



MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL OF CRIME AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION TOWARD THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

YASIR ALEEM¹, SANAN WAHEED KHAN², SAIMA JAMROZE³

ABSTRACT

Media attention and public sentiment on crime and the criminal justice system, both have been widely researched in the academic community. Because representations in the media of court systems have the power to change public perceptions of institutions, that have substantial relevance in terms of the practices used in crime control model. It has been shown in the majority of this study, which has used quantitative approaches, that attitudes and streaming media are correlated. Even if there has been a highly significant relationship, it has not been shown that it is the causation of any damage. The challenges in establishing a causal relationship between media coverage of crime and public perceptions of the criminal justice system really shouldn't, dissuade us from pursuing our investigations. It is preferable to look for more comprehensive explanations for the formation of public opinion and the media's participation in it, rather than depending just on statistical data to guide our reasoning. Focus groups were employed in this study to learn how and how much individuals depend on the media when it comes to understanding crime and judging judicial systems. The purpose of this research was to explore the impact of the media on public perceptions regarding the criminal justice system. Students from University of Sargodha were asked to participate in a focus group.

Keywords: media, criminal justice system, public perception, focus group, university students, Pakistan

JEL Codes: L82, K14

I. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the sociological examination of crime victims and victimization that takes place in the context of the media and media portrayals (Nygaard, 2019). The media is an important resource for people wanting to promote a specific viewpoint on crime victims or to question established viewpoints. It is also an important resource for policymakers aiming to ensure legitimacy and support of new legislation impacting crime victims. As a result, this chapter is critical in that it acknowledges the media as one of the key resources through which the ideas of crime, victim, and victimization are given meaning in modern society (Intravia & Pickett, 2019). It will look in particular at known work on the formation of crime news, media production and reception, and the rising prominence of the visual in contemporary society. Societal theory has a special late-modern relevance in the context of the 24-hour news media sphere and the enormous media and social attention that surrounds severe and high-profile crimes, particularly in Pakistan. However, mass media, is a strong socialization weapon, and it should be treated as such. It is critical in the dissemination of information and, as a result, has the potential to impact people's perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes (Korver-Glenn et al., 2020). While Pakistani media portrays gendered conceptions, it also reflects the country's specific cultural influences, which include Islamic characteristics and a long history of coexistence with the Hindu majority culture. The relationship between crime and the public's perception of it is critical in developing a criminal justice system. The news media have an important role in public politics, and coverage of crime news stories serves to set the agenda and strengthen support for punishing measures. People have always been captivated by deviant behavior, despite the fact that they are continuously vilified by those who engage in these activities (Pickett et al., 2015). The information provided by the mass media demonstrates just how widespread this ravenous interest in crime has become among the people of these mass communities. Crime and deviance have become an indispensable narrative for consumption, whether it be in our daily news broadcasts, movies, reality shows, fiction, video games, or entertainment (Intravia et al., 2020). This has prompted societies to study the relationship between the media and crime,

¹ Lecturer; College of Law, University of Sargodha; Email: yasir.aleem@uos.edu.pk

² Research Fellow; School of Communication, University Putra Malaysia, 43400, Selangor, Malaysia; Email: sannankharal@gmail.com

³ National College of Business Administration and Economics, Email: saima_jamroze@hotmail.com

which has resulted in a slew of disagreements about the media's impact on people and on criminal activity. This article will examine the connection between the media and crime and will offer some of the most significant theoretical approaches that have been developed to address this issue, including the media effects hypothesis from both a psychological and a sociological perspective (Deuchar et al., 2020). The next section will explain what makes a story noteworthy and how the media portrays criminals and their crimes based on variables such as age, gender, color, and socioeconomic status in order to demonstrate these points further (Dolliver et al., 2018).

The impact of media depictions of crime and criminal justice has caught the interest of a growing sociologists, legal experts, and media researchers. As Korver-Glenn et al., (2020) reminds out that since they are "forcedly wed," the media, crime, and criminal justice must all be scrutinized together (Wood & Gannon, 2013). The scientific community throughout the globe generally agrees that crime is an extensively covered problem with ramifications for public views of illegal acts and criminal justice (Dolliver et al., 2018; Wood & Gannon, 2013). Regardless of statistics, the media creates a picture of a society where crime is commonplace and rising at an astonishing rate. The media, it is often said, misrepresents the nature of crime. Tabloid newspapers and commercial television program often portray violent crimes as the usual, exposing a large number of individuals on a regular basis to stories concerning homicide, rape, and drug abuse (Pickett et al., 2015). For decades, the media has focused on crime (Dolliver et al., 2018; Wood & Gannon, 2013). In the European countries, (Miethe et al., 2019) found that almost 65 percent of the 101 news networks studied began with a criminal story. Similar patterns have been seen in other western cultures, such as the UK, where increasing crime reporting has been observed after World War II (Gray, 2013; Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008). Similar trends have been noticed in Sweden since the 1960s and in Finland since the late 1970s (Roberts & Doob, 1990). Crime, especially violent crime, is therefore a crucial "selling" point for various media sources competing for readers and viewers. It should come as no surprise that this has prompted inquiries into how this could influence people's views of crime in general. Many media users, according to Ash and Poyker (2019) tend to believe that the picture of crime that the media portrays ultimately becomes their perception of reality, so indirectly affecting the criminal policies of many industrialized countries. Similarly, as a result of the fast technological advancements in most Western cultures, the media landscape has seen substantial transformations during the last several decades (Choi et al., 2020). Furthermore, Hsieh and Boateng, (2015) both note that the number of alternative information channels and means to obtain information has grown significantly. The number of sources of information on crime has thus increased as a result of this expansion as well. Beyond classic types of crime, social concerns such as terrorism have also grown more prominent in many western cultures, significantly broadening the media environment of the present day.

Due to the wide range of diverse channels of violence in the news that are now available on a daily basis, the issue arises as to how the present cross-media landscape resonates with the fear of violence (Hsieh & Boateng, 2015; Kort-Butler & Habecker, 2018). Pakistan, like many Asian cultures, has actually seen a so-called crime decrease phenomena in recent decades in relation to many conventional kinds of criminal activity, despite the fact that criminality continued to play a major media role this is an interesting question to consider further (Baranauskas, 2022). In recent years, homicide rates in Pakistan, as well as in other Asian countries, have experienced a dramatic upswing (Gilmour, 2022). Other kinds of violence have remained stable in recent years whereas juvenile offending has reached an all-time low (Baranauskas & Drakulich, 2018). At the same time, empirical research has fallen short of presenting clear proof of a causal relationship between the media, public opinion, and people's behaviors – or even attitudes toward the media – in a variety of situations. To be more precise, there is some evidence, though it does not seem to be systematic or very substantial, that media consumption is associated with attitudes about crime and justice. Furthermore, whether or not this association is causal in nature has been heavily debated for quite some time (Martin, 2018; Shachar et al., 2020). It's not clear whether this means that the media are less influential and powerful than previously thought. Media coverage of crime and punishment has little or no impact on public perception? As we'll see in this issue's focus on procedural fairness, these issues are important to consider. Media depictions may act as a mediator between the public's perception of justice institutions and their actual behavior (Martin, 2018; Shachar et al., 2020). It is unacceptable when the media delivers inaccurate or distorted images of the judicial process, this might have a significant influence on public faith in the court system. Although the media have an impact on people's opinions, it is not always a direct and overpowering one: it is filtered via societal and individual interpretation processes, and it is plainly just one of the numerous factors that form people's ideas on certain problems. Through qualitative research approaches, we hoped to add to the conversation on crime and media by doing audience research, which is generally underutilized in crime and media studies, and evaluating the outcome (such as focus groups). Paul Lazarsfeld's two-step flow model looks to be capable of conceiving the media influence in a sophisticated and flexible way, and we believe that this is the case., thus we interpret our findings in this perspective (Lee & Pyun, 2022).

II. MEDIA, CRIMINALITY, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: VIEWPOINTS

The concept of 'effects' is often debated in crime, criminal justice, and media literature, among other places. We may hypothesize that the most significant media impact is on attitudes about crime and the tradition of criminalizing behavior. The media asserts that since the majority of media information is dominated by crime and immorality, it may foster deviant conduct among people. (Martin, 2018; Nix et al., 2021). Psychiatrist Fredric Wertham is most likely the one who first proposed the "direct effects" hypothesis. His research, which was carried out in the mid-1950s, concentrated on the influence of crime comics and television on children's thinking and conduct. Despite criticism Harris et al. (2022) the central concept of Wertham's work has been carried further, for example, in media campaigns against violence that have been launched in a number of countries. It is believed the media exaggerates or overstates antisocial conduct; this increases our fear of crime, which may lead to stronger state control and harsher punitive measures, according to the moral panic tradition. In order to define a reaction by the majority of the population that is based on inaccurate or exaggerated ideas driven by mass media bias, I coined the word "moral panic." (Graziano, 2019).

A significant volume of research demonstrates that people's increased fear of crime is linked to exposure to crime stories in the media on a regular basis (Graziano, 2019; Smith, 2022). A third approach, which may be called "social constructivism," has emerged as a response to the criminogenic tradition's focus on behavior and the moral panic approach's capacity to explain the political ramifications of particular periods of media coverage of crime and control (Button, 2022). This approach is concerned with the social construction of reality. However, it should be highlighted that, although reaching differing results, all of these techniques are predicated on the Western European countries, the presumption is that most people have never had any direct experience with criminality (Graziano, 2019). It is suggested that for them, the media is one of the most essential sources of knowledge regarding what behaviors we perceive to be unlawful or immoral are taking place in our society. Social constructivists are interested in detecting and understanding social constructs, as well as the processes through which humans gain knowledge and perceive reality (Intravia et al., 2018).

According to conventional wisdom in big, industrialized, and post-modern countries, the media predominates in the production of knowledge, viewpoints, and beliefs about reality (Intravia et al., 2018; Korver-Glenn et al., 2020). It's also worth noting that social constructivists deny the existence of a uniform and direct media influence (such as that in the criminogenic media practice). In their view, media are a patchwork from which we may create our own personal reality (Korver-Glenn et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the premise is that the media may have an impact on public perceptions of crime and justice. George Gerbner's "cultivation hypothesis," which he developed to define the impact of media consumption, is described here in particular. According to Gerbner's research, people who watch a lot of television (more than 3 hours a day) are more likely than those who watch a lot of television to feel that they live in a violent and crime-ridden society. Gerbner's cultivation theory, which asserts that intensive media usage cultivates attitudes that are more in line with the world of television than with the world of real life, is highlighted by the media influence on attitudes (Harris et al., 2022).

In conclusion, it seems likely that the media has a role in influencing public perceptions of crime and the judicial system. This job, on the other hand, is difficult to understand and conceive. Increased media consumption (especially television news and tabloid media) is connected with an increase in violence, anxiety and a more punitive attitude toward criminality, according to researchers (Deuchar et al., 2020). Only a few studies clearly link media consumption to believe in justice, although some results suggest that media consumption does influence believe in judicial systems (Intravia et al., 2020). Some statistically significant links between media consumption and fear of crime, trust in the judicial system, and punitive sentiments were found in our early analysis of the pilot test (Deuchar et al., 2020). No one should be surprised by the correlation between increased media exposure and increased fear of crime and punitive views.

III. AGENDA SETTING ROLE OF MEDIA

It's all about the media's role in shaping public perceptions of reality, and how this affects how people view it. The seminal research on voting by Leppänen and Liefverink, (2022) emphasizes that the media prioritizes some topics over others, or by broadcasting a considerable number of news broadcasts pertaining to certain policy areas while ignoring others. Media may successfully set the public agenda by consistently and shamelessly highlighting a few subjects in their news coverage, according to McCombs and Shaw's Chapel Hill research. As a result of Feezell, (2018) work, we may better understand the 'broad collection of concerns that are transmitted in a hierarchy of priority at any given moment' (Koop et al., 2022). The media bring attention to certain parts of politics while disregarding others by focusing

on one subject. Governing requires the consent of those it governs, and it is widely held that policymakers should not consider acts that go beyond their mandate (Guo & Vargo, 2020).

IV. PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE ARE SHAPED BY THE MEDIA

Public opinion and public policy are both influenced by media coverage of the criminal justice system. According to Choi et al., (2020) 24-hour news coverage of criminal concerns contributes to a fearful culture. As a result, media depictions may have a detrimental impact on public views of crime and crime prevention strategies. Violent crime is shown in the media, which leads to a greater awareness of crime and justice, which in turn influences public policy. Crime prevention experts underline the need of long-term activity and a sound diagnosis that takes into consideration the complexity of the crime. White-collar and environmental crimes are two examples cited by (Regehr et al., 2022) of crimes that go unreported by the Pakistani media. Because of the politicization of crime, which leads to incorrect perceptions of crime and ill-advised policy choices, crime control programs are unsuccessful, he points out. The development of criminal justice policy is heavily influenced by public opinion (Button, 2022; Regehr et al., 2022) on crime and punishment. In order for justice to be properly implemented, the public must have faith in the Criminal Justice System. The media influences public perceptions of crime and punishment (Wozniak et al., 2021). As a result of media-fueled misunderstandings about crime and punishment, the public has lost faith in the criminal justice system. A stronger penalty for criminals is thus demanded by the public (Schneider, 2022).

Schneider, (2022) assert that the public and the media are always fixated on crime. Crime stories have a ready audience and have been a popular cultural issue throughout the twentieth century because of the extensive coverage of crime in the media. The first step in advancing a public policy is to acknowledge that a problem exists (Choi et al., 2020). Pre-policy phases include issue formulation, policy demand, and agenda formation. Media coverage of crime may boost newspaper circulation, but it ultimately affects public perception of it as a major societal issue (Button, 2022; Regehr et al., 2022). Depending on the definitions of crime employed in a community, the percentage of media material that is loaded with crime tales might vary widely. He and his colleagues researched 'the social deviance and how media engage in developing it' (Deuchar et al., 2020). To be deviant is to act in ways that are "outside of the usual course of business" or "in defiance of accepted standards of conduct and common sense." What makes anything noteworthy to journalists is its deviance. Reality television and other types of infotainments mirror the entertainment industry's concentration on crime tales in the mainstream media (Intravia et al., 2020; Korver-Glenn et al., 2020). There is a lot of emphasis on crime stories and depictions in all mainstream media.

V. PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS

V.I. FEAR OF CRIME AND NEWS CONSUMPTION

In the last several decades, much study has been done on the connection between the frequency with which people read about crime and their overall degree of dread of it. Traditional media has been the focus of a lot of the previous study. Fear of crime is linked to the amount of time people spend watching crime news, according to the research (Intravia et al., 2018; Korver-Glenn et al., 2020). According to Graziano, (2019) who summarizes the current studies, there is a strong link between people's reported fear of crime and their willingness to report crimes. As one of the most prominent experts on the subject, David Altheide believes that the media has had a significant impact on the development of what he calls "the language of dread" (Smith, 2022).

Prior study has likewise generally concentrated on the role of the conventional media, with very little previous research on the contemporary cross media ecosystem, as has been highlighted (Martin, 2018; Nix et al., 2021). Even if Shachar et al., (2020) has stated that fear of crime is, in a manner, also going through the digitization process, this still seems to be the case. It has been shown that the use of the internet as a source of crime news does not lead to an increased fear of crime, but local television does. Additionally, Gilmour, (2022) showed that although crime-related social media usage did not have a significant connection with fear of crime, the researchers saw this as a perplexing conclusion when employing campus samples.

V.II. NEWS AVOIDANCE AND CONSUMPTION IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Understanding how much people's real conduct is influenced by how often they consume crime news is an important part of studying the effect. As a result of their fear or concern about crime, what precautions are taken? When it comes to avoiding specific regions at various times, one of the most important aspects of a person's behavior is whether or not he or she consumes news about crime (e.g., Kort-Butler & Habecker, 2018). There has been study done on the connection between avoidance behavior and the danger of victimization (Ash & Poyker, 2019; Hsieh & Boateng, 2015). Crime news consumption, on the other hand, hasn't been the subject of much study. Roberts & Doob, (1990)

evaluated the impact of crime news consumption on both fear of crime and possible avoidance behavior by focusing on print media and television news.

VI. METHODOLOGY

VII. THE FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH

We conducted a qualitative audience research study with the help of focus groups. It is true that individuals get signals from the media in many different ways, but most studies fail to take into account how people acquire, evaluate, and filter the information they receive. Crime and media studies have this commonality. According to popular belief, young people are the demographic most susceptible to the influence of the media (Gray, 2013; Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008). As a result, adolescent perceptions of themselves and the world around them are greatly influenced by the vast media universe that broadcast media. Television violence is now widely accepted as a cause of aggressive or antisocial behavior, oppressive dread of crime, and overly punitive attitudes among young people. This lack of empirical knowledge regarding the perspectives of young people on crime and criminal justice has surprised us (Haider and Ali, 2015; Sajid and Ali, 2018; Miethe et al., 2019; Ali and Bibi, 2020; Senturk and Ali, 2021). It piqued our curiosity to see how today's youth frame crime and justice-related topics. Because of this, we figured that their structures would have some resemblance to the media. We also questioned them about the role of the media in educating the public in general.

The University of Sargodha, which is located in Punjab, Pakistan, is one of the largest government-funded universities in the country. As a result, three focus groups comprising students from UOS aged 18–23 have been contacted between the 15th of January and the 15th of March in the year 2022. They were selected as volunteers to represent Pakistan's higher education system at the University of Sargodha Punjab, where they represented a diverse variety of fields (BS undergraduate students). There was a total of 26 individuals in present.

Group no. 1:

- Students from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law's undergraduate program
- born in the years 1998/2000
- Males only.
- individuals of Sargodha and its suburbs
- The family's socioeconomic position is low middle class

Group no. 2:

- students from the Faculty of Management's undergraduate program
- born in the years 1998/2000
- mixed sex with a preponderance of females
- individuals of Sargodha and its suburbs
- middle-class social status

Group no. 3:

- undergraduates from the Pure Sciences Department
- born in the years 1998/2000
- female dominance in mixed sex
- individuals of Sargodha and its suburbs
- Social class is considered to be below middle class

Researchers requested participants to complete a brief questionnaire on their media consumption habits prior to initiating the interviews and focus groups.

VII. RESULTS

VII.I. MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND ATTITUDES

For the most part, our participants didn't watch a lot of television, although they did watch a few crimes shows like Crime patrol and Cops. Interviewees favored sitcoms, sports, reality shows, and the cartoons on Music Television despite viewing a lot of television (2–3 hours a day on average). Politics and current events have little appeal to them. They instead sought out amusement. When it comes to their media consumption habits, our interviewees seemed to be entirely satisfied with the results of our study. There was a general lack of faith in the media among the survey participants. Journalists were criticized by all three groups for their lack of knowledge, talent, and even morality. But participants said that the media has significant influence on people's minds and may manipulate viewers. The media, on the other hand, had a direct impact on how people acted and thought, according to our interviewees (especially children and elderly people). This technique didn't work for them, they said; they only accepted media items or messages as genuine if they aligned with their pre-existing ideas on a subject. It's possible that some of these ideas are

based on personal experience, but the majority of the time they are based on interpersonal exchanges with our colleagues or close relatives (e.g., "my aunt had a case," "as it occurred to my brother") discuss their own experiences, ideas, and viewpoints on certain topics. Direct ways of communication, such as social media and text messaging, seem to have a bigger impact than indirect methods of communication, such as the media.

VII.I. FEAR OF CRIME

Those who participated strongly agreed that crime was a major issue in Pakistan. They thought that violence had become more common in the last decade than it had in the past. Serious physical injury, homicide, and sexual assault are only a few instances that were cited. It was clear to them that they were at risk of being victims of violent crime (Graziano et al., 2010; Wood & Gannon, 2013). Some of them had previously been subjected to minor attacks before they came to the conference. Fights with minor injuries, such as the one that occurred at the restaurant where I was dining with several friends, are examples of this. The police were not notified of the incident. Some of them had observed crimes, such as drug trafficking, corruption, and theft, among others. Most of our participants agreed that crime and rural people were linked. In their perspective, the entire Pakistani rural community was involved in criminal activity, and they supported strong penalties for anyone who broke the law. The majority of those who took part in our research had minimal knowledge of the criminal justice system. It was difficult for them to form views on the criminal justice system's public defenders and judges since they were unfamiliar with their job (Dolliver et al., 2018). They, on the other hand, were quite specific in their assessments of police activity, despite the fact that most participants had just a few personal encounters with the police. There was an abundance of common information and ideas that they drew from their own experiences and those of others.

VII.II. CONFIDENCE

There was a general agreement that the criminal justice system was not working properly. Neither they nor society at large believed that the criminal justice system could provide enough protection against crime. Neither effective nor efficient, the system operated at a glacial pace. The police, they said, only captured the smaller fish, while the larger ones escaped. Cars and street stops, as well as disco rounds, were thought to be the system's primary emphasis. The system was impotent in more severe crimes, such as domestic violence (Pickett et al., 2015). The community has a widespread distrust of law enforcement. There was also a highly negative image of the police owing to a lack of technical infrastructure and a lack of personnel. Procedural fairness was also brought up throughout the discussion. The overwhelming majority of persons who took part in the study agreed that police officers' tone and manner of communication were lacking. Both the police's use of unnecessarily bureaucratic jargon and their lack of regard for citizens were criticized. Laws and regulations, according to the panelists often contradict common sense (Intravia & Pickett, 2019). They held the view that laws are not strict enough to prevent criminals. They were in favour of imposing harsher penalties on criminals. Even though participants expressed their dissatisfaction with what they perceived as overly generous protections for criminals' rights (in the form of convoluted codes of practice and legal requirements), they expected a similar level of procedural correctness and fairness from the police in their own interactions with them.

VII.III. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS

There was surprisingly little difference in views and understanding of crime and criminal justice between the two groups. Members of Group 1 had more first-hand contact with crime and the police as a consequence of their lower social standing than members of Group 2. They said that police officers often stopped them while driving or walking along the street, which they considered to be a nuisance and a source of frustration. Because of this, some of them were subjected to criminal inquiry by the police department. Participants in Groups 2 and 3 lacked the same level of first-hand knowledge as those in Group 1. This means that people's views are shaped by social processes rather than their own personal experiences, because of the homogeneity in beliefs across groups.

VIII. DISCUSSION

In spite of their restricted media consumption and media critical attitudes, our focus group participants used a discourse on crime and criminal justice that is similar to the mainstream media discourse (based on results from a media frame analysis) (Miethe et al., 2019; Wood & Gannon, 2013). In Pakistan, there is rampant violence, and life is considerably more dangerous than it was in the past. Despite the fact that official figures show a steady decline in violent crime (such as homicide) in Pakistan in recent years, this nevertheless happened in the country. Overall, our participants tended to reflect the media's "cruel world" paradigm, which depicts life as hazardous and unpredictable, with crime striking anybody at any moment.

The centrality of the 'faulty system' framing is another remarkable link between the media's framing of crime tales and the participants' understanding of crime. While different interpretative frameworks are sometimes present in the high-quality press, the media's understanding of criminal justice as a flawed system seems to be the prevalent interpretation in connection to criminal activity. When questioned about the reasons or conditions of crime, this was the most common answer supplied by focus group members. To be precise, another explanation blamed urban people - a racist framing that is definitely not present in the media. Pakistani people are not mentioned in this explanation. Participants' distrust in the judicial system was reflected in their perceptions of increased crime and a broken system. When questioned about their sources of information or knowledge, participants seldom referred to the media. Even though they were convinced that the media had a significant impact on public opinion, they believed that they were immune to this effect. When it comes to the participants' speech, we observed a significant resemblance to that seen in media coverage, but we also found that they rejected the concept of media influence (Roberts & Doob, 1990). Participants' views on the police were mostly unfavorable, with many stating that the officers were both inefficient and unjust in their dealings with the public. (Note that they wished for more efficiency in arresting criminals as well as improved fairness in dealing with the police on an individual level). The interviewees admitted to having relatively little personal contact with police, but where do these ideas come from, given that they did not use the media as a source of information? And how is it that their views on crime and justice are so closely aligned with the media's portrayal of the world as a harsh and lawless place?

We think that theories that represent media-public opinion interactions in a circular, non-direct, and socially filtered way might help reconcile these inconsistencies. If we accept Zaller's reasoning, public opinion is a hazy and unstable phenomenon, yet it nevertheless has certain characteristics that change only slowly over time (Guo & Vargo, 2020). Personal experiences, relationships with friends and family, education, and media intake all contribute to the development of deeply held beliefs and values. The similarities between media messages and public opinion may be explained by the role of social filters and intermediaries (such as opinion leaders): statements from the media get into public opinion even if there is no direct influence. There should be no ignoring the active role media consumers play in selecting and interpreting media messages: messages that correspond and reinforce previous and socially accepted frames will presumably resonate more in people's minds, whereas those frames that are in conflict with already acquired meanings are more easily dismissed.

Public opinion and media framing are similar because the media simply reflects and repeats broad public opinion (Dolliver et al., 2018; Pickett et al., 2015). If this hypothesis is to be believed, individuals don't affect the media so much as they are influenced by it. In our opinion, this is exaggerated. This suggests, among other things, that the media does not have an agenda of its own and simply reflects the opinions of the population. Media studies and public perceptions of the media's function in contemporary society are at odds with this. According to our focus groups, the media does have an influence on people's lives (on others). Public opinion is shaped by the media, but it doesn't mean that they don't have an influence of their own. To put it another way, media and the general public are in constant communication with one another. The medium's effect is also taken into account in this formulation. An accurate picture of the media's effect on public opinion must avoid the extremes of either an all-pervasive or none-at-all perspective. It's imperative that researchers in the future construct a model of the social and individual components that contextualize the media effect.

In this argument, the credibility of institutions is plainly at risk. The judicial system's public image is shaped by a variety of factors. Assuming people's assessments of an institution's effectiveness and fairness are mostly based on their own personal experiences would be what is known as a "naturalistic error." However, Pakistanis aren't the only ones who have few personal experiences with the legal system, despite the fact that countries may differ in terms of interactions between inhabitants and police officers. Because trust is a social construct, it can only be influenced via social mediation that retells and distributes individual stories. They may be significant in and of themselves, such a violation of societal norms, or they could be significant because of the status of the people who tell them (Hsieh & Boateng, 2015). However, it seems that the media's impact on people's confidence is only indirect and limited. Consequently, it is incorrect to blame the media for eroding public confidence, and it is also incorrect to utilize the media as a tool to restore faith in institutions. Preliminary survey findings indicate a link between extensive media consumption and increased fear of crime and increased confidence in the legal system. At the same time, our focus group findings imply that consumers do not just depend on media portrayals when judging legal institutions. Investment in media initiatives to increase public perception and confidence in the legal system would thus be misguided (Graziano, 2019; Kort-Butler & Habecker, 2018). As a social construct, justice and competence are shaped via the use of various social filters, interpretative and sense-making processes, and a wide range of different

information sources. Public's perception of institutional justice may be improved by communication campaigns that complement real efforts to make an organisation more accountable and responsive (Deuchar et al., 2020). We believe, however, that media interventions alone will not change the public's image of judicial institutions. An experiment may be required to find out what information sources impact people's perceptions of effectiveness and fairness (such as personal experience or proximal social context).

IX. CONCLUSION

The impact of the media on public views of crime and the criminal justice system has been widely researched. Most studies have used a quantitative method to discover a relationship between attitudes and media consumption. Despite multiple demonstrations, a relationship exists, but its causation has yet to be shown. However, we should not dismiss the idea that the media has an influence on how people see crime and the legal system just because we find it difficult to accept direct media effects. In our quest for more complicated concepts about public opinion creation and the media's role in it, we should move our attention to audience research and apply more qualitative approaches, in addition to quantitative statistical data analysis. We ran focus groups as part of our research to determine how and to what degree the media impacts people's opinions of crime and the legal system. Focus groups combined with media content analysis might be useful in the future, especially if done often and in combination with panel research. This will enable us to connect adjustments in media frames and content to wider developments in public discussion. Experimenting with people's perceptions of institutional competence and fairness, which form the cornerstone of a trusting relationship, might be beneficial. The Lazarsfeld flow model with two phases or the Zaller model on mass opinion formation, both devised by Zaller to assist scholars better understand how the media may influence people's thinking on an individual and societal level, might be valuable for future research. The findings presented here may have some important consequences for procedural justice theory. Our results offer a starting point for reconciling perspectives on the media's effect on public confidence in justice with the procedural justice viewpoint, which has hitherto emphasised direct personal experience as a driver of public trust in justice and perceptions of legitimacy.

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