

## GROWTH OF VIOLENT CRIMES IN REPORTED NEWS AND PAKISTANI SOCIETY (1970s-2000s)

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### Abstract

*This study aims at examining the increase in violent crimes in the journalistic world of news, published in the highest circulated Daily Jang which is taken as a day-to-day reflection of the real crime scene in Pakistani society across the four decades (i.e. 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s). Rate of deaths and injuries alongside the treatment of reported crime news were also evaluated to identify the changing trends in the journalistic world of news. Crimes statistics provided by Bureau of Police Research and Development were further referred to compare relevance between the real and the reported crime scenes. Results show that the rate of crimes has increased both in journalistic world as well as in Pakistani society during the forty years sampled, but the increase is curvilinear rather than linear in nature. There seems to be fragile, proportional relationship between the two variables as far as number and growth of crimes are concerned. At the core level, this research analyzes the dynamic factors including national, regional and global socio-economic especially political scenario that lead to an extremely volatile environment in the country by 2000s. It is popularly assumed that Pakistani society becomes increasingly intolerant and violent day by day though most of the crimes committed never reported either in police stations or in newspapers.*

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## Introduction

Crime Statistics of Pakistan shows that there is a rapid increase in the number of crimes reported over a period of time. There are many factors that lead to increasing crime rate including high rate of unemployment, rising poverty, increasing inflation and urbanization. Some other non-economic factors such as exposure to excessive violence on media and weakening of traditional agents of socialization namely family, society and religion are also responsible for the lawlessness in the country. The impact of rising crime is not confined to the illiterate and poor class of society; even some wealthy, well-placed and educated people are also involved in committing crimes. They are in the race of accumulating wealth through illegal means. Furthermore, these people have sources to exploit loopholes in the legal system to get away with their wrong doings in our society. Furthermore, majority of the people who have meager resources at their disposal to meet their both ends are also involved in crime in the country. The official statistics of Pakistan indicates that the country is hardly progressing in any field be it economic, social, cultural, technological, environmental and moral realms of life.

Various steps were taken by different governments in the past to check and curb increasing tide of crimes but unfortunately because of corruption, poor implementation of policies and rising terrorism the circumstances are quite disappointing. Furthermore, poor legal and judicial system and corrupt law enforcement agencies further aggravate the law and order situation in the country.

## Crime and Its Forms

Crime refers to breach of law. It is thus any act that breaks a criminal law.

Kerbo defined Crime as “a particular form of deviance that involves violation of laws reinforced by the political system.” He suggests that the nature of crime thus must be determined within the context of power and the political process.<sup>1</sup>

Criminal acts are broadly divided into violent offenses (against persons) and nonviolent offenses (against property). However, the four major categories of crimes as identified by Kerbo and Hickey<sup>2 & 3</sup> include violent crimes, organized crime, white collar crime and political crimes (the category traditional crime refers to violent crime as defined below, hence replaced for clarity while the 4<sup>th</sup> category is actually political crime instead of popular crime & it's already explained in the section ahead, now in detail).

*Violent Crime* that is our subject of interest in this study is taken seriously since they include offenses against people. It includes homicide (murder), aggravated assault, forcible rape, robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, auto-theft and arson which also come under the category of traditional or street crimes.

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<sup>1</sup> Kerbo, H. R. (2007) *Sociology; Social Structure & Social Conflict*. California Polytechnic State University: National Book Foundation, Islamabad, pp. 189-223.2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 206-223.

<sup>3</sup> Thompson, W. E., & Hickey, J. V. (1999). *Society in Focus; Introduction to Sociology*. (Third, Ed.) Longman. An imprint of Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., pp. 183-215, 46.

*Organized Crime* refers to traditional crimes but as the title suggests these are the offenses patronized by criminal organization. The organization uses pressures and kickback to envelop illegitimate actions in much persistent and planned manner such as Mafia.

*White-Collar Crime* signifies offenses committed by professionals in the course of their otherwise legitimate occupational activities. It includes crimes such as disobedience of antitrust laws, misrepresentation in advertising, infringements on patents or copyrights and violation of labor laws.<sup>4</sup>

*Political Crimes* are usually committed to bring about or hamper change in the society. Kerbo identified that political criminal is usually provoked by ideology and political reasons rather than personal motives even when engaged in traditional offenses such as bank robbery, kidnapping and murder.<sup>5</sup> Political crimes are thus often directed against a particular government, state or political system. A consequence of such criminalization may be that a range of [human rights](#), [civil rights](#), and freedoms are curtailed, and conduct which would not normally be considered criminal *per se* (in other words, that is not antisocial according to those who engage in it) is criminalized at the convenience of the group holding power.

At one extreme, crimes such as [treason](#), [sedition](#), and [terrorism](#) are political because they represent a direct challenge to the government in power. Violence or even discrimination against an ethnic or racial group, as well [trade union strikes](#) or [picketing](#) against private [employers](#), can be perceived as a political crime when those in power see such conduct as undermining the political and economic stability of the state.<sup>6</sup>

## Theoretical Framework

It's imperative to refer to various researches and models devised in the disciplines of Sociology and Psychology regarding crimes and violence.

### Sociological Theories

Sociologists have different perspective regarding the critical causes of crimes and deviance. Diverse theories, each of which focuses different aspects of the origin of crime, were examined. These theories are classified as:

### Biological Theories

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<sup>4</sup> Sutherland (1961) & Coleman, W. J., (1985). *The Theory of White-Collar Crime; From Sutherland to the 1990s*, Chap. 2, 53-57.  
<http://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Te1HNZN6ah0C&oi=fnd&pg=PA53&dq=Sutherland,+1961%3B+Coleman,+1985&ots>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 207-208.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp. 207-208.

Lombroso<sup>7</sup> offered one of the early biological theories of deviance which claimed that physical characteristics such as body shape and facial features were related to criminal behavior. Since then, other criminologists such as Sheldon came up with similar theories,<sup>8</sup> but none of them signifying a link between body characteristics and crime proved by scientific research.

### **Social Stress Theories**

Sociologists often identified factors like social stress, anomie (contradiction between norms and actual conditions in a society), culture, learning, and the social psychological process of developing a self-identity when explaining deviance. Some social conditions such as poverty, high social inequality, family conflicts, failure at school, workplace or in some activity create frustration or emotional and mental stress for individuals which can often stimulate deviance and even crimes to regain one's self-esteem or position in one's circle.<sup>9</sup>

### **Functionalists Theories**

These theories highlighted that deviance including crimes are functional for human society. They serve the functions of conforming social norms and projecting social unity. According to strain theory, individual members of civilized societies are trained as per required cultural goals, but several individuals cannot attain these objectives through institutionalized (socially acceptable) means. Deviants are thus populace who either give up those goals or choose unusual ways to achieve them. Functionalists speculated that most of the crimes are the outcome of competition among the people of various social classes for equal success with material possessions, while prevailing social system hardly provides equal opportunities to lower and middle classes. People from different social classes thus encounter different opportunity structure to commit crimes.<sup>10</sup>

### **Control Theories**

These theories maintain that delinquents are generally teenagers or youngsters who hardly have strong attachment with family, school, and employees and even to society at large. They lack personal obligations and are mostly disrespectful to social norm and values.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Lombroso, C. (1911). *Crime: Its Causes and Remedies*, H.P. Horton, trans. Boston: Little, Brown.

<sup>8</sup> Sheldon, W. (1949). *Variation of Delinquent Youth: An introduction to Constitutional Psychiatry*. New York: Harper.

<sup>9</sup> Henslin, James M. (1997). *Sociology\_A Down to Earth Approach*. (Third, Ed.) United States of America: Allyn and Bacon, pp.100-267.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp.204-05.

<sup>11</sup> Krohn, M. D., & Massey, J. L. (1980). Social Control and Delinquent Behavior: An Examination of the Elements of the Social Bond. *The Sociological Quarterly* 21 (Autumn, 1980), pp.529-543.

Thus they are usually inclined to violate social norms and standards.

According to Sutherland, "Differential Association Theory is one of the most valued theories of deviance that advocates that deviant behavior ought to be learned in interaction with people who are already deviant."<sup>12</sup>

### **Labeling Theories**

One of the most popular theories of deviant in recent years which point out that most people have committed deviant acts, however, only a few of them actually think of themselves as deviants and get extensively involved in deviant behavior. The theory builds on the work of social psychologists like George Herbert Mead<sup>13</sup> who explained how people develop a "self" that guides their behavior.

### **Conflict Theories**

These theories emphasized that there are various groups with different interests, value and power in the society. Who gets labeled as deviant, what type of acts are considered crimes and motivation to such crimes and deviants can't be fully understood without reference to group conflict in the society. E.g. Laws are made by the affluent (Capitalist) class and the institutions that enforced the laws are highly influenced by the elite class. This elite class imposes its own interpretation of deviance and crime on working and marginal working classes. Thus overall the criminal justice system is biased against the poor and less affluent segments of society. The conflict perspective perceives law as a tool of repression to uphold the privilege of the haves over the haves not. As Henslin says the ruling class reins the criminal justice system to penalize desperate and vulnerable marginal working class while it keeps its own crimes away from the penal system.<sup>14 & 15</sup>

Quinney as cited by Hickey asserts that the poor and minorities are more often arrested and given longer prisoner terms compared with the more affluent who commit the same type of crime. Thus traditional street crimes, more often committed by lower class people attract more attention than the corporate crimes which cause more monetary damage to society.<sup>16</sup>

### **Culture and Learning Theories**

These theories draw attention to sub-cultural standards and their contribution in transmitting and teaching deviant behavior e.g. effects of violence displayed on TV and movies. Phillips (1982) confirms that there is now some research evidence that TV (and movies) violence can lead children to behave more violently. Coleman suggests that children learn from onscreen violence that it is an acceptable and easy mean of achieving

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>14</sup> Silver, I. (1977). Crime and Conventional Wisdom. *Society* (14), March-April: 9, pp. 15-19.

<sup>15</sup> ibid. Henslin, pp.206-07.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Hickey, 1999, p. 200.

goals and expressing anger. But the relationship between the mass media and the deviant behavior is rather complex.<sup>17</sup>

*According to Baran and Meyer (1974) it is quite evident that the overt examples of media impact are horrifying but exceptional. There are very few people who really imitate onscreen violence and criminal acts compared to large majority of viewers who might relate or identify with their volatile icons that leaves a rather lasting model for them to follow. Millar and Dollard (1941) already highlighted the fact saying that "people are likely to copy the onscreen behavior that they watch; those behaviors would be reinforced and therefore learned as acceptable actions".<sup>18</sup>*

The current study has its foundation in Culture and Learning Theories assuming that alongside several socio-economic and political factors, media violence provides a vicious model to the vulnerable sections of society. Besides it is often taken as reflection of the social trends and environment of its age and native society.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

The objective of this study is to assess the rate of violent crimes through comparative analysis of both reported news and state crime statistics that are assumed to be increased consistently in Pakistani society from 1976 to 2006 in the perspective of fast-changing scenario in the country, region and in the world.

### **Literature Review**

Over the past sixty five years, researchers have come up with millions of articles and studies on criminal violence, which markedly disagree regarding the leading correlates of violence. Research design, measurement, sources of information and definition of violence; all play a significant role in determining the violence rate and causes. Thus variance in research methodology and measures might often result into discrepant conclusions as identified by some researchers (Hindelang et al., as cited by Bridges & Weis).<sup>19</sup>

Probably the earliest study of this type was done by Davis<sup>20</sup> who found that crime coverage in Colorado newspapers bore no relationship to change in state crime rates. On

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Baran, S.J. (2001). Introduction to Mass Communication; Media Literacy and Culture. Mayfield Publisher, pp.184-210.

<sup>19</sup> Bridges, G. S., & Weis, J. G. (2000). *Violent Crime; Violent Criminals*. (N. A. Weiner, Ed.) Sage Press Edition.

<sup>20</sup> Davis, F. (1951) Crime news in Colorado newspapers. *American Journal of Sociology*, pp.57, 325-330.

the other hand in one similar study, Clark and Brandenburg as cited by Stepp<sup>21</sup> analyzed four leading US dailies to discover that 17.6% of all news items in sampled newspapers dedicated to violence at a rate of 2.3 violent items per news page across forty years. It further analyzed that crime stories accounted for one-third of all newspaper items and violent crimes tended to be covered more prominently than non-violent crimes. William and Dickinsen<sup>22</sup> explored that around 12.7% of the news hole in daily newspapers in Britain was filled with crime, contain an average of 65% violent crimes against people. Dreze and Khera insight analysis from homicide data (extracted from Government of India's annual publication, Crime in India, 1995)<sup>23</sup> concluded that increasing murder rates (i.e. 41 per million in 1995) bore no significant relation to urbanization or poverty. Education, on the contrary, appears to exercise a moderating influence on criminal violence while female-male ratio is identified as the strongest correlate of the murder ratio i.e districts with higher female-male ratios have lower murder rates. This analysis further raises questions about the possible role and impact of other socio-cultural factors such as violence-ridden media and crime news coverage in the growth of violent crimes.

Since the advent of Mass Media, Effect and Relational Studies have been the focus of researchers' interest across the world. As So cited, Cooper, Potter and Dupagne (1994) who evaluated 1,326 research articles from eight US-based international journals from 1965-89 to conclude that one quarter of them were effect studies. Potter and Riddle (2007) further specified that communication studies exploring the effects of general entertainment content represented 16.4% of all articles published in 16 academic journals from 1993 to 2005.<sup>24</sup>

### Research Questions:

1. Do Violence and Crime stories increase in newspapers during four decades?
2. Did the ratio of deaths and injuries increase in journalistic world of crimes from 1970s to 2000s?
3. Are these crimes reported graphically or objectively across the four decades?
4. Is there any correlation between the rate of crimes in reported news coverage and Pakistani society as reflected through crime statistics of Bureau of Police *Research and Development in Pakistan*?

### Methodology:

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<sup>21</sup> Stepp, C. S. (1998). The Fallout from too much Crime Coverage. *Annual Journalism Review*, 20 (3), p.55.

<sup>22</sup> Dickinsen, P. W. (1993). Fear of Crime; Read all about it. *British Journal of Criminology*, 33 (1), pp.33-56.

<sup>23</sup> Dreze, J., & Khera, R. (June 2000). Crime, Gender and Society in India: Insights from Homicide Data. *Population & Development Review*, 26 (2), pp.335-352.

<sup>24</sup> So, Y. K. (1988). Citation Patterns of Core Communication Journal; An Assessment of the Developmental Status of Communications. *Human Communications Research*, 15, pp.236-55.

Content analysis is used as a primary method in the current research study considering the nature of the research as Kelinger (2000, as cited in Dominick)<sup>25</sup> identifies that content analysis adopts wherever analysis of message system (content) in a quantitative, systematic and objective manner is required.

The prime objective of this study is to evaluate whether the enormity and intensity of crime is growing in journalistic world and if it is representative of the rising crimes and violence rate in real Pakistani society. Thus, we analyzed one month's newspaper of Daily Jang for violence and crime stories in a sampled year of 1976, 1986, 1996, and 2006 representing the four decades focused in the study. Jang is arbitrarily selected as the sample newspaper for the study as "it is the oldest and largest circulated Urdu Daily in Pakistan which started its publication in 1940, having the readership of 775 thousand (World Press Trade).<sup>26</sup> It is considered as one of the most influential and popular newspaper which has standing both in public and at the state level.

We counted all news items of verbal, physical and multiple-violence covered in the sampled crime stories of the four decades.

As a reality check, we referred the Crime Growth Rate and other relevant statistics, calculated and provided by the Bureau of Police Research and Development in Pakistan (2010) to explore whether the reported crime news in Jang (as a leading, mainstream newspaper) represents the real crime scene as assumed in the study or not.

### **Findings and Analysis of Results:**

#### **Do Violence and Crime Stories Increase in Newspapers During Four Decades?**

##### **Decade of 1970s:**

According to the findings, Jang newspaper was printed only 29 days in Dec. 1976 as there were public holidays on December 4 and 27 while in newspaper of December 26, no violence or crime news was printed.

Overall 76 violent crime incidents were reported in the month of Dec. 1976 with an average of 2.6 stories per issue. Category wise total 1 (1.3%) incident of pure verbal and symbolic violence came into limelight. Mostly incidents of physical violence, 34 (44.7%) dominated the journalistic world of crimes followed by 41 stories (53.9%) highlighting incidents of multiple i.e. verbal and physical violence.

##### **Decade of 1980s:**

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<sup>24</sup> Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2005). Research in Media Effects. In R. D. Wimmer, & J. R. Dominick, *Mass Media Research- An Introduction* (8th Edition ed., 141-143, 393-396, chapter VII). Wadsworth Publishing.

<sup>25</sup> *World Press Trade, the World Association of Newspapers*. (2010). Retrieved from Beedrop online database: [www.beedrop.com/database/Language/.../MBR1602F.html](http://www.beedrop.com/database/Language/.../MBR1602F.html).



Jang newspaper was printed only 30 days in Dec. 1986 as there was public holiday on 26<sup>th</sup> December.

Overall 275 violent crime incidents were reported in the month of Dec. 1986 with an average of 9 stories per issue. Category wise total 26 (9.45%) incidents of pure verbal and symbolic violence came into limelight. Mostly incidents of physical violence, 126 (45.81%) dominated the crime scene followed by 123 stories (44.72%) highlighting incidents of multiple i.e. verbal and physical violence.

#### **Decade of 1990s:**

According to the findings, Jang was printed 30 days in Dec. 90s due to public holiday on 26<sup>th</sup> December.

Overall, 370 violent crime stories were reported in the month of Dec. 1996 with an average of 12 stories per issue. Category wise only 33 (8.9%) incidents of pure verbal and symbolic violence were covered compared to 164 (44%) incidents of Physical violence and 172 (46%) incidents of multiple verbal and physical violence.

#### **Decade of 2000s:**

According to the findings there were 29 issues sampled for the decade since Jang was not printed two days, i.e. 7<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2006 on account of public holiday. Total 360 violent crime stories were reported. Category wise only 15 incidents of verbal and symbolic violence covered compared to 171 incidents of Physical violence and 167 incidents of both verbal as well as physical violence.

Findings of the study indicated that the number of crime news reports increased during four decades almost in a linear manner i.e. from 76 in 70s to 275 in 80s (almost four fold increase during the two decades), 370 in 90s and 360 in 2000s.

#### ***Did the ratio of deaths and injuries increase in journalistic world of crimes from 1970s to 2000s?***

##### **Number of Casualties**

**1970s:** Detailed content analysis of the sampled newspapers reflected that in the journalistic world of crime, 71 (93.4%) people were reportedly injured while 73 (96%) lost their lives in Dec. 1976 only.

**1980s:** In the journalistic world of crime, 2001 (32%) people were reportedly injured while 993 (16%) lost their lives in Dec. 1986.

**1990s:** In the journalistic world of crime, 346 (9%) people were reportedly injured while 220 (5.8%) lost their lives in a month.

**2000s:** In the violent world of newspapers, 289 people were reportedly injured while 382 lost their lives in a month

**Thus if we compare the number of injuries in the journalistic world of news reports,**

we find that it is increased markedly from 71 in 70s to 2001 in 80s reduced to still higher number of 346 injuries in 90s and further lower number of 289 wounded in the decade of 2000s in the reported news items.

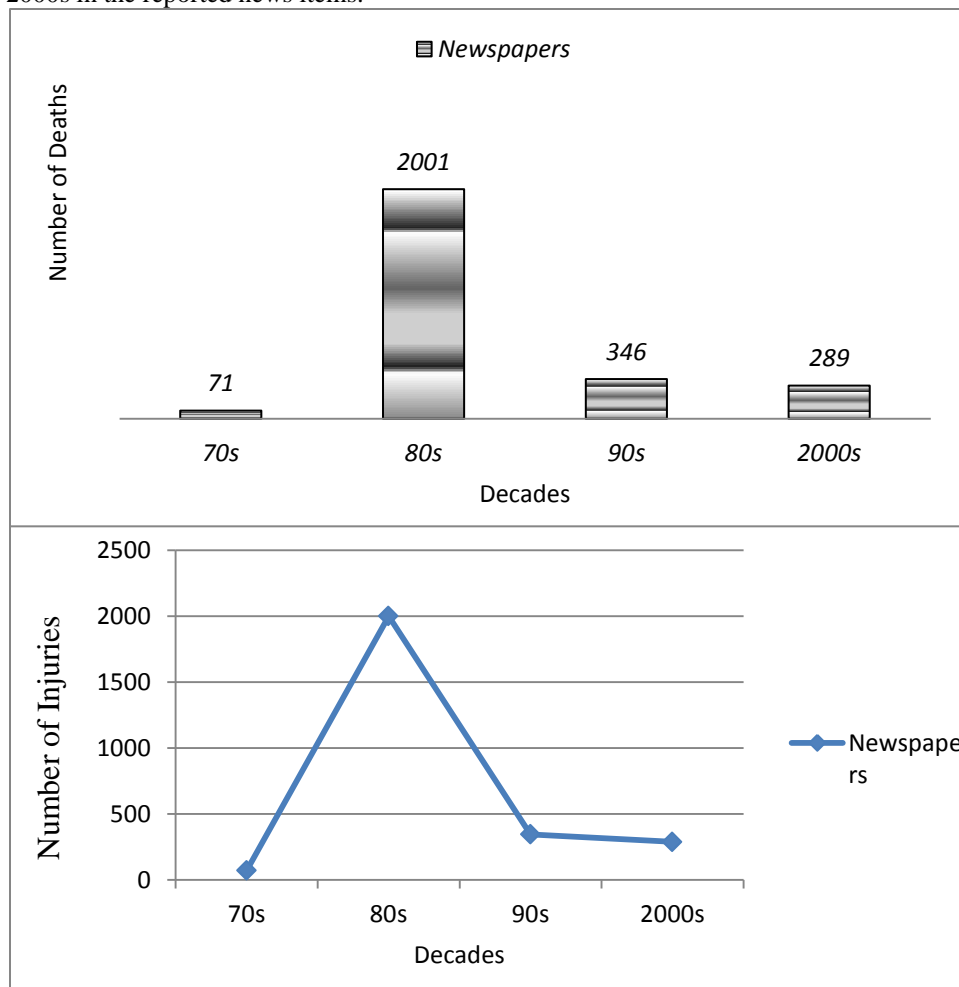


Fig 1 shows Number of Injuries in Newspapers in the decades of 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s

#### Number of Deaths:

In the real and reported news of crimes, it was extraordinarily increased from 73 in 70s to 993 in 80s perhaps because of communal riots and socio-political anarchy in the country. By the decade of 90s, it lowered down to 220 in 90s and then increased again to 382 in 2000s.

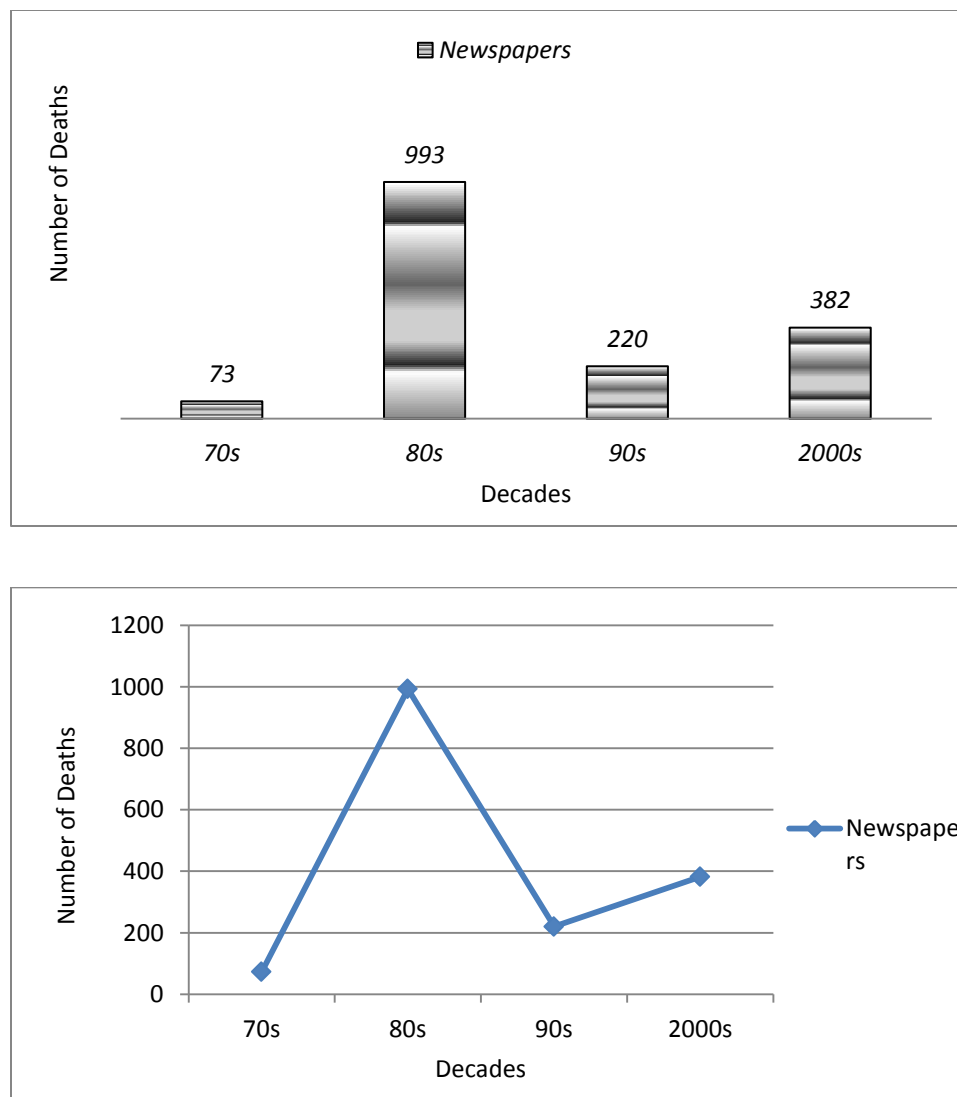


Fig. 2 represents Number of Deaths in Newspapers from 1970s to 2000s

### Treatment of Violence

#### *Are these crimes reported graphically or objectively across the four decades?*

In 1970s, total 30 (39.47%) stories were reported graphically, covering the incidents in detail mostly with double, triple and sometimes even four and five column headings exposing the severity of incidents through pictures, boxes or/and sensational phrases and adjectives. On the contrary, 46 (60.52%) news items received non-graphic, subtle or skeptical treatment

It can be evaluated from the results that reported news had relatively objective approach towards such casualties in yesteryears. The ratio of graphic and non-graphic treatment thus fluctuated from 39:61 in 1970s 47:53 in 80s, to 35:65 in 90s and 52:48 in 2000s. The figures reflect that the gory and detailed depiction of violence got almost doubled in the current decade.

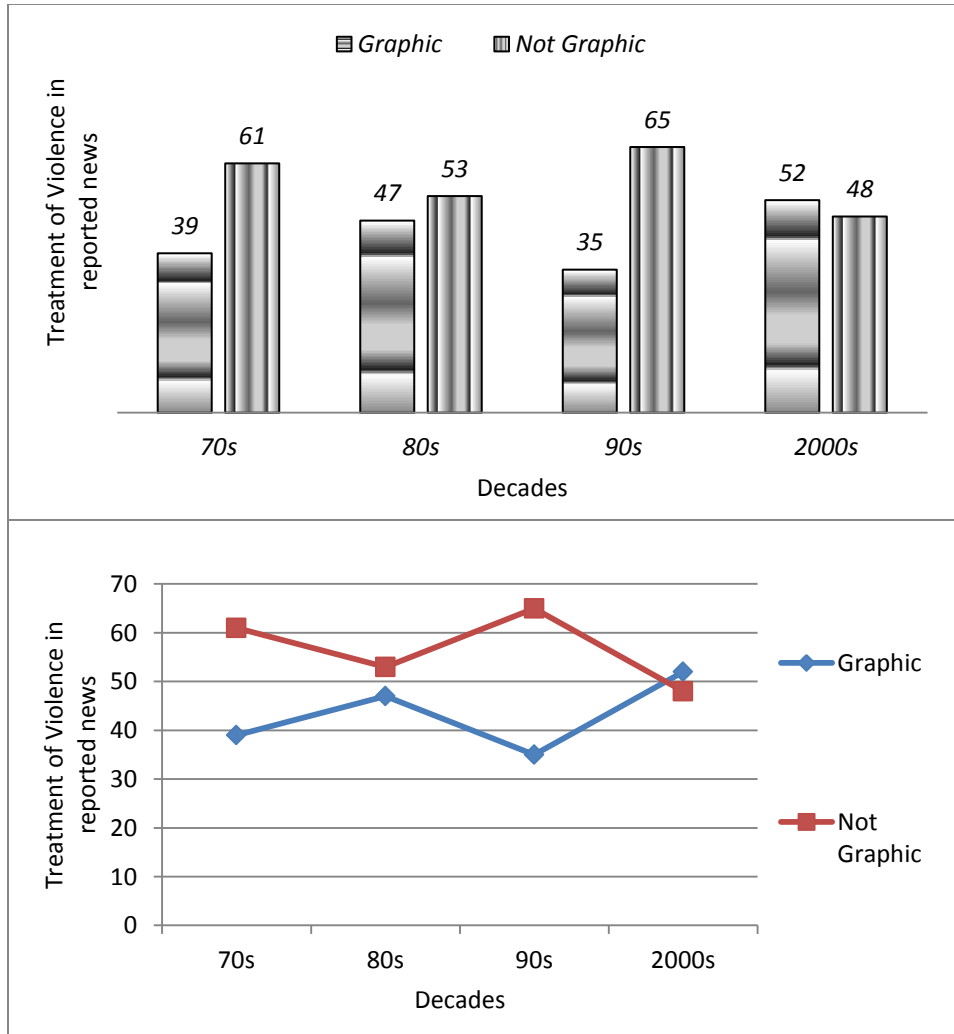


Fig 3 exhibits Treatment of Violence and Crime Stories in Newspapers in the decades of 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s

**Is there any correlation between the rate of crimes in reported news items and Pakistani society drawn from the crime statistics of Bureau of Police Research and Development in Pakistan?**

Findings reveal that total number of crimes reported and recorded by Bureau of Police Research is much greater than the reported crime news perhaps because journalists usually cover major and unusual criminal incidents considering their news value and available news hole for such stories on daily basis. Despite marked difference, real life crimes per thousand of population seem to be close to the number of crime reports published in Jang monthly. Though except 1970s, in rest of the three decades of 1980s, 1990s and 2000s crime reports covered in sampled newspaper of one month appear to be relatively higher in number compared to real-life crimes calculated per thousand of population in the same decade.

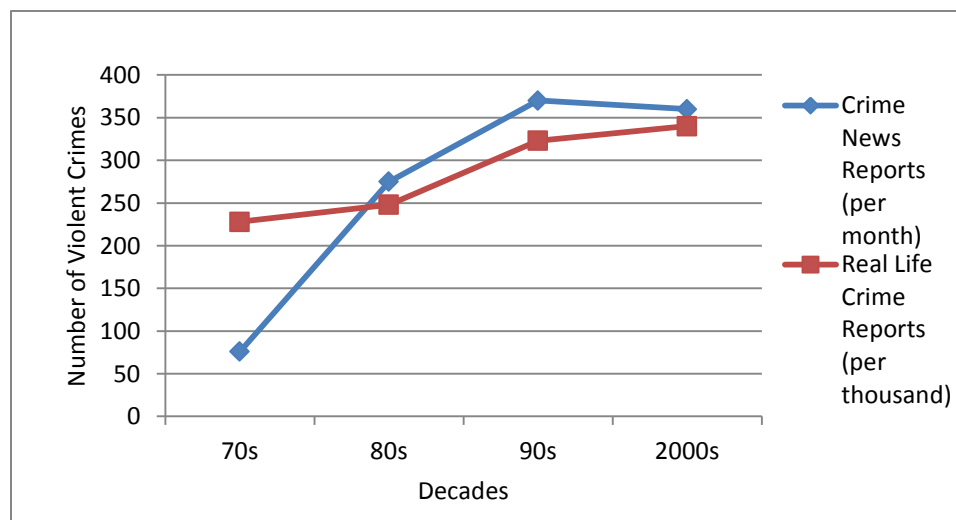
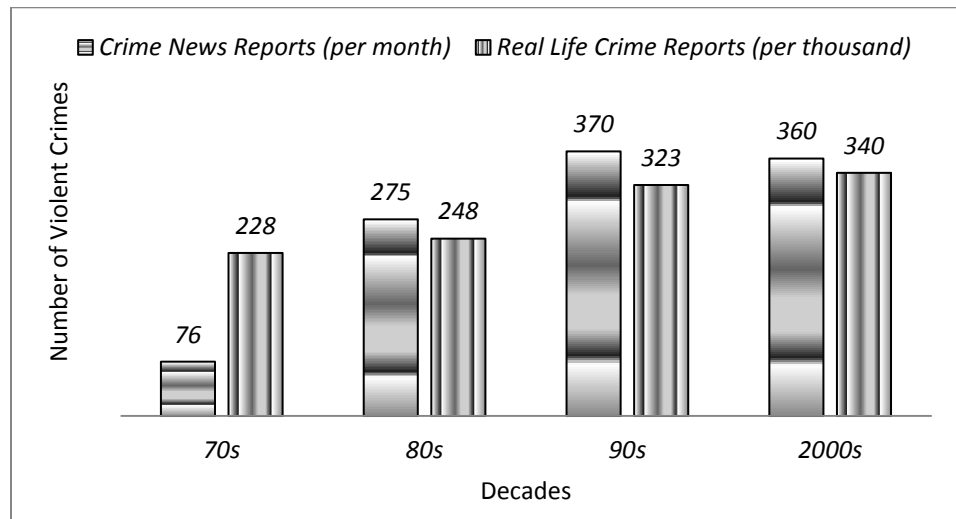


Figure 4 exhibits Number of Violent Crimes in Sample Newspapers and in Real Life (per thousand of population) as reported by Bureau of Police Research and Development, Pakistan (2010) in the four decades of 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s under study

Crime Rate in reported news (which was estimated by calculating the percentage of crime stories in the total number of news items covered in the sample) exhibit shocking increase especially from 1980s to 1990s which reduced markedly by 2000s, though still higher than the 70s and 80s.

On the other hand, crime statistics of bureau of police research reflect curvilinear growth in Pakistani society which was somewhat symmetrical to crime news (though at much higher scale) in the first two decades of 70s and 80s but fluctuate independently unlike the news reports in the last two decades of 90s and 2000s.

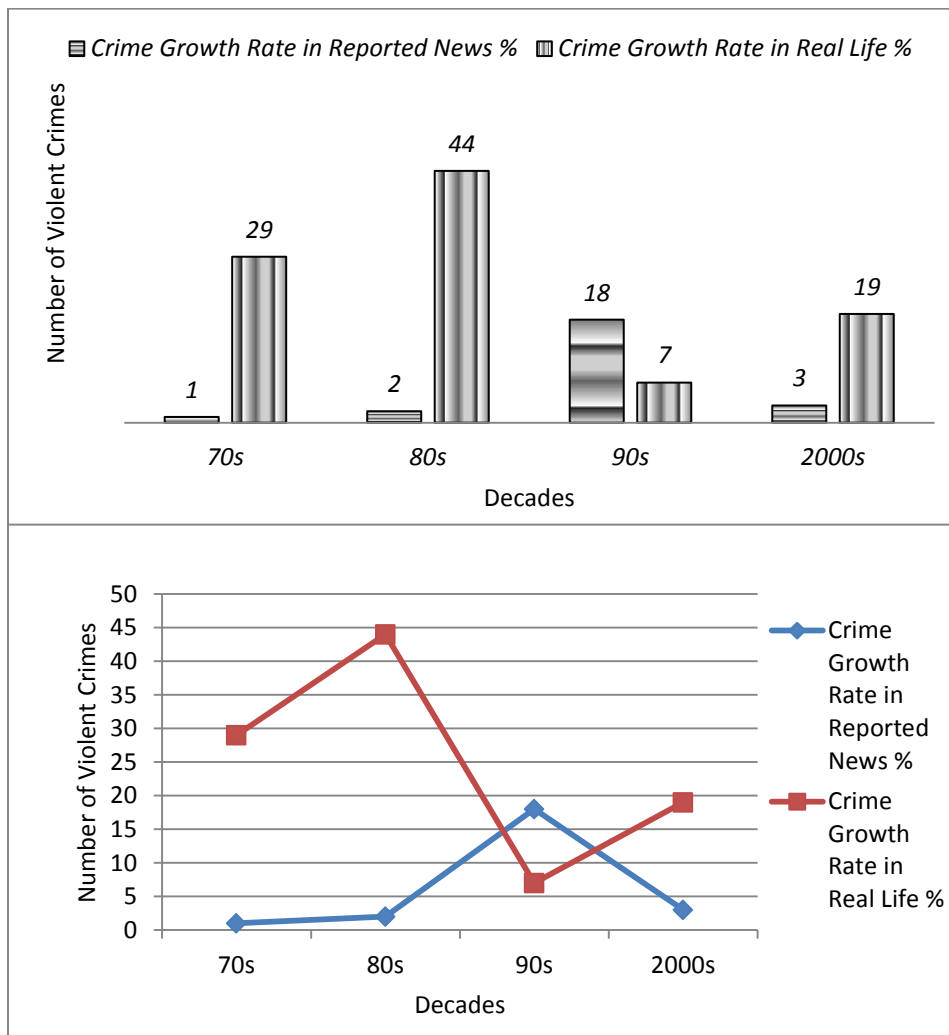


Figure 5 exhibits Crime Growth Rate in Sample Newspapers and in Real Life per thousand of population) as reported by Bureau of Police Research and Development, Pakistan in the four decades of 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s examined

**Table 1: Population and Crime Growth Rate in Pakistan (1947-2011)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Population in Millions</b>	<b>Total No. of Crimes Reported</b>	<b>Crime Growth Rate (%)</b>	<b>Crime per thousand of Population</b>
1947	31	73105	--	--
1951	33.82	76519	--	226
1958	38.12	81124	6.02	212
1961	42.97	79900	-1.51	185
1966	51.98	93633	17.19	180
1971	62.88	129679	38.50	206
1976	72.12	167032	28.80	228
1981	83.84	152782	8.53	215
1986	97.67	220035	44.02	248
1991	112.61	403078	83.19	257
1998	133.61	431854	7.14	323
2000	139.76	388909	-9.94	278
2003	149.03	400680	3.03	267
2005	153.96	453264	13.12	294
2007	158.17	538048	18.71	340
2009	180	603,626	15	--
2011	187	28,823 January only	--	--

*Note.* Source: Bureau of Police Research and Development; Pakistan Economic Survey (as cited by Cillani)<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Crime growth rate and crime per thousand of population are unavailable in some years including 1947, 1951, 2009 & 2011

Evaluating crimes in isolation either in society or in reported news is irrelevant. The available statistics (mentioned in table 1, as cited by Gillani, Rehman and Gill) reflect a comparison to reveal that “the total crime cases registered in 1947 at the time of Independence were 73,105, which doubled to 129,679 in 1971. It further rose to 167,032 by 1976. Later there was even faster growth in crime rate especially after 1980. The total number of reported crimes during the decade from 1980 to 1990 almost doubled from 152,782 to 403,078.”<sup>28</sup>

Nadeem mentioned that Crime population ratio indicates that “in 1966, 180 offences were reported per 100,000 populations. By the year 1991, it increased to 257 per 100,000 populations, which exhibits an increase of 40%. The situation further worsened in 1998 when the reported offences increased to 323 per 100,000 persons.”<sup>29</sup>

Bureau of Police Research and Development Pakistan, however, noted that “while the overall crime growth rate reflects an alarming increase in violent offences, number of crime per 100,000 populations didn’t seem to be that higher till 1998 and it remained lower than 300 from 1998 to 2005 but the year 2007 witnessed a noticeable increase to 340. It reflects that the crime per 100,000 might not really representative of the true picture of crime scene in the country.”<sup>30</sup>

According to Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “The 1980s witnessed a steady rise in the number of crimes. This led to rampant fears among the Pakistanis as social security was scarring the quality of life and making its citizens think otherwise about their country’s future.”<sup>31</sup>

It was statistically proven that the crime rate exceeded 4% whereas the population growth was merely 3% in the first half of 80s. The government called for drastic measures which included imposing martial law. The situation on the international border was also tense, where the Soviet-Afghan War had an indirect impact on the Pakistani economy. There was a sudden inflow of Afghan refugees and the economy was submerged under massive financial pressure. This transfusion facilitated narcotics trading, illegal arms smuggling, kidnapping for ransom, etc. Crime flourished in the country since then and it became a challenge for the subsequent governments to cope with the shenanigans of foreign citizens.

*In the decade of 1990s criminal violence rocked the tranquility of the nation. Since the war in Afghanistan, Pakistan has been flooded with illegal weapons. Kidnapping for*

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Nadeem, A. H. (2002). *Pakistan: The Political Economy of Lawlessness*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>30</sup> UN office on Drugs & Crime, Center for International Crime Prevention. (2007). *Seventh United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems*. Ministry of Interior, Islamabad: Bureau of Police Research & Development. [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Seventh-United-Nations-survey-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Seventh-United-Nations-survey-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html).

<sup>31</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (1984)



*ransom and open warfare in Karachi was rampant. It became so dangerous that in May 1992 the military has to be summoned to control the delirious happenings of the city and captured criminals and terrorists along with loads of unauthorized weapons at their disposal. Criminal activity has heightened at all levels of society since close ties were found between law breakers and political parties that prevented the law enforcing agencies from doing their job. Crime has been multiplied by almost 50 percent in the decade of 2000. These figures exclude terrorism which is a repercussion of post 9/11 policies (Gillani Rehman & Gill).*<sup>32</sup>

Abbasi (2010) added that the crime figures demonstrate that “in the year 1998 the number of countrywide registered crime was 431,854, which rose to 538,048 till 2007 at the rate of 18.7 per cent. These figures didn’t include kidnapping and car theft. By the end of 2009 it touched the figure of 603,626, which is 15 per cent increase from 2007. From January 2000 till December 2007, the overall crime rate of the country increased by 29% whereas between 2008 and 2009, the crime increased by 15 per cent.”<sup>33</sup>

It is shocking to note that the “annual population growth rate has been lower than the crime growth rate in Pakistan since 1951 despite the fact that data includes reported crimes only. On the other hand, number of unreported crimes is roughly speculated to be around 30-50% percent in the country” (UN office on Drugs & Crime, Center for International Crime Prevention).<sup>34</sup>

The constantly increasing crime rate in Pakistani Society makes sense only when we analyze it in reference to the socio-political scenario of its times. As Kunczik discovered that though “majority of viewers will remain unaffected, portrayal of violence on media might adversely influence a few inclined, predisposed young males in the environment in which violence is a routine experience”.<sup>35</sup>

The decade of 70s was an era of multiple conflicts and crises between and within India and Pakistan including the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, Bangladesh Liberation War, and the Indian Emergency 1975–1977. The general elections in 1970 in Pakistan, consequential split between East and West Pakistan, India’s attack on Dhaka and separation of Bangladesh were bloody episodes that marred the national history. In the remaining half of the country well known as the West Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took oath as the prime minister of the country. Bhutto’s oath restored lost confidence of the shaken state with his visionary approach, active foreign policy and mutually agreed constitution; first as the civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator and then as the prime minister for a short period. However his removal and arrest with imposition of martial

<sup>32</sup> Gillani, Rehman & Gill, 2009, pp.79-98.

<sup>33</sup> Abbasi, A. (2010, March 23). *The 10-year crime picture gets dirtier*. Retrieved December 2010, from Pakistan Herald.com- the voice of silent majority: <http://pakistanherald.com/Articles/The-10-year-crime-picture-gets-dirtier-2261>.

<sup>34</sup> Kunczik, M. (April 2003). *Recent Research on Media & Violence; Media Violence & Challenges facing Modern Societies*. UNESCO. Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development; UNESCO, 19-35.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.19

law in 1977 ultimately led to Bhutto's judicial murder in 1979 and imposition of Zia's Marshal Law that continued for eleven long years and resulted into an extremely volatile social scenario infected with lawlessness, violence and crimes.

By the end of the nineties, army once again removed the elected government from power and reined the control of the state. It was the same time when Pakistan was involved as a frontline ally of America in War on Terror which turned the country into one of the most dangerous places to live in by the twenty first century. Thus the reported crimes data endorses our assumption that the reported news reflects the occurrence of crime and its growth in native society to some extent and can be taken as an indication of the real crime scene despite the fact that many violent crimes might never get reported both in media as well as in police stations.