes to formulating guidelines and frameworks (Sutherland et al., 2015).

As previously discussed, this issue is also addressed by Menon et al. (2020) recommendations for reporting incidents in a manner that respects the privacy and memory of victims, increases awareness, and fosters balanced reporting. This research focuses on balanced reporting, with emphasis on recommendations surrounding elements such as mentioning the victim's name and page, providing photos and visual details or whereabouts of the event, the mention of legal actions taken against the perpetrators, the provisions of support services and links to the bigger picture of social challenges with GBV. Addressing the caveat highlighted in Sutherland's findings on guidelines and frameworks for reporting VAW, Menon et al. (2020) framework takes into consideration the International Federation of Journalists guidelines.

Serving as a key piece of literature for this thesis, Herscovitz (2023) research highlights how traditional Brazilian news media in the reporting of GBV has consistently failed to respect the rights and privacy of victims. Through the review of 75 articles on the most published femicides in Brazil during COVID-19, the study highlights the frames, sources and social context linked to the cases to illuminate links between gender, race, and class in the news. It also demonstrates the Brazilian mainstream media's inability to provide fair and detailed coverage of VAW that attempts to educate the audience or make connections to the greater issue of GBV nationwide (Herscovitz, 2023). Although this thesis provides certain depth, it undertakes a "wider" analysis by interpreting a wide range of GBV crimes, revealing the need for future research into the media's role in GBV during COVID-19 in perpetuating VAW.

### **3.4 Gender norms and perceptions in Brazil**

Understanding the relatively dreadful landscape for women in Brazil, with gender norms perceptions that are heavily skewed against their favor, is crucial for assessing the impact of COVID-19 on VAW in Brazil (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2001; Perova & Reynolds, 2017). With some of the highest rates of femicide in the world, Brazil is home to a patriarchal culture of "machismo" where expectations of women are closely linked to religion (i.e. the Virgin Mary and the notion of purity) and men are expected to behave dominantly and aggressively (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2001). Albeit conditions in several areas of life (education, working conditions, legal status, social freedom) have significantly improved since the 1970s (Baldwin & DeSouza,

2001), Brazilian society is still disproportionately biased against women, with social norms around labor participation and GBV/VAW enduring the test of time (Codazzi et al., 2018; Perova & Reynolds, 2017). Recognizing the weight of patriarchal “machismo” in Brazilian society enables a deeper understanding of the intra-gender dynamics at play in Brazil which normalizes the oppression of women throughout public and private life alike.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) was found to have several important predictors, like controlling behavior, excessive alcohol abuse and multiple sexual partnerships in partners, and/or suffering of IPV in mothers (Perova & Reynolds, 2017). Beyond socioeconomic factors, Perova & Reynolds were also concerned with prioritizing shifting norms which strengthen select negative male behaviors. This is a particularly pervasive issue in the context of media, as these negative behaviors emanate from representations of both genders. This concerns how the victim is represented (victim-blaming, ideal victims, or “pure”, “undeserving” vs unideal victims, which could be anything from being oppressed to being an unfaithful lover to a part of “everyday” violence) and the way the perpetrator is represented (be it angry, insane or outright invisible) (Fuentes et al., 2022). The extensive mapping of stereotypes and tropes in GBV reporting suggests the placement of women in news reports about GBV is still filled with codes that re-victimize and dehumanize them (Fuentes et al., 2022). Portrayals of victims tend to hide catalysts of structural violence by recreating hierarchies of ‘types’ of victims, further stressing the importance of responsible reporting (Fuentes et al., 2022). These frames as identified by UN Women’s report on media and GBV provide a coding framework for the operationalization of gender norms that oppress women.

Leaning into the academic lenses of feminism used to study GBV, this thesis will make use of feminist theory to analyze the contents of Brazilian news media’s framing of GBV during COVID-19. Feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality by studying men’s and women’s roles, responsibilities, and interests in society, and has links to several topics already reviewed in this research such as the trivialization of GBV, victim blaming, and stereotyping. These three topics are the foundation of this thesis’ analytical framework to operationalize gender norms in the media. Their prevalence in feminist theory and GBV in media reporting supports the justification for using them as indicators for the suppression of women. Based on

the literature review thus far, and considering the prevalent machista element in Brazilian society, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

*H1 - Brazilian news media coverage of gender-based violence during COVID-19 contributes to the normalization and perpetuation of violence against women by reinforcing societal gender norms that tolerate or excuse such violence.*

### **3.5 Conceptual Framework**

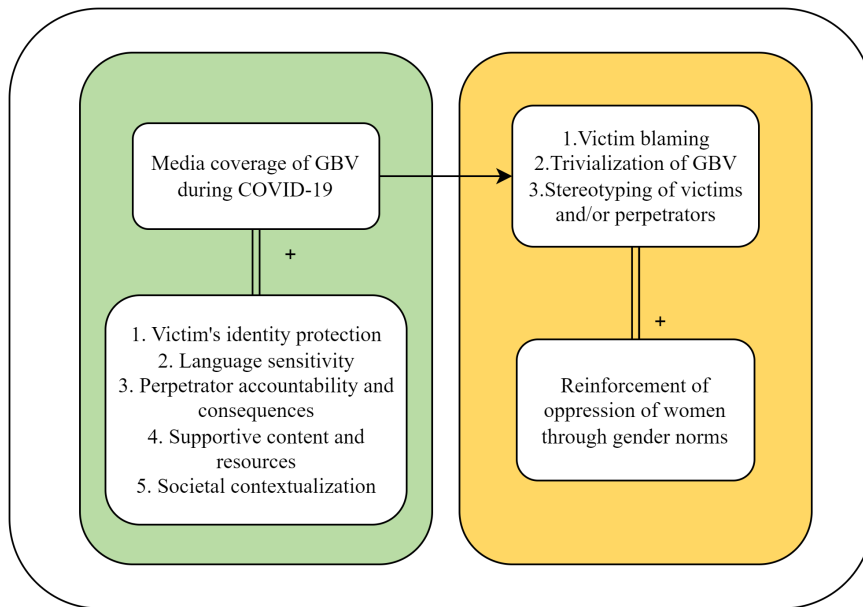
The reviewed literature on GBV and COVID-19, representation of GBV in media, and social norms and values provide a sound theoretical background for motivating research on the role of media in the perpetuation of framings that oppress women (see Figure 1). In order to provide a robust approach, this section will provide the conceptual framework of this thesis, building on knowledge surrounding gender norms that oppress women as well as responsible media reporting of GBV during COVID-19.

For gender norms that oppress women, categories are built upon Easteal et al. (2015) work regarding the concepts of victim blaming, the trivialization of GBV, and the stereotyping of victims and/or perpetrators. Stereotypes are supported by the different archetypes mentioned in Easteal et al. (2015) report on the relationship between media reporting and GBV. Through this conceptualization, gender norms that oppress women act as the dependent variable for this research, being measured via the presence or absence of oppressive terminologies or phrasings. Feminist theory helps guide the interpretation of the findings through its ability to analyze societal issues through the lens of gender, which posits that the issues in the coverage of GBV in traditional news media can be connected to greater societal issues reflecting gender imbalance and implicit asymmetric power relations.

For responsible media reporting of GBV, categories are built upon Menon et al. (2020) work surrounding the concepts of victim's identity protection, language sensitivity, perpetrator accountability, supportive resources and societal contextualization. Through this conceptualization, responsible media reporting of GBV in COVID-19 acts as the independent variable for this research, being measured via the presence or absence of media reporting that respects or violates the victim's privacy.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual framework*



As per Figure 1, this research proposes the possibility of a relationship between responsible media reporting of GBV during COVID-19 pandemic and gender norms that oppress women. Based on the variety of literature reviewed across topics, news articles adhering to responsible reporting are expected to demonstrate less communication that perpetuates oppressive gender norms.

#### **4. Methodology**

##### **5.1 Research Design**

This research conducts a qualitative content analysis (QCA), deemed as the most suitable method due to its systematic evaluation of the content of material at focus (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). QCA enables a comprehensive and insightful understanding of the latent content of the textual data (Halperin & Health, 2020, p. 374). In this case, it allows for a thorough examination of how news articles are constructed/framed when reporting GBV crimes, including the careful

analysis of word choices. Additionally, it is also a common method among researchers investigating similar aspects related to media reporting on GBV with articles as data sources (see Yusuf, 2022; Proll and Magin, 2022).

## **5.2 Case Selection**

The case selection of Brazil is justified based on an extreme case, with significant aspects that distinguish the country both in terms of the COVID-19 impact on overall domestic affairs and GBV levels (which were already high before the pandemic). The pandemic has significantly impacted the whole world's nations, but Brazil is often regarded as having the most disastrous consequences, with its pandemic response being considered “the worst in the world” as stated by Médecins Sans Frontières (Phillips, 2021; Filho, 2020). On the broader realm of GBV, Brazil has one of the highest indices of femicide in the world, with 14 women being physically assaulted per minute (Viapiana, 2023).

## **5.3 Methods of Data Collection**

Online newspaper articles are used as data sources, specifically from the three most-read online newspapers in Brazil, namely: O Globo (G1), Folha de São Paulo and Estado de São Paulo (O Globo, 2022). Given that these news outlets have a comparable readership and are considered prominent sources with rigorous editorial standards, it is appropriate to utilize their stories for study. This approach ensures a diverse selection of newspapers that may provide varying views and frames. Initially, the plan was to combine online news items with their respective television news reporting on GBV during the pandemic for an even more holistic approach. However, it was not feasible due to time constraints.

Here, the spectrum of GBV includes reports of femicide, physical assault, rape, and sexual and emotional harassment. The screening process of finding suitable articles involved the use of specific keywords, such as “gender-based violence”, “violence against women”, “femicide”, “sexual harassment”, “moral harassment”, “raped” and others. Articles discussing general GBV statistics in the country or similar themes related to GBV were excluded from consideration. Instead, only articles reporting on specific incidents of GBV-related crimes, as they offer a more accurate portrayal of societal perceptions and misrepresentations of these

events. In total, 200 articles were initially chosen to undergo a simple random sampling procedure with a random number generator, resulting in 100 final articles.

The phrase and paragraph-level recording units enable in-depth analysis of the article text (Halperin & Health, 2020).

#### **5.4 Methods of Data Analysis**

To define the scope of this paper, a deductive coding framework has been developed based on Menon et al. (2020) recommendations to promote balanced reporting of incidents of GBV in media. According to Menon et al. (2020), balanced reporting is recommended as a strategy to mitigate the risk of GBV in response to the alarming rise in GBV during the pandemic. Based on their recommendations, five categories were formed and adapted for the specific focus of this research: (1) *Victim's identity protection* to account for the extent to which the news article protects the victim's identity; (2) *Language use and narrative* focusing on assessing the use (or not) of judgmental language to describe events; (3) *Perpetrator accountability/consequences* referring to whether news reports discuss legal repercussions faced by perpetrators of GBV and social consequences; (4) *Supportive content and resources* to account for the presence of supportive content and resources in news coverage aimed at providing support to survivors; and (5) *Contextualization* (see Table 1).

Specific subcategories were developed for a more comprehensive analysis (see Table 1). In regards to gender norms, another deductive coding framework has been developed based on Easteal et. al (2015) research on the themes and silences on media portrayals of violence against women. The study points to three main areas of concern: (1) *Victim blaming/ mutuality of responsibility* wherein responsibility for the incidents are partially or fully placed on the victim; (2) *Trivialization of GBV* where the incident is reported on as a mundane or ordinary story; and (3) *Stereotyping of victims and/or perpetrator* where accounts make use of gender-based stereotypes that contribute to the oppression of women for those involved (see Table 2). Examples of operationalization of coding frameworks can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 1***Coding Framework on Media Reporting on GBV*

Category	Description	Sub-Category	Codes
Victim's identity protection	Evaluate if media reporting protects GBV's victim's identity	Mentions of the victim's name and age.	<p><i>Positive reporting:</i> No mention of name/age, victim's identity was protected.</p> <p><i>Negative reporting:</i> Mentions of victim's age and/or name, victim's identity is not protected.</p>
		Use of photographs.	<p><i>Positive reporting:</i> Does not contain images of victim</p> <p><i>Negative reporting</i> Contains victim's images</p>
Language use and narrative	Evaluate the language and narratives used in news coverage of GBV. with a focus on judgmental terminology for describing events	Mention of history, clothes, and whereabouts at time of events.	<p><i>Positive reporting:</i> No use of judgmental language to describe personal history, clothing, or location at time of attack.</p> <p><i>Negative reporting:</i> Use of judgmental language to describe events.</p>
Perpetrator accountability	Counts for whether the legal consequences the GBV offenders face are mentioned.	Mention of legal actions taken against perpetrators.	<p><i>Positive reporting</i> Mention of legal actions taken against perpetrators.</p> <p><i>Negative reporting</i> No mention of legal actions taken against perpetrators.</p>
Supportive content and resources	Check for the presence or absence of helpful information/resources for GBV victims in news coverage.	Provide information on provisions of support services (e.g., hotlines, shelters, counseling).	<p><i>Positive reporting</i> Mention of support services with information and resources for victims.</p> <p><i>Negative reporting</i> No mention of support services.</p>
Contextualization	Evaluate if news coverage contextualizes instances by referencing the bigger spectrum of GBV.	Mentions link to the bigger picture of societal challenges around GBV.	<p><i>Positive reporting</i> Contextualize the crimes with a bigger spectrum of GBV.</p> <p><i>Negative reporting</i> No mentions of greater issues around GBV in society</p>

*Note.* Adapted from “Role of media in preventing gender-based violence and crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic” by Menon et al. (2020).

**Table 2**

*Coding Framework on Gender Norms*

Category	Description	Codes
Victim-blaming/ mutualization of responsibility	Evaluates the extent to which news coverage blames the victim.	Type A reporting: No one is blamed or the woman is partially or fully blamed.  Type B: The perpetrator is fully blamed.
Trivialization of GBV	Evaluate the extent to which news coverage trivializes the occurrence of GBV.	Type A reporting: Downplays the seriousness of GBV.  Type B reporting: Acknowledges the seriousness of GBV.
Stereotyping of victim and/or perpetrator	Evaluate whether news reports frame the victim and/or perpetrator through stereotypes that reflect gender norms.	Type A reporting: Portrayal of the victim and/or perpetrator demonstrates gender-based stereotyping.  Type B reporting: Portrayal of the victim and/or perpetrator doesn’t demonstrate gender-based stereotyping.

*Note.* Adapted from “Enduring themes and silences in media portrayals of violence against women” by Easteal et al. (2015).

The overall categories for sensitive reporting do not all have the same nature, therefore the presence and absence of indicators mean different things. For the first two categories, namely “*Victim’s identity protection*” and “*Language use and narrative*”, the mere presence of the indicators defined by the subcategories (such as mention of victim’s name and use of photographs) indicates that there is an unbalanced reporting of incidents. For the remaining three, “*Perpetrator accountability*”, “*Supportive content and resources*” and

“*Contextualization*”, is something deemed as positive, as it indicates a balanced reporting of incidents.

To ensure comparability of framework results, gendered (Type A) reporting was counted as negative reporting, and non-gendered reporting (Type B) was counted as positive reporting. This reasoning is supported by the literature's findings on gendered reporting harming the portrayal of GBV in media representation (Easteal et al., 2015; Malamuth & Check, 1981).

### **5.5 Quality assurance**

By consistently and coherently applying the codebook, this paper meets Halperin and Health (2020) both internal and external validity requirements. Reliability was established through an inter-coder reliability test, which is also suggested as a suitable approach by Halperin and Health (2020). The test was performed with an independent second coder who coded 20 articles using the same codebook. The outcome of the test yielded 78% consistency in coding between the coders

, confirming its reliability as its plausible to others (see Appendix B for more details).

### **5.6 Timeline**

The specific time frame for the search coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, dated from 26/02/2020 until 05/03/2023 - the official period of the public health emergency for COVID-19 decreed by the World Health Organization (UN, 2023).

## **5. Results and Analysis**

The following section will present the results of the QCA and form a discussion based on the analysis of each key point.

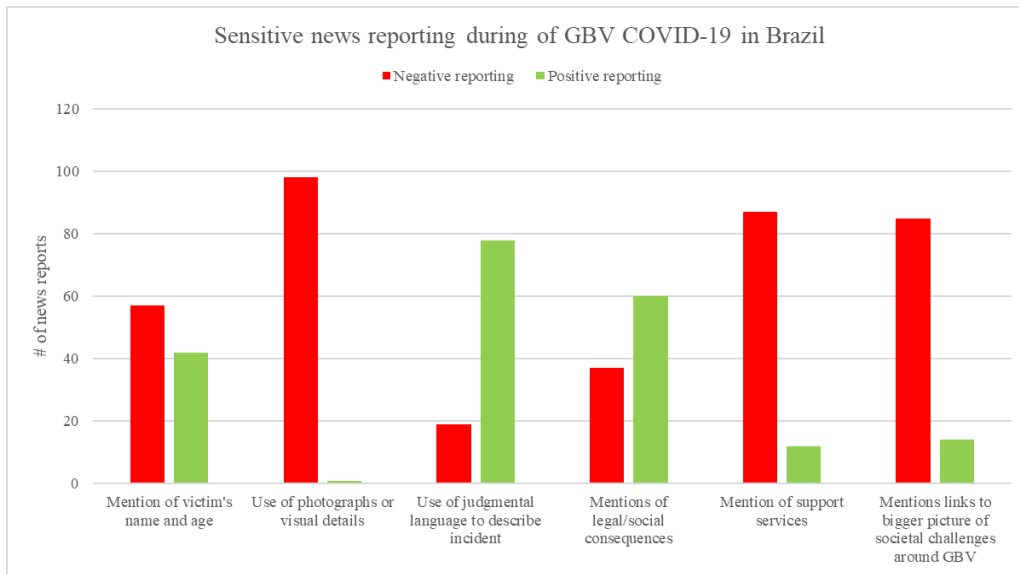
### **5.1 Media-sensitive reporting of GBV**

Coding the collected articles on the sensitive reporting of GBV in news media revealed that overall, news reporting of GBV in Brazil during COVID-19 was broadly insensitive of the privacy and ethics of the victims. Figure 2 (see below) presents the distribution of positive vs

negative reporting for all articles coded. The following subsections address each respective category in further detail.

**Figure 2**

*Sensitive News Reporting of GBV during COVID-19 in Brazil*



*Note.* Elaborated by the author.

**a) Mention of victim's name and age**

The victim's name and age happened more often than not, with nearly 60% of coded reports indicating one and/or the other. This reflects that the sharing of identifying details is a relatively common practice among Brazilian news outlets. Names are shared more frequently than age, but both criteria are present frequently enough to indicate a trend in news outlets consistently reporting insensitively as per Menon et al. (2020) guidelines on media reporting. The normalization of such practices reflects a media landscape that fails to grasp the shame and humiliation suffered by victims and their loved ones for being openly exposed as a victim of something already traumatic to begin with, potentially leading to re-traumatization. Something personal and intimate becomes part of public discourse, giving the impression that the media's framing turns into something that intensifies GBV rather than acting as a force in preventing it.

## **b) Use of photographs**

Photographs were used in almost every report, with over 95% of coded reports indicating its presence. This reflects that the use of photographs is part of standard procedure on reporting of GBV from the news outlets the reports were collected from. The most common instances of use were photos of victim's and descriptions of the violence suffered by the victim, such as the weapon of the crime and/or the number of times the victim was hurt with the weapon. This indicates an inherently insensitive style of reporting which diverges from Menon et al. (2020) principles and presents another dimension where the victim's privacy is rarely respected. Brazilian news' use of episodic framing results in the media trivializing the horrors of GBV (Herscovitz, 2023), something further addressed in section 6.2.b. This reporting style fails to contribute to preventing these crimes by drawing attention towards elements that do not contribute to building a social narrative focused on resolving these issues, rather than merely spectating them.

## **c) Use of judgmental language when mentioning victim's history, clothes, and whereabouts at time of events**

The use of judgmental language when mentioning victim's history, clothes, and whereabouts at the time of the event is the least common form of insensitive reporting, comprising less than 20% of coded reports. This reflects that such elements are not frequent in online news reporting, but still occur consistently enough for it to be a part of negative/insensitive framing of victims. Judgmental language was used to describe the relationship status of the victim vis-à-vis the perpetrator. When indicating that a woman's child is not the perpetrator's child in cases of IPV, "According to witnesses, Greice Quelly left two children. There are no details on whether they also belong to the suspect." (G1 Globo, 2022t).

Judgmental language was also used in instances where the victim's testimony was framed as 'claims' when the perpetrator had already been arrested, "When he arrived at the police station, the attacker claimed that the case was a "couple's fight"." (Rocha, 2021). Although these forms of insensitive reporting are the least common practice from the selected reports, instances where they are found enable GBV by undermining the victim's credibility with personal information and indecisive framing (Abrams, 2017). This failure to provide an environment that prevents GBV serves as an important component in victim-blaming by placing doubt in the

reader's mind on the character and testimony of the victim, discussed in more detail in section 6.2.a.

#### **d) Mention of legal actions taken against perpetrator**

Mentions of legal actions taken against the perpetrator provided one of the most frequent occurrences of positive reporting. With over two-thirds of the news reports containing mentions of such elements, it seems that sharing such information is normal in reports. This would provide the first and only category where Brazilian news outlets work in the right direction regarding GBV reporting according to Menon et al. (2020). Mentions usually concerned whether the perpetrator had been arrested for their crime, alongside mentions of the police's involvement in the matter, "Jessé was arrested red-handed for femicide and concealing a corpse." (Globo G1, 2022). However, reports seldom indicate social consequences for the perpetrator, thereby failing to raise awareness of the devastation that GBV brings to all parties involved, including the family of the perpetrator. Although the current style of reporting is more sensitive than other categories, expanding the scope of reporting to social elements could serve a fundamental role in preventing GBV by raising awareness of the gravity of the crime (Menon et al., 2020).

#### **e) Provision of support services for GBV victims**

Provisions of support services was another category with highly insensitive reporting, with nearly 90% of coded reports failing to provide information for support and raising awareness. These results indicate another façade of common practice news reporting that fails to respect the dignity of the victims in two ways. First, it deprives the audience of the knowledge that support systems exist, with the need for a support system alone partially indicating the societal scope of such issues (Easteal et al., 2015). Secondly, it deprives victims of GBV from feeling like what happened to them matters to the media, which can extend to feelings of invisibility in society more broadly, due to the media's agenda-setting power (Reid & Finchilescu, 1995; Zain, 2015). If the incident can generate enough interest to warrant a report, it could also be significant enough to include resources for those who may need them.

Brazil is a country where GBV and femicide are commonplace, so the absence of resources strengthens the observed trend of the media failing to protect the victims (Vahedi et al., 2023). Meaningful prevention of GBV is unlikely to happen if the issue is not deemed serious

enough by news outlets to acknowledge the need for support systems, something which has been repeatedly illustrated through the various applications of agenda-setting theory in studies concerning mass media (Neuman et al., 2015). In the case of reporting on GBV in Brazil, the media seems to consistently set an agenda where the issue of GBV is highlighted, but solutions remain out of the picture. This may create the impression that mass media is uninterested in addressing these incidents constructively because crimes aren't framed as an issue pressing enough to need resolving.

#### **f) Mentions link to bigger picture of societal challenges around GBV**

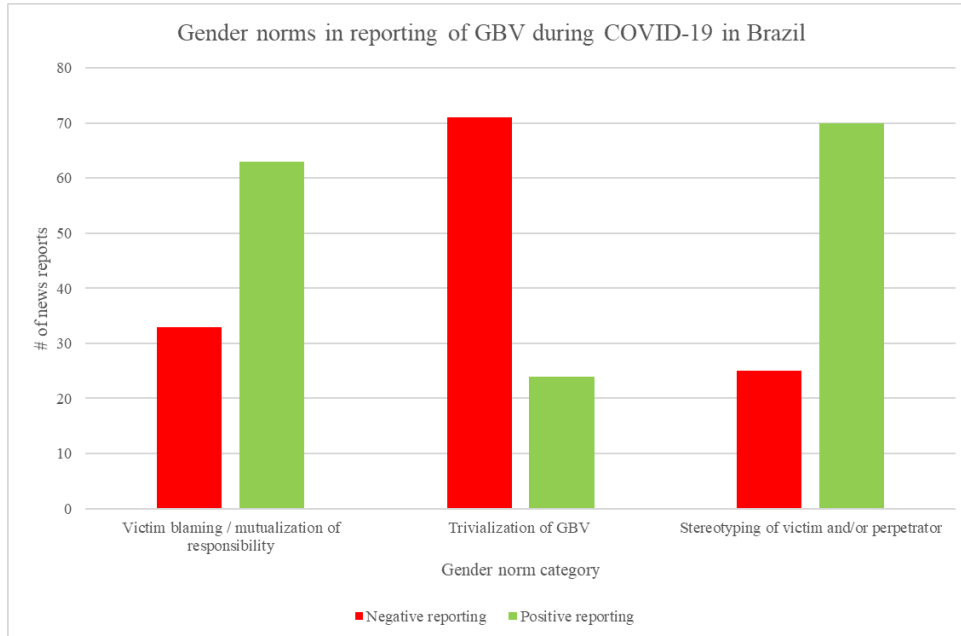
Much like with support services, mentions of links to the bigger picture of societal challenges around GBV were rare, with over 85% of coded reports failing to do so. These results further support the trend in Brazilian media falling short when it comes to sensitive reporting of GBV, reflecting a landscape filled with 'negative' reporting. Drawing from elements of episodic reporting, the media's consistent failure to acknowledge the bigger societal challenges around GBV categorizes standalone reports as isolated incidents, with no explicit links to the bigger picture. Similar to prevention that could potentially come from awareness raising on support services, recognition of the greater challenges faced by Brazilian society could educate audiences on the topic. This is one of the most important aspects in the media's framing, or lack thereof because it creates a public space where this is or is not framed as a problem that happens as an isolated incident.

## **5.2 Gender norms**

Coding the collected articles on the gender norms observable in news media revealed that overall, news reporting of GBV in Brazil during COVID-19 demonstrated gendered elements that can detrimentally portray women. Figure 3 presents the distribution of positive vs. negative reporting for all articles coded. The following subsections address each respective category in further detail.

**Figure 3**

*Gender norms in GBV reporting during COVID-19 in Brazil*



*Note.* Elaborated by the author.

**a) Victim blaming / mutualization of responsibility**

Victim blaming and/or mutualization of responsibility occurred in about a third of all news reports coded. This reflects that the blaming of victims and the mutualization of responsibility occurs often among Brazilian news outlets. Reports coded for this category were overwhelmingly represented by victim blaming. The mutualization of responsibility and denial of guilt occurred in a minority of the cases. The heavy emphasis on blaming the victim reflects challenges that are central to feminist theory and Easteal et al. (2015) observations on the media representations of female victims of GBV. Victims are subjected to more injustice when the system has already failed to protect them, which often further reinforces stigmas around reporting and society's relation to GBV while marginalizing them from society (Easteal et al., 2015; Reid & Finchilescu, 1995). Perpetrators on the other hand are taken out of the spotlight, undermining their responsibility in the crime and eclipsing from audiences the underlying patriarchal systems that create spaces for these tragedies to occur. Another major cause for concern is that victim-blaming is frequently done by families of the victims in these reports,

highlighting the shortcomings from both sides in framing GBV in a gender-sensitive manner, “Brother of woman shot dead in BA reports that family tried to prevent her from continuing an abusive relationship” (Globo G1, 2022t). Placing the emphasis around the woman’s responsibility inherently frames her as responsible for the crime, whereas the tolerance for the perpetrators violence goes unaddressed.

### **b) Trivialization of GBV**

The trivialization of GBV was the most frequent form of gender-normed reporting, with over two-thirds of coded reports framing incidents in a systematic fashion endemic to episodic framing, “The police revealed that he stabbed his ex-mother-in-law eight times, who died at the scene of the crime, an apartment in the Vila Nova neighborhood. The ex-wife, also according to the police, had been stabbed 23 times” (G1 Globo, 2022j). These findings reflect that the trivialization of GBV is normalized and part of common practice in Brazilian news outlets. Only 20 of the articles were coded for thematic framing, which seeks to provide information to the reader beyond the isolated incident and seeks to provide a context for the crime, “the 26th victim of femicide in Mato Grosso do Sul in 2022.” (Ribeiro & Moreira, 2022); “The State had a record number of cases of this nature last year.” (Tomazela, 2023a); “yet another crime of femicide occurring in the country” (Estadão, 2021). Thematic frames were presented at local, regional, and national level, pointing towards the systemic challenge being faced by women across the country. Thematic reporting being greatly overshadowed by episodic reporting in Brazil during COVID-19 aligns with feminist critiques of the media’s representation of GBV. This signals to society that the media's role in reporting GBV is more of an objective spectator of the crime rather than an engaged narrator, concerned with providing an almost scientific account of the incident with numbers and pictures. Choosing to bring GBV into the spotlight, while consistently refusing to do so in a manner that places emphasis on the responsibility of the perpetrators and the social systems that enable them, only creates bigger chasms between victims and society.

### **c) Stereotyping of victim and/or perpetrator**

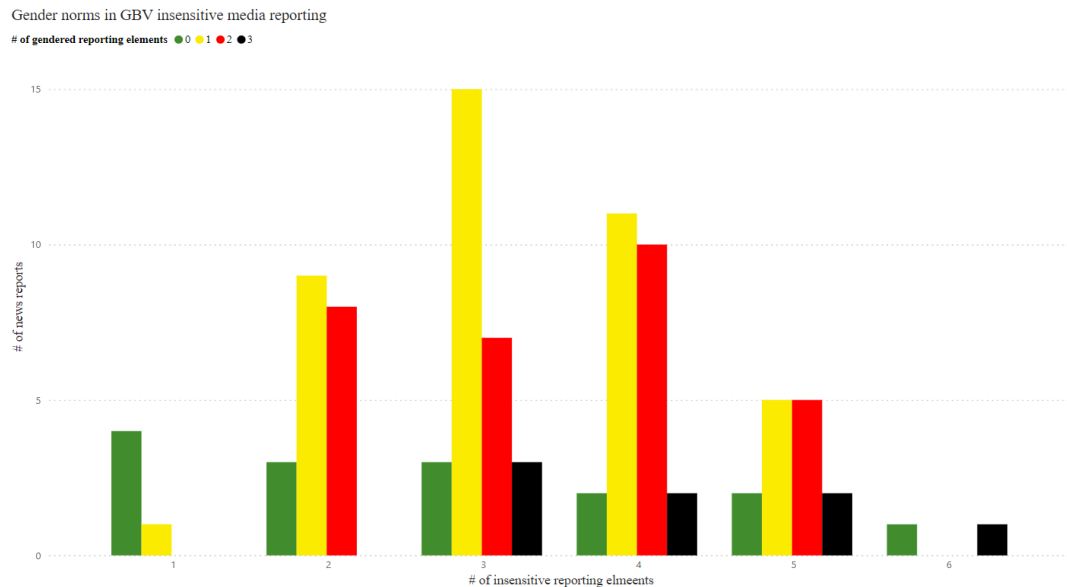
Gendered stereotyping of the victim and/or perpetrator was coded for about a third of the reports analyzed. Similarly to victim-blaming, it appears that stereotyping of the victim and/or perpetrator occurs frequently enough that it can be considered common in GBV reporting.

Gendered stereotypes were constructed much more often for men than for women, with over 75% of the instances of stereotyping being concerned with men, described as angry, jealous, confused, violent, or intoxicated perpetrators, “According to the Civil Police, the murder was motivated by jealousy towards his ex-partner.” (Borges & Mayer, 2022); “Friends report to the police that the man had unrequited love for the victim.” (Grellet, 2021a); “According to the Civil Police, the reason was jealousy” (Augusto, 2020c). “He had a very aggressive personality” (Quele & do Vale, 2022).. For victims, stereotypes revolved more around whether the victim was framed in a manner that portrayed them as being deserving, “had already mentioned to colleagues that she had been stabbed by the suspect, with whom she had an abusive relationship.” (G1 Globo, 2022u) or undeserving, “She also said that the victim was a good mother, wife and professional” (G1 Globo, 2022m). This stark contrast in stereotypes, both in terms of frequency and in terms of focus, further supports the feminist critiques of media representation of GBV. The behavior of perpetrators is often reduced to a single adjective, obscuring the roots of the issue in a society that seemingly tolerates or expects men to be angry, violent, or jealous to an extent where the violence seems to be justifiable. The diffusion of these stereotypes directly contributes to alienating victims from society, while their own images are reduced to whether they are deserving or undeserving victims. The media’s stereotyping of victims invites the audience to interpret, based on facts provided, the ‘purity’ of the victim, thereby adding an invisible weight to the crime, when in reality every violation is equally serious and devastating.

### 5.3 Media reporting & gender norms

**Figure 4**

#### *Gender Norms in GBV Insensitive Reporting*



*Note.* Elaborated by the author.

Based on the articles examined in the theoretical discussion, the expectation for this analysis was that Brazilian news media coverage of GBV during COVID-19 contributes to the normalization and perpetuation of VAW by reinforcing societal gender norms that tolerate or excuse such violence. When considering the reports collected and coded, both theoretical frameworks employed revealed a clear trend in media reporting of GBV that is insensitive and/or reinforces gender norms that normalize VAW. Both frameworks have categories that are coded either very frequently (using of photographs/visual details, mentioning support services and linking to the bigger picture of societal issues around GBV; trivialization of GBV) or somewhat frequently (mentioning the victim's name/age, legal and social consequences for the perpetrator, using of judgmental language; victim-blaming, stereotyping).

Scoring for negative reporting across both frameworks reveals a clear positive association between insensitive reporting and gender norms, wherein more elements of insensitive reporting

resulted in more gendered framing that normalizes the VAW. Figure 3 illustrates three key takeaways: (1) all articles reported insensitively in at least one category, (2) increases in insensitive reporting result in decreases in non-gendered reporting, (3) increases in insensitive reporting are met by increases in gendered reporting with a diminishing return. These takeaways highlight that insensitive reporting of GBV in Brazilian news outlets is the status quo, and gendered framing is more likely to happen the more insensitive elements a report contains. The absence of reports that contain all gendered categories coded from the first two steps of the media sensitivity scoring further highlights this and demonstrates the link between more insensitive reporting and more gendered reporting.

The combined scoring of these frameworks intersects with the motivations behind the theories used when designing this research. Menon et. al (2020) guidelines are positioned as a preventative tool in fighting GBV, built on the notion that women and victims of GBV need to be better protected by societal actors is supported by the increased incidence in gendered reporting in (more) insensitive reports. Conversely, Eastal et al. (2015) work stresses the harm for women and victims that emerges from media portrayals grounded in gendered frames that normalize violence. The social consequences of ‘machismo’ on women in Brazilian society permeate through most reports by rarely critically engaging with the perpetrator’s context and dismissing the victim’s importance, be it through oversharing intrusive details or by omitting support and the “big picture” links to society. Through this research, it becomes clear that the harm caused combined with the absence of suitable protection and prevention are interconnected and exemplify the damage of media reporting on GBV concerning the privacy, dignity, and safety of women and victims alike across the nation. A media culture of episodic framing, trivialization, victim-blaming, and stereotyping can only add fuel to the flames of an already dire situation - one might call it re-traumatization and dehumanization of the victim.

## **6. Conclusion**

To conclude, this thesis aimed to explore the association between news reporting on GBV and gender norms by providing an answer to the question “*How does Brazilian online newspaper coverage of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic influence societal gender norms in media?*”. QCA was conducted and findings were supportive of the hypothesis

that “*Brazilian news media coverage of GBV during COVID-19 contributes to the normalization and perpetuation of violence against women by reinforcing societal gender norms that tolerate or excuse such violence*”. The prevalence of negative reporting through both frameworks provides crucial evidence on the relevance of the research. By highlighting shortcomings in sensitive and gender-normative reporting the results indicate that the challenges faced by victims of GBV are multidimensional. The link between framework scores is another crucial piece of empirical evidence in demonstrating the relationship between these phenomena while validating the study’s null hypothesis.

Strengths of this research lie in the complexity and combination of two coding frameworks, which include sub-categories, all developed to cover the entire scope of the question, and the extensive thorough systematic content analysis of a large N (100) of articles. Additionally, the indicators of this paper are also clear, as illustrated by the 79% score on the inter-coder reliability test which makes the research easily replicable. Contrastingly, one weakness is that even more specific themes-categories could have been developed to look at more specific trends related to language choice of reporting. This was not feasible due to time constraints; however, it is highly recommended for further research to delve deeper into language and intersectionality with race and class.

As findings demonstrate, Brazilian online newspapers have a lot of work to do until reporting is done in such a way that does not reinforce gender norms that tolerate/excuse GBV crimes. Future research should investigate reasons behind the lack of implementation of research-backed appropriate guidelines for reporting on GBV. Additionally, it should also investigate the impact of media reporting on Brazilian audiences and their perception of GBV; and also behavioral change towards societal gender norms.

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## Appendix A

### *Codebook for media representation on GBV*

Frames	Operationalization	Examples
Victim's identity	<p>Does the newspaper protect the GBV victim's identity? If it does protect, code with positive reporting. If not, code with negative reporting.</p> <p>Does it showcase photos of the victim or descriptive graphic visuals? If yes, attribute under negative reporting. If not, code it with positive reporting.</p>	<p><u><i>Positive reporting examples:</i></u></p> <p>“Rio de Janeiro's Civil Police have dismissed from his job an officer suspected of raping a 25-year-old woman inside the 12th Police Station (Copacabana), in Rio de Janeiro's south zone.” (Fantti, 2023)</p> <p>“A female employee reports that she was sexually harassed at Salitre Town Hall, in the interior of Ceará. The case is being investigated by the Civil Police as sexual harassment.” (G1 Globo, 2021c).</p> <p>“A woman was stabbed to death on Saturday morning (10) in Povoado Cabeça do Russo, in the municipality of Itabaiana.” (G1 Globo, 2022f).</p> <p>“A 20-year-old woman was killed and a 16-year-old teenager was shot in the Maré favela complex, north of Rio, in a case that is being investigated as femicide, according to the Civil Police.” (Neder, 2021).</p> <p>“The complaints were made by students who were victims of the attacks.” (TV Mirante, 2022).</p> <p>“From the age of 20 to 25, Tatiane (not her real name) was a regular at the Zinho site, a combination spa and club in Boituva (117 km from São Paulo) where businessman Saul Klein welcomed around 2,000 young people</p>

		<p>a year.” (Folha de São Paulo, 2021a).</p> <p>“The women, aged between 26 and 31, gave evidence and gave details of the harassment, which took place between 2019 and 2021. One of them agreed to talk about it without identifying herself” (G1 Globo, 2021a).</p> <p><u>Negative reporting examples:</u></p> <p>“The victim was identified as Laís Faria de Oliveira, 35. The crime took place in the victim's own home, located in Rua Cabo Verde, in the Conjunto Habitacional neighborhood.” (G1 Globo, 2022d).</p> <p>“Housewife Maria Jusse Setúbal Batista, aged 64, is still trying to understand the reasons that led her ex-son-in-law, Janiel Soares Gomes, aged 37, to brutally murder his wife, her daughter, Dulcilene, of 33 years old, and the couple's two daughters, their granddaughters Luana, 13, and Jhenifer, 11” (Tomazela, 2023a).</p> <p>“According to the Military Police bulletin, Darli Marcio Christi, 49, stabbed his wife, Ana Lúcia da Costa, 44, in the abdomen” (G1 Globo, 2022c).</p> <p>“Suellen Helena Rodrigues was shot dead in front of her children in Curitiba during the period in which the Electoral Code prevents people from being arrested, with three exceptions.” (Budel, 2022).</p> <p>“Bricklayer's assistant Reidimar Silva, 31, confessed to having killed the girl Luana Marcelo Alves, 12, who had disappeared on Sunday morning, the</p>
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		<p>27th, when she went out to buy bread at a bakery 400 meters from her house, in Goiânia (GO), according to the Civil Police.” (Bahia, 2022).</p> <p>“App driver Alexander da Silva, aged 49, was arrested on Friday the 17th, accused of killing his own partner, Andréa Cabral Pinheiro, and two children: Maria Eduarda Fernandes Affonso da Silva, aged 12, Silva's daughter with another woman, and Matheus Alexander Cabral Pinheiro da Silva, aged 11 months, son of the suspect and the adult victim” (Grellet, 2023).</p>
<p>Language use and narrative</p>	<p>Does the newspaper refrain or employ from using judgmental language when describing the victim's personal history, clothing, or location at the time of the attack?</p> <p>Does the newspaper refer to unrelated personal details of the victim?</p> <p>Does the language used by the newspaper evoke plausible deniability of the crime?</p>	<p><u>Positive reporting is attributed to articles which simply do not use judgmental language to talk about the victim's personal history, clothing, or location at the time of the attack:</u></p> <p>“A 57-year-old woman was axed to death by her partner. This femicide happened on Thursday night (29) in Jardim São Guilherme, Sorocaba (SP).” (G1 Globo, 2022v).</p> <p>“Police have arrested a 59-year-old man suspected of shooting dead his 54-year-old wife in Guanhões. The crime took place on Wednesday night (9).” (G1 Globo, 2022l).</p> <p>“A 41-year-old woman was murdered on Thursday morning in Sorocaba (SP). According to the police, her ex-husband is suspected of the crime.</p> <p>According to the Women's Defense Police Station (DDM), the man went to his ex-mother-in-law's house, in the Vitória Régia neighborhood, after the</p>

		<p>victim.” (G1 Globo, 2022a).</p> <p>“The woman murdered with several punches by her husband at home in the city of Penedo, in the Lower São Francisco region of Alagoas, was 90 years old and lived alone with her 59-year-old husband. Amair Mota Ferro was found lifeless in the early hours of Thursday morning (22).” (Farias, 2022).</p> <p>“The murder took place in Jardim São Bento. According to information recorded by the Military Police, the suspect went to the victim's house where he started an argument with her daughter and assaulted her.</p> <p>In the middle of the fight, the man allegedly stabbed his ex-mother-in-law in the neck and then fled.” (G1 Globo, 2022s).</p> <p>“According to information from the Military Police, the victim was killed four days ago by her partner with knife blows. Neighbors became suspicious of the victim's disappearance and called the police when they smelled a foul odor coming from the house.</p> <p>As soon as they entered the house, the police found Luciana's body lying in one of the rooms. Marks on the victim's body indicate that she had been killed with at least three stab wounds.” (G1 Globo, 2022e).</p> <p><u>Negative reporting examples:</u></p> <p>“The owner of the apartment, Gustavo de Almeida Veloso, aged 42, stated that he had a "casual emotional</p>
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		<p>relationship" with Hilma and that the woman arrived at his house at around 2 pm.</p> <p>He also reported that the two drank and that, at night, they argued. The reason, in Gustavo's version, is that Hilma would have been nervous after her boyfriend refused to "maintain a relationship" with her that night." (Augusto, 2020).</p> <p>"The girl was at home drinking alcohol in the company of two teenagers, one aged 14 and the other aged 15. They would have gone out to buy more drinks, when they received an offer from another teenager and an adult to rape the child in a disused quarry that is close to the village. According to the report, the two teenagers received R\$100. They even offered sex to the girl, who refused. Then, they forced her to drink "pinga", a stronger drink compared to the one they were consuming previously, and forcibly dragged her to the quarry, where the four carried out the gang rape." (Baran, 2021).</p> <p>"According to information from the Santa Catarina Court of Justice, the couple had been separated for five months and the femicide occurred because the victim refused to resume the relationship." (Folha de São Paulo, 2022b).</p> <p>"Ramos claims that his niece had ended the relationship in February, but ended up getting back together under pressure from her ex. Last week, they fought again, and the teacher decided to break up again.</p> <p>According to the victim's family, it</p>
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		<p>was not the first time that Thiago attacked his wife. On another occasion, Ellen went to the hospital and the police station. The teacher, however, gave up pressing charges so as not to harm the career of her ex-partner who was joining the Military Police.” (Sousa, 2022).</p>
<p>Perpetrator accountability and consequences</p>	<p>Does the newspaper article mention legal/social consequences to the perpetrator of the GBV crime?</p> <p>If it does, it falls under positive reporting.</p> <p>If it does not, it falls under negative reporting.</p>	<p><u>Positive reporting examples:</u></p> <p>“Jessé was arrested red-handed for femicide and concealing a corpse.” (Santos &amp; Coelho, 2022).</p> <p>“The man was arrested in the act on Monday after injuring his own neck with a knife. He went through a custody hearing on Tuesday night and had the arrest caught in the act converted into preventive custody.” (Borges &amp; Mayer, 2022).</p> <p>“Thiago Mayson is a master's student in the Postgraduate Program in Mathematics at UFPI. According to the police, he was seen on Sunday morning (29) by university security guards carrying the unconscious victim on his lap. He was arrested red-handed.” (Sousa, 2023).</p> <p>“The victim's partner was arrested for domestic violence and the other man for rape. The judiciary issued a preventive detention order for both men.” (Klimpel, 2021).</p> <p>“Giovanni Quintella Bezerra is facing charges of rape of a vulnerable person. The police are investigating five other possible rapes involving the doctor and are also looking into around 30 names of patients who underwent procedures with him.”</p>

		<p>(Augusto, 2022).</p> <p>Negative reporting is attributed to the articles which simply <b>do not</b> mention information on perpetrator’s legal/social consequences, therefore there is no specific quote to exemplify its absence.</p>
<p>Supportive content and resources</p>	<p>Does the article mention supportive resources for GBV victims?</p>	<p><u>Positive reporting examples:</u>  “WHERE CAN I REPORT CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?”</p> <p>POLICE - Dial 190  Look for a Specialized Women's Police Station (DDM) close to your home, or a Police Station outside business hours. In São Paulo, the police report can be made online at: <a href="https://www.delegaciaeletronica.policiacivil.sp.gov.br/ssp-de-cidadao/home">https://www.delegaciaeletronica.policiacivil.sp.gov.br/ssp-de-cidadao/home</a></p> <p>WOMEN'S CALL CENTER - LEI MARIA DA PENHA - Dial 180  Send email to: <a href="mailto:liga180@mdh.gov.br">liga180@mdh.gov.br</a>  The service also provides information on women's rights, such as the closest and most appropriate service locations for each case: Brazilian Women's House, Reference Centers, Women's Service Stations (Deam), Public Defenders' Offices, Integrated Women's Service Centers, Women, among others  The call is free and the service operates 24 hours a day, every day of the week. All people who call reporting events of violence against women are answered</p> <p>DIAL HUMAN RIGHTS  Dial 100  Responds to serious situations of human rights violations, such as</p>

		<p>violence against women, and calls the competent bodies, enabling the flagrant” (Folha de São Paulo, 2022); exact same quote also on (Barbon, 2022).</p> <p>“Reports of domestic violence can be made by calling 181 or 190. Confidentiality is guaranteed.” (G1 Globo, 2021b).</p> <p><u>Negative reporting is attributed to articles which <b>do not</b> provide any information on support services for GBV survivors, therefore there is no quote to exemplify its absence.</u></p>
Contextualization	Does the article make references about the bigger societal context on GBV in Brazil?	<p><u>Positive reporting examples:</u></p> <p>“During the pandemic, women have become more vulnerable to domestic violence. According to a Datafolha survey, factors such as loss of employment, family income and financial autonomy have left this population more exposed to violence.</p> <p>Among women who have suffered aggression, 25% said that the loss of income, employment and the inability to work were the factors that most influenced the violence.</p> <p>In addition, 22% said that living more closely with the aggressor increased their vulnerability to aggression.” (Rocha, 2021).</p> <p>“For the lawyer, the problem begins when society does not talk about sexual violence. "We have a justice, educational and health system that does not know how to deal with sexual violence. We are still a society</p>

		<p>in which this is not a problem."</p> <p>Temer warns that failure to look at this violence has serious consequences. "It's not something specific, it's structural. Until we see this as a society, we won't build public policies. We need to have conversations about this in schools." (Menon, 2022).</p> <p>“International studies indicate that survivors of rape or sexual abuse develop physical, mental and social problems throughout their lives, including sexual dysfunctions and depression and anxiety worsened by PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorders) . They also generate up to 18.7% more suffering for abused women, indicating the weight of gender and victim blaming.” (Castro, 2023).</p> <p><u><i>Negative reporting is attributed to articles which <b>simply do not</b> contextualize instances by referencing the bigger spectrum of GBV, therefore there is no specific quote to exemplify its absence.</i></u></p>
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Codebook for gender norms

Frames	Operationalization	Examples
<p>Victim blaming / mutualization of responsibility</p>	<p>Does the newspaper article partially or fully blame the victim for the GBV crime? If yes, type A reporting code is attributed.</p> <p>If the perpetrator is partially or fully blamed for GBV crime, attribute type B code.</p>	<p><u>Type A reporting examples (no one is blamed or the woman is partially or fully blamed):</u></p> <p>“considered the injunction as "premature and totally unfair", stating that his client is innocent of the charges.” (Macedo, 2022).</p> <p>“Eva remembers that the couple's relationship was troubled and that they were always fighting, and ending and resuming their relationship.</p> <p>“He claimed that she [victim] had been cheating on him.” (G1 Globo, 2022).</p> <p>“The motivation for the crime would be because the woman disagreed with the suspect during a conversation.” (G1 Globo, 2022).</p> <p>“According to the police, the elderly woman's partner, José Clovis Ferro da Silva, said that she was sleeping and woke up to someone squeezing her neck. Thinking he was a thief, he punched the person to defend himself and ran out of the house to ask for help.” (Farias, 2022).</p> <p>“PM is arrested after killing ex-partner with around eight shots in BA; victim had already been stabbed by suspect.” (G1 Globo, 2022u).</p> <p>“According to delegate Elaine</p>

		<p>Benicasa, the author said he had been threatened by his wife hours before the crime. “He says he went to sleep and woke up with her, cursing and arguing with him, in possession of a knife”, explained the delegate.” (Ribeiro &amp; Moreira, 2022).</p> <p>“The family members reported that, in recent months, the author demonstrated an exacerbated jealousy of the victim, including her routine activities such as going out with friends, going to the gym, CrossFit. This would have triggered a crisis in the marriage," said the delegate.” (Alvorável, 2022).</p> <p>“The police suspect that the incident happened when the suspect saw her dancing with another man. He was at the same party as the woman, according to the PC.” (G1 Globo, 2022g).</p> <p>“Information collected so far indicates that the couple had a conflictual coexistence, including the registration of a police report by the woman, reporting episodes of domestic violence and requesting urgent protective measures.” (G1 Globo, 2022c).</p> <p>“According to the police report, he had killed his ex-wife because she was sending messages to his current partner.” (G1 Globo, 2022d).</p> <p>“Rodrigo Simonace also gave a statement and denied the accusations. He told the police that the student did this only because she was told to turn off her phone during class.” (G1 Globo, 2022h).</p>
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		<p>“According to the Civil Police, the couple was at home and had started an argument, when the victim grabbed the knife and went after the suspect.” (G1 Globo, 2022i).</p> <p>“The crime happened because the woman disagreed with the suspect during a conversation.” (G1 Globo, 2021l).</p> <p>“A month later, the victim requested a protective measure against Silvio and he began to be monitored by police officers. The suspect was prohibited from approaching. However, just over 10 days later, they resumed their relationship and she asked for the court order to be revoked.” (Quele &amp; do Vale, 2022).</p> <p>“Brother of woman shot dead in BA reports that family tried to prevent her from continuing an abusive relationship, but she persisted in the relationship” (G1 Globo, 2022t).</p> <p>“According to the police report, he had killed his ex-wife because she was sending messages to his current partner.” (G1 Globo, 2022d).</p> <p>“According to the police, she did not act against her partner and did not ask for a protective measure.” (Augusto, 2020).</p> <p><u><i>Type B reporting examples (the perpetrator is fully blamed):</i></u></p> <p>“According to the Military Police, the man, after committing the crime, went to the North Zone Police Station and confessed to the murder. A PM team was sent to the scene, where they confirmed the victim's</p>
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		<p>death. The suspect remains arrested and the case will be investigated.” (G1 Globo, 2022f).</p> <p>“A 41-year-old woman was murdered this Thursday morning (1st) in Sorocaba (SP). According to police, her ex-husband is a suspect in the crime.” (G1 Globo, 2022h).</p> <p>“A man was arrested this Wednesday (23), suspected of beating his 66-year-old wife to death three years ago and burying her body in the backyard of the house, according to Civil Police Chief, Flávio Leonardo. He still spent about a year collecting her pension. “ (G1 Globo, 2022o).</p> <p>“The man identified as the perpetrator of the murder is 35 years old. He would be the victim's ex-partner . His identity was not disclosed, but the Military Police reported that the person under investigation had convictions for threats, bodily harm, rape, damage, drug trafficking and false identity.“ (G1 Globo, 2022).</p> <p>“While Jessé was giving his statement, relatives found something suspicious in the house, which was undergoing construction, and called the police. Jessé was arrested in the act for femicide and hiding a corpse.“ (G1 Globo, 2022).</p> <p>“The suspect is Jaminus Quedaros de Aquino's ex-husband, lawyer and former civil police officer. A security camera caught the crime. (...) the family's defense lawyer, Jackson William Bahls Rodrigues, said that the victim had exhausted all available legal mechanisms to escape the cycle of domestic violence. “ (G1 Globo,</p>
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		<p>2022).</p> <p>“The suspect is the Mathematics master's student, Thiago Mayson Barbosa , aged 29, who was arrested. “ (Estadão, 2023).</p>
<p>Trivialization of GBV</p>	<p>Does the newspaper article trivialize the GBV incident using episodic framing? If yes, type A reporting code is attributed.</p> <p>If the newspaper makes use of thematic framing for the reporting, attribute type code B.</p>	<p><u>Type A reporting examples (the article makes use of episodic framing):</u></p> <p>“on Thursday night (29), at Jardim São Guilherme, in Sorocaba (SP). the case will be investigated” (G1 Globo, 2022v).</p> <p>“An injunction from the Goiás Court prohibited the man accused of killing his wife, Sarah Nunes Pereira, aged 23, and faking her suicide, in Aparecida de Goiânia, in the Metropolitan Region of the capital, from approaching the couple's daughter.” (Macedo, 2022).</p> <p>“The grandmother of the woman who was found stabbed to death in Bragança Paulista (SP) this Wednesday (30) mourned the family's loss. The victim was 23 years old and leaves two children: an eight-year-old boy and a one-year-old girl.” (G1 Globo, 2022b).</p> <p>“Jaine was born in Rondônia and leaves behind a 2-year-old daughter.” (G1 Globo, 2022i).</p> <p>“G1 contacted Pireth's lawyers, who said they would speak to him first, become aware of the accusation and then provide clarification.” (Altrão &amp; Figueira, 2022).</p> <p>“The man fled on a motorcycle towards the community of Cachoeira</p>

		<p>das Pombas and ended up being located by the police.” (G1 Globo, 2022l).</p> <p>“The police were called and the two locations were preserved for forensic examination. The case will be investigated by DDM.” (G1 Globo, 2022a).</p> <p>“The suspect in a car crashes into the head of a bridge. Upon impact, the vehicle “flies” and falls down the embankment. The suspect died at the scene, on the banks of the river.” (Cruz &amp; do Vale, 2022).</p> <p>“The elderly woman's body was taken to the Legal Medical Institute (IML), where it will undergo an autopsy to determine the cause of death. Afterwards, the report will be forwarded to the Civil Police to be attached to the investigation.” (Farias, 2022).</p> <p>“The police revealed that he stabbed his ex-mother-in-law eight times, who died at the scene of the crime, an apartment in the Vila Nova neighborhood. The ex-wife, also according to the police, had been stabbed 23 times.” (G1 Globo, 2022j).</p> <p>“Forensics attended the scene and released the body to a funeral home. The suspect's cap, which had blood marks on it, was sent for forensic examination.” (G1 Globo, 2022p).</p> <p>“According to information gathered by the Military Police, at the time she was stabbed, the woman had the couple's two-year-old daughter on her arm. Another son, aged nine, also</p>
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		<p>witnessed the incident.” (G1 Globo, 2022n).</p> <p>“Military police carried out searches to find the person responsible for the stabbing, but until the publication of this report he had not been located and arrested.” (G1 Globo, 2022s).</p> <p>“Now, he must answer for concealment of a corpse, femicide for futile reasons and social security fraud. According to delegate Flávio, representation has already been made to convert the arrest from flagrant to preventive.” (G1 Globo, 2022o).</p> <p><u><i>Type B reporting examples (the article makes use of thematic framing):</i></u></p> <p>“the 26th victim of femicide in Mato Grosso do Sul in 2022.” (Ribeiro &amp; Moreira, 2022).</p> <p>“The state department of Justice and Public Security (Sejusp) points out that 26 women were victims of femicide in the state in 2022. The number is the accumulated number of cases between January 1st and August 1st. The number of victims is already 8.3% higher than that recorded between January and the entire month of August 2021, when 24 femicides occurred in the state.” (G1 Globo, 2022e).</p> <p>“But it is necessary for women to be able to find out about her rights and the mechanisms that should assist her in this service network.” (TV Mirante, 2022).</p> <p>“The State had a record number of cases of this nature last year.”</p>
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		<p>(Tomazela, 2023a).</p> <p>“yet another crime of femicide occurring in the country.” (Estadão, 2021).</p> <p>“Brazil had a woman murdered every two hours in 2018, according to the Atlas of Violence 2020, released this Thursday (27).” (Camargo, 2020).</p> <p>“On average, four girls up to the age of 13 were raped every hour in Brazil in 2017 and 2018, according to the Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security 2019.” (Barbon, 2020a).</p>
<p>Stereotyping</p>	<p>Does the newspaper article make use of gendered stereotyping of the victim and/or perpetrator?</p> <p>If yes, type A reporting code is attributed</p> <p>If the newspaper refrains from stereotyping, attribute type code B.</p>	<p><u>Type A reporting examples (the article makes use of gendered stereotypes):</u></p> <p>“And then, in a moment of anger, the two got into a physical fight, he took the knife from her hand and, according to him, only struck her in the neck.” (Alirão &amp; Figueira, 2022).</p> <p>“When asked about the crime, he said he was on the run and had killed his partner out of jealousy at having seen her with another man in a bar.” (G1 Globo, 2022p).</p> <p>“According to the police, the suspect was outraged by the separation and chased a man he believed to be the victim's current boyfriend.” (G1 Globo, 2022k).</p> <p>“According to the police, the suspect was outraged by the separation and, on Tuesday (8), chased a man he believed to be the victim's current boyfriend. She also said that the victim was a good mother, wife and professional, and that the man did not</p>

		<p>accept the end of the relationship.” (G1 Globo, 2022m).</p> <p>“According to Herbert, the family did not agree with the relationship from the beginning. According to witnesses, Greice Quelly left two children. There are no details on whether they also belong to the suspect.” (G1 Globo, 2022t).</p> <p>“The victim had worked at the salon for around two months and had already mentioned to colleagues that she had been stabbed by the suspect , with whom she had an abusive relationship.” (G1 Globo, 2022u).</p> <p>“According to delegate Elaine Benicasa, the author said he had been threatened by his wife hours before the crime. “He says he went to sleep and woke up with her, cursing and arguing with him, in possession of a knife”, explained the delegate.” (Ribeiro &amp; Moreira, 2022).</p> <p>"There is no recorded incident of Daniela against Diego in the police records, but there are indications that in recent months he has displayed very jealous behavior and this has triggered a crisis in their relationship." (Alvorável, 2022).</p> <p>“According to the Civil Police, the murder was motivated by jealousy towards his ex-partner.” (Borges &amp; Mayer, 2022).</p> <p>“Friends report to the police that the man had unrequited love for the victim.” (Grellet, 2021a).</p> <p>“According to the Civil Police, the reason was jealousy” (Augusto,</p>
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		<p>2020c).</p> <p>“He had a very aggressive personality” (Quele &amp; do Vale, 2022).</p> <p>“confirmed in his testimony his brother-in-law's violent behavior” (G1 Globo, 2022q).</p> <p><u>Type B reporting examples are articles which refrains from using gendered stereotypes when describing the victim and/or perpetrator):</u></p> <p>“A 57-year-old woman was killed with an ax by her partner, on Thursday night (29), in Jardim São Guilherme, in Sorocaba (SP). According to the Military Police, the man, after committing the crime, went to the North Zone Police Station and confessed to the murder.” (G1 Globo, 2022v).</p> <p>“A young woman, identified as Jaine Diniz Xavier, aged 20, was stabbed to death by her husband, in the early hours of this Sunday (6), in Sinop , 503 km from Cuiabá.” (G1 Globo, 2022i).</p> <p>“Students from the Federal University of Piauí ( UFPI ) staged a protest this Monday, 30th, on the institution's campus after the murder of Janaína da Silva Bezerra , aged 23. The young woman, in the 5th period of Journalism, was raped and had her neck broken. The suspect is the Mathematics master's student, Thiago Mayson Barbosa , aged 29, who was arrested. The institution suspended classes.” (Coelho, 2023).</p> <p>“The young woman, who was studying a degree in biological</p>
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		sciences at Unicamp (State University of Campinas), had left home around 11am for a walk and never returned. The family called the police, who began searching for the student, and friends also shared requests for help on social media throughout the day.” (Toledo, 2022).
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*Note.* More data available if needed but this amount of examples was deemed sufficient by the supervisor.

## Appendix B (Inter-Coder Reliability)

**Table 3**

*Overview of inter-coder reliability test*

Frame	Matching Codes	Clashing Codes	Total
Media reporting on GBV crimes	91 <i>76%</i>	29 <i>29%</i>	120 <i>50%</i>
Societal gender norms	49 <i>81%</i>	11 <i>19%</i>	60 <i>50%</i>
Total	140 <i>78%</i>	40 <i>22%</i>	180 <i>100%</i>

A measure is reliable if it consistently gives us the same result over and over again (Halperin and Health, 2020, p. 163). They suggest conducting an inter-coder reliability test as an appropriate measurement for reliability of one's research. This test reveals the "extent to which different coders, each coding the same content, come to the same coding decisions" (Halperin and Health, 2020, p. 192). An independent coder who is a fellow graduate in the field of International Relations has coded 30 articles out of the 100 list, and was given the same codebooks to use in order to code the articles. The results were significantly positive, showing that 78% of the codes were in agreement. Therefore, once the test was performed and the result established reliability in the research, the codebooks were applied throughout the entirety of the sources.

### Appendix C: Newspaper articles (sources list)

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