Identity in Journalism: Evidence from News Reporting of Violence Against Women

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Abstract

This paper investigates whether reporter identity shapes news content and, through it, reader behavior. Using the universe of murders with female victims in Italy from 2006 to 2022, I exploit the quasi-random assignment of journalists to crimes based on newsroom schedules to estimate gender differences in reporting. I construct novel NLP-based narrative indices, validated against human annotators, capturing two opposing reporting styles: victim-centered (VC) narratives, which contextualize the crime within the broader phenomenon of VAW, and perpetrator-centered (PC) narratives, which emphasize the perpetrator's motives. Female journalists score one standard deviation higher on VC and are 17% more likely to label a murder a femicide and 70% more likely to mention victim resources; male journalists are 14% more likely to attribute the crime to jealousy or rage. These differences disappear for murders with male victims, ruling out quality-based explanations. Combining reporter assignment with provincial readership data in a staggered difference-in-differences design, I show that a 50 percentage point increase in exposure to female reporters leads to a 17% increase in calls to the national VAW helpline, roughly one additional call per province per week. The effect is driven by victim-centered narratives: experimental evidence shows that VC framing increases the perceived prevalence of help-seeking behavior, shifting norms around seeking support. By contrast, PC narratives increase empathy toward the victim and and perpetrators, while generating higher click-through engagement among male readers, suggesting that identity-driven and audience-maximizing motives may reinforce each other. These findings show that newsroom diversity shapes not only who produces the news but the informational content of journalism itself, with direct consequences for readers' real-world behavior.

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"You are the interpreters to the women of the country
as to what goes on politically in the legislative national life,
and also what the social and personal life is at the White House"
Eleanor Roosevelt at her first women-only press conference, 1933

1 Introduction

During her tenure as First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt held 348 press conferences exclusively for female journalists, events rooted in the belief that female journalists were better intermediaries for delivering political messages to female audiences. Nearly a century later, many newsrooms have been changing their composition following a similar idea: for instance, over the past decade, the New York Times increased the share of female and minority journalists by ten percentage points, explicitly motivated by the belief that a more diverse staff produces a stronger and more representative coverage.[1] Yet the literature has largely ignored the question of whether reporter identity shapes content, focusing instead on outlet-level differences in slant and implicitly assuming that reporters' incentives—both monetary and ideological—are aligned with those of their employers. Under this assumption, newsroom diversity is either purely descriptive, or influences audiences only through indirect channels such as role models (Beaman et al., 2009).

This assumption, however, abstracts from two reasons why reporter identity may directly shape news content. First, journalists retain substantial discretion over story framing and language, and their lived experiences and social identities plausibly shape how they interpret and present events. Second, reporters may face identity-specific incentives, such as reputational concerns with particular audiences or sources, or group-image concerns rooted in social identity (Tajfel, Billig, et al., 1971; Akerlof and Kranton, 2000), that are not perfectly aligned with outlet-level objectives and may systematically affect their writing choices. If any of these channels is active, reporter identity becomes a supply-side determinant of news content and, given the well-documented influence of media on public opinion and behavior (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007; Chiang and Knight, 2011; Enikolopov et al., 2011; DellaVigna and La Ferrara, 2015), a novel channel through which identity shapes persuasion at scale.

This paper provides evidence on how reporter identity shapes news content and, in turn, reader behavior, using reporting on Violence Against Women (VAW) as the empirical setting. Violence against women offers an ideal context to study identity-driven reporting for two reasons. First, gender identity is unusually salient: VAW crimes are predominantly perpetrated by men against women, creating a clear in-group/out-group structure where theoretical work would hypothesize reporters' gender to shape reporting (Tajfel, Billig, et al., 1971; Akerlof and Kranton, 2000). Second, the social stakes are high: around 736 million women worldwide have been subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner, and in 2023 alone approximately 51,100 women were killed by intimate partners or family members (UN, 2024). In this context, the media's role in shaping public awareness and victim behavior becomes a first-order policy question.

[1] See the NYT diversity call to action: https://www.nytco.com/a-call-to-action/.

A first challenge to estimate the existence and effects of gender differences in reporting is potential endogeneity of reporters' assignment to news. For this reason, I study these questions in Italy, a setting that combines a high saliency of the phenomenon[2] with a key institutional feature that allows me to investigate within newspaper differences in reporting. Italian newsrooms assign reporters to crimes based on work schedules and geographic proximity, generating quasi-random variation in the gender of reporters writing about otherwise similar crimes, and providing the identification strategy at the core of this paper.

A second challenge is measuring reporting style in a meaningful way. Existing outlet-level measures of slant or topic selection are too coarse to capture the narrative choices that reporter identity is most likely to influence. Instead, I develop two narrative indices rooted in international guidelines for VAW reporting and theoretical contributions from psychology and communication studies (Henley et al., 1995; Carlyle, Slater, et al., 2008; Palazzolo and Roberto, 2011). I construct two narrative indices, a Victim-Centered (VC) and a Perpetrator-Centered (PC) one, in a novel dataset linking the universe of murders with female victims in Italy between 2006 and 2022 to the newspaper articles covering them. Crucially these narratives capture the gendered nature of the crime: VC narratives center on the victim and contextualize the crime within the broader phenomenon of VAW. For instance, they mention prior violence ("Just two months ago the police had been called to break up another violent dispute") or available resources for victims. PC narratives instead foreground perpetrators' motives, for instance, referencing jealousy ("The idea that his partner had a lover obsessed him") or fits of rage.[3]

To identify gender differences in reporting, I exploit the assignment rule described above. Within each newsroom, I compare female and male reporters assigned to otherwise similar crimes, controlling for newspaper-by-year fixed effects and reporters' region fixed effects to account for selection within newsrooms, and crime fixed effects to address potential correlations between reporters' schedules and crime characteristics. If reporters were driven purely by monetary incentives and had access to the same profit-maximizing information within their newsroom, we would expect no systematic differences in narrative choice across gender. Conversely, if journalists' identity played a role in writing decisions, in line with models of identity-driven behavior (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Tajfel, Billig, et al., 1971), we could also observe reporters from the same outlet using different narratives.

In line with latter prediction, the results reveal sizable gender differences in reporting, with female journalists using more victim-centered narratives and fewer perpetrator-centered ones. Specifically, female journalists score on average one standard deviation higher on the VC index and 0.05 standard deviations lower on the PC index than their male counterparts. Breaking these differences down, female reporters are 17% more likely to refer to a murder as a femicide and 70% more likely to mention resources available to victims, while male reporters are 14% more likely to attribute

[2]In Italy, the share of women murdered by a current or former intimate partner has increased by 10 percentage points over the past decade, and despite having one of the lowest overall homicide rates in the European Union, Italy records the highest number of female murders (Statista, 2022a; Statista, 2022b).

[3]A human annotator classifying article pairs into victim- and perpetrator-centered categories agrees with the index classification 80% of the time, validating the measure.

the crime to jealousy or a fit of rage. Crucially, I find no gender differences in reporting on homicides with male victims, ruling out the alternative explanation that female journalists simply follow journalistic guidelines more carefully due to higher barriers to entry (Ashraf et al., 2024).

I then turn to investigate the second main question: do these differences in reporting matter for readers? A growing body of research shows that media content influences public attitudes and behavior (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007; Martin and Yurukoglu, 2017; Djourelova, 2023; Moreno-Medina et al., 2025), suggesting that identity-driven variation in narrative choice may have real behavioral consequences. To test this, I study whether exposure to female versus male journalists affects help-seeking behavior, measured as weekly calls to the national gender-based violence prevention helpline across Italian provinces since 2013. Identification exploits two sources of exogeneity: the random timing and location of murders, and the quasi-random assignment of first reporters to crimes. To ensure the latter, I construct the treatment variable using only the first five articles per newspaper within two weeks of each crime, before editorial preferences can influence reporter selection. I then estimate the effect of early exposure to articles by female reporters using a generalized difference-in-differences design with staggered and continuous treatment.

In line with existing work, province-level calls increase after a murder (Colagrossi et al., 2023). Additionally, I show that they increase more after crimes, by a larger share of female reporters, in a meaningful way. A 50 percentage point increase in exposure to female reporters, equivalent to one additional article by a female journalist per crime and newspaper, leads to a 17% increase in helpline calls, corresponding to roughly one additional call per province per week. These results are robust to alternative estimators that account for heterogeneous treatment effects across units and time and allow treated units to switch on and off the treatment status (Chaisemartin and D'Haultfœuille, 2024). Further, I find no effect on calls following coverage of homicides with male victims, confirming that the effect is specific to VAW reporting rather than reflecting a general quality difference between female and male journalists.

There are two potential channels for this helpline effect. An indirect channel where female readers may be more attentive to or more easily persuaded by articles written by women, echoing the literature on descriptive representation and role models (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Beaman et al., 2009; Miller and Segal, 2019). A direct channel where the different narratives female reporters employ may increase awareness of resources and update readers' perceptions of help-seeking norms, reducing informational and social barriers to calling (Bursztyn, González, et al., 2020). I provide two pieces of evidence supporting the latter. Replacing the female exposure measure with narrative-specific ones shows a positive and significant effect of VC narratives on calls even when including the female exposure measure, while PC narratives have no significant effect. Additionally, female reporter assignment generates no increase in total crime coverage volume in subsequent weeks, ruling out the possibility of higher salience if more women cover the crime. This points to VC narratives being the main driver of the helpline effect but leaves open the question of how these narratives affect help-seeking behavior.

To pin down the mechanism behind the helpline effect, I run a pre-registered online experiment with 1600 Italian respondents, randomly assigning them to read the same newspaper ar-

ticle about a VAW crime with one of three narrative additions: perpetrator-centered, episodic victim-centered—mentioning pre-existing violence and women seeking help—, or thematic victim-centered—providing information on resources and VAW prevalence. The results reveal that VC narratives increase respondents' perceived prevalence of help-seeking behavior among VAW victims only in the episodic variation. Conversely, there is no effect of providing information on resources on this outcome and this treatment even reduces perceptions about real crime incidence. I interpret this evidence as consistent with a descriptive social norms channel whereby learning that other women seek help normalizes the behavior and lowers its perceived social cost (Bursztyn, González, et al., 2020).

Further, the experiment allows me to provide a full picture of how narratives affect readers beyond help-seeking behavior and about readers' preferences for different narratives, overcoming the limitation of the lack of fine-grained observational data on attitudes and engagement. Investigating the effects of narratives on attitudes, I find that PC narratives increase empathy toward the victim while VC narratives decrease empathy toward the perpetrator and, consequently, preferences for a harsher punishment.

Finally, to investigate potential monetary returns of using different narratives, I also look at whether they generate different rates of readers' retention and click-through. The results show that PC narratives alienate female readers while generating higher click-through engagement among male readers. While this asymmetry could, in principle, generate incentives for narrative divergence along gender lines, it is unlikely to fully account for the documented differences: reporters lack access to article-level data about audience demographics and cannot link reader retention to single articles. Rather, this evidence suggests that identity-driven and audience-maximizing motives may reinforce each other, amplifying gender differences in narrative choice beyond what either channel would predict alone.

Overall, these findings highlight the significant role of journalists' identities in shaping not only the content and framing of news but also the behavior of readers. By showing that female reporters are more likely to adopt victim-centered narratives, I provide compelling evidence that reporter identity influences how crimes are presented to the public. Importantly, these differences in reporting translate into measurable changes in help-seeking behavior, as increased exposure to articles by female reporters leads to more calls to anti-violence helplines. These results highlight that newsroom diversity not only matters for representation or its indirect effects, but also directly affects the product of journalism, news content, and, consequently, news consumers' behaviors.

Related Literature This paper contributes to the literature on the effects of media on readers' behaviors and attitudes. A central finding of this literature is that politically slanted media affects individuals' political preferences, whether through exposure to different outlets (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007; Ladd and Lenz, 2009; Enikolopov et al., 2011; Martin and Yurukoglu, 2017; Durante et al., 2019) or through different topics (Chiang and Knight, 2011; Puglisi and Snyder, 2015;

Grossman, Margalit, et al., 2022).[4] My findings are more closely related to works on the effect of media exposure on crime-related outcomes (Mastrorocco and Minale, 2018; Banerjee, La Ferrara, et al., 2019; Moreno-Medina et al., 2025).[5].

This literature has attributed the supply-side drivers of slant primarily to outlet-level factors like ownership, editorial incentives, and demand-side audience preferences (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2010; Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2011), leaving the role of individual reporters largely unexplored. A few studies have made a first step in this direction by investigating whether reporters' have a role in contributing to media slant (Boxell and Conway, 2022; Cage et al., 2025) or group representation in the media (Ash, Durante, et al., 2021). However, these works focus exclusively on content and find limited effects of reporter identity on language and political slant, leaving open the question of how reporters' identity affect narratives other than slant and readers' behavior. This paper fills these gaps by providing two novel pieces of evidence. First, it uncovers a reporter-level supply-side channel of narrative variation leveraging a novel identification stemming from an institutional feature of the Italian journalistic context. Second, to the best of my knowledge, it provides the first evidence on the effects of reporter-specific writing choices on readers' real-world behavior.

In other contexts, many papers have investigated the role of identity in shaping individual preferences and behavior, building on social identity theory (Tajfel, Billig, et al., 1971; Turner et al., 1979) and its introduction into economics by Akerlof and Kranton (2000). Studies have documented gender and racial differences in politics (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Beaman et al., 2009; Bhalotra and Clots-Figueras, 2014), companies (Matsa and Miller, 2013; Bertrand et al., 2019; Flabbi et al., 2019), the justice system (Shayo and Zussman, 2011; Harris and Sen, 2019; Miller and Segal, 2019), and healthcare (Alsan et al., 2019). This paper extends this literature to journalism, a setting where workers produce a mass-distributed informational product, incentives may diverge from those of the employer, and the downstream effects of identity-driven output on audiences can be causally identified. Unlike settings where identity is the product (politicians) or where output is a private service (judges, doctors), journalism offers a uniquely clean test of whether worker identity shapes a product that reaches and persuades a mass audience. Additionally, unlike papers on the effect of female CEOs or female teachers that mainly show an effect on female employees and students through a role model effect (Dee, 2007; Flabbi et al., 2019; Porter and Serra, 2020), I provide evidence that identity of workers can have a direct effect on (news) consumers by directly affecting the product (news).

This paper further contributes to the literature on information framing and persuasion. A large body of work has documented effects of framing on perceptions (Andre et al., 2024; Bursztyn, Egorov, Haaland, et al., 2022), attitudes (Alesina, Ferroni, et al., 2021), and policy preferences (Stantcheva, 2021; Alesina, Miano, et al., 2023), with parallel work in political science on framing

[4]See DellaVigna and Gentzkow (2010) and DellaVigna and La Ferrara (2015) for a review of media effects in economics, Prior (2013) for the one in political science, and Valkenburg et al. (2016) for the one in psychology.

[5]In addition to the references above, see, e.g., Jensen and Oster (2009), Chong and La Ferrara (2009), La Ferrara et al. (2012), Baum et al. (2018), Kearney and Levine (2015), Philippe and Ouss (2018), Colagrossi et al. (2023), and Belguise and Monterosa (2025), which focus on the effect of media on women-related outcomes like fertility and emancipation.

effects on political attitudes (Iyengar, 1991; Chong and Druckman, 2007; Druckman, 2022). Most closely related are papers on the effect of specific rhetorical devices and narrative choices on attitudes toward politically salient events (Baum et al., 2018; Djourelova, 2023; Moreno-Medina et al., 2025; Berk, 2025). I contribute to this literature in two specific ways. First, I provide evidence that exposure to victim-centered narratives shapes perceived social norms around help-seeking behavior, extending the literature on how information about the behavior of others corrects misperceptions and shifts norms (Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin, 2020; Bursztyn, González, et al., 2020). Second, I show that narratives trigger empathy toward either the victim or the perpetrator, but do not find any evidence of this leading to an increased demand for government intervention, as the growing literature on the role of perspective-taking and empathy in shaping policy preferences would predict (Adida, Lo, and Platas, 2018; Kalla and Broockman, 2023; Adida, Lo, Platas, et al., 2025).

Finally, this paper contributes to the literature on gender-based violence. A substantial body of work has studied the economic determinants of intimate partner violence (Aizer, 2010), the role of legislation and enforcement (Ferraz and Schiavon, 2022; Sviatschi and Trako, 2021), and the role of gender norms, including evidence that entertainment media can shift norms and reduce VAW prevalence (Banerjee, La Ferrara, et al., 2019; González and Rodríguez-Planas, 2020; Green et al., 2020). This paper complements this literature by providing the first evidence that media narratives, and specifically reporter identity, affects help-seeking behavior among VAW victims.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides background information about violence against women and journalism in Italy. Section 3 introduces a conceptual framework of identity-motivated journalism that guides the analysis in the following sections. Section 4 and Section 5 describe the data and the construction of the text-based measures for the narratives, respectively. Section 6 and Section 7 describe the empirical strategies to estimate gender differences in reporting and the effect of female and male style on calls, attitudes, and policy preferences, and they report the results. Section 8 concludes.

2 Violence Against Women and Journalism in Italy

Italy is among the safest countries in Europe in terms of murders. Namely, as of 2022 it had the lowest murder rate per 100,000 inhabitants in the European Union, equal to 0.55, less than half that of France, equal to 1.21 per 100,000 inhabitants, and 20 percentage points lower than Germany, equal to 0.74 (Statista, 2022b).[6] At the same time, in 2022, it was estimated to be the country with the highest number of femicides in the European Union, counting 120 events, followed by France and Germany, with 118 and 113 femicides, respectively.

This picture becomes evident when looking at national data about murders, reported in Appendix Figure C.1a, which plots the number of murders per year, both overall and separately by victim gender. The figure shows that while the number of murders with male victims has decreased sharply in the past 20 years, the number of murders with female victims has decreased by a smaller

[6] Among all EU countries Latvia has the highest murder rate, equal to 4.05 per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Lithuania and Belgium, with a rate of 2.21 and 1.54, respectively.

margin and remained stable in the past 10 years. Moreover, the prevalence of murders at the hands of the current or ex-intimate partner has been increasing since 2017, reaching 60% of murders with female victims. Finally, nowadays, the totality of these murders is covered by newspapers.

Italy's media landscape is characterized by a few influential national newspapers and several more local ones. The leading national newspapers are *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica*, which are most widely read in the northern regions and broadly set the agenda of news to cover. However, these newspapers are less popular in the South of Italy, where regional and local newspapers dominate the media scene. These newspapers are generally smaller and focus more on local news while still covering the main national ones[7].

Within Italian newspapers, the editorial structure is hierarchical. Larger newspapers are typically led by an editor-in-chief who oversees several section editors, each responsible for a specific topic or theme like politics, economy, or crime. The crime section, for example, consists of a specialized team of journalists responsible for investigating and reporting crimes. A relevant feature of these units is that the assignment for covering specific crimes is usually determined based on the journalists' location and availability. In practice, journalists within the crime unit of a newspaper are assigned to crime stories depending on whether they are working at the time and in the region where the incident occurred. The same happens with crime developments in the following days, as long as the crime is covered by the crime unit.[8] This way, crime reporters' assignment to news is exogenous because journalists cannot decide which crimes to cover, excluding the possibility of selection into crimes depending on their characteristics.

Additionally, the Italian journalism job market has been relatively rigid in the last 20 years due to the decline in popularity and, consequently, revenues of newspapers. This has translated into limited hiring of young journalists, resulting in a predominantly homogeneous newsroom environment. In particular, editors-in-chief and editors at the head of news sections tend to be older and male journalists[9], who support a traditional writing style where the *storytelling* plays a more significant role than accurate reporting (Post, 2023).

It is also worth noting that focusing on murders involving women in Italy is particularly suited to investigate the role of journalists' identities for several reasons. First, as mentioned above, violence against women, mainly related to murders, is a very salient issue in Italy. On top of this, media representation of these crimes has increasingly been central to the public debate. Feminist activists argue that the media tend to exhibit empathy toward the perpetrator and make extensive use of episodic framing, for instance, by focusing on specific factors that might have led to the crime, like a fit of rage, mental or economic problems, or some action of the woman[10]. Moreover, these crimes mainly involve Italians and do not see striking differences across ages, regions, or

[7]See Appendix Table C.1 for information on newspapers and their readership.

[8]The assignment process is different when the crime becomes front-page news or a story of *national interest*. At this point, journalists outside the crime unit, such as opinion or political journalists, start to cover the story, making it unlikely that random assignment holds.

[9]There are only two newspapers with a female editor-in-chief among all newspapers.

[10]In a recent article by *The Guardian* the president of a feminist association argued for a change in how media portray perpetrators, and to "put an end to journalism that still emphasizes the point of view of the murderer, explaining what motivated him to kill a woman" (Kassam, 2023).

socioeconomic status. Therefore, focusing on male violence against women in Italy allows me to isolate the role of gender identity, abstracting from other characteristics and considerations that may lead to different writing choices. Finally, while there have been some attempts to regulate media representation of VAW at the national and international levels, making journalists aware of the *best practices* to report on these crimes, institutions proposing such regulations have failed to enforce their implementation.

3 A Conceptual Framework of Identity-Motivated Journalists

In this section, I present a model of identity-motivated journalists, where journalists decide on their writing style, accounting for readers' preferences and for the indirect effect of writing on readers. As in a standard probabilistic voting model (Lindbeck and Weibull, 1987), journalists maximize monetary returns from writing by computing the share of readers they would capture by choosing a writing style, knowing the distribution of readers' preferred style. Moreover, I use insights from the literature on social identity in psychology and economics that suggest that group identity affects individuals' choices and behavior (Turner et al., 1979; Akerlof and Kranton, 2000)). Following Akerlof and Kranton (2000), I include an *identity* component in the readers' utility function. Moreover, I combine theories from the literature on other-regarding preferences (Andreoni and Miller, 2002; Fehr and Schmidt, 2006) and social identity (Tajfel, Billig, et al., 1971; Tajfel and Turner, 2004; Chen and Li, 2009), suggesting that individuals are more likely to favor members of their in-group and include the utility of in-group readers in journalists' utility function.

In the absence of identity concerns by journalists, the optimal writing style only depends on the maximization of readers' utility. Therefore, identity only matters insofar as it affects the readers' preferred writing style. In particular, in line with models of probabilistic voting with politicians only interested in re-election, journalists from both groups will converge on the same writing style and the optimal writing style only depends on the preferences of the largest group among readers (Lindbeck and Weibull, 1987; Grossman and Helpman, 1996; Persson and Tabellini, 2002).

On the contrary, if identity motives also drive journalists, namely, if their utility is increasing in the utility of their in-group, they do not always choose the readers' maximizing style. Works in social psychology summarized in Tajfel and Turner (2004) and in economics (Chen and Li, 2009) experimentally show that individuals are more likely to favor members of their in-group when identity is salient. Similarly, observational studies on in-group bias find evidence of in-group favoritism in the judicial context (Shayo and Zussman, 2011). However, other observational studies in economics provide more mixed evidence on in-group bias in contexts where decision-makers also need to account for other incentives, like group-image concerns or public safety (Depew et al., 2017; Ash, Asher, et al., 2022; Guo et al., 2023; Ash and Marangon, 2024). The context of this project is closer to the latter group of works, as journalists also need to account for monetary incentives. Therefore, while only if journalists are identity-motivated we can observe an equilibrium where journalists from different groups choose the writing style that benefits their in-group, I show that this occurs only under some specific conditions.

Appendix Section A presents a formal model that combines all the elements described above and derives the predictions for the decision rule of journalists. In particular, Section A.1 describes the set-up of the model and journalists' maximization problem; Section A.2 derives the decision rule for the optimal writing style chosen by reporters and investigates how these rules respond to changes in parameters.

4 Data

In this section, I describe the main data sources used in the analysis of media representation of violence against women. In particular, Section 4.1 describes the data about murders; Section 4.2 describes the corpus of the newspaper articles and the available metadata; and Section 4.3 provides an overview of the additional data sources used in the analysis.

4.1 Murders

I start by compiling a list of murders where the victim is a woman, occurring in Italy from 2006 to 2022. For this purpose, I use two different sources. First, I collect information about these murders from the association *Casa Donne*[11], whose main purpose is to provide support and counseling to women who experience violence. On top of this, the association also writes annual reports containing information about murders involving women reported in the press that can be categorized as VAW, which I use to compile the initial dataset. In particular, I extract information about the date and place of the event and the victims' and perpetrators' names, nationalities, and relationships. Finally, I cross-check and complement this data with the list of murders involving women from 2018 from *Femminicidio Italia*[12], a website focusing exclusively on providing information about these events.

The final sample comprehends 1989 murders of women from 2006 to 2022. Appendix Table C.2 reports the summary statistics for the murders in my data. From the Table, it emerges that most victims and perpetrators are Italian—77% and 83%, respectively—and that around 87% of these murders are either committed by the partner of the victim or by a relative. To check the completeness of this newly constructed data, I compare the yearly average with the yearly national average of murders with female victims from the Italian National Statistical Office (Appendix Figure C.2). The largest discrepancy is in 2006 when the national average is almost twice the average in the new data. However, the difference between the two averages shrinks considerably over time and disappears starting from 2018[13]. The reason for this is that the association *Casa Donne* only collects murders that qualify as gender-based violence, thus excluding women who are killed in contexts where their gender is not among the reasons for the homicides, like robberies. However, the latter type of events is decreasing over time (Appendix Figure C.3), going from around 60 to

[11] https://www.casadonne.it/

[12] https://femminicidioitalia.info

[13] Note that for 2022 I do not have access to the national average, since there is some delay from the Italian National Statistical Office to release data.

less than 25 events per year. Moreover, these murders are instead recorded in the data available starting from 2018[14].

Second, I collect data about murders with male victims by extracting this information from newspaper articles about these events leveraging the large language model GPT-4[15]. For this purpose, I have the model reading each article and instruct it to classify whether the article is about a murder of real people, thus excluding fictional ones, and it happened in Italy. Further, I ask it to classify whether the victim is a woman or a man and to extract the names of the victim and the perpetrator, their relationship, the location where the murder happened, and the date[16]. Next, I manually clean the names, relationships, and locations from any spelling mistakes, map the locations to their respective municipality, and create identifiers for each murder. I identify a total of 5393 murders, of which around 7% are perpetrated by a relative and 8% by the intimate partner.

4.2 Corpus of Newspaper Articles

As a next step, I collect articles from Italian newspapers about murders recorded in the newly compiled data from *Factiva*. I include in my sample the most-read national newspapers, excluding from the count local news outlets, as well as the two most popular newspapers for each province[17]. To retrieve the articles of interest I query *Factiva* separately for each year by searching the name of the victim or the perpetrator combined with the root of words like "murdered", "killed", or "dead". I collect 36977 articles covering 1913 murders[18].Similarly, for the articles about murders with male victims I query words like "killed", "murder", "homicide", and "dead", and leveraging the tags available in *Factiva*—e.g., I only include news about crime and that are tagged in Italy, collecting a total of 18127 articles, after removing articles that are not about murders happening in Italy as described in Appendix Section B.

Figure 1a shows the total number of articles on murders with female victims over time, which has been increasing over the years, with a sharp increase in 2015[19]. The reason for this jump in the number of available articles lies in the availability of newspapers before that year. Indeed, Appendix Figure C.9 shows that until 2014 only five newspapers—*Corriere della Sera*, *Repubblica*, *La Stampa*, *Il Giornale*, and *Il Resto del Carlino*—are in the sample, while from 2015 on the pool of newspapers increases. Additionally, from Figure 1 is evident that there are some years in which the number of articles about murders with female victims is particularly high. This can be explained by looking at the distribution of the number of articles per newspaper-event in Appendix Figure C.10. Indeed, while the large majority of events are covered by less than 10 articles per newspaper, the distribution has a long tail, suggesting that some events get more attention. The reason for this is

[14] As a further confirmation for this Appendix Figure C.4 shows that the number of murders occurring at the hand of the intimate partner in my sample is much closer to the national average.

[15] I use the model gpt-4o-mini available in the OpenAI API.

[16] See Appendix B for further details

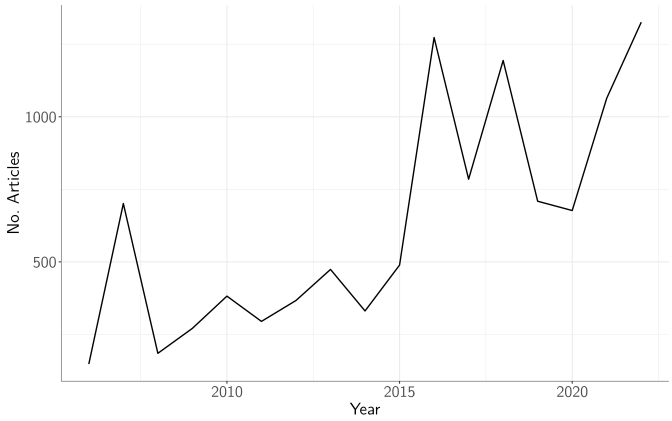
[17] See Appendix Table C.1 for a complete list.

[18] The matching rate between the murders in my sample and those for which I find the newspaper articles is 98.31% (Appendix Figure C.5).

[19] See Appendix Figure C.8 for murders with male victims.

Figure 1: Time Series of Articles

(a) Total Number of Articles



(b) Number of Articles by Reporter's Gender



Notes: Total number of articles on murders with female victims plotted by year. Panel (a) shows the total number of articles by year, while Panel (b) shows the total number of articles separately for female and male reporters.

that some cases become viral because of the victim's characteristics—e.g., the victim is young—or of the difficulty of the case—e.g., uncertainty on the identity of the perpetrator. For instance, the spike in 2007 is due to two homicides becoming viral in Italian media due to the challenging investigation: the murder of an English Erasmus student who was sexually assaulted and murdered, and the murder of young woman at the hands of her partner[20].

A sub-sample of articles has information about the reporter who authored it, for a total of 2710 reporters. For these reporters, I collect information from the National Journalist Order[21], an organization to which journalists have to subscribe to work as such[22]. In particular, from the organization website, I retrieve information about journalists' date of birth, region of residence — which coincides with the region where they work —, the date when they first subscribed to the order, and whether they are *Professionisti* or *Pubblicisti*, i.e., journalists working only as such or those who occasionally contribute to newspapers. I code the gender of the reporter from their name. Appendix Table C.3 reports the mean average for journalists characteristics for the reporters in the sample, and also separately by female and male reporters. The Table shows that the majority of reporters are men (58%) and live in Northern Italy (49%). Moreover, even when looking at within newspapers differences, female reporters are, on average, four years younger than male reporters and consequently have less experience. Finally, there are less female reporters working in Northern Italy. Figure 1b shows the number of articles on murders with female authors by year separately for female and male journalists. From the figure is evident that while there are consistently more male reporters covering these kinds of stories, the difference between male and female reporters has

[20] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Beredith_Kercher; https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delitto_di_Garlasco

[21] "Ordine dei Giornalisti"

[22] It is important to note that this subscription requirement is only a formality since the organization has limited power to enforce subscription. This results in individuals not subscribing to the order contributing to newspapers. However, this issue is limited in my sample where 80% of reporters are subscribed to the order.

been narrowing over the years[23]. Additionally, the majority of articles in the sample (around 75%) are authored by journalists who write articles on both crimes with female and male victims.[24] It is worth noting that this share is likely to overestimate the specialization in crime reporting, as the data in this paper does not contain articles about crimes other than murders.

Finally, I match newspapers with yearly data about their readership at the national level, which is created by averaging the readership in each Italian province, using data from *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*, a company that collects data about newspaper readership and diffusion.

4.3 Additional Data

Finally, I collect information about gender norms and calls to the VAW helpline number in Italy from the Italian Statistical Office (ISTAT).

The helpline number for violence against women was an initiative of the of the Department of Equal Opportunities, launched in 2006 to support women who are experiencing violence, including psychological violence or stalking, both within and outside the family. The number is active 24 hours a day and is managed by the NGO *Differenza Donne*, which is responsible for training and managing the call center operators. They also closely collaborate with anti-violence centers and among the operator tasks is also connecting women in need with anti-violence centers in their areas[25]. The data on calls are available starting from 2013 for each province and week. Appendix Figures C.12 shows the distribution of calls and it highlights the sparse nature of the variable, with the majority of province-week observations having zero or one calls. Moreover, Appendix Figure C.13, which shows the total number of calls by year, highlights how, after a spike in 2013, the number of calls decreased until 2017 and increased again after that year.

Turning to gender norms, an explicit survey on support for traditional gender roles, gender stereotypes, and acceptability of domestic violence is available only for 2018. Therefore, I use information about female labor market outcomes as a proxy for gender roles. Specifically, I collect data at the year and region level on the share of households—and share of households with children—in which the woman does not work[26]. Appendix Figure C.14 shows the distribution of this proxy for gender norms across region in 2019. The figure shows that there is a large divide between the North and the South of Italy, where, anecdotally, a more marked division of gender roles is more prevalent, increasing the confidence in this proxy. As a further validation for this proxy, I calculate the correlation between this variable and the level of agreement or acceptability of at least one stereotype about traditional gender roles, sexual violence, and stereotypical behavior within the household. I report the results in Appendix Table C.5 which shows that all of these measures have a correlation higher than 70% with the share of households with no working women, further validating the fit of this variable as a proxy for gender norms.

[23] Appendix Table C.4 shows the distribution of female reporters by newspaper.

[24] Appendix Figure C.11 shows the distribution of the share of articles about murders with female victims per reporter, considering reporters who authored more than 5 articles in my sample.

[25] See https://www.1522.eu/?lang=en for additional information.

[26] https://esploradati.istat.it/

5 Isolating Reporting Practices

In this section, I propose a keyword-based approach to quantify reporting practices about homicides with women as victims. Section 5.1 provides an overview of the existing guidelines for reporting episodes of violence against women, both worldwide and in Italy; building on these guidelines, Section 5.2 describes the method applied to isolate reporting practices following the guidelines and the linguistic literature.

5.1 Guidelines on Reporting about Violence Against Women

Journalists often rely on professional guidelines from journalists' organizations or news agencies as broad references for reporting. The main example of these guidelines is the *Associated Press* Stylebook which is described by its editor as a *toolbook* proposing "a set of standards and practices that safeguards AP stories from bias and inaccuracies." At the same time, there is often flexibility in adopting these guidelines as journalists' organizations understand the need for newsrooms to adapt them to the preferences of their audiences.

Moreover, the guidelines can sometimes be seen as a violation of the principle of freedom of information and critique that is often affirmed by journalists' ethics codes.[27] This perception can lead to challenges in consistently enforcing these rules.[28] For these reasons, guidelines for reporting on violence against women, issued by numerous international and national organizations,[29] are often non-mandatory, allowing for a lot of freedom of journalistic writing.

The main principles of these guidelines are closely related to works in linguistics, social psychology, and communication that have theorized the effect of different frames and rhetorical devices on responsibility attribution (Ryan et al., 2006). For instance, many of these works highlight how the use of passive voices leads to diminishing perpetrators' responsibility (see Henley et al. 1995; Bohner 2001; De Freitas et al. 2017). Similarly, other studies suggest that one of the reasons for the lack of social responsibility regarding VAW is that these crimes are often reported with information that diminishes perpetrators' culpability, e.g., by mentioning jealousy, the victim having another relationship, or wanting to separate. Additionally, these studies highlight the preference for episodic framing, i.e., focusing on single events rather than placing them in a broader context (Carlyle, Slater, et al. 2008; Palazzolo and Roberto (2011); Carlyle, Orr, et al. 2014). Moreover, existing works emphasize the importance of defining violence as a societal and public health issue since this type of thematic framing can lead to higher policy mobilization and support for victims (Iyengar 1991; Maxwell et al. 2000; Carll 2003). Finally, Palazzolo and Roberto (2011) and Carlyle, Orr, et al. (2014) suggest that describing the history of violence of perpetrators increases their

[27] As an example, the Italian ethics code (*Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista*) states that "Journalists' activity is inspired by the principle of freedom of speech affirmed in Italian Constitution [...] Journalists defend each person's right to information and freedom of expression.

[28] An example of this happened among journalists of the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*. In 2020 women rights activist and writer Michela Murgia was mandated to compile a list of *Dos* and *Don'ts* of reporting practices around murders of women. This initiative generated a backlash among *Repubblica* journalists who complained about these guidelines violating their freedom of expression.

[29] See UNESCO (2019), Zero Tolerance UK, Warren et al. (2024), UNDP (2022), FNSI (2017).

Table 1: Practices for Reporting about VAW

Dos	**Don'ts**
1. Report pre-existing violence	1. Avoid stereotypes
2. Refer to the crime as a "Femicide"	2. Avoid *snapping* as a motive
3. Report information about helplines or support services	3. Avoid secondary victimization[a]
4. Anonymize victims	4. Avoid sympathetic language towards the perpetrator[b]
5. Include cases of violence against all gender identities	5. Avoid passive voices

Notes: [a] E.g., mentioning betrayals, difficulties in reporting pre-existing violence or in leaving the perpetrator; [b] E.g., mention economic stress, mental illnesses, substance abuse or betrayals

perceived responsibility.

Following these works, the journalistic guidelines can be summarized in a few common principles. On the one hand, they suggest avoiding using the use of passive voices and *perpetrator-centered* narratives, like mitigating factors that can decrease the responsibility of perpetrators and perpetuate stereotypes, like mentioning a fit of rage, a betrayal, or mental and financial problems. On the other hand, they encourage journalists to adopt victim-centered narratives, by contextualizing the crime, e.g., reporting pre-existing patterns of abuse, and referring to the broader phenomenon of violence against women, for instance, by mentioning related data or information on existing resources to help women[30].

More in detail, these guidelines often compile lists of rhetorical elements and topics that should and should not be mentioned in articles about violence against women. I report the most recurring ones in Table 1.

5.2 Dictionary Approach

For the purpose of my analysis, I aim to isolate different topics described in the guidelines in Section 5.1 and highlighted by the literature in linguistics and communication. I create different dictionaries to capture the topics that the aforementioned sources suggest reporters should mention or avoid in articles about violence against women. In particular, I create six dictionaries, each capturing one of the following Perpetrator-Centered narratives: *fit of rage*, *jealousy*, *betrayal*, *end of the relationship*, *financial* and *mental problems*. For instance, the dictionary about *snapping* includes words like "raptus", "rage", and "fury", while the dictionary about financial problems includes words like "unemployed", "debt", and "temporary contract", reported in Table 2.

[30]The *Manifesto di Venezia* (FNSI, 2017) posits that this practice often follows from an *abuse* of the mandate of "reporting the substantial truth about facts" included in the journalists' ethics code. They argue that this mandate leads to overindulging in superfluous details that translate into episodic framing and spectacularization.

Table 2: List of Keywords per Dictionary

Topic	Words
Mad Outburst	*'raptus', 'rabbia', 'delitto d'impeto', 'impeto omicida', 'gesto d'impeto', 'gesto di impeto', 'omicidio di impeto', 'impeto di rabbia', 'impeto di gelosia', 'impeto di odio', 'impeto di follia', 'impeto di violenza', 'in un impeto', 'impeto nervoso', 'violenza cieca', 'violenta e irrazionale', 'impeto di gelosia', 'impulso', 'furia', 'perde la testa', 'ira', 'collera', 'furore', 'furibondo', 'infuriato', 'fuori di sé', 'fuori di senno', 'fuori di se', 'delirio', 'follia', 'pazzia', 'collera', 'irrefrenabile', 'foga omicida', 'foga di uccidere', 'frustrazione', 'furente'*
Jealousy	*'gelosia', 'ossessione', 'rivale in amore', 'geloso', 'morbosa', 'morboso', 'delitto passionale'*
Economic Difficulties	*'difficoltà finanziarie', 'difficile situazione lavorativa', 'crisi lavorativa', 'disoccupato', 'precario', 'licenziato', 'debiti', 'debito', 'perso il lavoro', 'indebitato', 'difficoltà economiche', 'problemi finanziari', 'instabilità economica', 'questioni economiche', 'ristrettezze economiche', 'preoccupazioni economiche', 'difficile situazione economica', 'difficile condizione economica', 'difficoltà finanziaria', 'precarietà economica'*
Mental Health Problems	*'salute mentale', 'disturbi psicologici', 'dipendenza', 'tossicodipendenza','alcolismo', 'abuso di sostanze', 'abuso di alcol', 'abuso di alcool', 'abuso di alcolici', 'abuso di droghe', 'depressi*', 'ossessivo compulsivo', 'disturbo di personalità', 'disturbi di personalità', 'narcisis*', 'disturbo psicologico', 'uso di sostanze', 'disturbi mentali', 'psicopatologici', 'perizia psichiatrica', 'dissociativi', 'psicopatologiche', 'malattia mentale', 'malato mentale'*
Infidelity	*'relazione segreta', 'infedeltà', 'scappatella', 'flirt*', 'tradimento', 'tradito', 'adultera', 'adulterina', 'extraconiugale'*
End of Relationship	*'separa*', 'stato lasciato', 'voleva lasciare', 'divorzi*', 'terminare la relazione', 'terminato la relazione', 'porre termine alla relazione', 'porre fine alla relazione', 'fine relazione', 'chiudere relazione', 'chiuso relazione', 'crisi coniugale', 'annullamento del matrimonio', 'crisi di coppia', 'coppia in crisi', 'crisi matrimoniale', 'crisi relazionale'*
Past Violence	*'violentata', 'violenti litigi', 'liti violente', 'violente liti', 'litigate violente', 'violente litigate', 'litigi violenti', 'violenza sessuale', 'violenza domestica', 'violenze domestiche', 'aggredita' 'minacciata', 'perseguitata', 'perseguitate', 'aggressione sessuale', 'aggressioni sessuali', 'maltratta*', 'molesta*', 'abus*', 'stuprare', 'stupratore', 'stuprata' ,'molestie', 'stalk*', 'sevizia*', 'palpegg*', 'molestia', 'stupro', 'mani addosso', 'picchiava', 'picchiata'*
Information on Resources	*'antiviolenza', 'anti-violenza', 'anti-violenza', 'anti stalking', 'antistalking', 'anti-stalking', 'casa rifugio', 'case rifugio', 'telefono rosa', '1522'*
Femicide	*'femminicidi*'*

Then, to isolate Victim-Centered narratives, I also create a dictionary that captures mentions of pre-existing sexual violence, containing words like "stalking", "abuse", or "rape", and one recording mentions of resources for countering violence against women, e.g., anti-violence centers or the helpline number 1522. Finally, I created an indicator that equals 1 if the article contains the word "femminicidio" and 0 otherwise. To ensure that the dictionaries are exhaustive, I use word embeddings to isolate the words that are closest in similarity to the seed dictionaries and enrich them with the terms with the highest similarity score and that are related to the topic of each dictionary.

I preprocess the text of the articles by lowering cases and removing the names of the author, the victim, and the perpetrator, as well as the names of regions and municipalities. Then, for each word in the dictionaries I first mask the keywords if they appear in expressions that do not refer to the reporting practice. For instance, for mentions of rape, I remove all instances where rape refers to the general phenomenon but not to the crime itself, e.g., "sexual violence episodes as serious as rape" or "181 cases of rape". Additionally, I mask all instances where the word is preceded by a negative adverb within a three-word distance, such as "she was not raped. After masking these expressions that could potentially confound the final measure, for each dictionary k and article a, I create an indicator capturing the presence of one or more words from the dictionary:

$$Y_a^k = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } w^k \in a \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

Finally, I aggregate these indicators into two measures. First, I create a *Victim-Centered* (VC) index that averages the indicators for mentioning pre-existing violence, "femminicidio", and the information on resources. Second, I construct a *Perpetrator-Centered* (PC) index averaging the indicators for the remaining dictionaries[31].

Validation The key advantage of using a dictionary approach when the goal is to isolate specific, known concepts is that it cleanly isolates the element of interest, minimizing the noise that other methods would introduce. For instance, using similarity in word embeddings to capture the topics described above would capture more elements than just the objective topics, even with embeddings trained on the specific corpus. Indeed, it is likely that the *fit of rage* and *pre-existing violence* dictionaries have high similarity with embeddings of words like *killed* or murdered, increasing the measurement error in the similarity measures. Similarly, given the co-occurrence of the topics in the articles, it is unlikely that a topic model can isolate these concepts. Moreover, the resulting measures can be easily interpreted, making the use of a dictionary an attractive method to create measures to be used in causal inference. A final concern could be that the keyword schema I use is not accurate enough and misses many instances of include many false positives. If this were the case, an alternative approach could be to use a large language model (LLM) to annotate the articles. To compare the performance of the current approach with that of an LLM I perform two

[31] Appendix Section D.1 shows some example articles with different values for each index.

Table 3: Validation Dictionary Approach

Topic	F1 Score	
	GPT	Human
	(1)	(2)
Mad Outburst	0.779	0.832
Jealousy	0.918	0.907
Econ. Difficulties	0.888	0.915
Mental Health Prob.	0.895	0.838
Infidelity	0.960	0.970
End of Relationship	0.860	0.861
Past Violence	0.856	0.900
Info on VAW Resources	0.954	0.955

validation exercises. First, for a sample of 1000 articles, ask GPT to annotate them if the different topics are present in the article, giving it a definition of the topics instead of the keyword schema, as shown in the prompt in Appendix Section D.2.1. I calculate the F1 score, weighted to account for the classes' imbalance, between the indicator in 1 and classification by GPT and human annotators, and report it in Columns 1 and 2 of Table 3.

The table shows that the F1 score is always larger than 0.85, except for detecting mentions of mad outbursts. Looking at the confusion matrices for each of the topics reported in Appendix Tables D.1 to D.8, it emerges that what drives the F1 score away from 1—for all topics—is the number of *false positives*, namely the instances that the dictionary approach detects as *False* and GPT annotates as *True*. Looking more closely at these instances, it emerges that GPT often makes over-inferences about information that is not directly reported in the texts, despite being explicitly told not to engage in over-inference.[32] This tendency of over-inference by GPT is confirmed when looking at the classification by human annotators. Indeed, the weighted F1 score between the results of the main method and human annotations is similar to the one compared to GPT for most dictionaries, and even higher for topics that are more likely to be over-inferred, like *mad outburst*.

Additionally, it could be that the presence of these topics does not capture major differences in what the articles focus on, making any difference irrelevant. To alleviate this concern, I provide proof-of-concept validation using GPT. Namely, I randomly select 5 events covered by articles that score either high on the victim-centered dimension—index larger than 0.7—and low on the perpetrator-centered dimension—index lower than 0.3—or low on the VC index and high on the PC one, using only the sample of first and second articles for each event-newspaper, where journalists have less time to include their considerations in the articles. Then, I use GPT-4.1 to create summaries of the articles using the following prompt:

"You are an expert summarizer of newspaper articles. I would like you to summarize the key content of the following articles in one or two paragraphs in English. Please, leave out any personal

[32] Appendix Section D.2.1 reports some examples of *false positive* articles annotated by GPT.

considerations and make sure to stick to what's reported by the article.[33]"

Table D.9 reports the pairs of summaries with the corresponding score for two crimes[34]. Despite the articles in the same row being on the same crimes, the elements chosen for the summary by GPT are very different depending on the values for the indexes. For instance, summaries of articles with a high VC index always refer to gender-based violence as a widespread phenomenon in Italy, also mentioning initiatives to counter it or the lack of these. This is not the case in summaries of articles with a high PC index, which instead tend to focus more on the back story of the perpetrator and the victim and mention separation, jealousy, or rage as possible motives. Finally, the summaries with high victim-centered index always contain the word *femicide*, whereas the rest often refer to the crime as *incident* or *voluntary homicide*.

Overall, these summaries show that the articles with different index values are indeed different in terms of the aspects of the crime they focus on. On the one hand, articles with a high VC index focus more on the victim and on framing violence against women as a broader societal problem. On the other hand, those with a high PC index discuss the possible motives of the perpetrator and the specific situation of the individuals involved. This reinforces the confidence that the topics and indexes constructed with the current methodology are indeed valid for capturing the differences outlined in the guidelines and the existing literature on the topic. As a final step of the validation, I ask a research assistant to classify 40 pairs of articles, selected with the same procedure as above, into victim and perpetrator-centered categories. Looking at results, of the classification, the human annotator agrees with the index classification for 80% of the pairs of articles, thus increasing confidence that the indexes correctly capture the different narratives.

Lastly, I investigate the trends of these practices by plotting the two indexes over time in Appendix Figure C.16. The Figure shows that the prevalence of the PC index decreases over time, while that of the VC index increases, suggesting a general trend toward a more victim-centric narrative of these crimes. Additionally, Appendix Figure C.17 shows that the increasing trend in the VC index is more pronounced for female reporters, while there are more muted differences across reporters' gender in the PC index.

6 Gender Differences in Reporting

In this section, I investigate gender differences in reporting about VAW murders. I start by investigating this question descriptively by looking at whether an LLM-based classifier can correctly predict the gender of the reporter from the article text. In particular, I finetune a BERT classifier trained on an Italian corpus on the sample of articles of female murders to predict reporters' gender and create out-of-sample predictions using a cross-fold procedure. The model achieves an out-of-sample accuracy of 0.61, suggesting that writing style contains statistically meaningful information

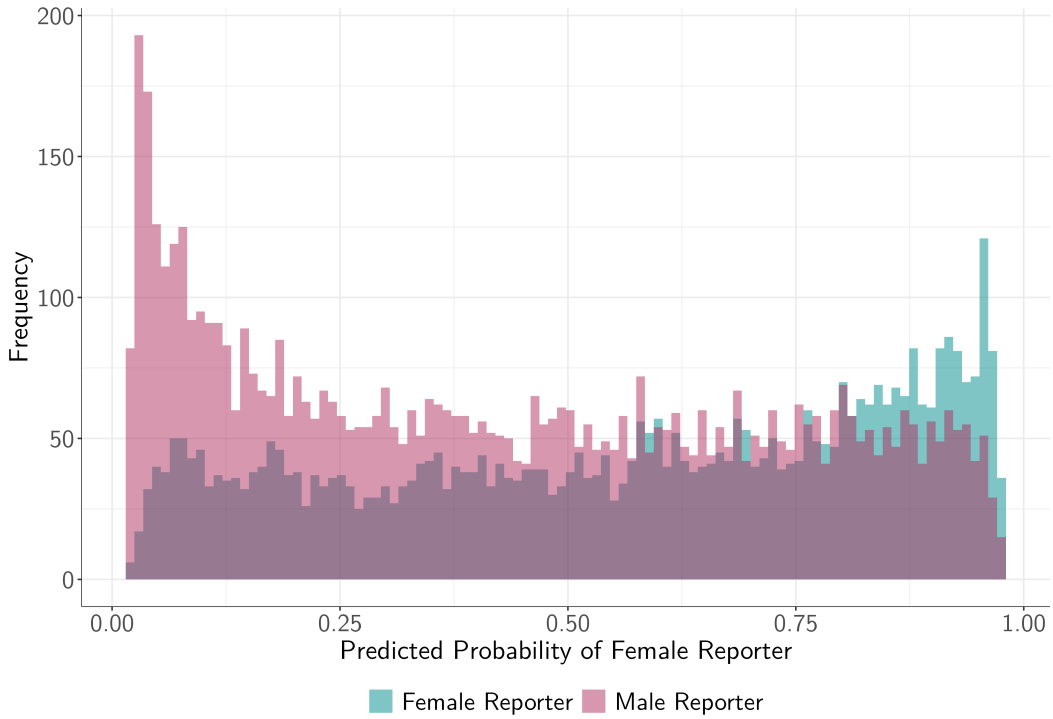
[33] I include the last sentence since GPT always included how a sentence like "This incident underlines the urgent need for action against gender-based violence in Italy" at the end of each summary, even for articles without any mention of the phenomenon of gender-based violence in Italy.

[34] Appendix Section D.2.2 reports more examples and the text of the full articles.

Table 4: Pairs of Summaries of Articles about the Same Crime

High VC Index—Low PC Index	Low VC Index—High PC Index
In Ferrara, a 34-year-old woman named Cinzia Fusi was tragically killed by her 52-year-old partner, Saverio Cervellati, in a violent attack at a household goods store garage where they had arranged to meet. The couple was said to have met to address tensions in their relationship, possibly stemming from the man's behavior and the significant age difference between them. The situation escalated, leading to Cervellati repeatedly striking Fusi in the head with a wooden rod, causing her to collapse. Despite efforts by paramedics and hospital staff, Fusi succumbed to her severe injuries at the hospital, prompting Cervellati's arrest on charges of voluntary manslaughter. The case is being treated as another brutal instance of femicide in Italy, with no prior reports of violence or red flags in their public relationship.	In this tragic incident, 52-year-old Saverio Cervellati brutally murdered his 34-year-old girlfriend, Cinzia Fusi, with a rolling pin in a fit of jealousy and possessiveness. The couple was supposed to spend the day at the beach to reconcile after some disagreements, but a heated argument in their garage escalated into violence. Cervellati repeatedly struck Fusi on the head with the rolling pin, leaving her lifeless on the garage floor. Following the incident, Cervellati called his lawyer and then the police to confess, leading to his arrest and subsequent admission of guilt for the crime. Despite efforts by medical staff, Fusi succumbed to her injuries later in the hospital. Cervellati, devastated by his actions, expressed remorse and willingness to face the consequences of his heinous act.
Guglielmo Berettini is suspected of premeditating the murder of his ex-wife, Michela Fioretti, using a relative's car to chase and ram her vehicle before shooting her. Berettini, a security guard, is in critical condition after shooting himself in the head post the crime, with doctors fearing he may be left in a vegetative state. The couple's two young daughters were at their maternal grandparents' house when the murder took place. Reports suggest Fioretti had been subjected to threats and abuse in the months leading up to the tragic incident, with periodic mutual complaints filed from 2011 to 2012. A planned flash mob is scheduled to commemorate Michela's sacrifice and protest against femicide, while the region has pledged financial and support assistance for her daughters.	Michela Fioretti, a 41-year-old nurse and mother of two, was shot and killed by her ex-husband, Guglielmo Perettini, a 42-year-old security guard, in a violent incident on Via del Mare near Ostia in Rome. The couple was separated, and Michela had previously reported his violent behavior to the police. The ex-husband, who was not accepting the separation, chased Michela in his car, eventually ramming her vehicle and shooting her multiple times before turning the gun on himself. He is now in critical condition in a hospital. The incident unfolded in front of horrified witnesses, including shocked motorists and pedestrians. The violent and tumultuous separation had led to mutual accusations and legal disputes between the couple but had not involved reported threats of gun violence prior to the tragic event.

Figure 2: Predicted Probability of Female Reporter by Real Reporter's Gender



Notes: Distribution of the predicted probabilities of each article being written by a female reporter plotted separately by *real* reporters' gender.

about reporters' gender.

Next, I plot in Figure 2 the distribution of predicted probabilities of articles being authored by a female journalist separately for articles authored by female and male journalists. The figure shows that articles written by male reporters are heavily concentrated at low predicted probabilities, while those written by female reporters concentrate at high predicted probabilities, despite being more uniformly distributed. This evidence suggests potentially meaningful gender differences in the language used in VAW reporting. However, the predictive approach alone does not fully isolate these differences as they could be driven by crime characteristics or other confounders. Moreover, such a text-based approach would not be informative about the specific narratives and reporting practices that potentially matter for reader attitudes and help-seeking behavior. For this reason, I use the theory-based measure of victim- and perpetrator-centered narratives as the main approach in the rest of the analysis.

The remaining part of the section is organized as follows: Section 6.1 presents the identification strategy, Section 6.2 reports the results from this analysis, and Section 6.3 reports additional analyses and robustness tests.

6.1 Empirical Strategy

The empirical strategy is a regression analysis that leverages a set of fixed effects to isolate the effect of authors' characteristics on reporting. A major concern in this analysis is that reporters

with different characteristics select into murders to cover based on their preferences for specific crime characteristics. For instance, it could be that women prefer to write about murders in which the perpetrator is the intimate partner of the victim. If this were the case, any gender differences in mentions of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator would be due to differences in case selection.

This concern is partially mitigated by the exogenous assignment of crime journalists to events within each newspaper in the first few days after the murder happens. Indeed, in each newspaper, when a new murder occurs, the story is assigned to the reporter within the crime unit who is on duty when the murder news arrives to the newspaper and who is in the region where the crime happened. A similar process applies as long as the news remains within the crime unit—i.e., it is not covered by the political, opinion, or judicial news sections. Moreover, the vast majority of crimes are covered by only one or two reporters per newspaper: Appendix Figure C.15 reports the distribution of the number of reporters for each newspaper who cover the same crime. The figure shows that the large majority of crimes are covered by only one or two reporters per newspaper, thus mitigating this concern. I check that the reporters' assignment is orthogonal to crime characteristics, conditional on the newspaper, by performing some balance checks on the sample of articles with known authors. I run the following regression for the whole sample and separately for the first, second, third, and fourth articles within each newspaper:

$$Y^k_{ajyn} = \beta FemaleRep_j + \alpha_{ny} + \varepsilon_{ajyn} \tag{2}$$

where Y^k_{ajyn} indicates characteristics k of the murder reported in article a written by reporter j in newspaper n at time t. On the right-hand side, $FemaleRep_{ajyn}$ is a binary variable indicating if the reporter writing the article is a woman or a man; α_{ny} are newspaper-year fixed effects. A final concern in the identification of gender differences is that male and female journalists have different characteristics, and the observed effect is rather due to the combination of these other characteristics than to gender itself. Appendix Table C.3 shows the summary statistics for reporters' characteristics and the gender differences along these dimensions. The table shows that indeed female and male reporters are different, with women being younger, less experienced, and less likely to be from the North. For this reason, in Section 6.3, I also investigate differences in reporting along other dimensions and whether the gender effect still persists when accounting for these differences.

Table 5: Balance Test on Reporter's Gender

Variable	Average		Difference in Means						
	Female Reporters	Male Reporters	Without FE	With FE					
	All	All	All	All	Art. 1	Art. 2	Art. 3	Art. 4	Art. 5
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Victim Italian	0.852	0.836	0.017**	-0.002	0.004	-0.014	0.012	0.047	0.032
	(0.355)	(0.371)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.018)	(0.038)	(0.046)
Perpetrator Italian	0.786	0.801	-0.015*	-0.004	-0.013	0.015	0.025	0.018	0.043
	(0.41)	(0.399)	(0.008)	(0.024)	(0.018)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.052)	(0.049)
Perpetrator Partner	0.368	0.36	0.008	0.011	0.020	0.043*	0.034	-0.065**	-0.071
	(0.482)	(0.48)	(0.007)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.025)	(0.033)	(0.045)
Perpetrator Relative	0.105	0.102	0.003	0.005	0.01	0.006	-0.038	-0.012	0.01
	(0.307)	(0.303)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.018)	(0.014)
Relationship Missing	0.399	0.412	-0.013*	-0.015	-0.02	-0.023	-0.026	0.086***	0.008
	(0.49)	(0.492)	(0.007)	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.025)	(0.041)
First Article - Female Vict.	0.318	0.325	-0.006	-0.013					
	(0.466)	(0.468)	(0.009)	(0.02)					
Second Article - Female Vict.	0.149	0.138	0.011	0.007					
	(0.356)	(0.345)	(0.007)	(0.004)					
First Article - Male Vict.	0.566	0.634	-0.068***	-0.046					
	(0.496)	(0.482)	(0.012)	(0.043)					
Second Article - Male Vict.	0.152	0.159	-0.007	-0.009					
	(0.359)	(0.366)	(0.009)	(0.007)					
Victim Female	0.597	0.583	0.014**	0.007					
	(0.491)	(0.493)	(0.007)	(0.018)					

Notes: Balance test of crime and article characteristics along reporters' gender for articles on murders with female victims. *Article Length* is the number of words in each article; *First Article* and *Second Article* are indicators for whether the article is respectively the first or the second one about a specific crime in the same newspaper. Columns 1 to 4 report the results for the whole sample, and Columns 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 report the results separately for the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth articles, respectively. Columns 1 and 2 report the mean and standard deviation of crime and article characteristics separately for Female and Male reporters. Column 3 reports the simple difference in means between Female and Male reporters. Columns 4 to 9 report the difference in means after taking out newspaper-year fixed effects. Standard errors in Columns 4 to 9 are clustered at the newspaper level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5 reports the results of the balance test. Columns 1 and 2 report the mean of each variable separately for female and male reporters, while Columns 3 and 4 report the simple difference in means and the coefficient β from equation 2 for the whole sample. From Column 3, it emerges that there are some small differences between cases covered by female and male reporters. For instance, women are less likely to cover cases where the perpetrator is Italian but more likely to cover crimes with an Italian victim. However, all of these differences disappear when newspaper-year fixed effects are included.[35] Importantly, after including the fixed effects, there are no differences between male and female reporters in the probability that they are assigned to the first or second article about a crime with either female or male victims. Additionally, female and male reporter write about crimes with female and male victims to a similar extent. Finally, Columns 5 to 9 report the results for the same specification of Column 4 separately for the first five articles about a crime in each newspaper. The results show that reporters' gender is not correlated with crime characteristics in the first five articles.

This evidence overall suggests that the authors' characteristics are orthogonal to crime characteristics. However, it could still be that crimes' characteristics are correlated with the time of the crime, and that, reporters' working hours are correlated their gender. For instance, it could be that male reporters are more likely to work at night, when intimate partner violence crimes are more likely to occur. If this were the case, then accounting for newspaper-year fixed effects would not be sufficient to leverage the exogenous assignment of reporters to news. For these reasons and since I do not observe reporters' working hours, I include crime fixed effects to compare differences in reporting holding constant crime characteristics. The final regression I run is the following:

$$Y_{a(e)jyn} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FemaleRep_j + \alpha_{ny} + \alpha_r + \alpha_e + \varepsilon_{a(e)jyn} \tag{3}$$

where $Y_{a(e)jyn}$ is the indicator for the presence of any words in the dictionaries described in Section 5.2 in article a about crime e written by journalist j in year y and newspaper n; the explanatory variable is $FemaleRep_j$ which indicates that the article is written by a female journalists, and the coefficient of interest is β_1, which indicates differences in outcomes between female and male journalists. As aforementioned, I include newspaper-year and reporter's region fixed effects, α_{ny} and α_r, to account for the selection of reporters into cases, and crime fixed effects, α_e, to account for additional potential correlations between crime and reporters characteristics. Standard errors, $\varepsilon_{a(e)jyn}$, are clustered at the newspaper-year level.

6.2 Results

Table 6 reports the results from equation 3 in which the main explanatory variable is an indicator for the reporter being a woman. Columns 1 and 5 report the results from the simple OLS regression of reporters' gender on the indexes for victim-centered and perpetrator-centered narratives,

[35] To further test this assumption of exogeneity, Appendix Tables E.1 and E.2 look at differences in reporters along other characteristics, like age and gender norms. In line with the assumption, the tables show that there are few to no differences in reporters' age and proxies for gender norms in the region of residence.

Table 6: Gender Differences in Reporting

	Victim-Centered Index				Perpetrator-Centered Index			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Female Reporter	0.169***	0.129***	0.145***	0.132***	−0.075***	−0.068**	−0.058**	−0.048**
	(0.032)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Age				0.001				0.004***
				(0.001)				(0.001)
Observations	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587
R^2	0.007	0.118	0.130	0.425	0.001	0.058	0.064	0.355
Newsp × Year FE		X	X	X		X	X	X
Reporter Reg. FE			X	X			X	X
Crime FE				X				X

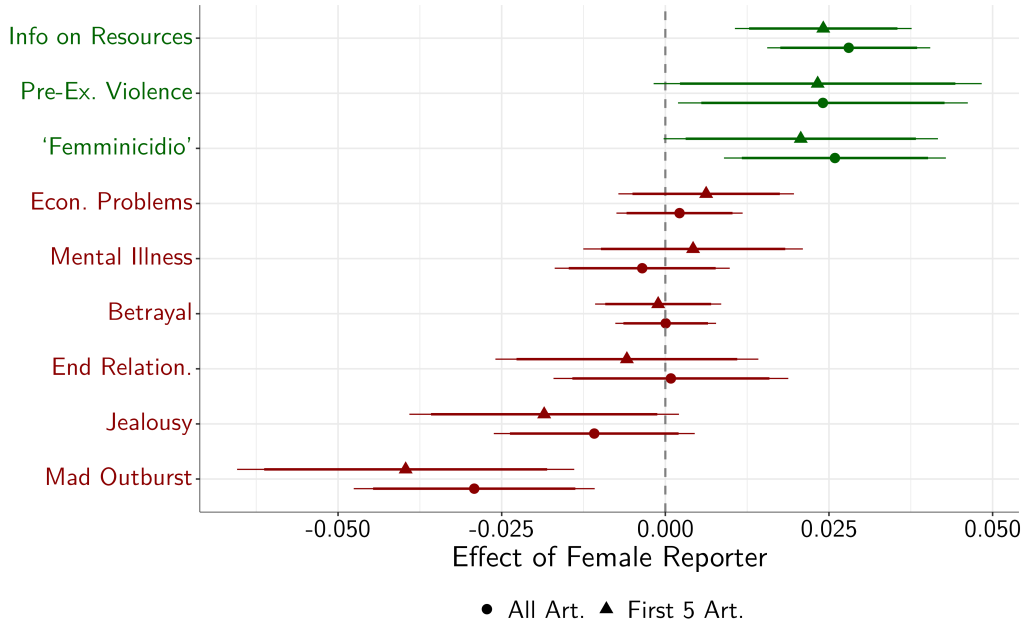
Notes: Differences in the use of reporting practices between Female and Male reporters. Columns 1 to 4 report the results for the victim-centered index, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1, capturing the use of practices complying with the guidelines on reporting about VAW; Columns 5 to 8 report the results for the perpetrator-centered index, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1, capturing the use of practices that do not comply with such guidelines. Columns 1 and 5 report the OLS regression; Columns 2 and 6 include newspaper times year fixed effects; Columns 3 and 7 add reporter's region fixed effects; Columns 4 and 8 also include crime fixed effects and controls for author's date of birth. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Columns 2-3 and 6-7 add newspaper times year and reporter's region fixed effects to leverage the exogenous of reporters to cases. The results from these columns show that female reporters are more likely than male ones to use victim-centered narratives and, at the same time, less likely to use perpetrator-centered narratives. The results are robust to the inclusion of crime fixed effects and to controlling for reporters' date of birth (Columns 4 and 8), suggesting that these gender differences persist when accounting for differences in crimes. In particular, the results from these two columns show that female reporters have a VC index that is 0.13 standard deviations higher than that of male reporters. At the same time, their PC index is 0.04 standard deviations lower than that of male reporters. Following the conceptual framework in Section 3, I interpret these results as evidence of reporters being driven also by identity-related motives, instead of solely maximizing monetary returns from readership.

As a next step, I break down the effect of the reporter's gender by topic. Namely, I run regression 3 using as an outcome the presence of each reporting topic separately. I plot the resulting coefficients in Figure 3 with both 90% and 95% confidence intervals. The results show that female reporters are around 2.5 percentage points more likely than male reporters to mention words referencing pre-existing sexual violence, to call the crime a femicide, and to provide information about resources to counter VAW. On the contrary, male reporters are between 3 and 4 percentage points more likely to mention a fit of rage and between 1 and 2 percentage points more likely to mention jealousy. Relating these estimates to the average prevalence of these practices, the results suggest that female reporters are 17% percent more likely than male reporters to call the crime a femicide and 70% more likely to report information on help resources. On the other hand, male reporters are around 14% percent more likely than female reporters to mention a mad outburst and jealousy.

An alternative explanation for the observed difference could be that women who become journalists are, on average, of *higher quality* than their male colleagues. Indeed, journalism is a male-

Figure 3: Effect of Female Reporters on Reporting Practices



Notes: Effect of female reporter on topic presence in articles. Regressions include newspaper-year, crime, and reporter's region fixed effects, and for coefficients represented by dots, are run on a sample that includes only the first 5 articles for each crime. Errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level, and the figure shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals. The coefficients colored in green indicate practices that form the victim-centered index, while the coefficients in red are those that form the perpetrator-centered index.

dominated job, as are many other workplaces, and women may face higher barriers to entry in the profession. If this were the case, the quality of women who successfully become journalists would be higher than their male counterparts, who face lower barriers (Ashraf et al., 2024), and hence more likely to be aware and follow journalistic guidelines. To test for this hypothesis, I look at differences in reporting in murders where the victim and the perpetrator are men. This way, the identity channel is shut down as female journalists do not write about their in-group. Appendix Figure F.2 reports the results of equation 3 using as outcomes the perpetrator-centered practices described in Section 5.2, including an indicator for the presence of sensationalist language.[36] The figure shows that there are no differences in reporting between male and female journalists, suggesting that in reporting about other crimes, women are not more likely to comply with journalistic guidelines.

Similarly, it could be that women are more empathetic towards victims and, therefore, always lean towards them in crime reporting. To rule out this hypothesis I look once again at the sample of articles on murders with male victims and run the same predictive exercise I ran at the beginning of this section. The model trained on the sample of articles with male victims performs worse than the one trained on the sample of articles about female victims, achieving an accuracy of 0.53, close to random guessing. This is also reflected in Appendix Figure F.3 where the distribution of predicted probabilities of female reporter is very similar across female and male reporters.

6.3 Robustness

In this section, I show that the results on gender differences in reporting are not driven by differences along other reporters' or newspaper characteristics and are robust to a series of alternative specifications and sample restrictions.

I start by investigating whether these gender differences disappear when focusing on other reporters' characteristics. In particular, I focus on reporters' age and gender norms, proxied by the level of gender norms in their region of residence, and run regression 3 focusing on these dimensions. On the one hand, it could be that younger reporters who experienced a rise in awareness on topics around VAW at a younger age are more sensitive to these topics and, consequently, more likely to write adhering to the guidelines. On the other hand, reporters from regions with a higher level of gender norms may be less aware of the guidelines and more likely to engage in practices like providing a motive for the perpetrator. Appendix Table F.1 reports the results for age differences, focusing on whether the reporter is 40 years old or younger. The coefficients for the victim-centered index are positive, hinting that younger reporters are more likely than older ones to comply with the guidelines. However, these coefficients, as well as those for the perpetrator-centered index, are non-significant, while the coefficients on reporters' gender are still significant and similar in magnitude to those in Table 6. Moving to the analysis of reporters' norms, Appendix Table F.2 reports the results. The table shows that reporters from regions with a more conservative gender

[36] I cannot include the indicators for victim-centered language in this analysis as the practices falling in that category are specific to murders with female victims.

norms are less likely to use victim-centered narratives and more likely to use perpetrator-centered ones, although this effect disappears when including newspaper times year fixed effects. However, the coefficient on reporters' gender is again significant and similar in magnitude to the main results.

Next, it could be that these differences disappear when newspaper ideology is included. In Appendix Section F.2, I look at differences in reporting across newspaper ideology. Appendix Table F.3 shows that reporters in liberal newspapers are more likely to use victim-centered narratives, while there is no significant difference in the perpetrator-centered index between liberal and conservative newspapers, even if the coefficient is negative. Looking at the magnitude of the coefficients, it is worth noting that the effect of female reporters on narratives is comparable to the effect of having a liberal versus a conservative newspaper. This suggests that having a female author reporting about these crimes is equivalent to shifting from a conservative to a liberal newspaper. Finally, to exclude the possibility that gender differences are driven by reporters with different characteristics, I look at the effect of female reporters among journalists in a specific group (e.g., young, old, conservative, etc.). The results, reported in Appendix Figures F.1a and F.1b show that there are small and non-significant differences in the coefficients estimated restricting the sample to journalists or newspapers with specific characteristics, suggesting gender is the main driver of these differences in reporting.

As a next robustness check, I consider the probability of at least one topic for each index appearing in the article. Appendix Table F.4 shows a similar pattern to the main results with the standardized index. In particular, female reporters are 3.6 percentage points more likely to mention at least one topic that complies with the guidelines and 2 percentage points more likely not to mention any topic that does not comply with the guidelines.

Additionally, I further address the concerns that there may be selection of journalists into crimes for articles after the first one. For this purpose, I create a variable capturing the order of release of articles about the same crime within the same newspaper (e.g., first article, second article, etc.). To account for the possibility of selection in follow-up articles for potential variation in the narrative of crimes over time, I first show that my results are robust to the inclusion of article order times crime fixed effects in Column 2 of Appendix Tables F.5 and F.6. Moreover, I show that the results hold when restricting the sample to the first article published in each newspaper for each crime, even if less precise (Column 2 in Appendix Tables F.7 and F.8).

Moreover, I show that the results are robust to different fixed effects and clustering options in Columns 3, 4, and 5 of Appendix Tables F.5 and F.6. Also, it could be that the effect is driven by a few popular crimes that attract media attention due to their characteristics. To account for this, in Column 6 of Appendix Tables F.5 and F.6 I include weights for the inverse of the number of articles about the same crime in each newspaper and show that the main results are robust to this. As a further check for this, I show that the results are robust to excluding crimes that are covered by more than 10 articles in the same newspaper (Column 6 in Appendix Tables F.7 and F.8).

Additionally, it could be that the differences in reporting arise only in the later debate around the crime. Therefore, to check for this, I restrict the sample to the first five articles if these are written in the same week when the crime happened or in the following one. Column 3 of Appendix

Tables F.7 and F.8 show that the results are robust to this restriction, despite being less precise. I also look at whether the results change when restricting the sample to murders by the intimate partner or by Italian perpetrators. Columns 4 and 5 of Appendix Tables F.7 and F.8 show the results when restricting the sample to murders by the intimate partner and to Italian perpetrators, respectively. The results on IPV crimes are similar to the main ones, further supporting the role of reporters' identity in driving these differences. Additionally, the results also hold when restricting the sample to only Italian perpetrators, excluding the possibility that female reporters may be more supportive of victims only when the perpetrator is from a different nationality. Finally, I restrict the sample to reporters who appear in my sample as authors of both crimes with female and male victims in Column 7 of the same tables, which shows that the results are virtually unchanged.

7 Effects of Female Versus Male Writing

Section 6 shows the presence of identity-driven differences in reporting about female homicides, with female reporters using more victim-centered narratives and fewer perpetrator-centered ones. A natural question that follows this analysis is: Do these writing choices matter? Or are they simply an inconsequential way for reporters to express their stylistic preferences? If the latter is true, then any diversity-driven change in writing following the increase in diversity in newsrooms would have limited policy implications. In contrast, if these differences translate into differences in reader' behavior, they should constitute an important channel through which identity-driven reporting can shape persuasion, public attitudes, and ultimately provide some insight for policy design.

To investigate this, I provide evidence from two complementary analyses. First, In Section 7.1 look at whether being exposed to more female reporters, and, consequently, to more female-like writing style and victim-centered narratives affects readers' real life behavior. In particular, I focus on help-seeking behavior by VAW victims proxied by calls to the Italian helpline number to counter VAW. I leverage the exogenous assignment of reporters to crime and the random timing of the murders to causally identify the effect of higher exposure to female reporters and provide evidence on the effects of identity-driven writing on help-seeking behavior.

In the second analysis reported in Section 7.2.1, I move to cleanly identify the effects of the different narratives on a attitudes, preferences for policy intervention, and engagement in a controlled experiment. I show respondents a newspaper article about a woman's murder and randomize the presence of victim-centered and perpetrator-centered narratives to isolate the effect of narratives, abstracting from the gender of the author which compounds the treatment in the observational data analysis.

The experimental results on the effect of narratives coupled with the results on the effect on help-seeking behavior provide robust evidence on the existence of a channel of identity-driven persuasion, which has been overlooked in the literature so far.

7.1 Exposure to Female Reporters and Help-Seeking

After establishing that reporters' gender shapes news content, I move to investigate whether these gender differences also affect readers' behavior, focusing on help-seeking behavior. In this Section, I investigate the effect of being exposed to female reporters on calls to the helpline number for VAW. In particular, Section 7.1.1 describes the empirical strategy, Section 7.1.2 reports the results, discusses the mechanisms and reports some robustness tests.

7.1.1 Empirical Strategy

In this analysis, I am interested in investigating whether exposure to articles on female murders written by female reporters affects help-seeking behavior, measured through the number of calls to the VAW helpline. The first challenge to identify this is to properly capture exposure to female reporters. To achieve this, I combine the newspaper data on such articles with information about their readership in each province and year. I construct the exposure measure for each province (p) and week (yw) as the share of articles written by a woman in a specific week, where each article is weighted by the market share of the newspaper in that province in the previous year ($y-1$).

$$FRExp_{pyw} = \sum_n \frac{\sum_a \mathbf{1}\left[FemaleRep_{a(e)nyw}\right]}{TotArt_{nyw}} MktShr_{np,y-1} \tag{4}$$

where $FemaleRep_{a(e)nt}$ is an indicator for whether article a about crime e in newspaper n and in year-week t is written by a woman, $TotArt_{nyw}$ is the total number of articles by n in week yw, and $MktShr_{np,y-1} = \frac{Readership_{np,y-1}}{\sum_n Readership_{np,y-1}}$ is the market share of newspaper n in province p and year $y-1$. This way, I am able to include in the measure only newspapers that are read in a specific province and weigh them for their relative popularity in that province. $FRExp_{pyw}$ captures the exposure to articles by female reporters in p and yw, considering articles about *any* female murders. To investigate the effect of exposure to female reporters of calls, I start by running the following regression:

$$Calls_{pyw} = \delta_1 FRExp_{pyw} + \delta_2 Murder_{pyw} + \alpha_p + \alpha_m + \varepsilon_{pyw} \tag{5}$$

where $Calls_{pyw}$ is the number of calls to the helpline number in province p and week $yw+1$,$FRExp_{pyw}$ is as described above, and $Murder_{pyw}$ is an indicator if a murder involving a woman happened in province p and week yw; α_p and α_m are province and month fixed effects, respectively. Errors ε_{pyw} are clustered at the province level.

The main coefficient of interest from (5), δ_1, is likely to be biased. Indeed, as anticipated in Section 6.1, the exogenous assignment of reporters to crimes holds mainly for the first few articles following the crime. Therefore, it could be that there is a selection of reporters who write follow-up articles, particularly concerning articles by reporters outside of the crime unit. For instance, it could be that editors ask female reporters to write opinion articles about cases that become popular at the national level, which are also more likely to lead to an increase in calls.

For this reason, I leverage the within-newspaper exogeneity in the assignment of journalists to murder, combined with the random timing of these murders, in a generalized difference-in-differences (two-way fixed effects) with a continuous treatment as an empirical approach. A primary concern regarding the timing and location of the murders is that they are more likely to happen in places that already have high crime rates. Moreover, it could be that the timing of other crimes, such as homicides with male victims, leads to an increase in the prevalence of these murders. To investigate this hypothesis, I compute the Pearson correlation between the prevalence of murders with female victims and that of male victims, which is 0.02, suggesting the absence of any correlation in the time and place between these events. Additionally, Appendix Figures C.18a and C.18b report the number of murders with female and male victims, respectively, for each province and month. On the one hand, Figure C.18b shows that a lot of murders with male victims happen in the same province-month observations, which correspond to big cities. On the other hand, the distribution of murders with female victims is more homogeneous, with a few province-month observations containing a maximum of six murders. Finally, Appendix Figure C.19 shows that murders with female victims are not correlated with other crime rates.

To avoid considering reporters who were willingly picked by editors to cover such crimes, I use the exposure measure constructed using only the first five articles for each crime and newspaper if these articles were published in the same week of the murder or the following one as treatment. Moreover, I consider as *treated* only provinces where the murder happens. Therefore, assuming that a crime happens at time $t = 0$, the measure for exposure to articles written by female reporters in province p used in this analysis only includes articles about murders of women written in $t = 0$ and $t = 1$, if such articles are among the first 5 in each newspaper following a crime. Finally, I focus on a four-week window before and after each murder for two reasons. First, these crimes are high-frequency, with an average of one every three days, allowing for the possibility of each province being treated more than once. Indeed, while the majority of provinces witness only one crime each year, as shown in Appendix Figure C.6, big cities are likely to experience up to 13 murders per year. At the same time, two murders rarely happen within the same month, as shown in Appendix Figure C.7. Therefore, to avoid the effect being confounded by more than one event happening, I restrict the window of analysis. Additionally, since I only focus on exposure to female reporters in the first five articles, thus excluding most follow-up articles, any effect found over a longer time window would likely be biased by additional coverage.

This way, I aim to isolate the effect of higher exposure to female reporters during the initial coverage of a crime. This effect is likely to be different from the effect of overall exposure to female reporters because (i) it does not consider exposure to articles after the first five, and (ii) it treats each event in the same province as separate, thus excluding the effect caused by previous exposure. The main regression of interest is as follows:

$$Calls_{pyw} = \delta_1 FemExp_c^{5Art.} + \delta_2 FemExp_c^{5Art.} \times PostMurder_{pyw} + \alpha_p + \alpha_m + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{pcyw} \quad (6)$$

where $Calls_{pyw}$, α_p, and α_m are as described above. $FemExp_c^{5Art.}$ is the treatment for crime c, i.e., the measure for exposure to articles written by female reporters, considering the first five articles for each newspaper and crime, averaged over the first two weeks following the crime. $PostMurder_{pyw}$ is an indicator for being in the period after the murder, and α_i is the time-from-murder fixed effects. Errors ε_{pcyw} are clustered at the province level.

Additionally, I also run an event study regression with two-way fixed effects, using a binarized version of the treatment and the estimation outlined by Chaisemartin, D'Haultfœuille, and Vazquez-Bare (2024), to account for units to switch treatment status:

$$Calls_{pyw} = \sum_{i\in[-5,10]} \delta_i Treat_c^{TopQ} \times Week_{p,yw+i} + \sum_{i\in[-5,10]} \lambda_i Treat_c^{BottomQ} \times Week_{p,yw+i} + \alpha_p + \alpha_m + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{pywc} \tag{7}$$

where $Treat_c^{TopQ}$ and $Treat_c^{BottomQ}$ are indicators if the crime has the exposure measure in the top quartile or the bottom quartile of the treatment distribution. I interact these treatment variables with indicators for being in each week before or after the crime. The main assumption for δ_i and λ_i to causally estimate the effect of initial exposure to female articles on calls in a standard difference-in-differences design is that, absent a murder and its subsequent coverage by newspapers, calls in provinces with different exposure to female murders would have followed the same trajectory. To test this assumption, I also include in the regression the interaction of the treatments with indicators for pre-treatment periods[37]. However, as shown in Callaway, Goodman-Bacon, et al. (2024), settings with a continuous treatment require a *stronger* version of the parallel trends assumption, which requires that units treated with different doses of treatment would have reacted similarly if they had been exposed to the same dose. In this context, this means that provinces with different likelihoods of being exposed to female reporters would have reacted similarly had they been exposed to the same number of articles by women. The main concern with this assumption is that provinces with different levels of gender norms would react differently depending on how many articles by women they read. To partially account for this, I include in regression 6 the proxies for gender norms at the regional level. Moreover, given that each province is treated more than once, with province fixed effects, I can leverage the within-province variation in female reporters' exposure, partially accounting for this concern. Nonetheless, I cannot fully rule out this possibility. Finally, since this setting focuses on staggered treatment, it may present the issues of two-way fixed effects estimation highlighted in Goodman-Bacon (2021) and Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021). To control for this, I follow the estimation strategy described in Chaisemartin, D'Haultfœuille, and Vazquez-Bare (2024) and Chaisemartin and D'Haultfœuille (2024), which also allows units to enter and exit the treatment group and therefore be treated more than once in different periods.

[37]This test also assumes that given the exogenous assignment of crime reporters to news, the share of female exposure would have been similar before and after a murder happens.

Table 7: Effect of Female VAW Reporters on Calls to Helpline

	Number of Calls					Log. Calls	Std. Calls	Poisson
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Female Rep. Exposure	0.315*	0.303*	0.118**	0.116**	0.117**	0.005	0.034**	0.055**
	(0.172)	(0.167)	(0.055)	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.025)
Murder (Prov-Week)		3.178***	0.258**		0.242**	0.020	0.071**	0.047**
		(1.185)	(0.103)		(0.101)	(0.018)	(0.029)	(0.021)
Murder (Reg-Week)				0.074**				
				(0.032)				
Observations	56443	56443	56443	56443	56443	56443	56443	56443
R^2	0.000	0.016	0.690	0.690	0.690	0.538	0.690	0.446
Mean Dep. Var.	1.724	1.724	1.724	1.724	1.724	1.724	1.724	1.724
Mean Expl. Var.	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209
Province FE			X	X	X	X	X	X
Month FE			X	X	X	X	X	X
Tot Art.					X	X	X	X

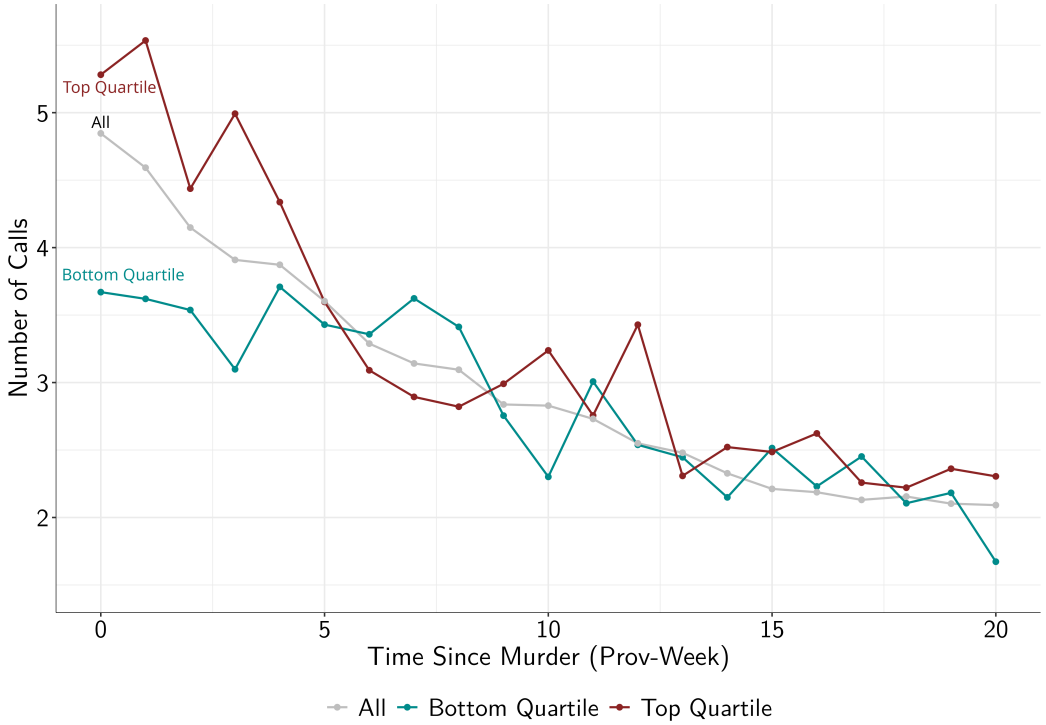
Notes: Effect of exposure to female reporters on calls. Columns 1 to 5 report the OLS estimate using the number of calls as outcomes. Column 1 reports the simple OLS estimate; Column 2 controls for a murder happening in the same week, Column 3 adds province and month fixed effects; Column 4 controls for a murder happening in the same region and week; Columns 5 to 8 report the results also control the total number of articles in that week. Column 6 uses the logarithm of calls as an outcome, Column 7 the normalized number of calls, and Column 8 uses a Poisson regression. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

7.1.2 Results

I start by looking at the results of the simple OLS regression 5, reported in Table 7. Looking at the number of calls as an outcome, Columns 1 to 5 show a positive effect of exposure to female reporters on calls, which is statistically significant across all specifications. In particular, Column 5 shows that an increase of 50 percentage points in the exposure measure, which corresponds to having an additional article written by a woman per crime in the first two weeks after a crime, is correlated to a 0.06 increase in calls, which corresponds to a 4% increase (0.02 of a standard deviation looking at Column 7). The results are similar when using the logarithm of calls or a Poisson model, however non-significant for the logarithm of calls. Another takeaway from this Table is that the presence of a murder is correlated with a 14% increase in calls in the same week and province, which is more than three times as large as the effect of being exposed to a female reporter. The results from this table, while pointing towards a positive correlation between the coverage of crimes by female reporters and calls, are very small in magnitude and are likely to suffer from omitted variable bias, as explained in the previous section.

Therefore, I move to investigate the effect of female exposure in the weeks after a murder happens using a staggered difference-in-differences design. First, I look descriptively at the evolution of calls in the weeks after a murder happens in the same province. Figure 4 shows this time series separately for observations with female reporters' exposure in the bottom and the top quartile of the distribution of the measure. The figure suggests that in the first 5 weeks following the murder, calls are higher in provinces with high exposure to female reporters. Moreover, in Appendix Figure G.2, I plot the same time series after residualizing the number of calls on province fixed effects,

Figure 4: Calls to Helpline in the Weeks after Murder by Exposure to Female Reporters



Notes: Time series of the number of calls in the province of the murder in the 20 weeks after the murder happens. The time series is plotted considering all province-week observations and separately for observations with the female reporters' exposure measure in the bottom and top quartile of its distribution.

Table 8: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls Difference-in-Differences

	At Least 1 Call				Number of Calls (Poisson)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Fem. Exposure^{5Art}× Post	0.107	0.117*	0.117*	0.138*	0.243	0.299**	0.302*	0.421
	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.072)	(0.177)	(0.132)	(0.182)	(0.300)
Fem. Exposure^{5Art}	−0.047	−0.083	−0.083	–	−0.076	−0.268**	−0.270	–
	(0.059)	(0.056)	(0.056)		(0.187)	(0.104)	(0.169)	
Observations	6980	6980	6980	6980	6980	6980	6980	6980
R^2	0.268	0.282	0.282	0.393	0.535	0.564	0.564	0.570
Mean Dep. Var.	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.741	3.668	3.668	3.668	3.668
Mean Expl. Var.	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209
Province FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Window FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Month FE		X	X	X		X	X	X
Crime FE				X				X

Notes: Effect of exposure to female reporters on calls estimated in a difference-in-differences design in an eight-week window around the murder. Columns 1 to 4 report the linear probability estimate of there being at least one call (extensive margin). Columns 5 to 8 report results using the number of calls as outcomes and a Poisson model. Columns 1 and 5 report the OLS and Poisson estimates, including province and weeks-from-murder fixed effects, while Columns 2 and 6 also add month fixed effects, and Columns 3 and 7 control for the proxy for gender norms and the total number of articles. Finally, Columns 4 and 8 also include crime fixed effects. The R^2 in Columns 5 to 8 corresponds to the pseudo R^2 calculated for the Poisson regression. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

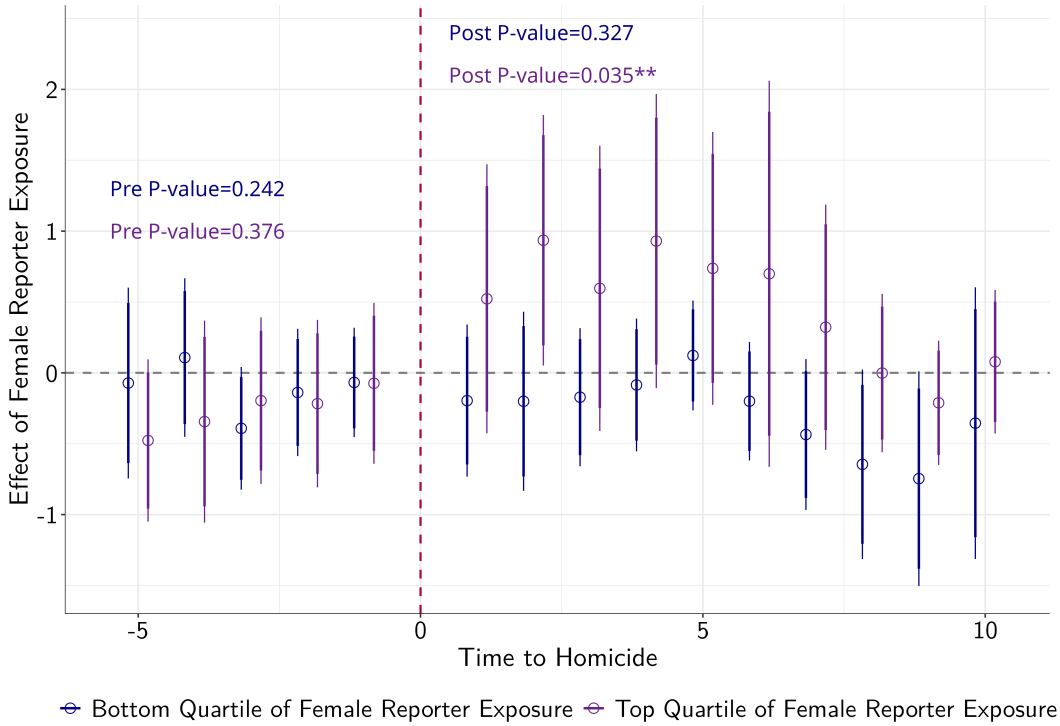
after murders with female victims (Panel (a)) and murders with male victims (Panel (b)). Panel (a) shows that even after accounting for province fixed effects, calls to the helpline increase after a murder of a woman in the province of the murder, and they increase more for provinces that are more exposed to articles about the crime by female reporters. On the contrary, Panel (b) shows no effect of murders with male victims on calls and no differences across different coverage by female reporters.

Next, I estimate the two-way fixed effect regression (6), looking at both the probability of at least one call and the total number of calls in an eight-week window around the murder. To account for potential differences in treatment effects depending on the level of the treatment received, I also include a proxy for gender norms in the region of the murder. The results reported in Table 8 confirm the positive effect of exposure to female reporters on calls and suggest a much stronger relationship than the one highlighted in Table 7. Columns 1 to 4 show the results for the probability of at least one call. The coefficient on the interaction is positive and significant across all specifications, with the estimate in Column 3 suggesting an increase of 12 percentage points in the probability of at least one call associated with higher female reporter exposure after the murder of a woman in the province of the murder. Second, I investigate the effect on the number of calls. One potential issue when using the number of calls and a linear model is that the distribution of calls is skewed towards 0, leading to a misspecified model.[38] To account for this, I use a Poisson model and report the results in Columns 5 to 8 of Table 8.[39] As with the probability of at least one call, the coefficient is

[38]See Appendix Figure C.12.

[39]Column 6 of Appendix Table G.3 reports the results using the zero-inflated Poisson model to further alleviate this concern.

Figure 5: Event Study: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls



Notes: Calls to the help-line number before and after a murder happens in the same province for increasing exposure to female reporters in the first two articles covering the crime. The figure plots the coefficient from equation 7 using two binarized versions of the treatment: being in the bottom quartile and the top quartile of the distribution. The regression includes province and month fixed effects. It shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals constructed clustering errors at the province level. Overlaid text reports the p-value from an F-test for the joint significance of the four pre- (top left) and post-murder (top right) coefficients: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

positive and significant across all columns. Assuming an increase of one article per newspaper and crime written by a female reporter—corresponding to a 50 percentage points increase in the female exposure measure –, the number of calls increases by 17% corresponding to around one additional call for each province and week. Finally, in Columns 4 and 8, I also include crime fixed effects to account for crime-specific characteristics that might affect the number of calls, obtaining similar results despite the conservative specification.

Finally, in Figure 5, I report the coefficients from the event study regression 7 with the two versions of the binarized treatments and accounting for observations switching treatment status. Reassuringly, the figure shows the absence of any effect of the treatment in the weeks before the murder for both treatment variables. Moreover, being in the bottom quartile of the distribution of exposure to articles by female reporters, the Figure shows a null effect also in the weeks after the murder, while being in the top quartile of the distribution leads to an increase in calls equal to around one more call for each province and week in the first four weeks following the murder. Overall, this evidence points towards a positive and sizable effect of exposure to female reporters on help-seeking behavior in the first two weeks following the murder of a woman.

Table 9: Effect of Exposure to Narratives on Calls Difference-in-Differences

	Number of Calls (Poisson)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Victim-Cent. Narr.^{5Art}	0.473**	−0.052	−0.055			
	(0.185)	(0.142)	(0.142)			
Victim-Cent. Narr.^{5Art}× Post	0.466***	0.485***	0.491***			
	(0.150)	(0.177)	(0.177)			
Perp.-Cent. Narr.^{5Art}				1.417***	0.401	0.403
				(0.298)	(0.250)	(0.247)
Perp.-Cent. Narr.^{5Art}× Post				−0.243	0.101	0.104
				(0.394)	(0.435)	(0.433)
Observations	6980	6980	6980	6980	6980	6980
R^2	0.538	0.564	0.564	0.537	0.564	0.564
Mean Dep. Var.	3.668	3.668	3.668	3.668	3.668	3.668
Mean Expl. Var.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.092	0.092	0.092
Province FE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Window FE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Month FE		X	X		X	X

Notes: Effect of exposure to victim-centered (Columns 1 to 3) and perpetrator-centered narratives (Columns 4 to 6) on calls estimated in a difference-in-differences design in an eight-week window around the murder. All columns report the results from a Poisson regression, including province and weeks-from-murder fixed effects. Columns 2-3 and 5-6 also add month fixed effects and control for the proxy for gender norms. The R^2 corresponds to the pseudo R^2 calculated for the Poisson regression. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Mechanisms This effect can act through two different channels. On the one hand, it could have a direct effect through the *product*. Given the evidence provided in Section 6 about the different narratives used by female and male reporters, it could be that different narratives lead to different perceptions about violence against women and hence trigger different help-seeking reactions. On the other hand, it could have an indirect effect via exposure through female news producers. Echoing the literature on role models, it could be that female readers are more attentive to news written by female reporters or are more likely to react to the article when seeing the name of a woman, hence triggering the effect on calls (Miller and Segal, 2019; Beaman et al., 2009).

To investigate whether it is the narrative used that is driving the effect, I create a measure of initial exposure to victim-centered and perpetrator-centered narratives following the construction of the main treatment variable and run the same difference-in-differences regression 6. The results, reported in Table 9, show a positive and significant effect of initial exposure to victim-centered narratives on calls (Columns 1 to 3) and a non-significant effect of initial exposure to perpetrator-centered narratives (Columns 4 to 6), suggesting a direct effect of victim-centered narratives on calls.

A different mechanism for the effects presented in this section could be that a higher coverage by female reporters leads to more coverage of the crime. To test for this, I also look at the effect of increasing exposure to female reporters on the total number of articles for each crime in the

weeks after the first two, weighted by the market share of newspapers in the province of the crime. Appendix Figure G.1 shows that there is no difference in the number of articles between places with initial high versus low exposure to female reporters after the crime, which allows me to rule out this mechanism.

Taken together, all this evidence points towards the effect of exposure to female reporters on calls being driven by the narratives they use rather than by a role model effect or increased salience or volume of reporting. To pin down how different narratives affect readers, I further investigate their in Section 7.2.

Robustness In this section, I perform some additional robustness checks reported in Appendix Section G.2 to further corroborate the results presented in the previous section. First, to rule out that the effect may be driven by general exposure to articles by female reporters on crime, I use as a placebo the sample of murders with male victims for which there are no gender differences in reporting. I construct a similar treatment using articles on murders with male victims and report the results from the event study regression (7) in Appendix Figure G.3, which shows that there is no effect of higher exposure to female reporters on calls for murders with male victims. Additionally, I create placebo murders by creating random events that replicate the murder distribution across provinces each year. I estimate the event study regression (7) using these placebo murders and report the results in Appendix Figure G.4. Similarly, to murders with male victims, none of the coefficients in the event study is significant.

A potential problem with the difference-in-differences analysis presented above is the possible presence of spillovers, which would lead to a violation of the stable unit treatment value assumption (SUTVA). Indeed, it could be that if higher exposure to female reporters leads to more calls in the province where the crime occurs, the same could also happen in other provinces that are exposed to the same or similar news. While in this context the SUTVA is likely to be violated, given that the media market for each newspaper is larger than just the single province, any positive effect of higher female exposure would likely attenuate the estimates presented in the previous section. Still, I check for the presence of potential spillovers by looking at the effect of female exposure on provinces in the same region and on neighboring provinces. I report the results where I also control for a murder happening in that province, in Appendix Figures G.5 and G.6, respectively. The figures mitigate the concerns about the SUTVA, as the positive effect of being increasingly exposed to female reporters is more muted compared to Figure 5 and non-significant.

Overall, this analysis shows that the main effect of higher exposure to female reporters is only present for the province of the crime, where the event is particularly salient and where people might, therefore, be more attentive to such crimes. One possible explanation for this is that people living in the same province are more likely to fully read articles about femicides, while those in provinces where the event is less salient are less likely to do so. If this were the case, then the effect of journalistic narratives would only affect respondents in the province of the crime, therefore, alleviating any concern about SUVTA violations.

Next, in Appendix Tables G.3 and G.4, I provide evidence that the results are robust when

considering a different number of articles when computing the female exposure measure and a different Poisson model for the estimation on number of calls. The coefficients from these estimates are similar in magnitude to the main ones, suggesting that the results are not sensitive to considering a different number of articles. I also show that the results hold when excluding crimes occurring within 10 weeks of another crime in the same province (Appendix Figure G.7). Moreover, in Appendix Table G.5, I show that the results are robust to including gender norms times year fixed effects, and controlling for the total number of murders with female victims, the total number of female reporters on other murders, and other crime rates in each province-year.

Finally, in Appendix Section G.1, I provide an alternative strategy to estimate the main effect, also using exposure to follow-up articles. I use an instrumental variable approach, using the current treatment as the instrument and the overall exposure measure as the endogenous regressor. This instrument, while valid, is likely to violate the exclusion restriction. Indeed, it is likely that readers are primed by the first few articles they read, and their behavior is, consequently, directly affected by this, independently of the articles they read afterward. Nevertheless, I report the analysis for completeness and show that the results are robust to using this estimation strategy.

7.2 Effect of Victim-Centered and Perpetrator-Centered Narratives

The analysis of Section 7.1 provides evidence on how higher exposure to female reporters to an increase in help-seeking proxied by the number of calls to the VAW helpline. Additional analysis suggests that this increase is driven by the different narratives used by female reporters. However, due to the lack of fine-grained administrative and opinion data, it is difficult to fully understand the effects of these identity-driven differences in reporting narratives and to understand the mechanisms behind the effect on calls. For instance, it could be that people are not aware of the existence of help resources, thus providing information about these would be enough to increase help-seeking. On the other hand, it could be due to a role model effect where women are more likely to seek help if they read about other women doing it and thus update their beliefs about the prevalence of help-seeking. In this section, I overcome the limitation following the absence of fine-grained data by running an online experiment and providing evidence on how different narratives affect individuals' attitudes, preferences, and beliefs. Further, to better understand the drivers of reporters' narrative choices, I investigate the effects of different narratives on engagement as a proxy for reporters' monetary and career incentives.

7.2.1 Experimental Design

I conduct an online experiment with 1600 Italian respondents[40]. In the experiment, respondents are randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions, each containing the same newspaper article and a different narrative reflecting the gender differences uncovered in Section 6. The articles rely on real news articles on crimes where the names of the people involved are changed.

[40]The experiment was run in February and March 2026, pre-registered at the AEA RCT Registry (AEARCTR-0017870) and approved by the Harvard University IRB.

In the *Control* group, respondents only read the baseline article either on crime A or crime B. The remaining treatment groups are shown the same baseline article from the *Control*, with an additional sentence including either perpetrator-centered or victim-centered narratives to mimic male and female style, respectively. The first two treatments, *Perpetrator-Centered (PC) Treatment* and *Episodic Victim-Centered (EVC) Treatment* are strictly more centered on the perpetrator and the victim, respectively. In particular, Treatment PC provides some background on the possible motives of the perpetrator by mentioning jealousy and a fit of rage. Conversely, Treatment EVC adds information on the victim, focusing on the pre-existing violence between her and the perpetrator and her actions. Finally, the *Thematic Victim-Centered (TVC) Treatment* still falls in the victim-centered narratives as defined in Section 5.2, but provides information on help resources and data about violence against women in Italy.[41] All treatments are reported both in Italian and English in Appendix Section H.1.

I focus on three different outcome categories. First, I elicit attitudes towards the victim and the perpetrator by using a version of the empathy-thermometer question by Alrababa'h et al. (2021) adapted to this context. Second, I investigate whether different narratives affect preferences for government intervention in this context. Specifically, I ask respondents to sign a *simulated* petition to increase the resources dedicated to supporting policies that counter violence against women, and to increase the stakes of the outcome, I tell them I will report to a parliamentary commission the share of respondents who signed the petition. Third, I measure the perceived prevalence of VAW and help-seeking through police reporting and helpline calls in the province where the respondent resides. For the latter outcomes, I can investigate the deviation of their guesses from the real data and thereby incentivize the questions by offering a monetary reward if their guesses are close to the true value.[42]

Finally, I also test the effect of the treatment on some secondary outcomes, like the perceived fairness of punishment and compensation, and engagement with the newspaper, measured in two ways. First, I ask respondents whether they would use the same outlet for information on crime. Second, I mimic the visualization of news articles in online newspapers by adding links below the main article to other articles that they can click on, and record their clicks.

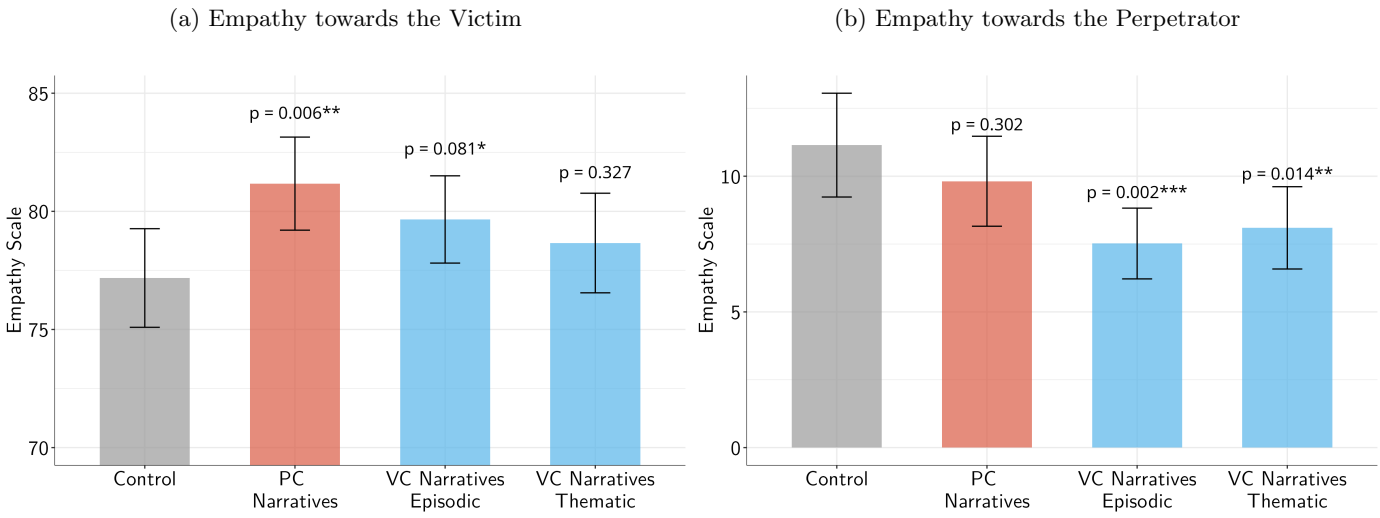
7.2.2 Experimental Results

Before analyzing the results, I investigate the socio-demographic composition of the sample. Appendix Figure H.19 shows that while the sample is balanced across gender, it is unbalanced across all other dimensions and is mostly not representative of the Italian population. For instance, around 70% of respondents are below 45 years of age, which is lower than the Italian median age of 49 years.

[41] This distinction of victim-centered narratives into background of the victim (episodic framing) and information on the context (thematic framing) is important from both a policy and theoretical perspective. From a theoretical perspective, the literature in political science and linguistics predicts that framing news in an episodic versus a thematic way affects whether the crime is perceived as an isolated event or a signal of a more systematic issue, and, consequently, preferences for government intervention and perceptions (Iyengar, 1991). Additionally, if these narratives lead to different effects, the distinction would also be important for journalists and policymakers.

[42] I report the full questionnaire in Section **??**

Figure 6: Respondents' Attitudes



Notes: Respondents' attitudes separately by treatment. Panel A reports the results for empathy towards the victim, while Panel B for empathy towards the perpetrator. Empathy is measured on a scale from 0 (*not feeling close*) to 100 (*feeling very close*). The figure reports confidence intervals at the 95% level and p-values from a t-test between each treatment and the control: * p $<$ 0.1, ** p $<$ 0.05, *** p $<$ 0.01.

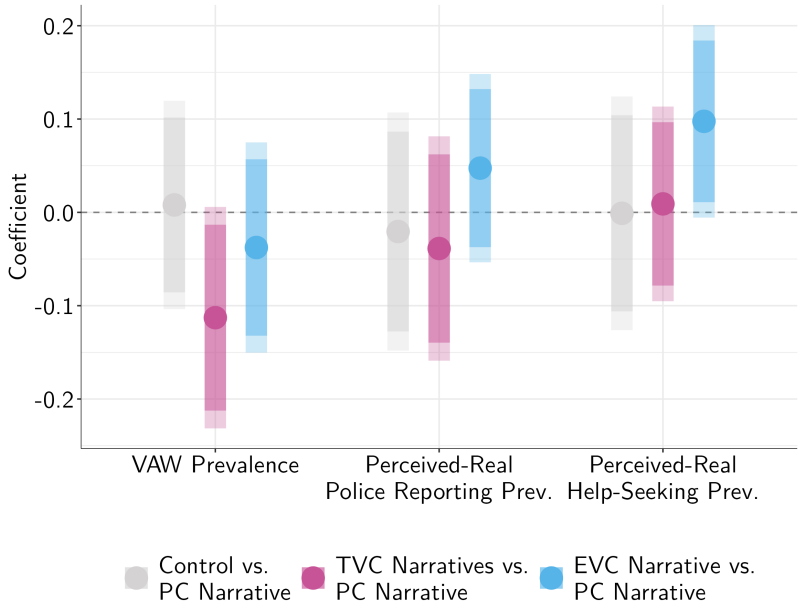
Moreover, regarding political representation, while the sample accurately captures abstention levels in Italy, it is also heavily skewed towards the left, whereas the right is under-represented.[43] Respondents are also most likely to use social media and websites of newspapers to stay informed and are equally distributed across Italy once accounting for the population of provinces (Appendix Figures H.20 and H.21). Additionally, I measure proxies for gender and family norms and find that the sample is mostly progressive, although they are less polarized on the idea of having a *traditional* family. Finally, I check whether the randomization worked correctly and show in Appendix Table H.6 that respondents' characteristics are balanced across treatments.

I start by testing the hypothesis on the effect of treatments PC and EVC compared to the control on attitudes towards the victim and the perpetrator, respectively, and report in Figure 6 the average measure of empathy separately by treatment.[44] As hypothesized and in line with the existing literature on reporting about VAW (Palazzolo and Roberto, 2011; Carlyle, Orr, et al., 2014), respondents reading victim-centered narratives feel more empathetic towards the victim compared to the control. However, this is also true for perpetrator-centered narratives. One potential explanation for this pattern could be the skewness to the left of the sample: given that, from a legal perspective, jealousy falls into the futile motives category in the context of murders, most progressive individuals might feel closer to the victim if they read about it. However, Appendix Table H.7 shows that the effect is stable across all subgroups, including left and right-leaning respondents.

[43] At the last national elections held in 2022, the right-wing coalition won with 44% of votes, while the left-wing coalition obtained 26% of votes. The share of people who did not turnout was around 36%.

[44] Regression results are reported in Appendix Tables H.7 and H.8.

Figure 7: Effect of Victim-Centered vs. Perpetrator-Centered Narratives: Perceptions of VAW and Help-Seeking



Notes: Effect of victim-centered narratives compared to perpetrator-centered narratives on perceptions about prevalence of VAW, police reporting, and help-seeking behavior, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1. The figure also reports the difference between outcomes between perpetrator-centered narratives and the control group. The figure reports confidence intervals at the 95% and 90% level.

Moving to empathy towards the perpetrator, Figure 6b shows that there is no statistically significant effect of seeing perpetrator-centered narratives compared to the control, contrary to what hypothesized. However, as shown in Appendix Figure H.24, respondents in the perpetrator-centered treatment display significantly higher levels of empathy towards the perpetrator than those seeing victim-centered narratives. Contrary to the effect on empathy towards the victim, which is stable across different groups, Appendix Table H.8 shows that the positive effect of perpetrator-centered narratives compared to victim-centered narratives is driven entirely by male respondents.

Second, I look at whether exposure to different narratives affects preferences for government intervention, measured as the willingness of respondents to sign a petition to increase the amount of resources invested in countering violence against women. I report the share of respondents separately by treatment in Figure H.23. Contrary to the hypothesis, I find a null effect of all treatments against the control in willingness to sign the petition. The null effect is stable across subgroups,[45] therefore, rejecting the hypothesis from Iyengar (1991) that thematic victim-centered narratives increase preferences in government intervention by framing the event as a broader societal problem.

Next, I test whether exposure to different narratives affects perception about the prevalence of violence against women, police reporting of such crimes, and help-seeking behavior, proxied by

[45] Appendix Table H.9 reports the results comparing respondents across treatment groups the victim-centered and the perpetrator-centered treatments, as pre-registered

calls to the helpline. As with preferences for government intervention, I test whether the victim-centered treatments increase perceptions about these variables compared to perpetrator-centered narratives, as pre-registered. I report the results in Figure 7, which also includes the coefficient showing the difference between the PC Narratives treatment and the control for completeness. First, the figure shows that there are no statistically significant differences in perceived prevalence of VAW between the PC and EVC treatments. However, the TVC treatment leads to a reduction in these perceptions compared to other treatments, hinting that respondents overestimate the extent of the phenomenon. Second, in line with the hypothesis, episodic victim-centered narratives increase perceptions about police reporting and helpline calls compared to perpetrator-centered narratives, whereas this is not true for thematic victim-centered narratives. This last result provides evidence on a potential mechanism for the positive effect of victim-centered narratives on calls. Rather than being due to improving awareness about the existence of these resources, the experimental evidence suggests that narratives increase awareness about help-seeking behavior and could therefore trigger an awareness and social learning effect, whereby learning that other women seek help normalizes the behavior and reduces the social cost to doing so, which could be triggering the effect on calls. In line with this interpretation, Appendix Tables H.11 and H.12 show that the effect is entirely driven by female respondents and respondents with daugthers, who are more sensitive to the topic.

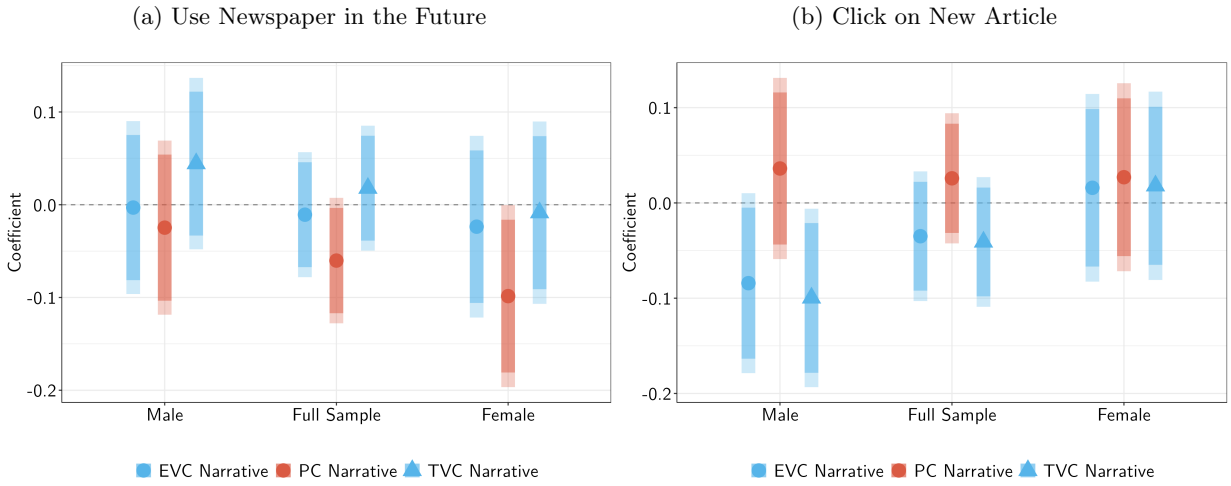
Finally, Appendix Figures H.25 and H.26 show the treatment effects for the secondary outcomes. In line with the positive effect of victim-centered narratives on empathy for the victim and the negative one on empathy for the perpetrator, respondents in this treatment judge the punishment as too lenient compared to respondents in other groups. There are no significant differences in the perceived fairness of the compensation to the victim's family. Turning to the effects on engagement, respondents seeing perpetrator-centered narratives are less likely than all other respondents to say that they would use the newspaper again. At the same time, they are more likely to click on a new article than respondents who see victim-centered narratives; specifically, they are more likely to click on the article showing additional data on violence against women.

To have a better understanding of these dynamics, we investigate the effect on engagement separately by gender. Appendix Figure 8 shows a substantial heterogeneity of the effects of narratives on engagement by gender: while the negative effect of perpetrator-centered narratives on future use of the newspaper is driven entirely by female respondents, the positive effect on engagement of the same treatment compared to the other two is driven exclusively by men. This suggests that newspapers face a potential trade-off when choosing the narrative framing of VAW stories: perpetrator-centered narratives risk alienating female readers and reducing their future readership, while abandoning them in favor of victim-centered narratives may mean forgoing the higher click-through engagement they generate among male readers.

7.3 Discussion

Taken together, the results presented in this section provide robust evidence of an identity-driven persuasion channel operating through news narratives, with meaningful implications for help-

Figure 8: Effect of Narratives on News Engagement by Gender



Notes: Effect of narratives on news engagement. Panel A reports the results for future use of newspaper and Panel B for whether respondents click on another article. The figure reports confidence intervals at the 95% and 90% level.

seeking behavior and policy preferences.

The analysis in Section 7.1.1 shows that higher initial exposure to female reporters following the murder of a woman in a province leads to a significant increase in calls to the VAW helpline, equal to 1 additional call per province and week. Two channels could underlie this effect. First, an indirect channel operating through the identity of the reporter: echoing the broader literature on descriptive representation, it could be that female readers are more attentive to, or more likely to be persuaded by, articles written by women (Miller and Segal, 2019; Beaman et al., 2009; Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004). Second, a direct channel operating through content: the different narratives female reporters employ may increase awareness of resources and update readers' perceptions of help-seeking norms, thereby reducing informational and norms-related barriers to calling the helpline. The mechanism analysis provides evidence in favor of the latter interpretation. Replacing the female exposure measure with narrative-specific ones shows a positive and significant effect of victim-centered narratives on calls, while the effect of perpetrator-centered narratives is smaller and non-significant. Crucially, this result is robust to controlling for female exposure, which allows me to partially account for the endogeneity of narrative choices with respect to gender and disentangle the *product* channel from the role model one. The evidence thus points to a direct effect of victim-centered narratives on help-seeking behavior. This could be driven by many different factors. First, this effect is consistent with an awareness mechanism, where victims learn about the existence of resources and are therefore more likely to use them. Second, reading about other women experiencing violence and in some cases seeking help from authorities, associations, or family and friends, could lower the perceived social cost of seeking help themselves (Bursztyn, González, et al., 2020).

While the observational analysis paints a relatively clean picture, the experimental evidence reveals a more complex set of effects that highlight important trade-offs in narrative choice. First,

contrary to the pre-registered hypothesis, perpetrator-centered narratives increase empathy towards the victim as much as victim-centered ones. One potential explanation for this lies in the particular salience of this issue in Italy, where reporting norms around VAW are actively debated. In this context, reading about jealousy as a motive may make readers feel even more strongly for the victim, while also increasing empathy towards the perpetrator. This interpretation is consistent with the broader literature showing that framing effects can be reversed or amplified when an issue is highly culturally charged and when audiences bring strong prior attitudes to the question (Druckman, 2001; Chong and Druckman, 2007).

Second, the null result on the willingness to sign a petition for policy intervention contradicts the pre-registered hypothesis derived from Iyengar (1991), which predicts that thematic victim-centered framing should increase support for government intervention by attributing responsibility to society.

Third, the results on perceptions of help-seeking are the most directly relevant to the mechanism behind the effect on calls. In line with the hypothesis, episodic victim-centered treatments increase respondents' beliefs about how common it is for women to report violence to the police and to call the helpline, relative to the perpetrator-centered treatment. Conversely, providing information about help resources does not produce the same effect. I interpret this evidence as supporting the descriptive social norms channel as a rationalization of the results in the observational analysis: by making help-seeking behavior visible, victim-centered narratives can shift perceived social norms around seeking formal assistance.

Finally, the results on engagement reveal an important asymmetry that has direct implications for reporters' incentives. Perpetrator-centered narratives make female readers less likely to return to the outlet, while simultaneously generating higher click-through engagement among male readers. This creates a trade-off for news organizations: maximizing short-term digital engagement would make reporters lean toward perpetrator-centered framing, while retaining female readership pulls in the opposite direction. This tension could partially explain the gender differences in narrative choice documented in Section 6: if female reporters prioritize retaining female readers and male reporters prioritize online engagement, narrative choices could partly reflect same-gender audience-maximizing behavior, consistent with the logic of Gentzkow and Shapiro (2010). This interpretation would predict that female reporters cater to female audiences and male reporters to male ones, suggesting the overall gender composition of the newsroom partly determines the framing of VAW coverage at the outlet level. However, newspapers typically have access to subscription data at the outlet level and cannot measure readers' characteristics at the article level, making it unlikely that individual reporters systematically optimize for their gendered audiences. A complementary plausible driver is reporters' ideology: female reporters may genuinely hold different views about how these crimes should be covered, independent of monetary incentives. While I cannot fully disentangle these supply- and demand-side factors, the evidence presented in this paper highlights the need for further research on reporters' incentives and the factors that shape their narrative choices, as this could have important policy implications.

8 Conclusion

In this paper, I provide evidence of the impact of journalists' gender identity on the framing of news coverage concerning violence against women in Italy. By leveraging the exogenous assignment of reporters to articles and the richness of the dataset, the analysis isolates the gender differences in reporting practices. The findings show that female journalists are more likely to adopt victim-centered narratives, contextualizing crimes within broader patterns of gender-based violence. In contrast, male reporters use more perpetrator-centered narratives, often attributing motives such as jealousy or depicting incidents as isolated events rather than manifestations of systemic issues.

Beyond journalistic practices, these differences in framing have downstream effects on public behavior. The analysis finds that increased exposure to articles on murders of women written by female reporters is associated with a rise in calls to the VAW helpline, indicating that reporters' identity also affects readers' behavior. Specifically, a 50-percentage-point increase in exposure to female reporters results in a 17% increase in calls to the helpline in the aftermath of a murder. This provides direct empirical evidence that media representation influences societal responses to gender-based violence and access to support services. Finally, these changes seem to be driven by the narratives reporters' use rather than the gender itself, as supported by the evidence from the online experiment. Indeed, in the final part of the paper, I provide preliminary evidence suggesting that different narratives lead to changes in attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of readers. In particular, perpetrator-centered narratives lead to an increase in empathy towards the perpetrator. Conversely, thematic framing and victim-centered narratives lead to an increase in preferences for government intervention concerning VAW and in perceived prevalnce of help-seeking behavior.

Overall, the findings underline the significant role that journalist identity plays in shaping media narratives and influencing readers' behavior, contributing to the broader literature on media slant, gender norms, and violence against women. Moreover, similar dynamics could manifest at other levels of the media company, where the identity of media producers could affect the representation of members of specific groups or different phenomena in many areas beyond crime and the representation of violence against women, as exemplified by the case of the media complex owned by Silvio Berlusconi. For instance, consider the case of articles about individuals in positions of power, like politicians or CEOs from different races or genders. It could be that if a female reporter writes about a female CEO, she highlights different characteristics than those that a male reporter would underline. In turn, building on the evidence in the literature about female CEOs (Bertrand et al., 2019; Hampole et al., 2024), different writing choices could have different effects on women's employment and career choices. These observations, along with the findings presented in this paper and the extensive evidence on the effect of media slant, highlight the need for further research on the role of reporters' identity in shaping media content and readers' behavior.

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A A Model of Identity-Motivated Journalists

A.1 Model Set-Up

I model the decision of journalist j about the writing style $s_j \in \{s^{AC}, s^{BC}\}$ they will use in their articles,[46] accounting for readers i's utility from reading articles with writing style s_j. Journalists and readers can belong to groups A or B—$j, i \in \{A, B\}$—with size ρ and $1-\rho$, respectively. Readers decide on whether to read an article with writing style s_j by maximizing the following utility function

$$U_i(s_j) = -|s_j - \hat{s}_i| + \phi_i(s_j) \tag{8}$$

When making their reading choice, they consider the direct cost of reading an article with a writing style that is different from their preferred one, $\hat{s}_i$. This direct effect of reading on their utility can be thought of as the benefit they get from reading an article they find engaging. $\hat{s}_i$ which can be equal to either s^{AC} or s^{BC} and is stochastic with the following probability mass function:

$$\mathrm{P}\left(\hat{s}_i = s^{AC}\right) = \alpha \quad \text{and} \quad \mathrm{P}\left(\hat{s}_i = s^{BC}\right) = 1 - \alpha \tag{9}$$

Moreover, they also consider the indirect cost or benefit of reading an article with style s_j, $\phi_i(s_j)$. This indirect effect on their utility can be thought of as *material* or psychological effect of reading an article with a specific writing style, that depends on their identity as in Akerlof and Kranton (2000). For instance, in articles about violence against women, where gender is a salient identity dimension, if a woman who is in a violent relationship reads an article that is more victim-centered or reports information on resources, she might be more willing to seek help (Daponte et al., 1999; Bettinger et al., 2012) or become less accepting of VAW (Banerjee, Ferrara, et al., 2019), and this might ultimately benefit her. On the contrary, if she reads an article that is more perpetrator-centered, she might be less likely to seek help, which will ultimately harm her. Similarly, men may benefit from perpetrator-centered writing as it diminishes men's responsibility in perpetrating VAW (Smith and Frieze, 2003). The structure of this additional component depends on the group that the readers belong to. In particular, I assume that if $i = B$, then they benefit from $s_j = s^{BC}$ and incur in a cost if $s_j = s^{AC}$, with the opposite being true if $i = A$. Formally,

$$\phi_B(s_j) = \begin{cases} \tau & \text{if } s_j = s^{BC} \\ -\tau & \text{if } s_j = s^{AC} \end{cases} \qquad \phi_A(s_j) = \begin{cases} -\tau & \text{if } s_j = s^{BC} \\ \tau & \text{if } s_j = s^{AC} \end{cases} \tag{10}$$

Where $\tau > 0$ is a constant parameter, such that $\tau \geq \frac{s^{AC} - s^{BC}}{2}$. This latter assumption implies that the magnitude of the indirect effect is large enough to compensate for the loss from reading an article with a writing style different from the readers' preferred one.[47]

I now turn to the maximization problem of journalists. Knowing readers' utility function, $U_i(s_j)$,

[46] I assume without loss of generality that $s^{AC} > s^{BC}$.

[47] See Appendix A.3 for the derivation of the threshold for τ.

they decide on their writing style by maximizing the following

$$W_j(s_j) = \iota_j \Big[\rho \mathrm{P}\left(U_B(s_j) \geq U_B(s_{-j})\right) + (1-\rho)\mathrm{P}\left(U_A(s_j) \geq U_A(s_{-j})\right)\Big] + (1-\iota_j)\mathbb{E}\left[U_{i=j}(s_j)\right] \tag{11}$$

As anticipated, journalists account for two main factors when choosing their writing style. First, they want to maximize the *monetary returns* from writing by maximizing the share of readers that, if they implement $s_j = s_j^*$, prefer s_j^* to s_{-j}, as in models of probabilistic voting (Lindbeck and Weibull, 1987). Namely, this part captures the returns from writing an article with a style that readers find engaging and, therefore, prefer to alternative writing styles. Second, journalists also altruistically care about the expected utility of readers from their in-group, $\mathbb{E}\left[U_{i=j}(s_j)\right]$ (Andreoni and Miller, 2002; Turner et al., 1979). For instance, female journalists may care about the well-being of their female readers who face issues with violent partners and, thus, have an interest in including information on resources to counter VAW in their articles. Finally, these two components enter journalists' utility functions with different weights determined by $\iota_j \in [0,1]$, and these weights can differ across journalist groups.

A.2 Decision Rule for Writing Style

Journalists choose writing style s^{BC} over s^{AC} if their utility from s^{BC} is larger than their utility from s^{AC}—$W_j(s^{BC}) \geq W_j(s^{AC})$. Namely, they follow the following decision rule

$$\iota_j \Big[2\rho \mathrm{P}\left(U_B(s_{BC}) \geq U_B(s_{AC})\right) + 2(1-\rho)\mathrm{P}\left(U_A(s_{BC}) \geq U_A(s_{AC})\right) - 1\Big] + (1-\iota_j)\Big[\mathbb{E}\left[U_{i=j}(s_{BC})\right] - \mathbb{E}\left[U_{i=j}(s_{AC})\right]\Big] \geq 0$$

This yields the two different decision rules for groups A and B

$$DR_j(s^{BC}) = \begin{cases} \iota_A(2\rho-1) + (1-\iota_A)\Big[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC}) - 2\tau\Big] \geq 0 & \text{if } j = A \\ \iota_B(2\rho-1) + (1-\iota_B)\Big[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC}) + 2\tau\Big] \geq 0 & \text{if } j = B \end{cases} \tag{12}$$

Next, I move to the characterization of the writing styles chosen by journalists. I start by characterizing the scenario where journalists from both groups face the same decision rule. Namely, when the following condition is true

$$\iota_A(2\rho-1) + (1-\iota_A)\Big[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC}) - 2\tau\Big] = \iota_B(2\rho-1) + (1-\iota_B)\Big[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC}) + 2\tau\Big]$$

This equality leads to the following proposition.

Proposition 1. *Assuming a positive and large enough indirect effect of writing practices ($\tau > \frac{s^{AC}-s^{BC}}{2}$), journalists from both groups face the same decision rule if journalists only care about monetary returns: $\iota_A = \iota_B = 1$. Additionally, the optimal writing style is $s_B^* = s_A^* = s^{BC}$ if*

$\rho \geq 0.5$*, and vice-versa.*

Therefore, in the case of purely readership-maximizing journalists, we should observe the same writing style in articles written by journalists from different groups. On the contrary, if we observe journalists from different groups choosing different writing styles, then at least one group of journalists is *identity-motivated*, namely, journalists from that group also care about maximizing the utility of their in-group—$\iota_A < 1$ or $\iota_B < 1$.

As a next step, I characterize the equilibrium allocation of writing styles in which journalists pick the writing practice that has a positive indirect effect on their in-group—$\phi_{i=j}(s_j) = \tau$.

Proposition 2. *Assume that at least one group of journalists is identity-motivated,* $\iota_A < 1$ *or* $\iota_B < 1$*. In this scenario, the optimal combination of writing styles is* $(s_A^*, s_B^*) = (s^{AC}, s^{BC})$ *if and only if one of the following parameter combinations realizes:*

- $\rho \leq \frac{1}{2}$ *and* $\frac{2(1-\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})}{1-2\rho} \geq \frac{\iota_B}{1-\iota_B}$
- $\rho \geq \frac{1}{2}$ *and* $\frac{2\alpha(s^{AC}-s^{BC})}{1-2\rho} \geq \frac{\iota_A}{1-\iota_A}$

Proof. See Appendix A.3. □

In other words, the conditions of Proposition 2 imply that journalists choose the writing practice that benefits their in-group if their in-group represents the majority of the population of readers. Alternatively, they choose the same writing practice if either they increasingly care about maximizing the utility of their in-group—$\iota_{A,B}$ low enough—or if the probability of the in-group utility maximizing style is more likely to be readers' bliss point.[48]

A.3 Additional Derivations

Derivations of Threshold for τ: To compute the threshold value for the parameter τ, I focus on the intermediate case in which the preferred writing style of readers does not coincide with the one that benefits their group. For instance, I assume that $\hat{s}_B = s^{AC}$. In this scenario, readers from group A prefer $s_j = s^{AC}$ if the following expression is satisfied

$$\begin{aligned} U_M(s^{AC}) &\geq U_B(s^{BC}) \\ -|s^{AC} - \hat{s_B}| - \tau &\geq -|s^{BC} - \hat{s_B}| + \tau \\ -\tau &\geq s^{BC} - s^{AC} + \tau \\ \tau &\leq \frac{s^{AC} - s^{BC}}{2} \end{aligned}$$

[48] In the case with $\tau \leq \frac{s^{AC}-s^{BC}}{2}$, the conditions for Proposition 2 change only in that the first parameter of interest is α, with journalists surely picking the in-group maximizing writing style if this is style is the more likely to be readers' preferred one.

Therefore, if readers' preferred writing style is the same as the one harming their group, then they would get a higher utility under this writing style with respect to the alternative that benefits them if and only if the magnitude of the benefit/cost is small enough that it is compensated by the taste-based gain. On the contrary, if the magnitude of the benefit/cost is large – $\tau \geq \frac{s^{AC}-s^{BC}}{2}$ –, the utility-maximizing writing style is always the one with a positive indirect effect on readers.

Proof of Proposition 2: I start by focusing on the scenarios in which journalist A chooses s^{AC} as preferred practice, namely, when

$$\iota_A(2\rho-1)+(1-\iota_A)\left[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})-2\tau\right]\leq 0$$

Note that since $\tau \geq \frac{s^{AC}-s^{BC}}{2}$, $\left[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})-2\tau\right] \leq -2\alpha A$ which is lower or equal 0. Therefore, one condition for the LHS of the decision rule to be negative is $\rho \leq 0.5$. Alternatively, if $\rho > 0.5$ then it must be that

$$\iota_A(2\rho-1)+(1-\iota_A)\left[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})-2\tau\right]\leq \iota_A(2\rho-1)-(1-\iota_A)2\alpha(s^{AC}-s^{BC})\leq 0$$

Given that $\tau \geq \frac{s^{AC}-s^{BC}}{2}$ it is sufficient to show that the second inequality holds, which is true if $\frac{\iota_A}{(1-\iota_A)} \leq \frac{2\alpha(s^{AC}-s^{BC})}{(2\rho-1)}$.

Moving to the choice of journalists from group B, they choose s^{BC} as preferred practice if

$$\iota_B(2\rho-1)+(1-\iota_B)\left[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})+2\tau\right]$$

As above, since $\tau \geq \frac{s^{AC}-s^{BC}}{2}$, $\left[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})+2\tau\right] \geq 2(1-\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})$ which is always positive or equal 0. Therefore, one condition for $s_B^* = s^{BC}$ is $\rho \geq 0.5$. Alternatively, if $\rho \leq 0.5$ then it must be that

$$\iota_B(2\rho-1)+(1-\iota_B)\left[(1-2\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})+2\tau\right]\geq \iota_B(2\rho-1)+(1-\iota_B)2(1-\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})\geq 0$$

which is true if $\frac{2(1-\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})}{(1-2\rho)} \geq \frac{\iota_B}{(1-\iota_B)}$. Finally, it is worth noting that since the two conditions for $s_A^* = s^{AC}$ and $s_B^* = s^{BC}$ involving ρ are mutually exclusive, then we have $(s_A^*, s_B^*) = (s^{AC}, s^{BC})$ with one of the following combinations of parameters:

- $\rho \leq \frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2(1-\alpha)(s^{AC}-s^{BC})}{1-2\rho} \geq \frac{\iota_B}{1-\iota_B}$
- $\rho \geq \frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2\alpha(s^{AC}-s^{BC})}{1-2\rho} \geq \frac{\iota_A}{1-\iota_A}$

B Extracting Murders Information

To compile the dataset about murders with male victims, I leverage GPT-4 through the OpenAI API. In particular, I loop through all the articles and extract information using the following system prompt:

"You are an honest classifier. You receive an Italian news excerpt in the user prompt. You should classify if the news is related to a murder involving real people or not. You should classify the news positively if it is explicitly about the murder of a real person taking place in Italy as the main topic. You should classify negatively if the text generally mentions murders, e.g., in political discussions, or if it mentions other crimes, e.g., attempted murder, killing of animals, or murders that occur in fictional contexts, e.g., movies. If it is a murder news, you should also extract the name of the perpetrator and the victim if it is mentioned and set the respective field to None otherwise. Moreover, you should classify whether the victim is a woman or a man when possible. You should classify it positively if the victim is female. You should classify it negatively if the victim is a man. If you don't have this information, just return None. If the city or region where the murder occurred is explicitly mentioned, you should also extract it and set the respective field to None otherwise. If the murder date is explicitly mentioned, you should extract it or set the respective field to None otherwise. Suppose the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is mentioned. In that case, you should extract it and fill the respective field with one of the following values: partner, ex-partner (if the perpetrator is the partner or ex-partner of the murder victim), relative, ex-relative (if the perpetrator is the relative or ex-relative of the murder victim), acquaintance. If this is not mentioned, set the field to None. Please return for each user prompt an output in the custom Newsclassification format, which is inherited from Pydantic."

This allows me to classify the articles as being about a real murder happening in Italy and it having a female victim. Additionally, if the article is classified as a real murder, I ask the model to extract the names of the victim and perpetrator, the city where the murder occurred, and the date. I also ask it to extract the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, suggesting the values to input. Finally, I specify the format of the output, mentioning that it should follow a JSON schema as defined by Pydantic. This way, I ensure that the output of the model has always the same structure, with each field containing the corresponding information.

C Summary Statistics

C.1 Tables

Table C.1: Most Read Newspapers per Region

Newspaper	Diffusion	Ideology
Corriere della Sera	260357	Liberal
Repubblica	136321	Liberal
Avvenire	100802	Conserative
La Stampa	97800	Liberal
Il Messaggero	70021	Conserative
Il Resto del Carlino	67155	Conserative
Il Fatto Quotidiano	50515	Liberal
Il Gazzettino	47987	Conservative
La Nazione	44224	Conservative
Il Giornale	32461	Conservative
Messaggero Veneto	30045	–
Il Secolo XIX	26366	–
Il Tirreno	24349	–
Il Mattino	24328	–
Gazzetta di Parma	23575	–
L'Arena	23092	Conservative
La Nuova Sardegna	22356	Liberal
Il Giornale di Vicenza	21360	Liberal
Il Giorno	20605	Conservative
Il Piccolo	15514	–
Il Manifesto	13356	Liberal
Quotidiano di Sicilia	11206	–
Gazzetta del Sud	11145	–
Corriere Adriatico	9507	Liberal
Nuovo Quotidiano di Puglia	8465	–
La Provincia Pavese	7962	Liberal
La Tribuna di Treviso	7722	Liberal
La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno	7610	Liberal
Gazzetta di Reggio	6063	Liberal
Nuova Gazzetta di Modena	5803	Liberal
La Nuova di Venezia e Mestre	5687	Liberal
La Nuova Ferrara	4621	Liberal

Notes: List of Italian newspapers in the sample (most read national newspapers and two most read newspapers per province). *Diffusion* indicates the number of newspaper copies sold in 2022 all over Italy.

Table C.2: Summary Statistics – Murders with Female Victims

Variable	Mean	SD	N
Victim Italian	0.77	0.42	1969
Perpetrator Italian	0.83	0.37	1860
Perpetrator Partner	0.66	0.47	1861
Perpetrator Relative	0.21	0.41	1861
Relationship Missing	0.06	0.25	1989
North	0.38	0.49	1989
South	0.30	0.46	1989
Center	0.18	0.39	1989

Notes: Summary statistics of murders with female victims. *North*, *Center*, and *South* indicate whether the region where the crime happened is in the North, Center, or South of Italy.

Table C.3: Summary Statistics – Reporters

		Average		Difference in Means	
Variable	Total	Female Reporters	Male Reporters	Without FE	With FE
Region Gender Norms	0.301	0.301	0.3	0	-0.002
	(0.068)	(0.068)	(0.068)	(0.001)	(0.007)
Year of Birth	1971.627	1973.964	1969.943	4.021***	3.675***
	(10.06)	(8.807)	(10.559)	(0.154)	(0.546)
Start Year	1999.815	2001.814	1998.374	3.441***	3.009***
	(10.111)	(9.045)	(10.583)	(0.155)	(0.761)
North	0.468	0.454	0.478	-0.023***	0.016
	(0.499)	(0.498)	(0.5)	(0.008)	(0.064)
South	0.22	0.21	0.227	-0.017	-0.021
	(0.414)	(0.407)	(0.419)	(0.006)	(0.035)
Liberal	0.62	0.586	0.644	-0.057***	-0.051*
	(0.485)	(0.493)	(0.479)	(0.007)	(0.029)
Conservative	0.266	0.297	0.243	0.054***	0.053*
	(0.442)	(0.457)	(0.429)	(0.007)	(0.03)

Notes: Summary statistics of reporters for the whole sample and separately for female and male reporters. The last two columns show the difference in mean between female and male reporters, with and without newspaper times year fixed effects. *Region Gender Norms* indicates the share of households for each region in which only the woman is working. *North* and *South* indicate the region of residence of the reporter.

Table C.4: Female Reporters by Gender and Newspaper

Newspaper	Art. by Female Reporters	Female Reporters
CDS	0.39	856
La Stampa	0.31	287
Repubblica	0.41	932
La Nazione	0.40	275
Giornale	0.43	204
Gazzetta di Parma	0.42	16
Il Resto del Carlino	0.48	534
Fatto Quotidiano	0.58	87
Il Gazzettino	0.44	216
Il Mattino	0.53	268
Il Messaggero	0.50	344
Nuovo Quotidiano di Puglia	0.42	41
Avvenire	0.38	38
Il Secolo XIX	0.38	39
Messaggero Veneto	0.64	25
L'Arena	0.53	16
La Nuova Sardegna	0.36	39
Il Tirreno	1.00	1
Il Giorno	0.40	40
Il Piccolo	0.27	6
Gazzetta del Sud	0.80	4

Notes: Share of articles by and number of female reporters by newspaper.

Table C.5: Correlation Between Proxy for Gender Norms and Gender Norms

	Stereotypical Behavior	Support for Traditional Gender Norms	Stereotypes about Sex. Violence
Share of HH with no Woman Working	0.766	0.785	0.710

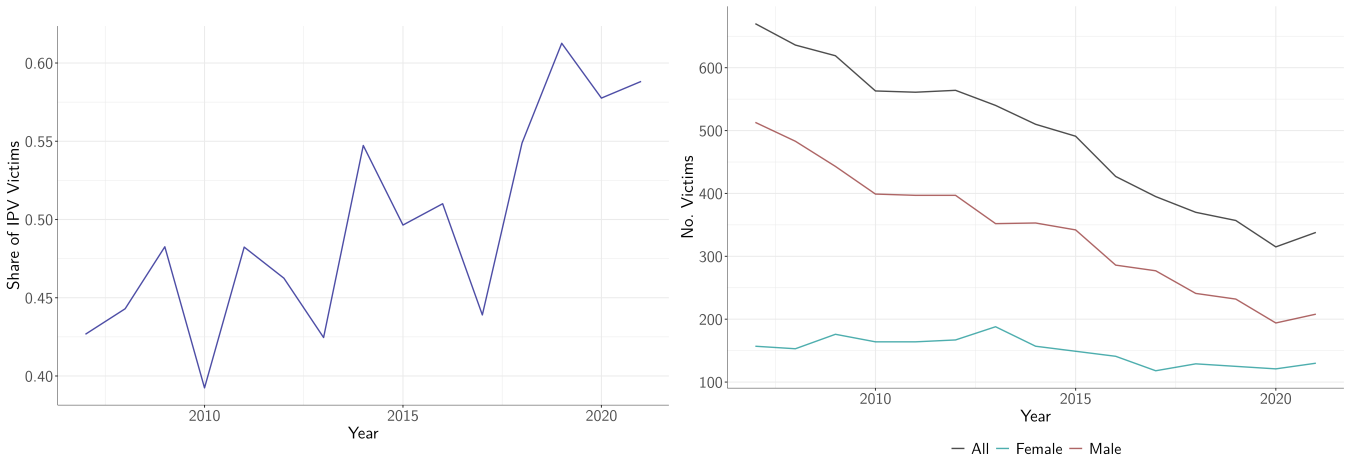
Notes: Pearson correlation between the proxy for gender norms in 2018, namely the share of households with couples where only the man is working, and survey-based measure of stereotypical behavior – e.g., for women, it is less important to have a career –, support for traditional gender norms – e.g., men should provide economically for their family –, and acceptability of intimate partner violence – e.g., it is acceptable to slap a woman if she has been cheating.

C.2 Figures

Figure C.1: Number of Articles with Male Victims over Time

(a) Number of Murders

(b) Share of IPV Murders with Female Victims



Notes: Time series of victims of homicide in Italy from 2006 to 2021. Panel (a) plots the number of victims of voluntary homicides in Italy, both overall and separately by gender, while Panel (b) plots the share of female victims murdered by their ex- or current intimate partner.

Figure C.2: Number of Murders with Female Victims



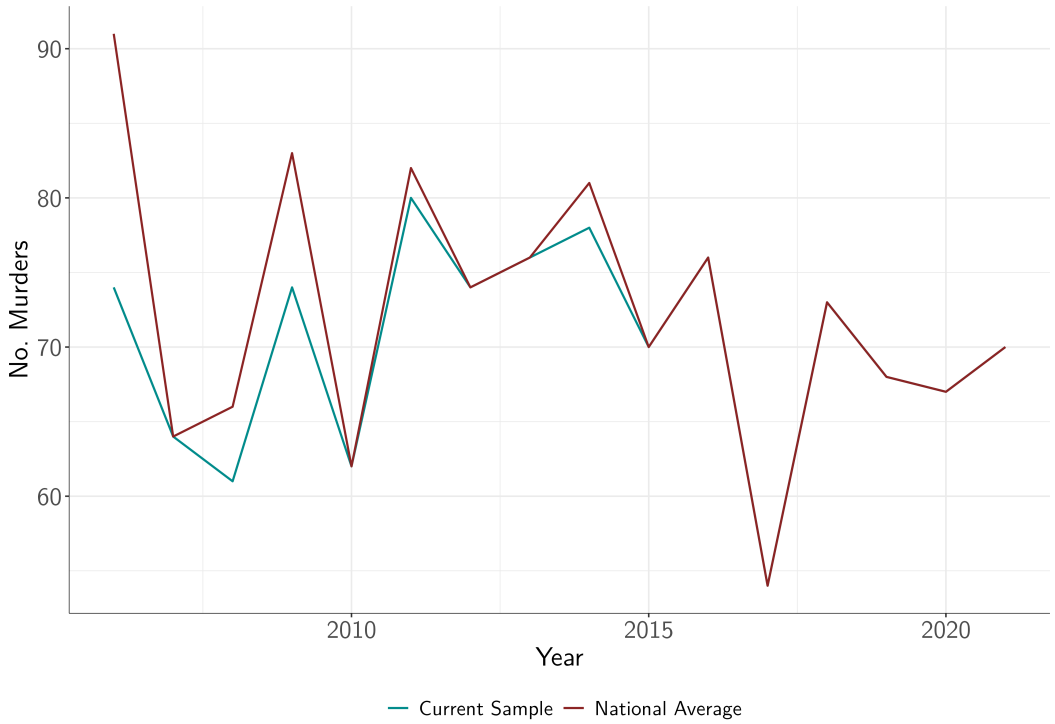
Notes: Number of murders with female victims plotted separately for the national average, calculated using data from the Italian National Statistical Office, and the events in the newly compiled dataset.

Figure C.3: Number of Murders with Female Victims not VAW



Notes: Number of murders with female victims whose killer is either unknown to the victim or not identified, calculated using data from the Italian National Statistical Office.

Figure C.4: Number of Murders with Female Victims by Intimate Partner



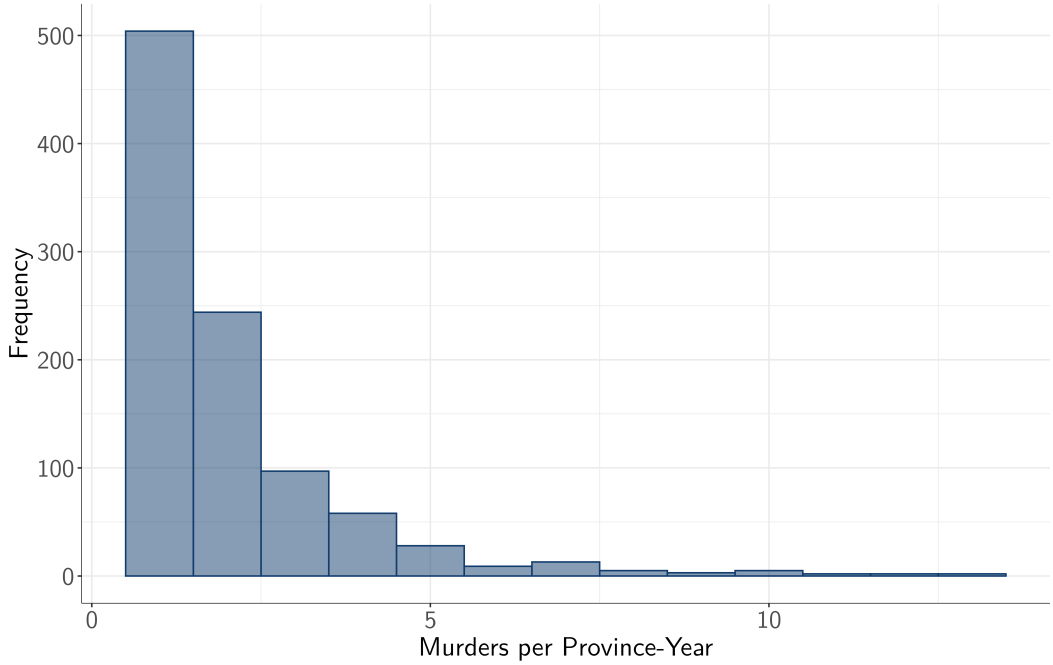
Notes: Number of murders with female victims by the intimate partner plotted separately for the national average and the events in the compiled dataset.

Figure C.5: Number of Murders in Full and Newspapers Sample



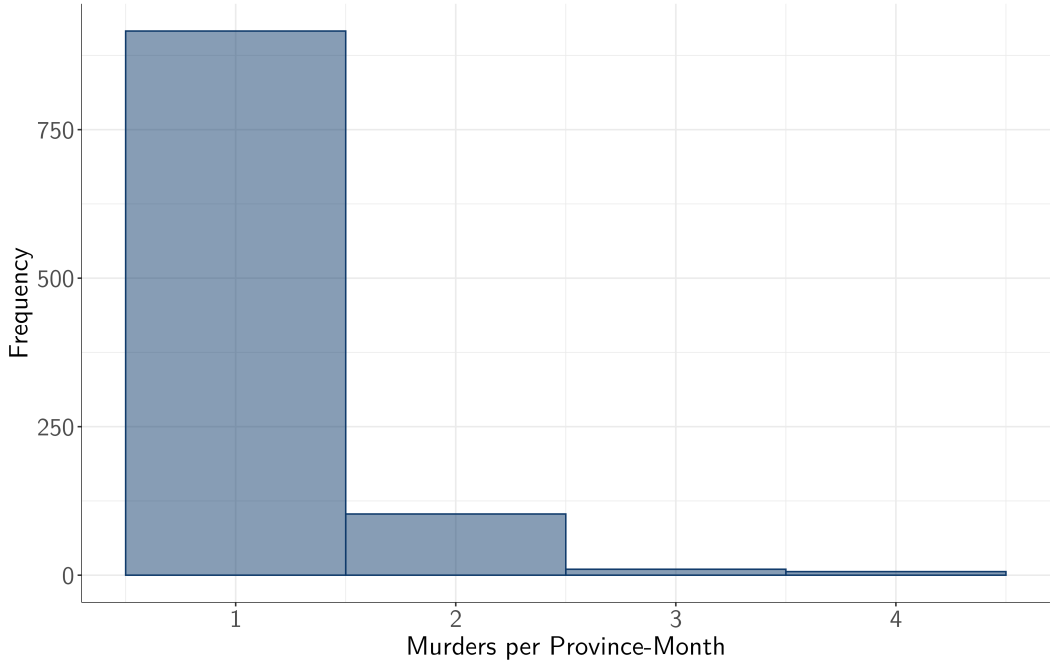
Notes: Number of murders with female victims plotted separately for the initial murder dataset and the sub-sample matched with newspaper data.

Figure C.6: Distribution of Murders per Year-Province



Notes: Histogram of number of murders with female victims in each province and year.

Figure C.7: Distribution of Murders per Month-Province

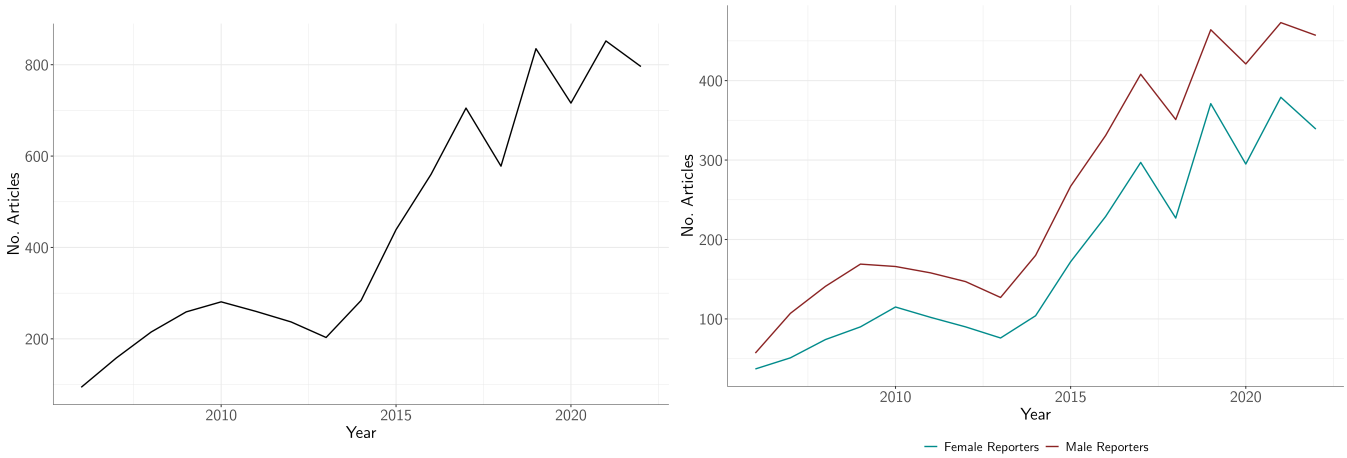


Notes: Histogram of number of murders with female victims in each province and month.

Figure C.8: Number of Articles with Male Victims over Time

(a) Total Number of Articles

(b) Number of Articles by Reporter's Gender



Notes: Total number of articles on murders with male victims plotted by year. Panel (a) shows the total number of articles by year, while Panel (b) shows the total number of articles separately for female and male reporters.

Figure C.9: Share of Articles for each Newspapers

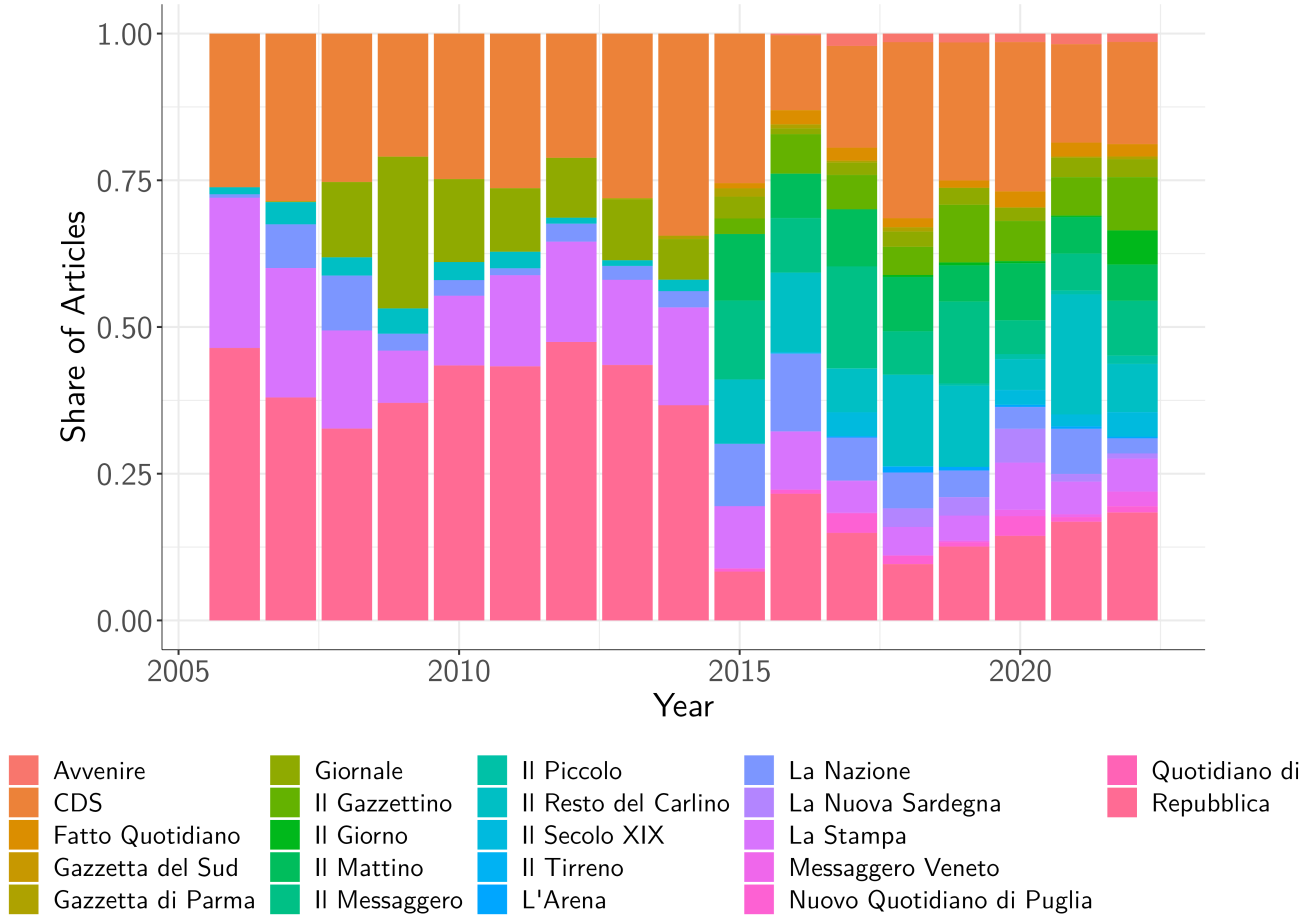
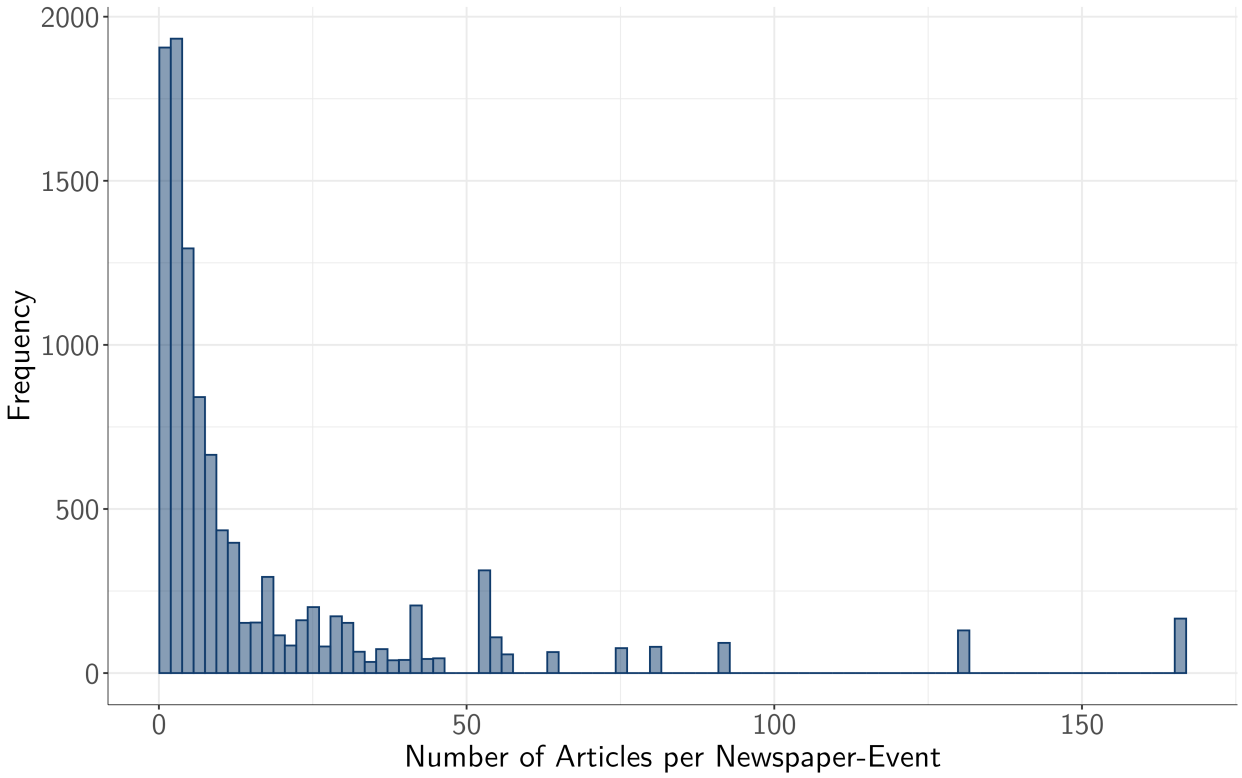
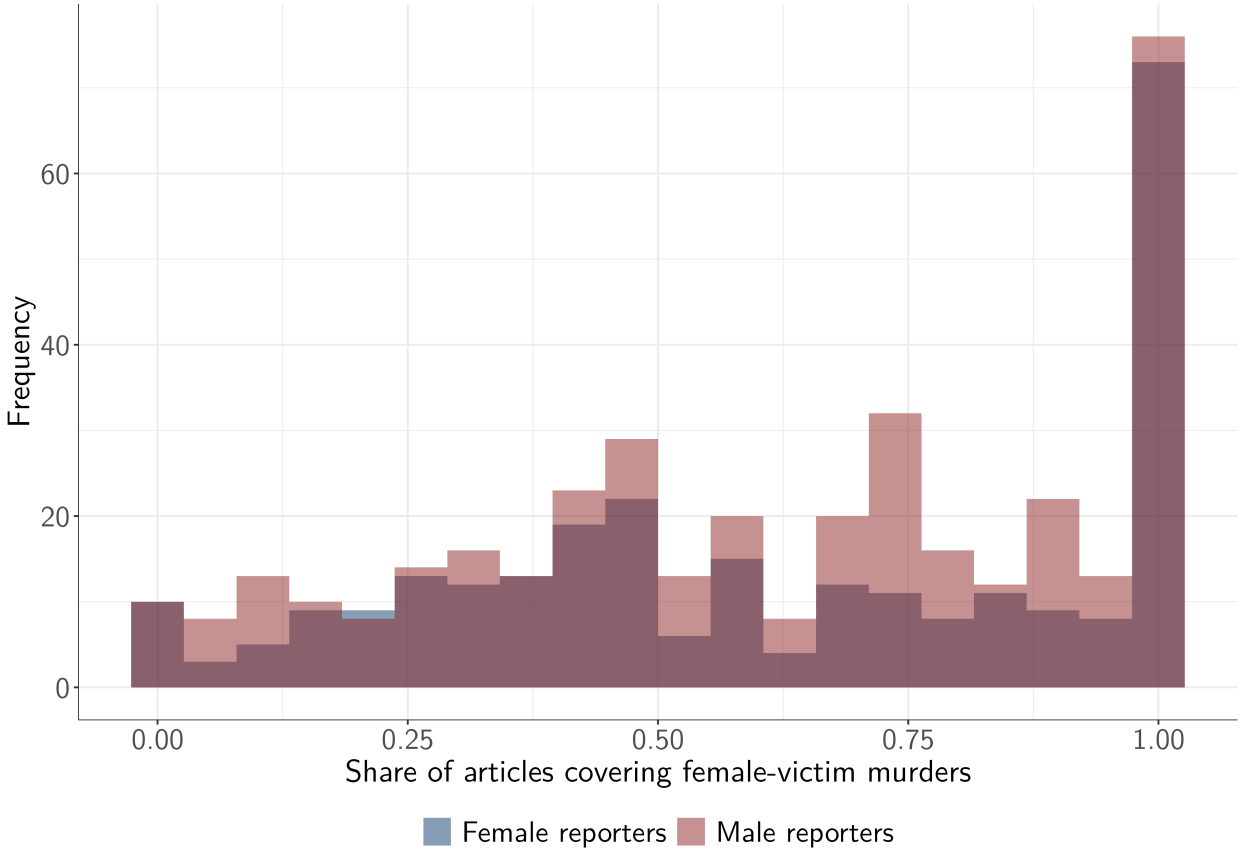


Figure C.10: Distribution of Articles per Newspaper-Event



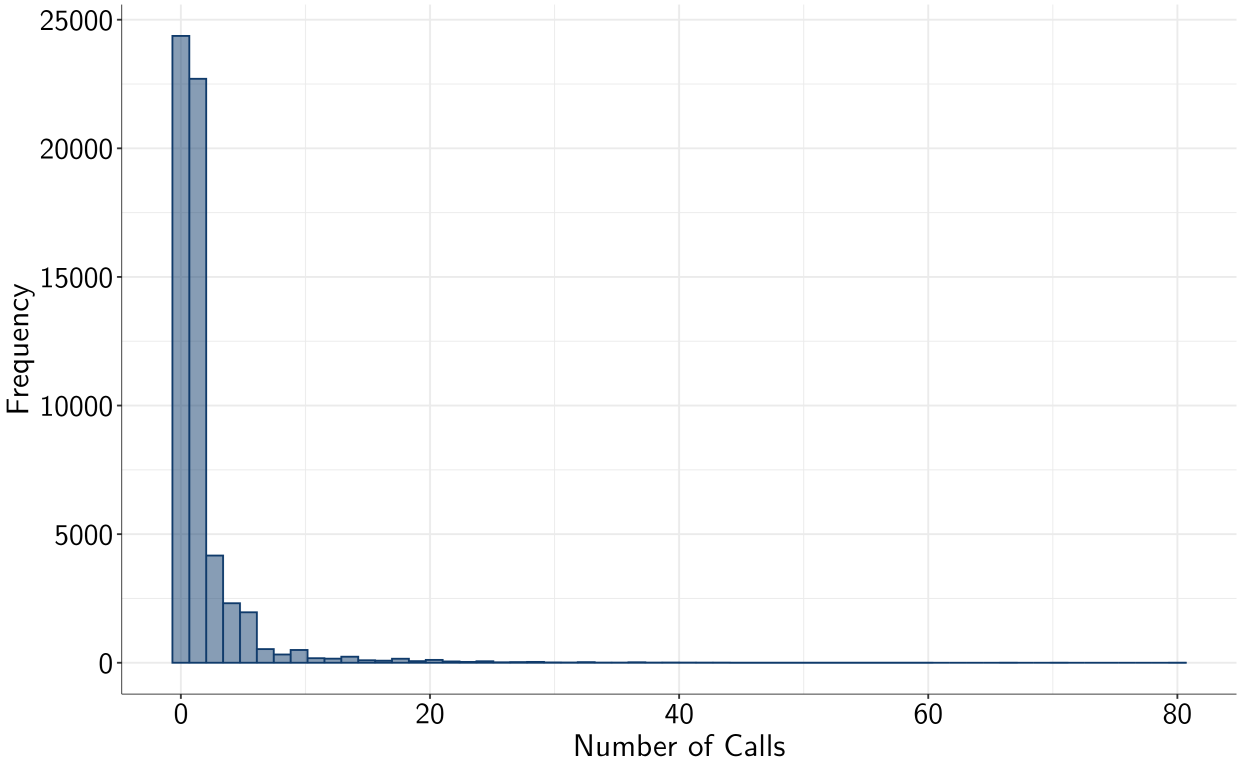
Notes: Histogram of the number of articles about each event in each newspaper in the sample of articles on murders with female victims.

Figure C.11: Distribution of Share of Articles on Crimes with Female Victims



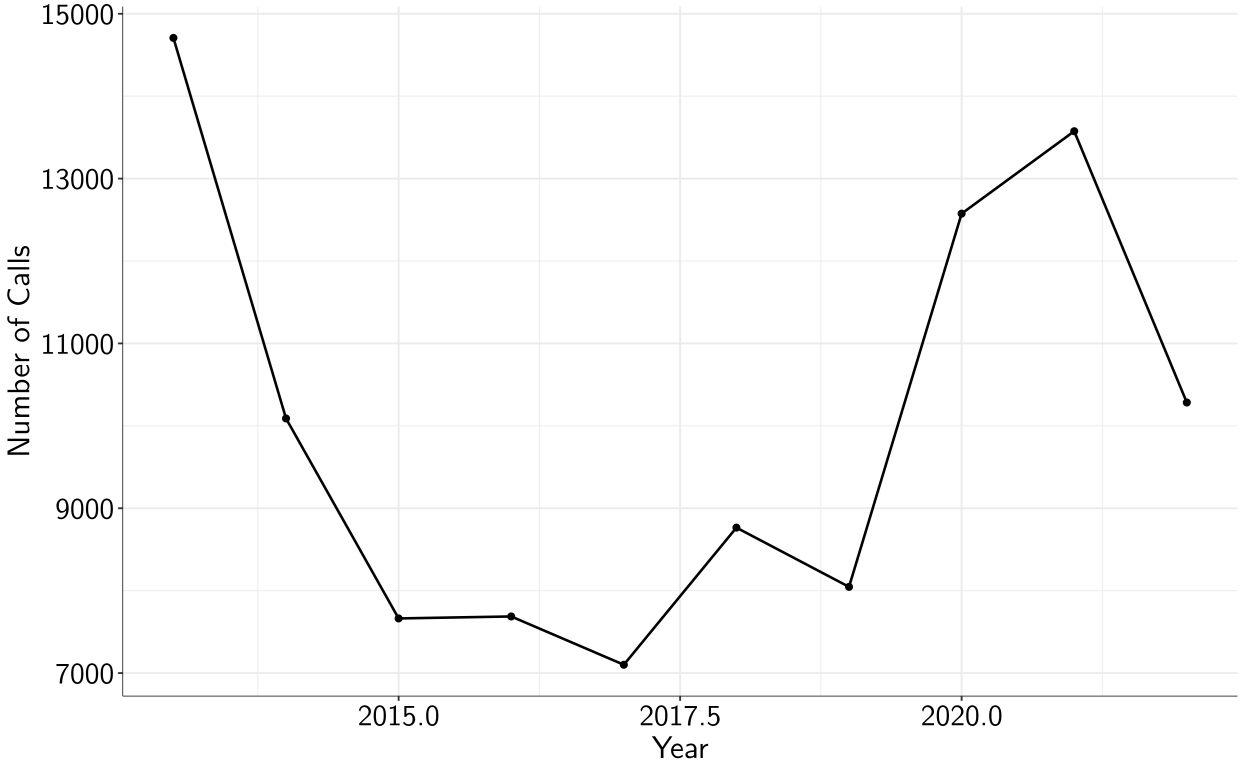
Notes: Distribution across reporters of the share of articles about murders with female victims that each reporter writes about, separately by reporters' gender.

Figure C.12: Distribution of Helpline Calls



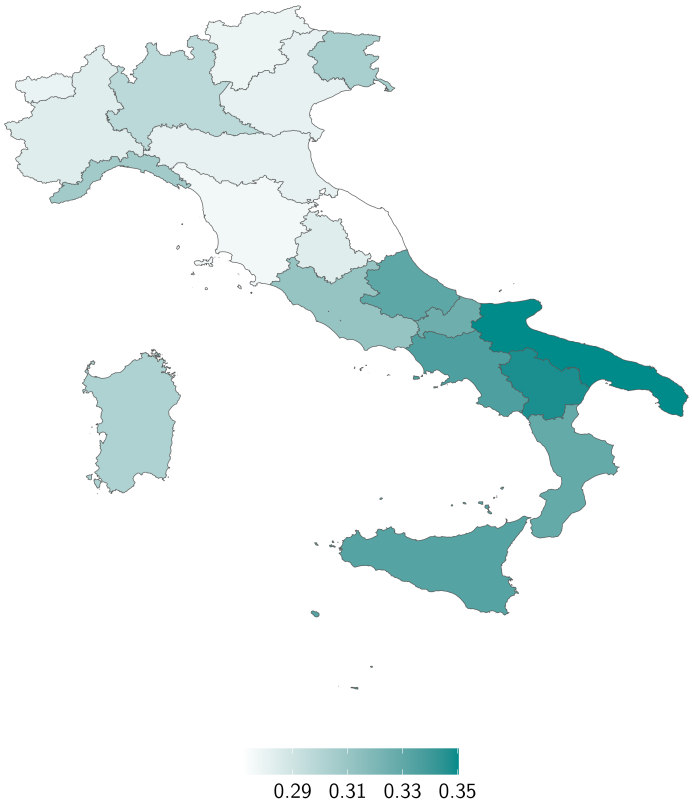
Notes: Histogram of the number of calls to the 1522 helpline number in each week and province, from 2013 on.

Figure C.13: Helpline Calls over Time



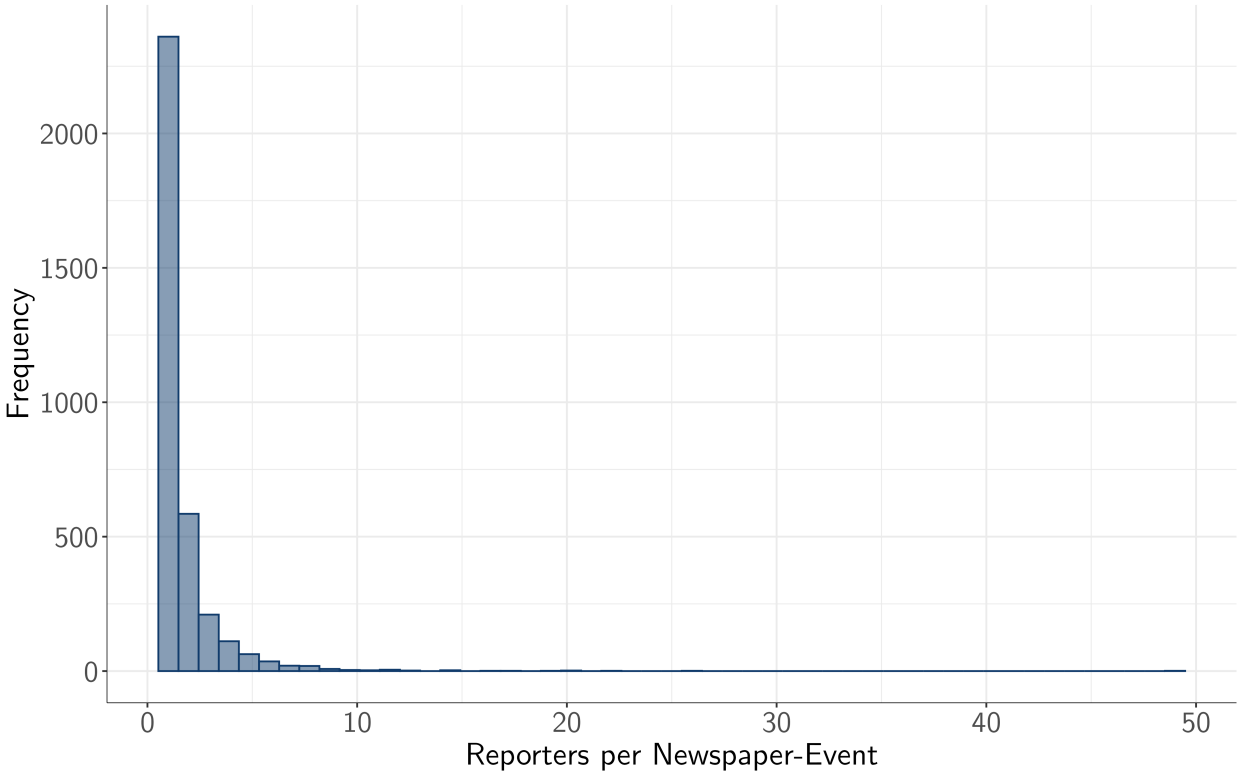
Notes: Total number of calls to the 1522 helpline number by year.

Figure C.14: Share of Households with no Female Workers – 2019



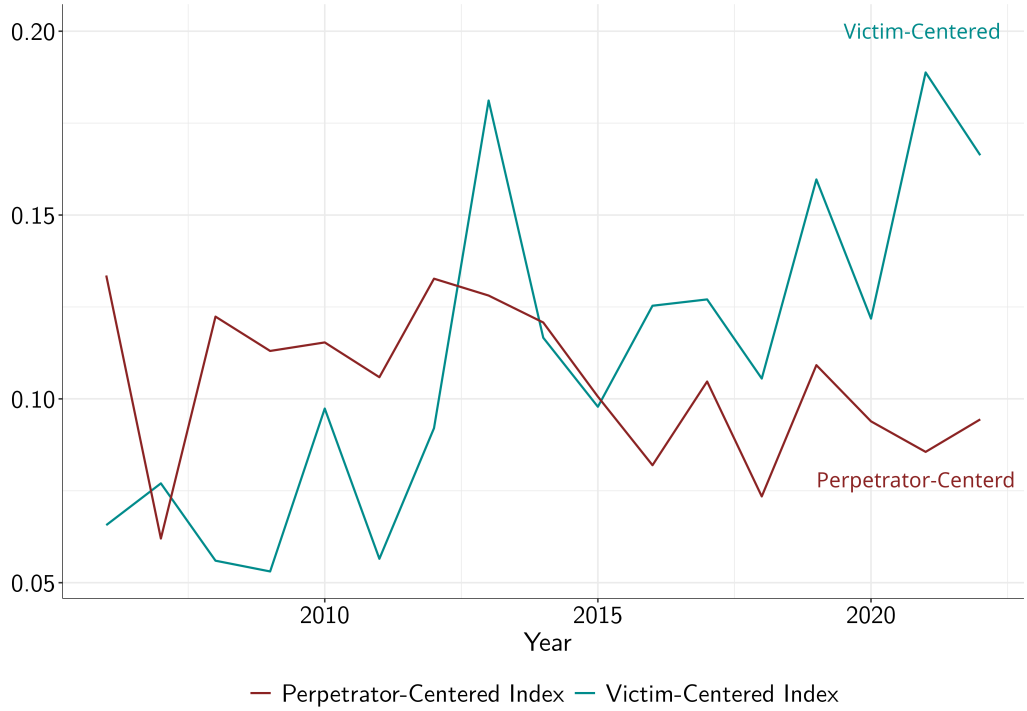
Notes: Heatmap of the proxy for gender norms across Italian region in 2019, namely showing the share of households in which only the man works. Darker shades indicate a higher share of such households.

Figure C.15: Distribution of Reporters per Newspaper-Event



Notes: Histogram of the number of reporters in each newspaper covering each murder in the sample of murders with female victims.

Figure C.16: Trends of Text-Based Measures of Reporting Practices in Italian Newspapers

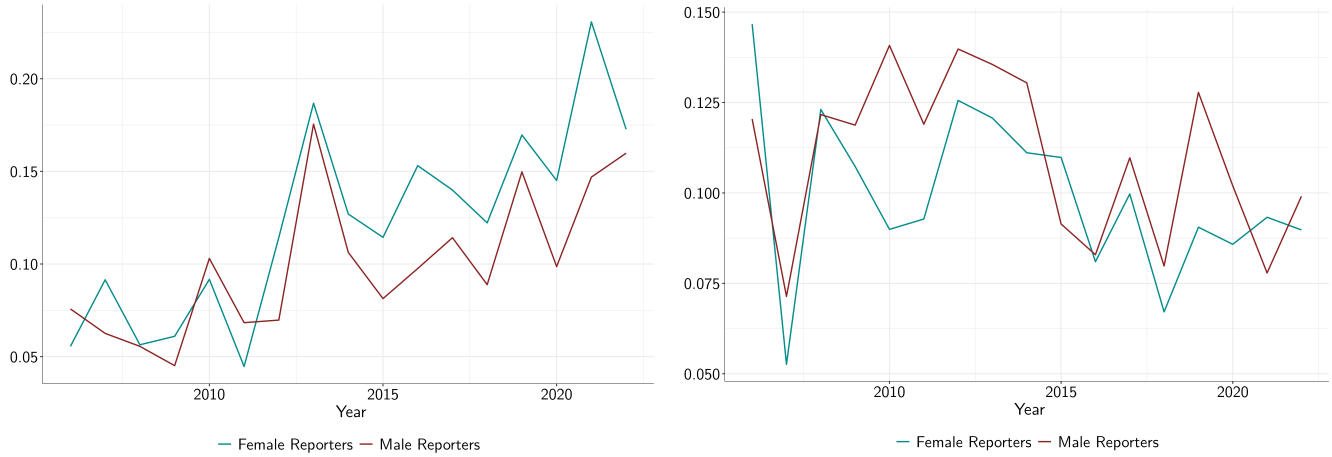


Notes: Average indexes for victim-centered and perpetrator-centered with the guidelines on representation of VAW plotted by year.

Figure C.17: Trend in Reporting Practices by Gender

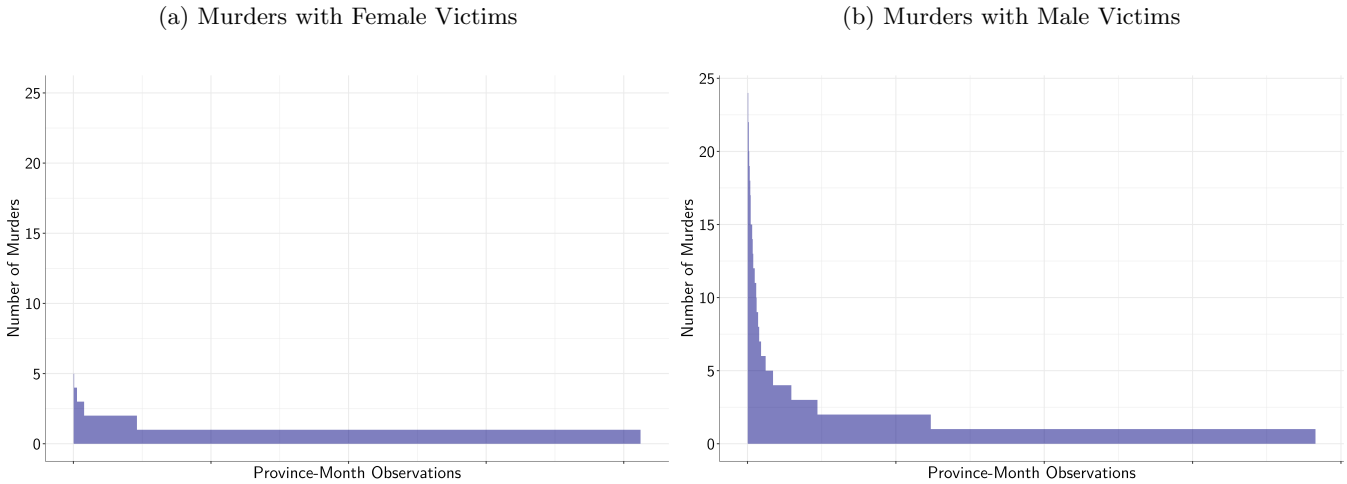
(a) Victim-Centered Index

(b) Perpetrator-Centered Index



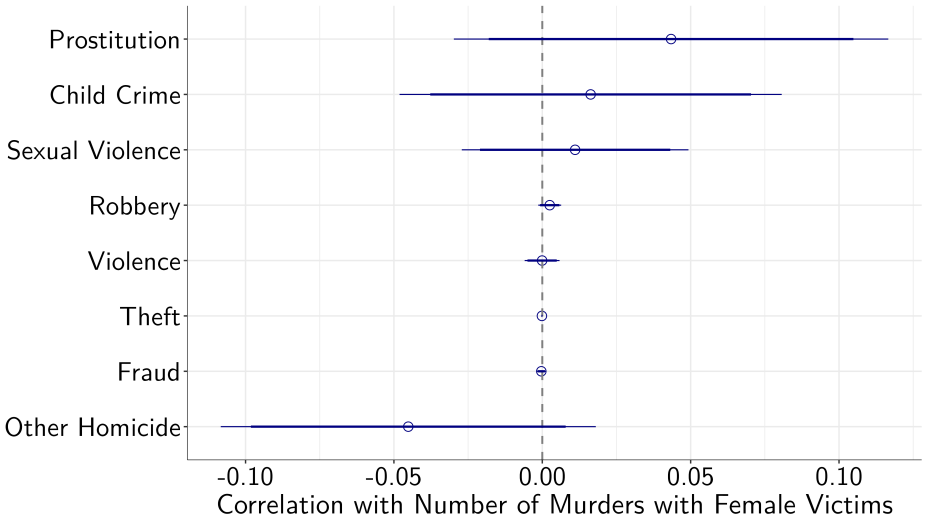
Notes: Victim-centered and perpetrator-centered indexes plotted by year separately for male and female reporters. Panel (a) shows the victim-centered index, while Panel (b) shows the perpetrator-centered index.

Figure C.18: Number of Murders in each Province and Month



Notes: Number of murders in each province and month, for province-month observations that have at least one murder. Panel (a) plots the province-months observations for murders with female victims, while Panel (b) plots murders with male victims.

Figure C.19: Correlations Between Murders with Female Victims and Crime Rates



Notes: Correlation between the number of murders with female victims and other crime rates in each province and year. All regressions include province and year fixed effects and the figure shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals.

D Keyword-Based Measure

D.1 Examples of Articles

- **Victim-Centered Index** = 1: Milan – Murdered by Her Husband in the Bedroom with 23 Stab Wounds, **After Twenty Years of Violence and Threats**. This is how Rosanna Belvisi, a 50-year-old employee of the Italian social security institute (INPS), met her tragic end in her 30-square-meter apartment in Lorenteggio, a southern suburb of Milan. Her killer, Luigi Messina, 53, is a former security guard with minor prior offenses for resisting a public official and insulting an officer. After denying everything for hours, he finally confessed at 4 AM when the inconsistencies in his version of events became impossible to sustain. According to Lorenzo Bucossi, head of Milan's homicide squad, who conducted the investigation alongside prosecutor Gaetano Ruta, the man displayed a "cold and calculated" demeanor in his attempt to cover up the murder. Investigators reconstructed the events leading up to the crime: the couple had returned on Saturday from a month-long vacation in Pantelleria and had a violent argument on Sunday morning. **It was just one of many fights between them, as neighbors later recounted.** During the altercation—Messina later confessed—Belvisi allegedly threatened him with an iron. In response, he savagely attacked her with a kitchen knife. After the murder, he staged an elaborate deception to mislead the investigation. He left the house and wandered the neighborhood for three hours—shopping for groceries, buying pastries, chatting with acquaintances, and stopping at a bar to play slot machines. In the meantime, he managed to dispose of the murder weapon and his blood-stained clothes in a storm drain two kilometers away, where they were unlikely to be found. Around 3 PM, Messina returned home and called emergency services (118) and the police, claiming he had found the door open and his wife lying in a pool of blood. **His story was eerily similar to what had happened in 1995 when Rosanna had been stabbed and her husband had called for help, claiming he had found the door open and his wife bleeding. Back then, she did not report him, and from that moment on, their life together was marked by endless arguments, shouting, and threats.** The entire neighborhood was aware—neighbors could hear the screams coming from the ground-floor apartment. Yet no one ever intervened to protect her. **Just two months ago, on November 5, the police had been called to break up another violent dispute.** According to Milan's police chief, Antonio De Iesu, this case is **"emblematic of a toxic family dynamic, where violent relationships remain hidden." It is the story of a woman abandoned to her fate, without support to escape a life of terror. "There are now legal measures in place," De Iesu emphasized. "Victims of stalking must turn to anti-violence centers and alert the police, who have the authority to issue warnings to violent men."** But few women do. "**In the past year alone, I have personally met with 38 men who were reported for violence by their wives and partners.** The system works. Yet in Milan, we receive hundreds of calls reporting violence against women, and many of them do not come forward until it is too late." For this reason,

he stressed, "the most important thing is to raise awareness among women: they must ask for help." Rosanna Belvisi's murder is the second femicide in Milan in just a few days. On Friday, another woman, Tiziana Pavani, 55, was found dead in her home. Her killer was an occasional acquaintance, Luca Raimondo Marcarelli, who murdered her with a bottle in a drug-fueled rage.

- *Victim-Centered Index* = 0.667: "**The father of the woman killed in Milan recounts that the aggressor had already tried to strangle her last August and that he had beaten her "until he broke her eardrum," forcing her to be hospitalized**. For this reason, on August 29th, the victim had filed a complaint (never withdrawn). On May 28, 2006, the woman was stabbed three times in the condominium at Viale Bligny, 42, also called the "drug fortress." 134 **Victims of femicide** (i.e., in cases of gender violence) in Italy in 2013 alone. This is the highest figure in the last ten years. The percentage of family abuse or violence and by ex-partners actually reported is only 11%. Thousands of stalking complaints filed from August 1, 2013, to July 31, 2014. Since 2009, they have exceeded 51 thousand."

- *Victim-Centered Index* = 0.667: "The husband confesses, **already accused of rape**. The family. The couple, originally from Kosovo, had seven children together before separating. Veli Selmanaj returned from Germany to commit the crime, where he had found work. They saw him drink sambuca at the bar and then head towards the town's exit. A few minutes later, gunshots were heard coming from the area of the Todis supermarket. Screams. And a rush of people. The first to notice the two corpses were some supermarket employees. On the asphalt, in a pool of blood, among scattered shopping bags, were two women: mother and daughter of Albanian ethnicity, but of Kosovar origin. The first, Fatima, 45 years old, had 7 children. The one killed, Senada, 21 years old, was the eldest. The carabinieri only needed to speak with some witnesses to direct the investigation towards the woman's husband, Veli Selmanaj, 46 years old, also from Kosovo, a farm laborer, long at odds with his wife, who had recently been reported for sexual violence and was undergoing separation proceedings. **A family situation irreparably compromised after the woman accused her husband of molesting their eldest daughter, Senada.** The Avezzano court had imposed a restraining order on the man to stay away from his wife and daughters. It took the carabinieri two hours to track down and arrest the Kosovar, intercepted at a roadblock while trying to leave the town in a Fiat Punto, where a gun was found. **A double femicide.** A public execution that took place yesterday, shortly after 7 p.m., not far from the center of Pescina, a fraction of L'Aquila, with 4,000 inhabitants in the heart of the Marsica region. According to the first information gathered by the carabinieri, led by provincial commander Savino Guarino, the crime matured in a family context steeped in violence and abuse by the man. The farm laborer's hand was armed, who only occasionally did odd jobs in the countryside and who had recently moved to Germany, with the intention of "punishing" the wife who had reported him. The Kosovar had returned to Pescina a few days ago to complete the separation procedure. His wife, who works in a vegetable and fruit washing facility, had instead stayed to live with

their 7 children in the nearby fraction of Venere. A terrible story, with few shadows left now. Selmanaj confessed during the night to the Avezzano public prosecutor, Maurizio Cerrato. He admitted to firing the shots. Although it is still unclear what prompted him to also aim the gun at his daughter. Everything, in any case, suggests a premeditated murder. The man waited at the bar, drinking sambuca. Then, seeing the two women leave the supermarket, he headed towards them, brandishing a weapon. He fired repeatedly, without saying a word. In the insane belief of washing some kind of honor."

- *Perpetrator-Centered Index* = 0.7: He disposed of the evidence, throwing the knife into a storm drain and hiding his clothes behind some plants two kilometers from home. He created an alibi, wandering around the neighborhood from 11 AM to 3 PM on Sunday—doing the groceries, buying pastries, playing slot machines, and greeting as many acquaintances as possible. He vehemently denied being the murderer of his wife, Rosanna Belvisi, 50, who had been brutally killed in their bedroom with 23 stab wounds. Then, at 4 AM, he broke down: "I was the one who killed her. I'm sorry and I regret what I've done," reads the arrest order.**Jealousy, resentment, and violence—this was the constant pattern in Rosanna and Luigi's life.** She was a former building custodian who had found work at the Italian social security institute (INPS), while he was an unemployed former security guard. In the concierge lodge of the building on Via Coronelli, where they had continued to live, their fights were incessant. In November, the police had intervened twice to defuse the situation, but the **help of doctors from the local mental health center had produced no results.** Messina, 53, known for his hot temper and with prior offenses for resisting and insulting a public official, would beat Rosanna with a broomstick, accusing her of spending too much time on Facebook. In 1995, he had stabbed her in the back and then staged the same charade for the police as he did two days ago: "I came home, found the door open, and Rosanna was lying on the floor." This time, however, one stab wound wasn't enough. **He attacked her with uncontrollable rage**, "then showed remarkable composure in executing an effective cover-up plan," said homicide squad chief Lorenzo Bucossi. Rosanna and Luigi had returned on Saturday from a month-long vacation in Pantelleria, and everything at home seemed calm. In his statement, Messina claimed: "We woke up in a good mood, we even made love. We had breakfast, then Rosanna started insulting me." Luigi remembered exactly what his wife had said—but not how he had reacted. And the 23 stab wounds on Rosanna's body? "**I didn't even realize it.** I remember I had just grabbed a knife in the kitchen because I wanted to peel an orange. The argument continued, and suddenly I found myself in the bedroom with the knife in my hand. **After yet another insult, I lost my temper and started stabbing her repeatedly—I don't know how many times.**" Noticing he had a wound on his hand and his clothes were covered in blood, he stuffed everything into a supermarket bag and got rid of it. Then he focused on his alibi: "I went twice to the pastry shop to buy babà, withdrew 50 euros from an ATM, played the slot machines, and won 70 euros." He even went grocery shopping—buying salad for his wife, who had already been

dead for hours

- *Perpetrator-Centered Index* = 0.6: The woman was 48 years old, the man feared that the child was not his. A positive pregnancy test triggered suspicion. **"You betrayed me."** Bellagio (Como) - **The idea that his partner had a lover obsessed him.** Saturday night, faced with a positive pregnancy test, **jealousy shook him and blinded him. It drove him mad.** The thought that his partner might be expecting a child from another man transformed a calm 55-year-old truck driver into a murderer. The murderer of his woman, strangled with an electric cable, and perhaps also of his child. Autopsy will determine whether Anna Maria Chesi, a 48-year-old nurse - divorced and already mother of two children and grandmother of two grandchildren -, was indeed expecting a child. That evening there was a crescendo of accusations, **culminating in the truck driver's mad act, who, in a fit of rage, grabbed an electric cable and tightened it around his partner's neck.** He strangled her from behind, not looking into her eyes as she died. The carabinieri from the Bellagio barracks immediately reached the house on Via Neer where the two lived together: in reality, Voci only spent weekends there, as work in inner Switzerland (canton of Thurgau) occupied him on other days of the week. Questioned by Prosecutor Pizzotti, the truck driver admitted his responsibilities and said **he killed out of jealousy**, **revealing the news of the pregnancy test and the suspicion of betrayal.** Tomorrow, the autopsy will probably be performed. A preliminary analysis confirmed death by suffocation caused by the cable tightened around the neck. A bruise on the woman's face, dating back to a few days earlier, was also noted."

- *Perpetrator-Centered Index* = 0.8 "The two argue. The neighbors hear the screams. **She accuses him of cheating on her with a younger woman. He, in a fit of rage, puts his hands around her neck and tightens, until he kills her.** Then he calls the carabinieri: "I made a mistake, I strangled her." It would seem like **the usual drama of jealousy**, the one that unfolded last night in an apartment at Via Beltrand 2, in Cuneo. **Madness that overcomes the passion of the past.** If it weren't for the age. The victim, Pierina Baudino, was 85 years old. The murderer, Vittorio Ninotto, 76. The murder took place shortly after 8 p.m. The admission: "I couldn't bear it anymore." Ninotto and Baudino had been living together for 27 years. Not an easy relationship. She, a former hairdresser, had been enduring for some time. Violence, arguments. **Ninotto was a difficult, unstable man.** A month ago he had attempted suicide. **He had been hospitalized for ten days in the psychiatry department of the Carle Hospital in Cuneo.** Then he had come back home, and she had taken him back. But it hadn't worked out. Neighbors tell of a rather "cheerful" Ninotto for his age. **He often went out in the evening, leaving Baudino alone, who perhaps suspected not only of being betrayed, but also robbed of her pension money**. Voices that investigators will now have to verify to understand the motive and reconstruct the dynamics of the crime. **"A murder matured in a situation of strong degradation, also psychological** - said Captain Lucio De Angelis of the Carabinieri

of Cuneo -. The man had already tried to kill himself twice in the last period." "

- *Perpetrator-Centered Index* = 0.6 ""They were separating. The victim was found by her 9-year-old twin children. **The investigation The marriage had long been in crisis,** she suffered abuse but had never reported it The testimony The little ones called an aunt screaming: 'Hurry, Mom won't move.' Smoking one cigarette after another, Marshal Eraldo Marchetti seems calm, alternating between silences and statements. Investigators are surprised by his attitude since only a few hours have passed since the tragedy that destroyed his family. Marshal Marchetti, 53, originally from Colleferro, stationed in Frosinone, was arrested last night for voluntary manslaughter and taken to Velletri prison. Also yesterday, in the evening, in Cecchina, near Albano (Castelli Romani), another 7-year-old boy witnessed the injuring of his mother, a 45-year-old Romanian, struck in the head with a statuette by her husband, a 47-year-old Roman doctor, then stopped by the carabinieri. **Another marriage in crisis,** like that of the teacher with the marshal, according to the woman's family members, questioned by the police. 'They argued often, for a while it seemed they had reconciled. They had started the separation process. She was a beautiful woman, and **he was very jealous**,' say the neighbors. Perhaps yesterday the woman gave the marshal an ultimatum to leave the house. But this time, Marchetti, **in a fit of rage** according to investigators, pounced on her, bludgeoning her with the hammer taken from the garage. Then he left and drove to the Colleferro police station to turn himself in."

D.2 Validation

D.2.1 Keyword Schema

Prompt Topic Classification: " You are an assistant for annotating documents. Your task is to read a newspaper article about a murder and identify and annotate when the article mentions one of the following topics. Please note: if words related to these topics appear in contexts that do not concern the crime itself, or if they are mentioned negatively — for example, to deny that the crime is linked to these topics — they must not be annotated as present. Please strictly follow what is stated in the article and do not make assumptions or inferences that are not supported by explicit mentions. The topics are:

- Mad Outburst: if the motive for the crime is attributed to loss of control, a sudden outburst, madness, anger, etc.
- Jealousy: if the motive for the crime is attributed to jealousy, possessiveness, or a crime of passion
- Economic issues: if the motive for the crime is attributed to financial problems, money, or debts
- Infidelity: if the motive for the crime is attributed to cheating, infidelity, adultery

- Mental health problems: if the motive for the crime is attributed to mental disorders, psychological imbalance, or psychiatric illnesses
- End of the relationship: if the motive for the crime is attributed to a breakup, end of the relationship, separation
- Past violence: if the article mentions that the crime provides information about the violent past of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, this can include sexual violence, but also stalking, beatings, or violent arguments
- Information on resources to combat violence against women: if the article mentions resources available to victims of violence against women, such as helplines, assistance centers, NGOs

If a topic is present according to the criteria above, return True; otherwise, return False."

Table D.1: Mad Outburst

	GPT: True	GPT: False
Dict.: True	618	184
Dict.: False	56	142

Table D.2: Jealousy

	GPT: False	GPT: True
Dict.: False	818	73
Dict.: True	17	92

Table D.3: Economic Difficulties

	GPT: False	GPT: True
Dict.: False	818	120
Dict.: True	19	43

Confusion Matrices:

Table D.4: Infidelity

	GPT: False	GPT: True
Dict.: False	930	45
Dict.: True	6	19

Table D.5: Mental Health Issues

	GPT: False	GPT: True
Dict.: False	806	116
Dict.: True	11	67

Table D.6: End of Relationship

	GPT: False	GPT: True
Dict.: False	721	136
Dict.: True	21	122

Table D.7: Past Violence

	GPT: False	GPT: True
Dict.: False	726	88
Dict.: True	61	125

Table D.8: Information on VAW Resources

	GPT: False	GPT: True
Dict.: False	913	59
Dict.: True	2	26

Examples of *False Positive* articles: In the following, I will report some articles that are annotated as 0, i.e., not mentioning a topic, by the dictionary-based approach and as 1 by GPT.

- **Mad Outburst:** The alarm to 113 came at 10:45. On the sleepy morning in Via Birmania, a quiet corner of the EUR district, desperate screams were heard. Two police cars arrived with four officers on board. They climbed over the protective wall using a ladder provided by a neighbor and headed toward the basement tavern where everything seems to have happened: "Open the door, open the door" the officers shouted several times when they realized that the killer was still inside the villa. From inside, no answer, no sound. Even the screams had stopped. But while the firefighters were working to break down the door to the basement level, Federico Leonelli, 35, suddenly came out from another entrance. He was wearing black combat boots, military trousers, a green T-shirt, a leather belt, and a gardener's mask. In his hands, he held a large kitchen knife, still bloody, and he ran toward his car. He was nearly two meters tall, frightening. The firefighters moved aside, while the police fired several shots. The man, given emergency assistance by the 118 medical team, arrived already dead at the Sant'Eugenio hospital. Behind him he had left the decapitated body of Oksana Martseniuk. He was probably still attacking her. It is hard to say with certainty what exactly happened. Pending the investigation, the villa was seized by the magistrates—prosecutor Luigi Fede and deputy prosecutor Pierfilippo Laviani. The order was carried out by the police. The property, registered to a real-estate company, also appears to be the legal headquarters of La Celsa Srl, a company that in 2009 held a PUP (Urban Parking Plan) concession for what was then Municipality XII. The residents of the villa arrived at Via Birmania 86 last night shortly before 9 p.m., returning quickly from vacation in an SUV. The house had been lent to Leonelli by his colleague—in the IT sector—in exchange for doing some small maintenance jobs. But the killer's real passion was knives, the same ones that had alarmed the 40-year-old Ukrainian woman and that ultimately cost her her life on a quiet Sunday morning in August.

- **Mad Outburst:** Three shots with his service pistol: two to kill his wife, one to take his own life. A terrible family tragedy unfolded yesterday afternoon in Via Machiavelli, just outside the historic center of Cisterna di Latina, in front of their two children, aged six and seven. It was the children who called the neighbors and raised the alarm. Everything happened in a matter of minutes, shortly after 4 p.m., following a furious argument ("increasingly frequent in recent weeks," neighbors told investigators) within the walls of their home. Antonino Pierpaolo Grasso, a 38-year-old originally from Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto and a prison police officer stationed at Velletri prison, pulled out his service pistol and fired at his wife, Tiziana Zaccari, 36. She tried to defend herself: the first bullet hit her hand, the second, the fatal one, severed her femoral artery. She bled to death in the hallway of their home, by the time he was already dead. Moments after shooting her, he put the pistol to his temple and shot himself in the living room. The gunshots were also heard by neighbors in the surrounding apartment buildings near number 20 Via Machiavelli. The two children ran screaming to some of the neighbors, who then helped investigators reconstruct the family situation. Grasso had served

for a long time in Biella, and after being transferred closer to home, he had requested to return. "They no longer got along, they wanted to separate," a neighbor recounted. "This afternoon our children were doing homework together at our house, and she was there too. Then they went back home, and in just a few minutes, everything went to hell."

- **Jealousy:** I can say that we exchanged messages until 12:05 a.m. to arrange to meet the next day," roughly around 11 a.m. Speaking is Giulia Ballestri's new partner, recalling for investigators—who are questioning him on the morning of September 19, right after her body was found—the last time they were in contact: shortly after midnight between September 15 and 16. The woman would be killed the next morning inside the now-abandoned family villa on Via Padre Genocchi. During that same interrogation on the 19th, the new partner also states that he lost contact with her on WhatsApp between 8 and 9 a.m. on the 16th. And it is in this web of messages and times that further doubts arise regarding the versions provided so far by her husband, 51-year-old dermatologist Matteo Cagnoni, who has been in jail for 20 days on charges of beating his wife to death. Since August 6—the day her husband discovered everything through a private investigator—Giulia and her new partner had been communicating only via Instagram and a mutual friend because Cagnoni "checked her phone; he had forced her to remove the lock code." Still, they managed to meet almost every Friday, and they were supposed to meet on Friday the 16th as well. The night before, during their message exchange, she asked him: "By what time do you need the car?" She perhaps needed a ride, and he replied: "I'll take the housekeeper home whenever you want, as soon as I can get away." After the Florence investigating judge informed Cagnoni about that message, he first said he understood his wife's "hurry to leave." Then he claimed he had left the crime-scene villa with her—where they had gone to photograph some paintings—around 10:30 a.m. He said they had chatted a bit in the nearby park, that he had said goodbye, and that he had last seen her under their building on Via Giordano Bruno at 12:15 p.m. But Giulia had an appointment with her new partner around 11 a.m., yet she had not sent him any message to warn him she would be late. For the prosecution, the only explanation at this point is this: that by that time, her husband had already killed her.

- **Past Violence:** Thirty-one days. That is how long Giuseppe Di Gioia, 48, from Albinia, remained locked inside a cell in the Via Saffi prison—from the early hours of Sunday, October 25, until yesterday, shortly before 2 p.m., when Di Gioia, accompanied by his lawyers Sabrina Pollini and Alessia Ceraolo, walked out through the main gate of the detention facility. He was released at the request of the very same public prosecutor, Laura D'Amelio, who had had him jailed on charges of murdering his elderly mother, Donata Muccio. "There are no longer grounds for keeping him in custody," and so Di Gioia left the Via Saffi facility to return to his home in Albinia, where, for the time being, he must remain under house arrest—at least until the Court of Cassation rules on the appeal filed by his lawyers. Outside the prison, Di Gioia made no statements. With a long beard and a worn, exhausted face, he walked straight ahead. "This ruling," lawyers Ceraolo and Pollini explained, "confirms what we have been

arguing for days: that there are no grounds for pre-trial detention." They also confirmed that they had already filed an appeal with the Supreme Court against the Appeals Court's decision to extend custody by sixty days. The prosecutor's request for his release came after a new inspection, on Tuesday the 17th, of the second-floor apartment at Via Sauro 100. Officers from the mobile squad and forensic experts from Rome searched again for possible biological traces. During the inspection, a computer Di Gioia had given to his sister Maria and some documents were seized. It is the same apartment where, according to prosecutor D'Amelio, the murder of Donata Muccio took place at the climax of a quarrel with her son Giuseppe. According to the accusation, a violent argument escalated to the point where the son allegedly struck his mother, causing her to fall and die. He has always denied this. He denies having touched her and denies being responsible for her death. He admits the argument and says that when he found her on the floor, motionless, he panicked and thought of staging a robbery. But why such a fierce quarrel? Money, it seems—after yet another request for money from his mother, according to the prosecution. It is a case whose true contours still need to be established. Crucial to this will be what emerges from the forensic medical examination of the cause of death, as early indications suggest that it may not have been a violent death.

D.2.2 Indexes

Table D.9: Pairs of Summaries of Articles about the Same Crime

High VC Index – Low PC Index	Low VC Index – High PC Index
Rosanna Belvisi, a 50-year-old INPS employee, was brutally murdered in her 30-square-meter apartment in the Lorenteggio area of Milan by her husband of 20 years, Luigi Messina. After returning from a month-long vacation, the couple got into a violent argument, resulting in him stabbing Belvisi 23 times with a kitchen knife. Neighbors reported previous violent altercations between the couple, highlighting a history of abuse and threats. Authorities describe the case as emblematic of a deeply troubled family dynamic characterized by unreported violence, emphasizing the importance of women seeking help from anti-violence centers and law enforcement in such situations. This is the second femicide in Milan within a short period, following the murder of Tiziana Pavani by a guest in her home during a cocaine-induced outburst.	In Milan, a man named Luigi Messina, 53, confessed to killing his wife, Rosanna Belvisi, 50, after a violent argument that escalated tragically. The couple had a history of intense disputes fueled by jealousy and accusations regarding Belvisa's relationship with another man, which had driven a wedge between them. On the day of the murder, despite a seemingly peaceful morning, a heated argument led to Messina attacking Belvisi with 23 stab wounds in a fit of rage. Messina, who has a history of violence, described the incident with vague recollections, claiming he lost control during the confrontation after Belvisi insulted him. He later expressed remorse for the crime, detailing the events surrounding the murder and how he cleaned up and attempted to maintain an alibi despite the chaotic circumstances.
The article discusses the tragic femicide of Federica Madau in Iglesias, Italy, at the hands of her husband, Gianni Murru, who did not accept her request for separation. Despite having previously reported him to the authorities, Federica was fatally stabbed during a confrontation after picking up her children from her husband. The incident highlights the persistent issue of gender-based violence and femicide in Italy, as evidenced by a recent ruling against the Italian state by the European Court of Human Rights for not adequately responding to a similar case in the past. The lack of support for victims of domestic violence, including the absence of anti-violence centers in Sardinia, further exacerbates the situation and calls for more resources and awareness to combat this ongoing problem.	In Iglesias, Italy, a 46-year-old man named Giovanni Murru killed his 32-year-old wife, Federica Madau, after an argument that ended on the staircase of their two-story house in the city outskirts. The couple, who were parents to three children, were in the midst of a tense separation which was due to be finalized with a divorce in a few days. The trigger for the violence is believed to have been the impending separation, causing Murru to fatally stab and throw his wife down the stairs where she was later found by emergency services covered in blood. Murru was apprehended by the police and the investigation is ongoing.

Table C.1: Pairs of Summaries of Articles about the Same Crime

High VC Index – Low PC Index	Low VC Index – High PC Index
Three femicides occurred in a short span of time in Italy, with one in Tuscany and two in Lombardy. In Tuscany, a man called the emergency services to confess he killed his 46-year-old girlfriend near Monterotondo Marittimo. The woman, a mother of two, was found dead in the car. In Lombardy, a married couple of Albanian origin was discovered dead in an apparent murder-suicide in Calino. Additionally, in Vigevano, a 59-year-old man killed his 39-year-old girlfriend before surrendering to the police the next day. These incidents come amidst a growing concern over gender-based violence in Italy, illustrated by other recent cases like an arrest in Figline Valdarno of a 34-year-old man trying to enter his girlfriend's house armed with a knife, and the arrest of a 23-year-old Albanian man in Bergamo who threatened his wife and mother-in-law with a rifle over a domestic dispute.	A man identified as Nicola Stefanini, 48, killed his partner, Silvia Manetti, 46, by cutting her throat after a night out in Suvereto, Piombino. Stefanini immediately called emergency services to confess the crime and was found by the police next to the victim's body with a knife in a vineyard along a road in Maremma. The couple had a turbulent relationship marked by arguments and Stefanini's irascible character. The motive behind the murder remains unclear, and Stefanini has been arrested for voluntary homicide. The incident is part of a series of femicides in Italy, with other cases reported in Brescia and Vigevano involving intimate partner violence leading to tragic outcomes. The communities affected have shown solidarity and support towards the victims' families. In a separate incident in Cazzago San Martino, Calino (Brescia), a couple of Albanian origin were found dead in an apparent murder-suicide. The husband allegedly strangled his wife before taking his own life, leaving behind a letter explaining his actions driven by jealousy. The couple's adult children, who were on holiday at the time, raised the alarm when they couldn't reach their parents by phone.

E Balance Checks

Table E.1: Balance Table for Reporter's Age

	Mean		Difference in Means	
	Young Reporters	Old Reporters	Without FE	With FE
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Article Length	486.371	513.57	-27.199**	-14.271**
	(199.603)	(234.491)	(5.525)	(5.857)
Victim Italian	0.854	0.841	0.012	-0.001
	(0.353)	(0.365)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Perpetrator Italian	0.777	0.802	-0.025**	0.008
	(0.416)	(0.399)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Perpetrator Partner	0.511	0.58	-0.069**	-0.018^{+}
	(0.5)	(0.494)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Perpetrator Relative	0.154	0.127	0.027**	0.003
	(0.361)	(0.332)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Relationship Missing	0.168	0.128	0.041**	0.004
	(0.374)	(0.334)	(0.008)	(0.008)
First Article	0.286	0.332	-0.047**	0.013
	(0.452)	(0.471)	(0.011)	(0.012)
Second Article	0.135	0.148	-0.013^{+}	-0.003
	(0.342)	(0.355)	(0.009)	(0.009)

Notes: Balance test of crime and article characteristics along reporters' age. *Article Length* is the number of words in each article; *First Article* and *Second Article* are indicators for whether the article is respectively the first or the second one about a specific crime in the same newspaper. Columns 1 and 2 report the mean and standard deviation of crime and article characteristics separately for reporters who are younger or older than 40. Column 3 reports the simple difference in means between young and old reporters. Column 4 reports the difference in means after taking out newspaper-year and reporter's region fixed effects. Standard errors in Column 4 are clustered at the newspaper-year level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.2: Balance Table for Reporter's Gender Norms

Variable	Difference in Means	
	Without FE	With FE
	(1)	(2)
Article Length	-350.538**	-240.024*
	(99.596)	(114.869)
Victim Italian	1.589**	1.639**
	(0.16)	(0.187)
Perpetrator Italian	1.881**	1.114**
	(0.186)	(0.199)
Perpetrator Partner	0.263+	0.247
	(0.226)	(0.254)
Perpetrator Relative	0.01	-0.097
	(0.148)	(0.168)
Relationship Missing	0.018	0.361*
	(0.16)	(0.165)
First Article	1.214**	1.07**
	(0.213)	(0.244)
Second Article	0.359*	-0.072
	(0.159)	(0.193)

Notes: Balance test of crime and article characteristics along reporters' region of residence gender norms, proxied by the share of couples in which only the husband works. *Article Length* is the number of words in each article; *First Article* and *Second Article* are indicators for whether the article is respectively the first or the second one about a specific crime in the same newspaper. Column 1 reports the simple correlation between gender norms and crime and article characteristics. Column 2 reports the correlation after taking out newspaper-year fixed effects. Standard errors in Column 2 are clustered at the newspaper-year level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

F Gender Differences in Reporting – Additional Results

F.1 Differences across Other Reporters' Characteristics

Table F.1: Age Differences in Reporting

	Victim-Centered Index				Perpetrator-Centered Index			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Age<40	0.106*	−0.013	−0.005	0.007	−0.105**	−0.084	−0.077	−0.109*
	(0.061)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.058)	(0.049)	(0.059)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Female Reporter				0.128***				−0.057**
				(0.025)				(0.024)
Observations	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587
R^2	0.001	0.114	0.126	0.424	0.001	0.058	0.064	0.354
Newsp × Year FE		X	X	X		X	X	X
Reporter Reg. FE			X	X			X	X
Crime FE				X				X

Notes: Differences in the use of reporting practices between reporters younger and older than 40 years old. Columns 1 to 4 report the results for the victim-centered index, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1, capturing the use of practices complying with the guidelines on reporting about VAW; Columns 5 to 8 report the results for the perpetrator-centered index, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1, capturing the use of practices that do not comply with such guidelines. Columns 1 and 5 report the simple OLS regression; Columns 2 and 6 include newspaper times year fixed effects; Columns 3 and 7 add reporter's region fixed effects; Columns 4 and 8 also include crime fixed effects and controls for author's gender. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

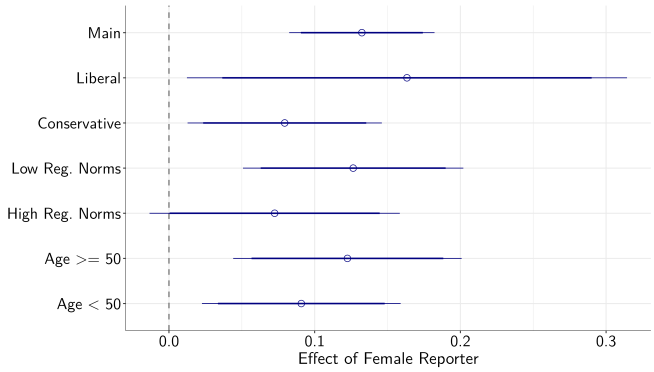
Table F.2: Differences in Reporting across Reporters' Region Norms

	Victim-Centered Index				Perpetrator-Centered Index			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Reg. Norms	1.493*	0.859	−2.919***	−2.647***	1.864**	2.047**	0.825	0.600
	(0.863)	(0.917)	(0.897)	(0.903)	(0.769)	(0.943)	(0.988)	(1.003)
Female Reporter				0.120***				−0.073***
				(0.030)				(0.026)
Age				0.003*				0.006***
				(0.001)				(0.001)
Observations	7731	7731	7731	7731	7731	7731	7731	7731
R^2	0.005	0.109	0.410	0.413	0.005	0.066	0.374	0.377
Newsp × Year FE		X	X	X		X	X	X
Crime FE			X	X			X	X

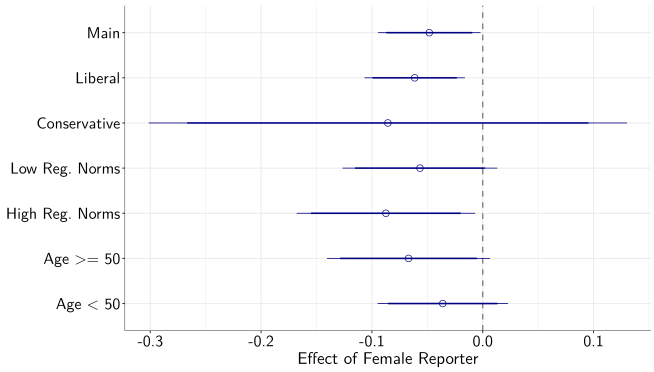
Notes: Effect of reporters' gender norms, proxied by norms in their region of residence. Columns 1 to 4 report the results for the victim-centered index, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1, capturing the use of practices complying with the guidelines on reporting about VAW; Columns 5 to 8 report the results for the perpetrator-centered index, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1, capturing the use of practices that do not comply with such guidelines. Columns 1 and 5 report the OLS regression; Columns 2 and 6 include newspaper times year fixed effects; Columns 3 and 7 add crime fixed effects and Columns 4 and 8 include controls for reporters' characteristics like gender and date of birth. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Figure F.1: Gender Differences in Reporting by Sub-Groups

(a) Standardized Victim-Centered Index

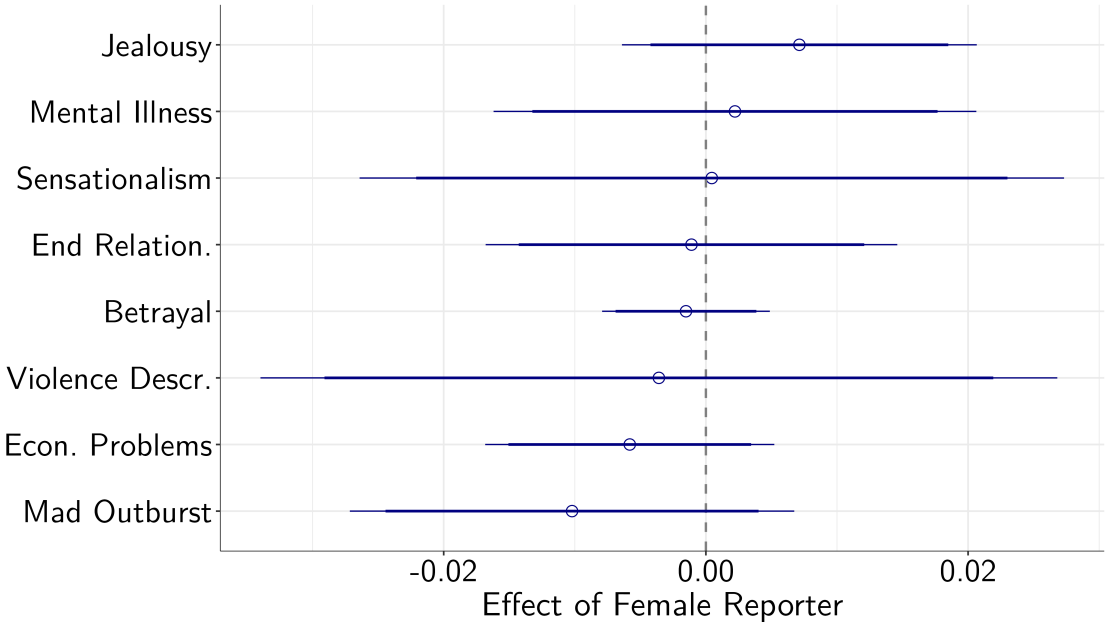


(b) Standardized Perpetrator-Centered Index



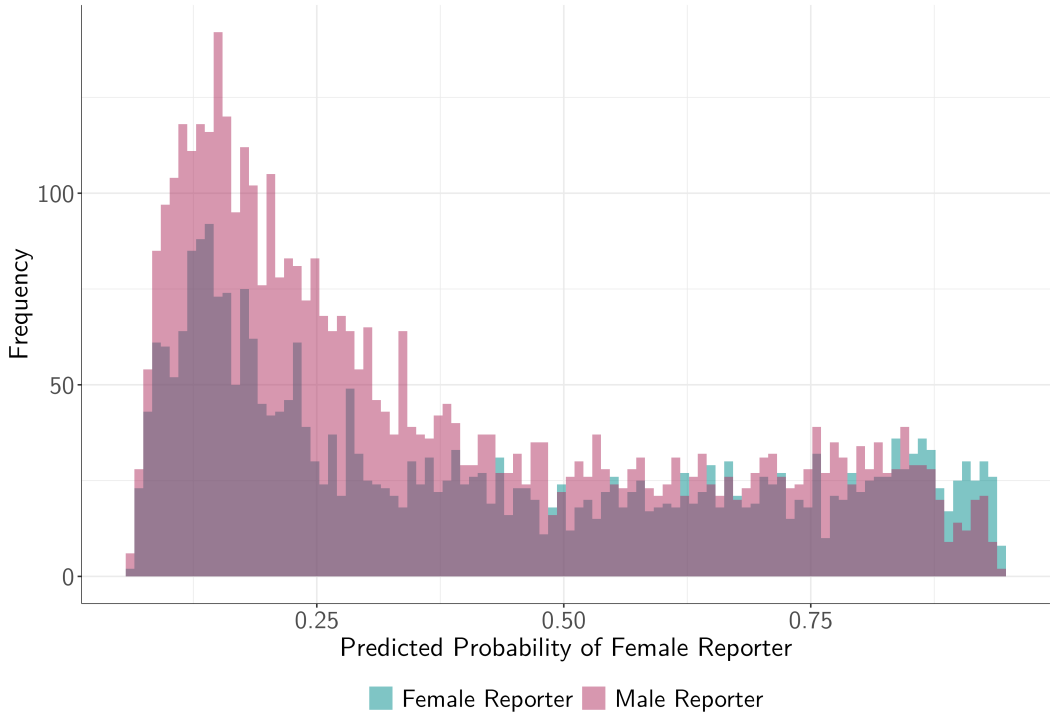
Notes: Effect of female reporter on the victim-centered – Panel (a) – and perpetrator-centered indexes – Panel (b) –, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1. All regressions include crime and reporter's region fixed effects. Regressions run on the samples of liberal and conservative newspapers also include year fixed effects, while the remaining ones include newspaper times year fixed effects. The top coefficient shows the effect of the main specification. The estimates labeled as "Liberal" and "Conservative" come from regressions on the group of conservative and Liberal newspapers. Those labeled "Low Region Norms" and "High Region Norms" are from regressions on the sample of reporters living in regions with gender norms below and above the median level, while the final ones from regressions run on the sample of reporters older or younger than 50 years old. Errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level, and the figure shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals.

Figure F.2: Gender Differences in Reporting on Murders with Male Victim



Notes: Gender differences in reporting about murders of male victims. All regressions include newspaper-year, crime and reporter's region fixed effects. The reporting practices used are the same that compose the perpetrator-centered index from the analysis of murders with male victims with two additions. First, an index for sensationalistic language; second, an index capturing description of the violence that occurred in the murder. Errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level, and the figure shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals.

Figure F.3: Predicted Probability of Female Reporter by Real Reporter's Gender—Murders with Male Victims



Notes: Distribution of the predicted probabilities of each article being written by a female reporter plotted separately by *real* reporters' gender.

F.2 Differences across Newspapers

In this part, I isolate the effect of newspapers' ideology on reporting. The analysis in this part relies on assumptions that are similar to those from the analysis on reporters' characteristics. Namely, the main concern is that newspapers' ideology is correlated with crime characteristics. For instance, it could be that more conservative newspapers decide to cover crimes in which the victim had betrayed the perpetrator. If this were the case, then observing a higher likelihood of mentioning betrayals by conservative newspapers would be due to differences in crimes covered rather than to the newspaper's ideology. Additionally, it is likely that regional newspapers only cover crimes happening in regions close to their reader and that, at the same time, regional newspapers are different from an ideological point of view. Therefore, if crimes happening in different regions were to have different characteristics, then any observed difference in reporting should be attributed to differences in crimes rather than ideology. To account for this, I follow the same approach as in the main analysis and include crime fixed effects in the main regression. Moreover, it could be that conservative newspapers hire journalists who are very different from journalists who write on more liberal newspapers (e.g., more men, older, etc.). For this reason, I also include the regression author's characteristics like gender, age, and region of residence.

The final regression is the following:

$$Y_{a(e)jyn} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Liberal_n + \mathbf{X}_j'\mu + \alpha_r + \alpha_e + \alpha_y + \varepsilon_{a(e)jyn} \tag{13}$$

where Y_{ajyn} is the outcome as before, $Liberal_n$ is an indicator that takes value 1 if the newspaper is liberal. $\mathbf{X}_j'$ is a vector of reporters' characteristics, α_r, α_e, α_y are reporter's region, crime and year fixed effects, respectively. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper level. The coefficient of interest is β_1, which estimates differences in reporting practices between liberal and conservative newspapers.

I report the results from this regression in Table F.3. Columns 1 and 5 report the results from a simple OLS for the victim-centered and perpetrator-centered index, respectively. Columns 2-3 and 6-7 add crime and year fixed effects and control for 0 reporters' characteristics, respectively, to account for the selection of crimes to cover and reporters by newspapers with different ideologies. The coefficient for the victim-centered index is positive and significant suggesting that liberal newspapers are indeed more likely to use victim-centered narratives. Still, when including controls for reporters' characteristics, the coefficient of female reporters is still positive and significant, suggesting that the reporter's gender affects reporting practices beyond newspapers' ideology. There is no significant difference in the perpetrator-centered index between liberal and conservative newspapers.

Table F.3: Differences in Reporting across Newspaper Ideology

	Victim-Centered Index			Perpetrator-Centered Index		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Liberal	0.053	0.083**	0.127**	0.022	−0.040	−0.044
	(0.055)	(0.042)	(0.056)	(0.060)	(0.028)	(0.030)
Female Reporter			0.137**			−0.062**
			(0.056)			(0.028)
Age			−0.001			−0.003**
			(0.002)			(0.001)
Observations	9048	9048	9048	9048	9048	9048
R^2	0.001	0.412	0.422	0.000	0.339	0.344
Crime FE		X	X		X	X
Year FE		X	X		X	X
Reporter Reg, FE			X			X

Notes: Differences in the use of reporting practices between liberal and conservative newspapers. Columns 1 to 3 report the results for the victim-centered index, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1, capturing the use of practices complying with the guidelines on reporting about VAW; Columns 4 to 6 report the results for the perpetrator-centered index, standardized to have mean 0 and standard deviation of 1, capturing the use of practices that do not comply with such guidelines. Columns 1 and 4 report the OLS regression; Columns 2 and 5 include crime and year fixed effects, while Columns 3 and 6 add reporters' characteristics among the controls. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

F.3 Robustness Checks

Table F.4: Gender Differences in Reporting - Alternative Outcome Specification

	Victim-Centered Index				Perpetrator-Centered Index			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Female Reporter	0.056***	0.039***	0.046***	0.039***	−0.033**	−0.031**	−0.025**	−0.020
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Age				0.000				0.002**
				(0.001)				(0.001)
Observations	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587
Adj. R^2	0.004	0.066	0.077	0.288	0.001	0.035	0.038	0.187
Mean Dep. Var.	0.287	0.287	0.287	0.287	0.371	0.371	0.371	0.371
Newsp × Year FE		X	X	X		X	X	X
Reporter Reg. FE			X	X			X	X
Crime FE				X				X

Notes: Differences in the use of reporting practices between Female and Male reporters. Columns 1 to 4 report the results for at least one topic in the victim-centered index; Columns 5 to 8 report the results for at least one topic for the perpetrator-centered index. Columns 1 and 5 report the OLS regression; Columns 2 and 6 include newspaper times year fixed effects; Columns 3 and 7 add reporter's region fixed effects; Columns 4 and 8 also include crime fixed effects and controls for author's date of birth. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table F.5: Gender Differences in Reporting Alternative Specification – VC Index

	Main	Art. Order×Crime FE	Crime×Newsp FE	Crime×Year Clust.	Crime×Auth. Clust.	Weghted
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Female Reporter	0.128***	0.125***	0.123***	0.128***	0.128***	0.142***
	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.033)
Observations	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587
R^2	0.424	0.362	0.587	0.424	0.424	0.575
Newsp × Year FE	X	X		X	X	X
Reporter Reg. FE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Crime FE	X			X	X	X

Notes: Differences in the use of reporting practices between Female and Male reporters in the victim-centered index. Column 1 reports the results from the main specification; Column 2 adds fixed effects for whether the article is the first, second, etc. on the same crime in newspaper n; Column 3 includes crime times newspaper fixed effects; Column 4 has standard errors clustered at the crime times year level; Column 5 adds weights for the inverse number of articles for each newspaper-crime. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table F.6: Gender Differences in Reporting Alternative Specification – PC Index

	Main	Art. Order×Crime FE	Crime×Newsp FE	Crime×Year Clust.	Crime×Auth. Clust.	Weghted
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Female Reporter	−0.060**	−0.053**	−0.060**	−0.060***	−0.060***	−0.051*
	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.030)
Observations	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587	10587
R^2	0.354	0.317	0.521	0.354	0.354	0.513
Newsp × Year FE	X	X		X	X	X
Reporter Reg. FE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Crime FE	X			X	X	X

Notes: Differences in the use of reporting practices between Female and Male reporters in the perpetrator-centered index. Column 1 reports the results from the main specification; Column 2 adds fixed effects for whether the article is the first, second, etc. on the same crime in newspaper n; Column 3 includes crime times newspaper fixed effects; Column 4 has standard errors clustered at the crime times year level; Column 5 adds weights for the inverse number of articles for each newspaper-crime. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level in all columns except for Column 4 (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table F.7: Gender Differences in Reporting Alternative Samples – VC Index

	Main	First Art.	First 5 Art.	IPV	Italian Perp.	No Viral Events	All Crimes Rep.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Female Reporter	0.128***	0.156***	0.118***	0.160***	0.127***	0.135***	0.063*
	(0.025)	(0.046)	(0.031)	(0.039)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.035)
Observations	10587	3391	7004	6006	8045	6577	6804
R^2	0.424	0.646	0.486	0.447	0.456	0.499	0.476
Mean Dep. Var.	−0.000	0.091	0.050	0.163	0.019	0.071	−0.052
Newsp × Year FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reporter Reg. FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Crime FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: Differences in the use of reporting practices between Female and Male reporters in the victim-centered index. Column 1 reports the results from the main specification; Column 2 restricts the sample to the first article for each crime in each newspaper; Column 3 restricts the sample to articles within 10 days from the first one in each newspaper; Column 4 to murders committed by the (ex-)partner; Column 5 to Italian perpetrators; Column 6 excludes events that are covered by more than 10 articles per newspaper. All columns include newspaper-year, reporter's region, and crime fixed effects, with the exception of Column 3, which includes newspaper-crime and reporter's region fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level in all columns except for Column 4 (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table F.8: Gender Differences in Reporting Alternative Samples – PC Index

	Main	First Art.	First 5 Art.	IPV	Italian Perp.	No Viral Events	All Crimes Rep.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Female Reporter	−0.060**	−0.081**	−0.071**	−0.081***	−0.069**	−0.071**	−0.094***
	(0.023)	(0.038)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.031)
Observations	10587	3391	7004	6006	8045	6577	6804
R^2	0.354	0.620	0.417	0.355	0.353	0.416	0.420
Mean Dep. Var.	−0.000	0.156	0.095	0.097	0.052	0.127	0.033
Newsp × Year FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reporter Reg. FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Crime FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: Differences in the use of reporting practices between Female and Male reporters in the perpetrator-centered index. Column 1 reports the results from the main specification; Column 2 restricts the sample to the first article for each crime in each newspaper; Column 3 restricts the sample to articles within 10 days from the first one in each newspaper; Column 4 to murders committed by the (ex-)partner; Column 5 to Italian perpetrators; Column 6 excludes events that are covered by more than 10 articles per newspaper. All columns include newspaper-year, reporter's region, and crime fixed effects, with the exception of Column 3, which includes newspaper-crime and reporter's region fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper-year level in all columns except for Column 4 (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table G.1: First Stage: Effect of Initial Female Reporters Exposure on Total Exposure to Female Reporters

	Exposure to Articles by Female Reporters						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Fem. Exposure^{5Art}	0.293***	0.265**	0.265**	0.265**	0.224**	0.131**	0.122**
	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Mean Dep. Var.	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.208	0.209	0.209
F-stat	420.103	5.790	5.520	5.475	5.746	6.272	6.393
Window	$[-4, 4]$	$[-4, 4]$	$[-4, 4]$	$[-4, 4]$	$[-5, 5]$	$[-7, 10]$	$[-10, 15]$
Province FE		X	X	X	X	X	X
Month FE		X	X	X	X	X	X
Window FE			X	X		X	X
Observations	6800	6800	6800	6800	8348	14365	15526
R^2	0.058	0.091	0.092	0.092	0.080	0.055	0.053

Notes: First stage regression: effect of the share of female reporters in up to the first three articles on the female reporter's exposure measure. Columns 1 to 4 report the results for a 8-week interval from the 4 weeks before the crime to the 4 weeks after the crime. Column 1 reports the simple OLS regression; Column 2 includes province and week fixed effects; Column 3 adds week-from-crime fixed effects; and Column 4 controls for the total number of articles. Columns 5 to 7 report the results from the same specification in Column 4 for 10-week, 17-week, and 25-week intervals, respectively. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

G Exposure to Female Reporters and Help-Seeking – Additional Results

G.1 Instrumental Variable Analysis

In this Section, I propose an instrumental variable approach to complement the analysis in Section 7.1. In this analysis, I leverage the random assignment of authors in the first articles and the serial correlation of authors over time. I use as an exogenous variation for exposure to female reporters the exposure measure constructed using up to the first two articles for each newspaper and crime if these are written in the week when the crime happens or in the following one. The identifying assumption is that conditional on each province and week's fixed characteristics, the weighted share of female reporters for each newspaper who authors up to the first three articles about a crime is orthogonal to the number of calls to the helpline number.

To show that the instrument is relevant, I report the first stage regression in Table G.1. Columns 1 to 4 report the first stage regression for the time period that I will focus on for the main analysis. Column 4, which reports the results from the preferred specification, including province, week, and week-from-crime fixed effects, shows a positive and significant effect of having female reporters in the first articles on the female exposure index. Columns 5 to 7 consider different week intervals. As I enlarge the time interval, the first stage effect decreases while remaining positive and significant. One explanation for this is that articles written more than 5 weeks after the crime are not necessarily written by the same reporter who wrote the first articles. For this reason, in the main analysis, I will only focus on the 4-week window.

Table G.2: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls

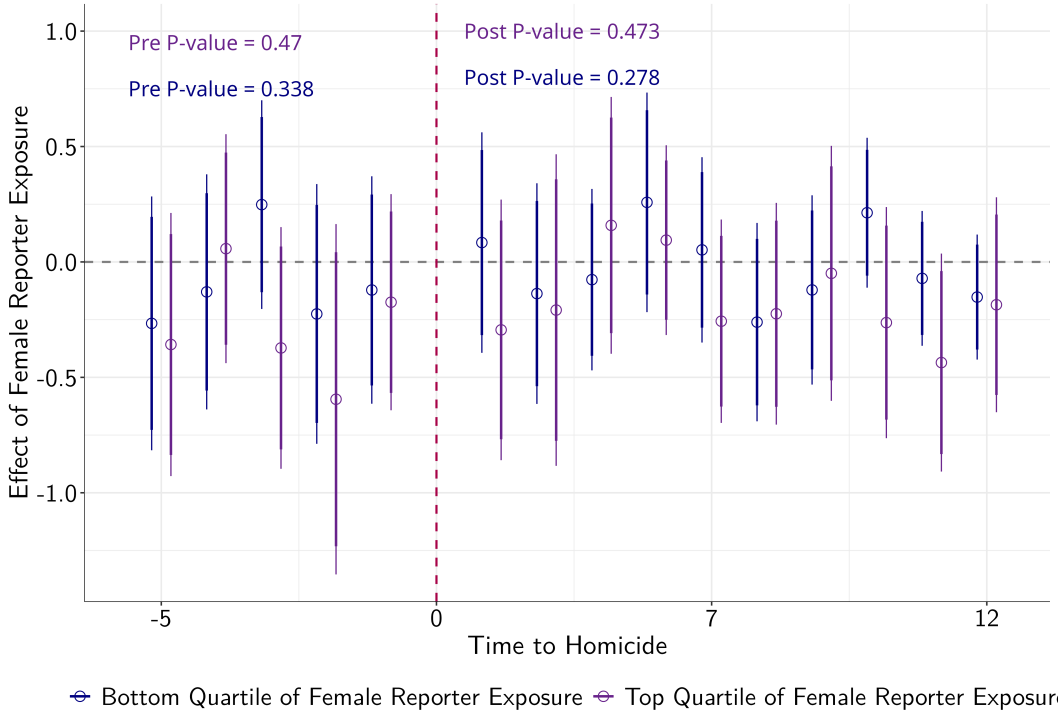
	At Least One Call							
	Pre-Murder Period				Post-Murder Period			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
OLS	0.100*	0.129+			0.036	0.011		
	(0.041)	(0.068)			(0.033)	(0.047)		
Reduced Form			−0.089				0.120**	
			(0.061)				(0.043)	
IV				−5.934				0.460**
				(7.212)				(0.176)
Mean Dep. Var.	0.715	0.715	0.715	0.715	0.758	0.758	0.758	0.758
Mean Expl. Var.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.212	0.212	0.212	0.212
Province FE		X	X	X		X	X	X
Week FE		X	X	X		X	X	X
Window FE		X	X	X		X	X	X
Tot. Article		X	X	X		X	X	X
Observations	2716	2716	2819	2716	4086	4086	4161	4084
R^2	0.021	0.444	0.441	−1.623	0.026	0.410	0.413	0.394

Notes: Effect of exposure to female reporters on calls. Columns 1, 2, 5, and 6 report the OLS estimate, while Columns 3 and 6, and 4 and 8 show the reduced form and the IV estimates, respectively. Columns 1 to 4 report the results for the 4 weeks before the murder, while Columns 5 to 8 for the 4 weeks after the murder. Columns 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 include province, week, and week-from-murder fixed effects, as well as controls for the total number of articles. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table G.2 shows the OLS and IV results for both the pre- and post-murder periods. In particular, Columns 1 to 4 report the results for the pre-murder period and show that there is no effect of higher exposure to female reporters on calls, as the coefficient is small or negative and non-significant when looking at the reduced form or IV estimates. This result shows that there are no pre-trends in the effect of female reporters' exposure on calls, suggesting that any effect in the post-murder period is unlikely to be driven by pre-existing differences that may bias the results. Columns 5 to 8 show the results in the post-period. The coefficient in both the OLS and IV regression is positive and significant – with the exception of Column 7 – suggesting a positive effect of exposure to female reporters on calls to the helpline number. In particular, the IV results in Column 8 suggest that a 50 percentage points increase in the female reporters' exposure measure, which corresponds to one additional article per newspaper written by a woman, leads to a 32% increase in the probability of at least one call after the murder happens.

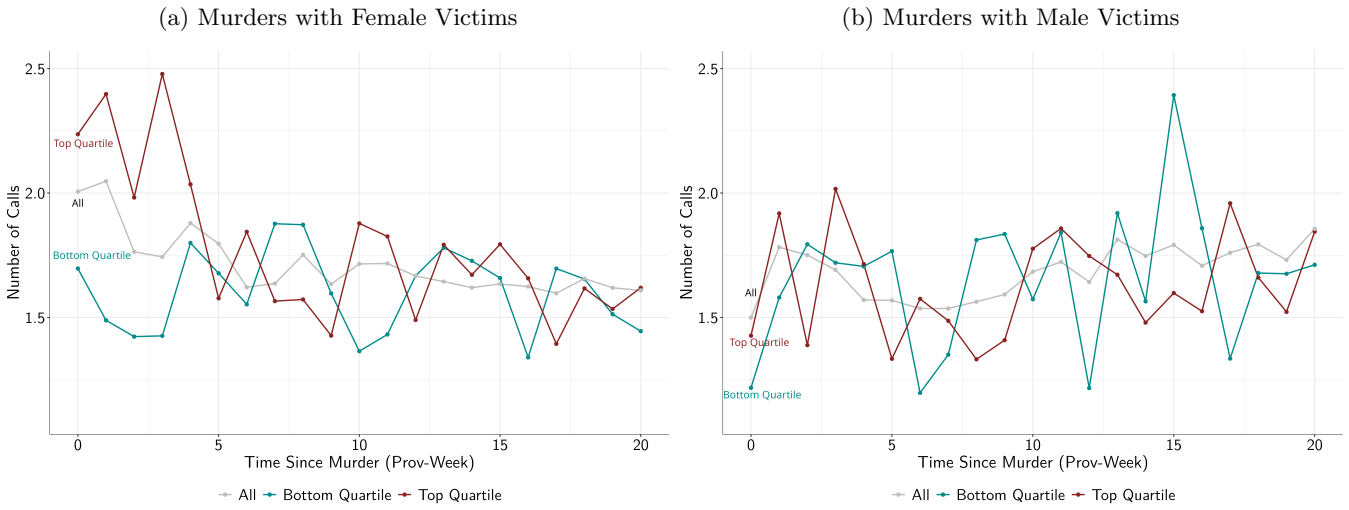
G.2 Robustness Checks

Figure G.1: Event Study: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Number of Articles



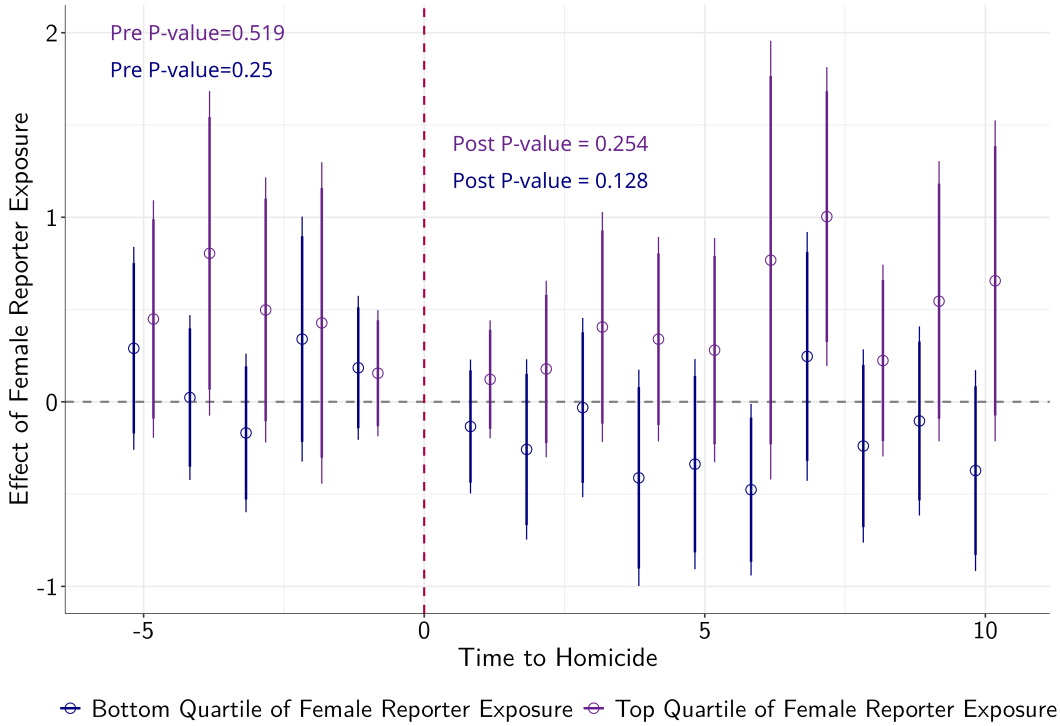
Notes: Number of articles before and after a murder happens in the same province for increasing exposure to female reporters in the first five articles covering the crime. The figure plots the coefficient from equation (7) using as an outcome the number of articles weighted by the newspapers market share. The regression includes province and month-fixed effects. It shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals constructed clustering errors at the province level. Overlaid text reports the p-value from an F-test for the joint significance of the four pre- (top left) and post-murder (top right) indicators.

Figure G.2: Calls to Helpline in the Weeks after Murder by Exposure to Female Reporters



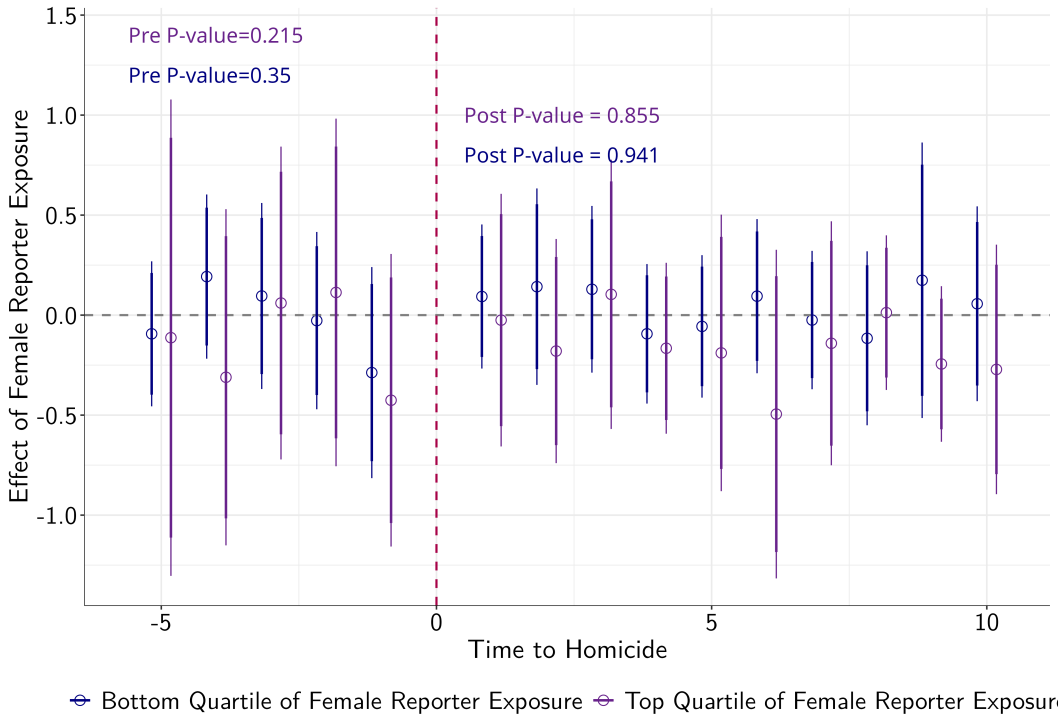
Notes: Time series of the number of calls, after taking out province fixed effects, in the province of the murder in the 20 weeks after the murder happens. The time series are plotted considering all province-week observations and separately for observations with the female reporters' exposure measure in the bottom and top quartile of its distribution. Panel (a) shows the trend of calls to the helpline in provinces where a murder with female victims occurs and after such murder, while Panel (b) plots the same for murders with male victims.

Figure G.3: Event Study: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls – Male Victims



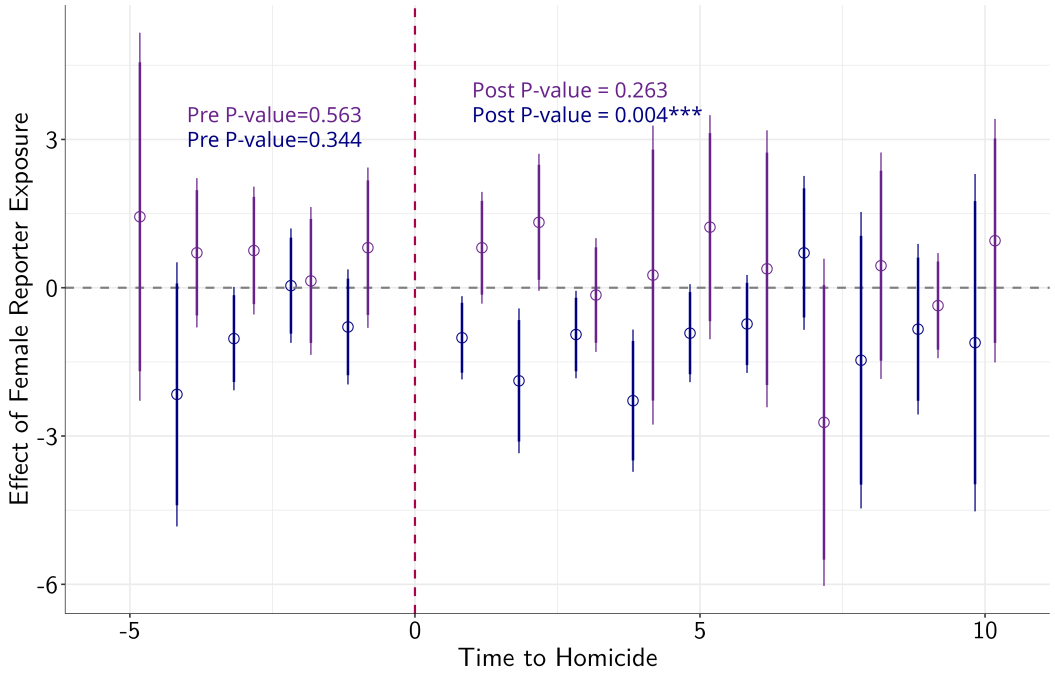
Notes: Calls to the help-line number before and after a murder happens in the same province for increasing exposure to female reporters in the first five articles on crimes. The figure plots the coefficient from equation (7) separately for murders with male victims. The regression includes province and month-fixed effects. It shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals constructed from clustering errors at the province level. Overlaid text reports the p-value from an F-test for the joint significance of the four pre- (top left) and post-murder (top right) indicators.

Figure G.4: Event Study: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls – Placebo



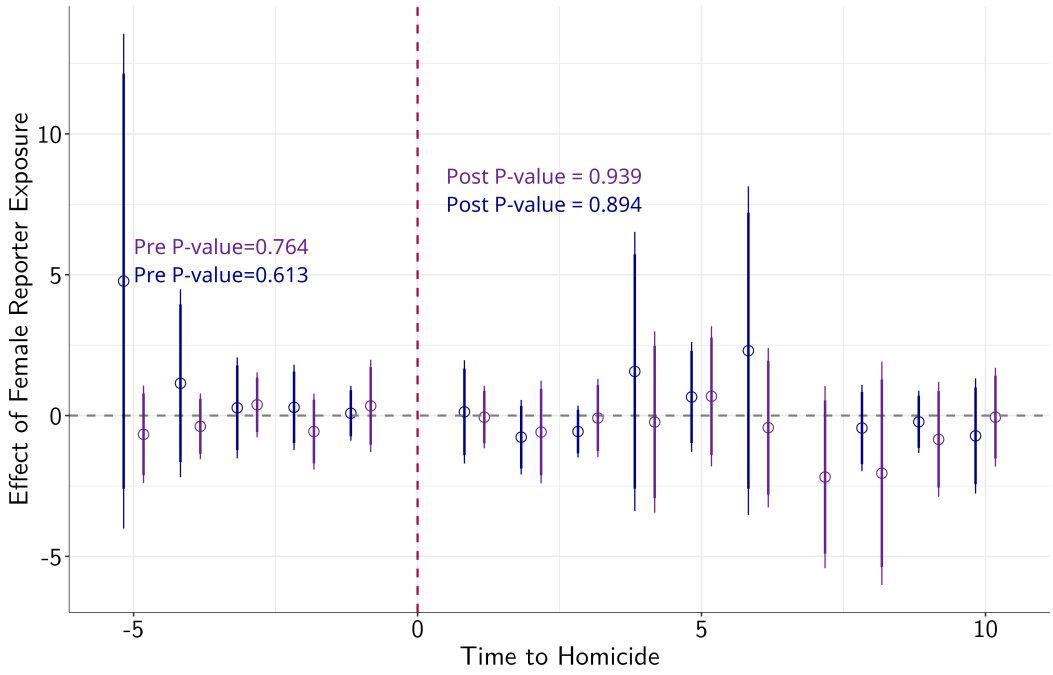
Notes: Calls to the help-line number before and after a placebo murder happens in the same province for increasing exposure to female reporters in the first five articles covering crimes. The figure plots the coefficient from equation (7) for placebo murders. The regression includes province and month-fixed effects. It shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals constructed clustering errors at the province level. Overlaid text reports the p-value from an F-test for the joint significance of the four pre- (top left) and post-murder (top right) indicators.

Figure G.5: Event Study: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls—Same Region



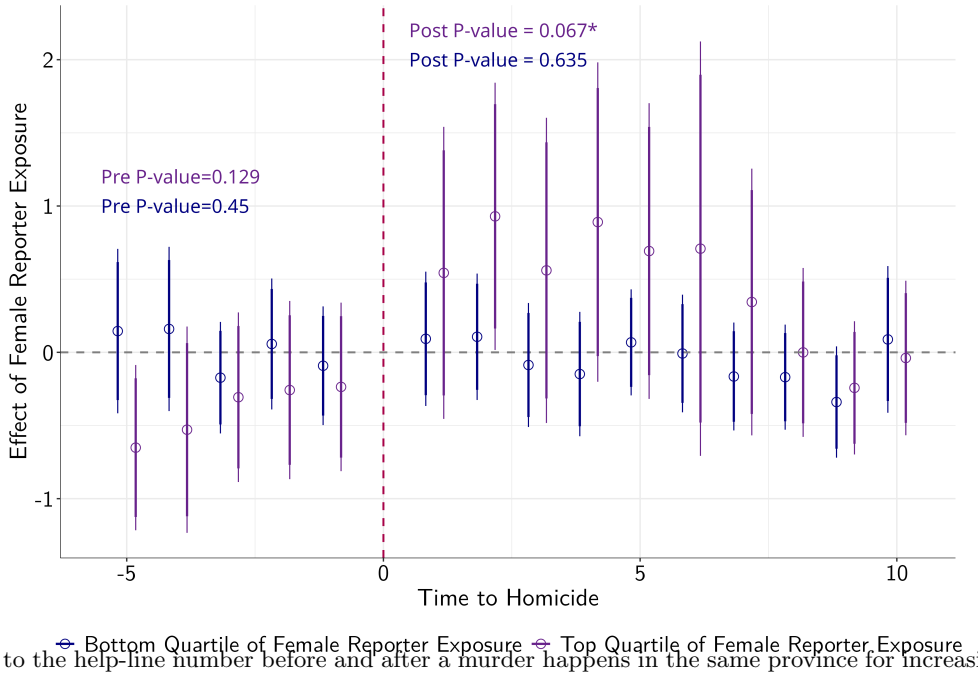
Notes: Calls to the help-line number before and after a murder with a female victim occurs in a province in the same region for increasing exposure to female reporters in the first five articles covering crimes. The figure plots the coefficient from equation (7) where each province is treated if a murder occurs in a province in the same region. The regression includes province and month-fixed effects. It shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals constructed clustering errors at the province level. Overlaid text reports the p-value from an F-test for the joint significance of the four pre- (top left) and post-murder (top right) indicators.

Figure G.6: Event Study: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls—Neighboring Provinces



Notes: Calls to the help-line number before and after a murder with a female victim occurs in a neighboring province for increasing exposure to female reporters in the first five articles covering crimes. The figure plots the coefficient from equation (7) where each province is treated if a murder occurs in a neighboring province. The regression includes province and month-fixed effects. It shows 95% and 90% confidence intervals constructed clustering errors at the province level. Overlaid text reports the p-value from an F-test for the joint significance of the four pre- (top left) and post-murder (top right) indicators.

Figure G.7: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls – No Overlap



Notes: Calls to the help-line number before and after a murder happens in the same province for increasing exposure to female reporters in the first five articles covering the crime. The figures plot the coefficient from equation (7) using two binarized versions of the treatment: being above or below the 25^{th} percentile or the median of the exposure measure. The regressions include province and week-fixed effects and exclude crimes occurring within 10 weeks of the previous one in the same province. The plots show 95% and 90% confidence intervals constructed clustering errors at the province level. The overlaid text reports the p-value from an F-test for the joint significance of the four pre- (top left) and post-murder (top right) indicators.

Table G.3: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls – 8 Weeks Window

	Poisson Model					
	Main	1 Art.	2 Art.	3 Art.	4 Art.	Zero-Infl. Poisson
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Fem. Exposure$^{X\,Art}$×Post	0.302*	0.014	0.126	0.211	0.261	0.431***
	(0.182)	(0.158)	(0.174)	(0.197)	(0.195)	(0.098)
Fem. Exposure$^{X\,Art}$	−0.270	−0.104	−0.131	−0.216	−0.280*	−0.267
	(0.169)	(0.147)	(0.152)	(0.173)	(0.167)	(0.230)
Gender Norms	−1.469	−1.563	−1.458	−1.434	−1.443	−1.286
	(1.938)	(1.918)	(1.927)	(1.926)	(1.929)	
Observations	6980	6969	6980	6980	6980	6980
R^2	0.564	0.562	0.563	0.564	0.564	
Mean Dep. Var.	3.668	3.668	3.668	3.668	3.668	3.668
Mean Expl. Var.	0.209	0.167	0.189	0.199	0.204	0.209
Province FE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Window FE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Month FE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Crime FE						X

Notes: Effect of exposure to female reporters on calls estimated in a difference-in-differences design in an eight-week window around the murder. Column 1 reports the results from the main specification. Columns 2 to 5 show results using different treatments. In particular, the treatment in those columns is computed using the first 1, 2, 3, and 4 articles, respectively. All specifications include province, week-from-murder, and month fixed effects and control for the proxy for gender norms and the total number of articles. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table G.4: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls (Extensive Margin) – 8 Weeks Window

	At Least One Call				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
treat_2wmean5_pw	−0.083				
	(0.057)				
shr_c_male_emp	0.650	0.628	0.639	0.640	0.654
	(0.754)	(0.753)	(0.754)	(0.755)	(0.755)
n_art_noauth_diff_pw_lag	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
treat_2wmean5_pw:after	0.116*				
	(0.067)				
treat_2wmean1_pw		−0.027			
		(0.043)			
treat_2wmean1_pw:after		0.068			
		(0.053)			
treat_2wmean2_pw			−0.048		
			(0.043)		
treat_2wmean2_pw:after			0.078		
			(0.055)		
treat_2wmean3_pw				−0.064	
				(0.048)	
treat_2wmean3_pw:after				0.106*	
				(0.061)	
treat_2wmean4_pw					−0.085*
					(0.049)
treat_2wmean4_pw:after					0.103*
					(0.062)
Observations	6980	6969	6980	6980	6980
R^2	0.282	0.282	0.282	0.282	0.282
Mean Dep. Var.	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.741
Mean Expl. Var.	0.208	0.166	0.188	0.198	0.204
Province FE	X	X	X	X	X
Window FE	X	X	X	X	X
Month FE	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: Effect of exposure to female reporters on the probability of at least one call estimated in a difference-in-differences design in an eight-week window around the murder. Column 1 reports the results from the main specification. Columns 2 to 5 show results using different treatments. In particular, the treatment in those columns is computed using the first 1, 2, 3, and 4 articles, respectively. All specifications include province, week-from-murder, and month fixed effects and control for the proxy for gender norms and the total number of articles. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table G.5: Effect of Exposure to Female Reporters on Calls – 8 Weeks Window

	At Least 1 Call				Number of Calls (Poisson)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Fem. Exposure^{5Art}	−0.083	−0.084	−0.083	−0.088	−0.288	−0.269*	−0.272	−0.270
	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.191)	(0.163)	(0.167)	(0.177)
Fem. Exposure^{5Art}× Post	0.120*	0.116*	0.115*	0.114*	0.291	0.308*	0.305*	0.299
	(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.207)	(0.185)	(0.181)	(0.185)
Murders in Province-Year		−0.000				0.005		
		(0.003)				(0.008)		
Crime Female Rep.			−0.007				−0.011	
			(0.006)				(0.012)	
Observations	6980	6980	6980	6924	6980	6980	6980	6924
R^2	0.284	0.282	0.283	0.279				
					0.568	0.564	0.564	0.564
Mean Dep. Var.	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.741	3.668	3.668	3.668	3.668
Mean Expl. Var.	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208
Province FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Window FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Month FE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gender Norms×Year FE		X				X		
Other Crime Rates				X				X

Notes: Effect of exposure to female reporters on calls estimated in a difference-in-differences design in an eight-week window around the murder. Columns 1 to 4 report the linear probability estimate of there being at least one call (extensive margin). Columns 5 to 8 report results using the number of calls as outcomes and a Poisson model. All columns include province, month, and week-to-murder fixed effects. Columns 1 and 5 also include gender norms times year fixed effects; columns 2 and 6 control for the total number of murders in each province-year, and columns 3 and 7 control for the number of female reporters writing on murders with male victims that individuals are exposed to in each province-year. Finally, columns 4 and 8 control for other crime rates. The R^2 in Columns 5 to 8 corresponds to the pseudo R^2 calculated for the Poisson regression. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

H Experiment Additional Material

H.1 Treatments

Figure H.8: Control: News Articles for Crime A

(a) Italian Version



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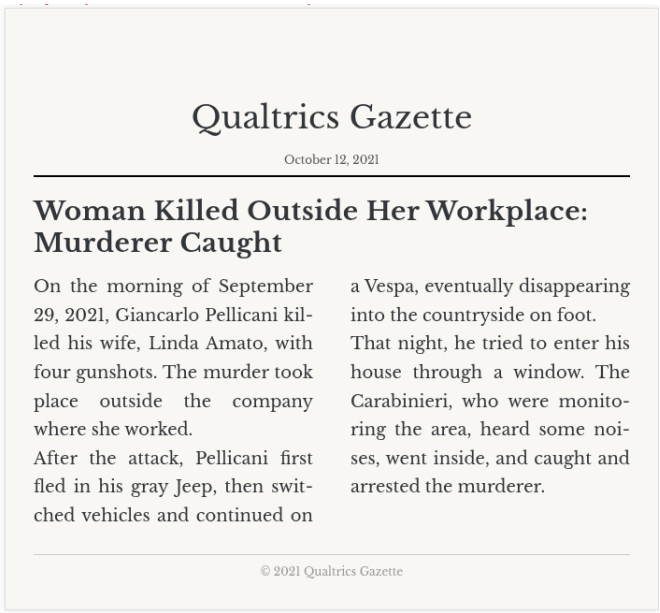
12 Ottobre, 2021

Uccisa Fuori Dal Lavoro: Catturato Il Colpevole

La mattina del 29 Settembre 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani ha ucciso la moglie, Linda Amato con quattro colpi di pistola. L'omicidio è avvenuto fuori dall'azienda in cui lei lavorava.
Dopo l'agguato, Pellicani era fuggito prima a bordo della sua Jeep grigia, poi aveva cambiato mezzo e si era allontanato con la Vespa per poi far perdere le sue tracce nelle campagne a piedi.
Nella notte, ha cercato di entrare nella sua abitazione da una finestra. I Carabinieri, che sorvegliavano il luogo, hanno sentito alcuni rumori, sono entrati e hanno sorpreso e arrestato l'omicida.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

October 12, 2021

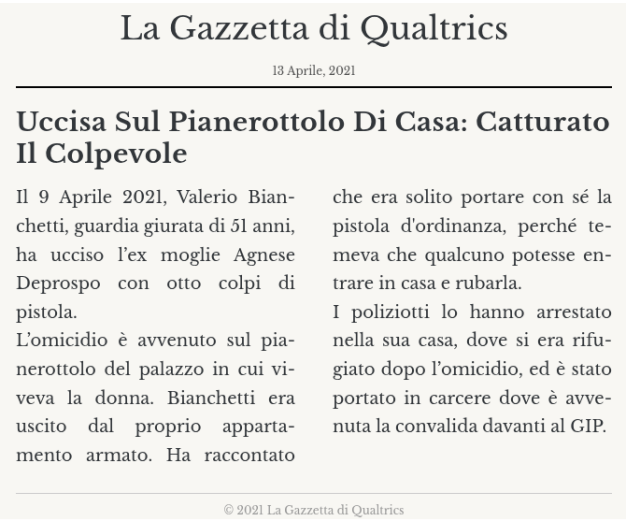
Woman Killed Outside Her Workplace: Murderer Caught

On the morning of September 29, 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani killed his wife, Linda Amato, with four gunshots. The murder took place outside the company where she worked.
After the attack, Pellicani first fled in his gray Jeep, then switched vehicles and continued on a Vespa, eventually disappearing into the countryside on foot.
That night, he tried to enter his house through a window. The Carabinieri, who were monitoring the area, heard some noises, went inside, and caught and arrested the murderer.

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Figure H.9: Control: News Articles for Crime B

(a) Italian Version



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13 Aprile, 2021

Uccisa Sul Pianerottolo Di Casa: Catturato Il Colpevole

Il 9 Aprile 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, guardia giurata di 51 anni, ha ucciso l'ex moglie Agnese Deprospo con otto colpi di pistola.
L'omicidio è avvenuto sul pianerottolo del palazzo in cui viveva la donna. Bianchetti era uscito dal proprio appartamento armato. Ha raccontato che era solito portare con sé la pistola d'ordinanza, perché temeva che qualcuno potesse entrare in casa e rubarla.
I poliziotti lo hanno arrestato nella sua casa, dove si era rifugiato dopo l'omicidio, ed è stato portato in carcere dove è avvenuta la convalida davanti al GIP.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

April 13, 2021

Killed On Her Doorstep: Perpetrator Captured

On April 9, 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, a 51-year-old security guard, killed his ex-wife Agnese Deprospo with eight gunshots.
The murder took place on the landing of the building where the woman lived. Bianchetti had come out of his own apartment armed. He said he usually carried his service pistol because he feared someone might break in and steal it.
Police officers arrested him in his home, where he had taken refuge after the murder, and he was taken to prison, where the charges were confirmed before the investigating judge (GIP).

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Figure H.10: Episodic Framing Perpetrator: News Articles for Crime A

(a) Italian Version



La Gazzetta di Qualtrics

12 Ottobre, 2021

Uccisa Fuori Dal Lavoro: Catturato Il Colpevole

La mattina del 29 Settembre 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani, accecato dalla rabbia, ha ucciso la moglie, Linda Amato con quattro colpi di pistola. L'omicidio è avvenuto fuori dall'azienda in cui lei lavorava.
Dopo l'agguato, Pellicani era fuggito prima a bordo della sua Jeep grigia, poi aveva cambiato mezzo e si era allontanato con la Vespa per poi far perdere le sue tracce nelle campagne a piedi.
Nella notte, ha cercato di entrare nella sua abitazione da una finestra. I Carabinieri, che sorvegliavano il luogo, hanno sentito alcuni rumori, sono entrati e hanno sorpreso e arrestato l'omicida.
Giancarlo Pellicani, negli ultimi tempi, era diventato particolarmente geloso, temendo le nuove frequentazioni della moglie potessero compromettere la loro relazione. Ha ammesso di aver premuto il grilletto perché non riusciva ad accettare di vederla allontanarsi.

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Qualtrics Gazette

October 12, 2021

Woman Killed Outside Her Workplace: Murderer Caught

On the morning of September 29, 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani, blinded by rage, killed his wife, Linda Amato, with four gunshots. The murder took place outside the company where she worked.
After the attack, Pellicani first fled in his gray Jeep, then switched vehicles and continued on a Vespa, eventually disappearing into the countryside on foot.
That night, he tried to enter his house through a window. The Carabinieri, who were monitoring the area, heard some noises, went inside, and caught and arrested the murderer.
Giancarlo Pellicani had become particularly jealous, fearing that his wife's new acquaintances might jeopardize their relationship. He admitted to pulling the trigger because he couldn't bear to see her walk away.

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Figure H.11: Episodic Framing Perpetrator: News Articles for Crime B

(a) Italian Version



La Gazzetta di Qualtrics

13 Aprile, 2021

Uccisa Sul Pianerottolo Di Casa: Catturato Il Colpevole

Il 9 Aprile 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, guardia giurata di 51 anni, ha ucciso l'ex moglie Agnese Deprospo con otto colpi di pistola, acciecato dalla gelosia.

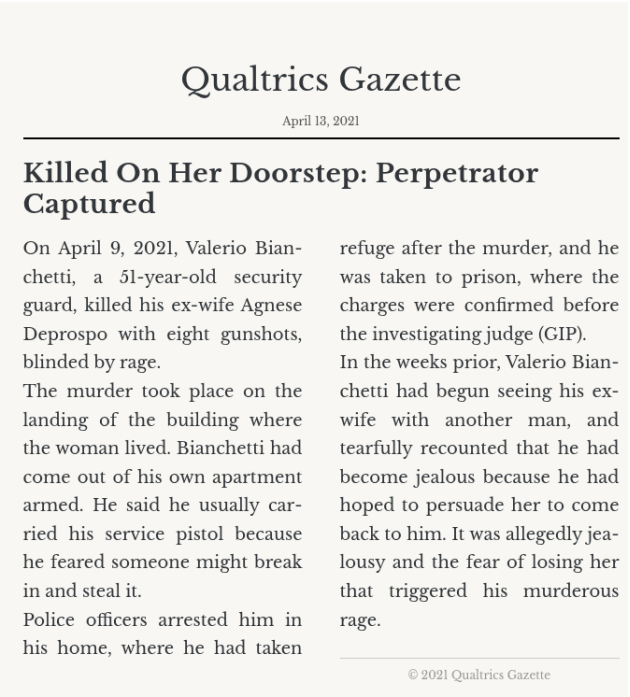
L'omicidio è avvenuto sul pianerottolo del palazzo in cui viveva la donna. Bianchetti era uscito dal proprio appartamento armato. Ha raccontato che era solito portare con sé la pistola d'ordinanza, perché temeva che qualcuno potesse entrare in casa e rubarla.

I poliziotti lo hanno arrestato nella sua casa, dove si era rifugiato dopo l'omicidio, ed è stato portato in carcere dove è avvenuta la convalida davanti al GIP.

Nelle settimane precedenti, Valerio Bianchetti aveva iniziato a vedere l'ex moglie con un altro uomo e racconta in lacrime di essersi ingelosito in quanto sperava di convincerla a tornare sui propri passi. Sarebbero state la gelosia e l'idea di perderla a scatenare la furia omicida.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

April 13, 2021

Killed On Her Doorstep: Perpetrator Captured

On April 9, 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, a 51-year-old security guard, killed his ex-wife Agnese Deprospo with eight gunshots, blinded by rage.

The murder took place on the landing of the building where the woman lived. Bianchetti had come out of his own apartment armed. He said he usually carried his service pistol because he feared someone might break in and steal it.

Police officers arrested him in his home, where he had taken refuge after the murder, and he was taken to prison, where the charges were confirmed before the investigating judge (GIP).

In the weeks prior, Valerio Bianchetti had begun seeing his ex-wife with another man, and tearfully recounted that he had become jealous because he had hoped to persuade her to come back to him. It was allegedly jealousy and the fear of losing her that triggered his murderous rage.

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Figure H.12: Episodic Framing Victim: News Articles for Crime A—Version 1

(a) Italian Version



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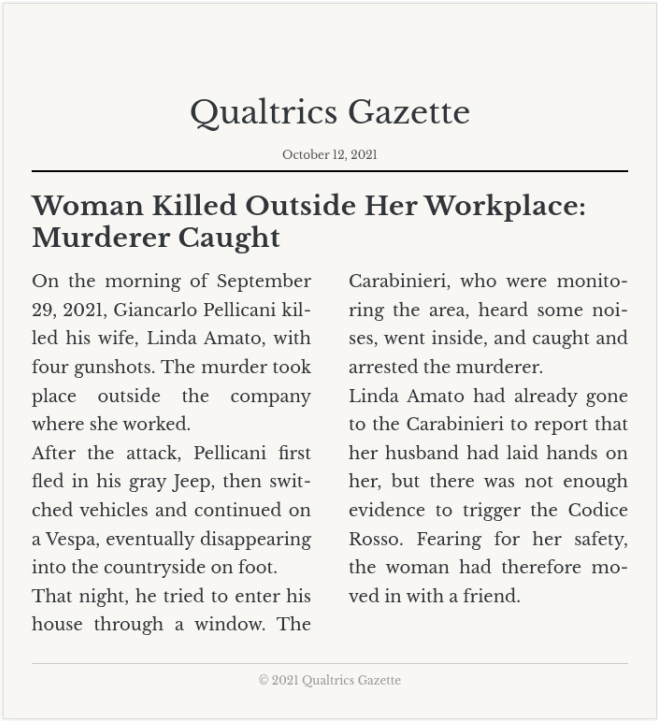
12 Ottobre, 2021

Uccisa Fuori Dal Lavoro: Catturato Il Colpevole

La mattina del 29 Settembre 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani ha ucciso la moglie, Linda Amato con quattro colpi di pistola. L'omicidio è avvenuto fuori dall'azienda in cui lei lavorava.
Dopo l'agguato, Pellicani era fuggito prima a bordo della sua Jeep grigia, poi aveva cambiato mezzo e si era allontanato con la Vespa per poi far perdere le sue tracce nelle campagne a piedi.
Nella notte, ha cercato di entrare nella sua abitazione da una finestra. I Carabinieri, che sorvegliavano il luogo, hanno sentito alcuni rumori, sono entrati e hanno sorpreso e arrestato l'omicida.
Linda Amato era già andata dai carabinieri per raccontare che il marito le aveva messo le mani addosso ma non erano risultati gli elementi necessari per far scattare il Codice rosso. Temendo per la sua incolumità la donna si era quindi trasferita da un'amica.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

October 12, 2021

Woman Killed Outside Her Workplace: Murderer Caught

On the morning of September 29, 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani killed his wife, Linda Amato, with four gunshots. The murder took place outside the company where she worked.
After the attack, Pellicani first fled in his gray Jeep, then switched vehicles and continued on a Vespa, eventually disappearing into the countryside on foot.
That night, he tried to enter his house through a window. The Carabinieri, who were monitoring the area, heard some noises, went inside, and caught and arrested the murderer.
Linda Amato had already gone to the Carabinieri to report that her husband had laid hands on her, but there was not enough evidence to trigger the Codice Rosso. Fearing for her safety, the woman had therefore moved in with a friend.

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Figure H.13: Episodic Framing Victim: News Articles for Crime A—Version 2

(a) Italian Version



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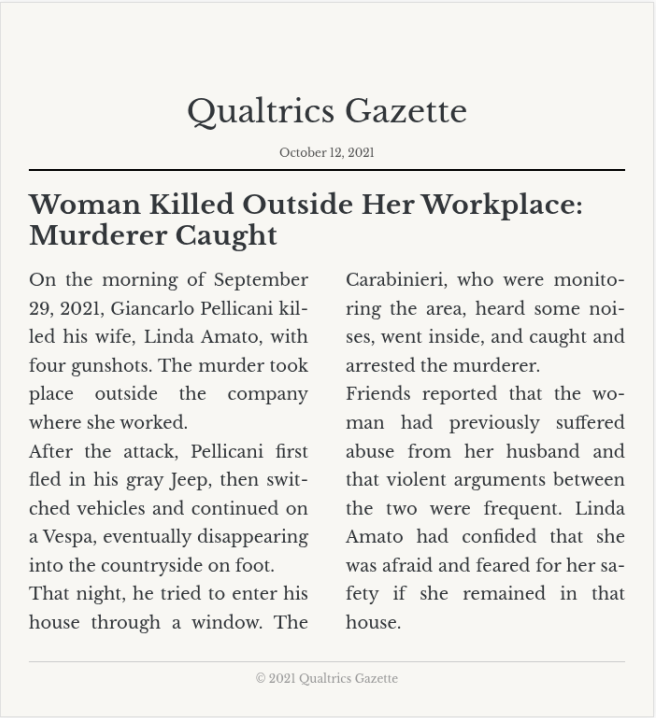
12 Ottobre, 2021

Uccisa Fuori Dal Lavoro: Catturato Il Colpevole

La mattina del 29 Settembre 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani ha ucciso la moglie, Linda Amato con quattro colpi di pistola. L'omicidio è avvenuto fuori dall'azienda in cui lei lavorava.
Dopo l'agguato, Pellicani era fuggito prima a bordo della sua Jeep grigia, poi aveva cambiato mezzo e si era allontanato con la Vespa per poi far perdere le sue tracce nelle campagne a piedi.
Nella notte, ha cercato di entrare nella sua abitazione da una finestra. I Carabinieri, che sorvegliavano il luogo, hanno sentito alcuni rumori, sono entrati e hanno sorpreso e arrestato l'omicida.
Linda Amato aveva confidato alle amiche che l'uomo la picchiava spesso. Era già andata dai carabinieri per raccontare che il marito le aveva messo le mani addosso e temendo per la sua incolumità, la donna si era quindi trasferita da un'amica.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

October 12, 2021

Woman Killed Outside Her Workplace: Murderer Caught

On the morning of September 29, 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani killed his wife, Linda Amato, with four gunshots. The murder took place outside the company where she worked.
After the attack, Pellicani first fled in his gray Jeep, then switched vehicles and continued on a Vespa, eventually disappearing into the countryside on foot.
That night, he tried to enter his house through a window. The Carabinieri, who were monitoring the area, heard some noises, went inside, and caught and arrested the murderer.
Friends reported that the woman had previously suffered abuse from her husband and that violent arguments between the two were frequent. Linda Amato had confided that she was afraid and feared for her safety if she remained in that house.

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Figure H.14: Episodic Framing Victim: News Articles for Crime A—Version 3

(a) Italian Version



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12 Ottobre, 2021

Uccisa Fuori Dal Lavoro: Catturato Il Colpevole

La mattina del 29 Settembre 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani ha ucciso la moglie, Linda Amato con quattro colpi di pistola. L'omicidio è avvenuto fuori dall'azienda in cui lei lavorava.

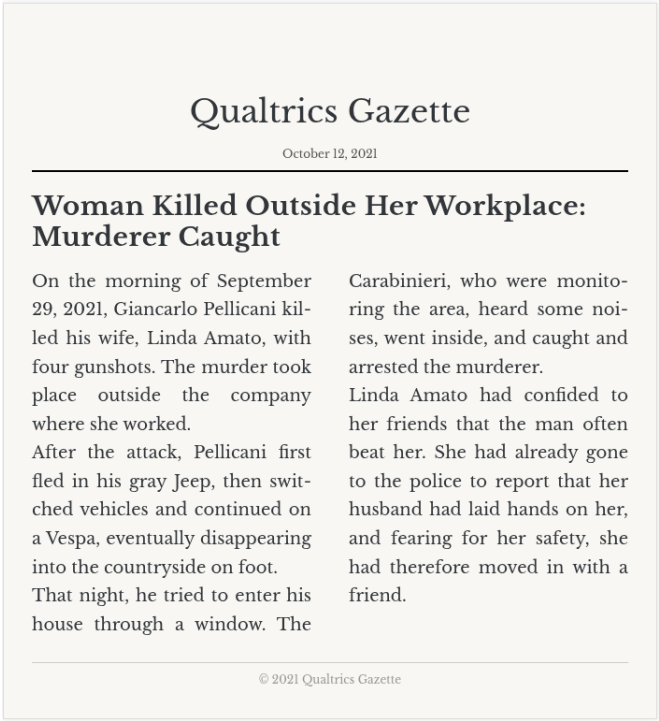
Dopo l'agguato, Pellicani era fuggito prima a bordo della sua Jeep grigia, poi aveva cambiato mezzo e si era allontanato con la Vespa per poi far perdere le sue tracce nelle campagne a piedi.

Nella notte, ha cercato di entrare nella sua abitazione da una finestra. I Carabinieri, che sorvegliavano il luogo, hanno sentito alcuni rumori, sono entrati e hanno sorpreso e arrestato l'omicida.

Le amiche riferiscono che già in passato la donna avrebbe subito maltrattamenti da parte del coniuge ed erano frequenti le liti violente tra i due. Linda Amato aveva confidato che aveva paura e che temeva per la sua incolumità in caso fosse rimasta in quella casa.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

October 12, 2021

Woman Killed Outside Her Workplace: Murderer Caught

On the morning of September 29, 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani killed his wife, Linda Amato, with four gunshots. The murder took place outside the company where she worked.

After the attack, Pellicani first fled in his gray Jeep, then switched vehicles and continued on a Vespa, eventually disappearing into the countryside on foot.

That night, he tried to enter his house through a window. The Carabinieri, who were monitoring the area, heard some noises, went inside, and caught and arrested the murderer.

Linda Amato had confided to her friends that the man often beat her. She had already gone to the police to report that her husband had laid hands on her, and fearing for her safety, she had therefore moved in with a friend.

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H.2 Experimental Evicdence: Additional Results

Figure H.15: Episodic Framing Victim: News Articles for Crime B—Version 1

(a) Italian Version



La Gazzetta di Qualtrics

13 Aprile, 2021

Uccisa Sul Pianerottolo Di Casa: Catturato Il Colpevole

Il 9 Aprile 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, guardia giurata di 51 anni, ha ucciso l'ex moglie Agnese Deprospo con otto colpi di pistola.

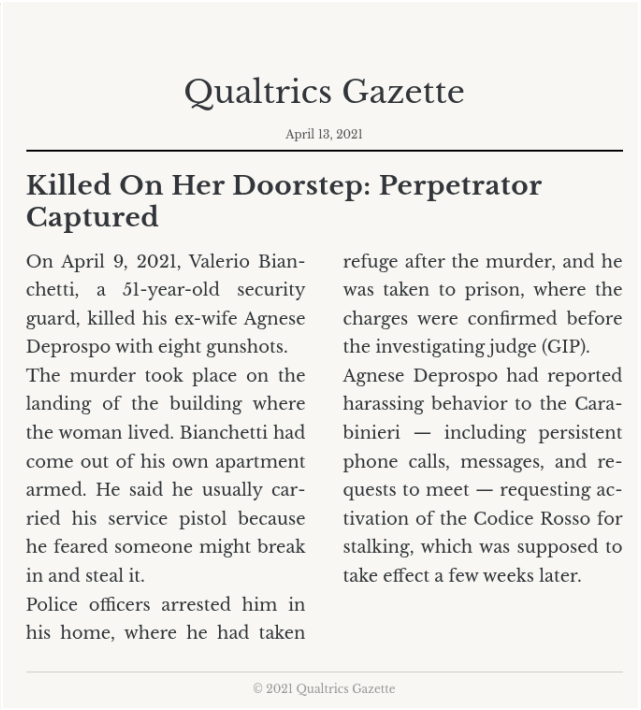
L'omicidio è avvenuto sul pianerottolo del palazzo in cui viveva la donna. Bianchetti era uscito dal proprio appartamento armato. Ha raccontato che era solito portare con sé la pistola d'ordinanza, perché temeva che qualcuno potesse entrare in casa e rubarla.

I poliziotti lo hanno arrestato nella sua casa, dove si era rifugiato dopo l'omicidio, ed è stato portato in carcere dove è avvenuta la convalida davanti al GIP.

Agnese Deprospo aveva segnalato ai Carabinieri atteggiamenti molesti — tra cui telefonate insistenti, messaggi e richieste di incontro — chiedendo l'attivazione del Codice rosso per stalking, che sarebbe dovuto entrare in vigore di lì a qualche settimana.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

April 13, 2021

Killed On Her Doorstep: Perpetrator Captured

On April 9, 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, a 51-year-old security guard, killed his ex-wife Agnese Deprospo with eight gunshots.

The murder took place on the landing of the building where the woman lived. Bianchetti had come out of his own apartment armed. He said he usually carried his service pistol because he feared someone might break in and steal it.

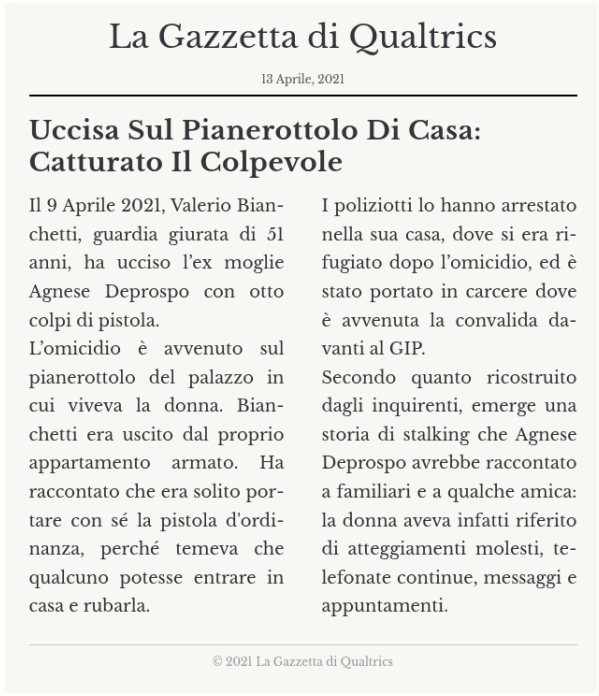
Police officers arrested him in his home, where he had taken refuge after the murder, and he was taken to prison, where the charges were confirmed before the investigating judge (GIP).

Agnese Deprospo had reported harassing behavior to the Carabinieri — including persistent phone calls, messages, and requests to meet — requesting activation of the Codice Rosso for stalking, which was supposed to take effect a few weeks later.

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Figure H.16: Episodic Framing Victim: News Articles for Crime B—Version 2

(a) Italian Version



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13 Aprile, 2021

Uccisa Sul Pianerottolo Di Casa: Catturato Il Colpevole

Il 9 Aprile 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, guardia giurata di 51 anni, ha ucciso l'ex moglie Agnese Deprospo con otto colpi di pistola.

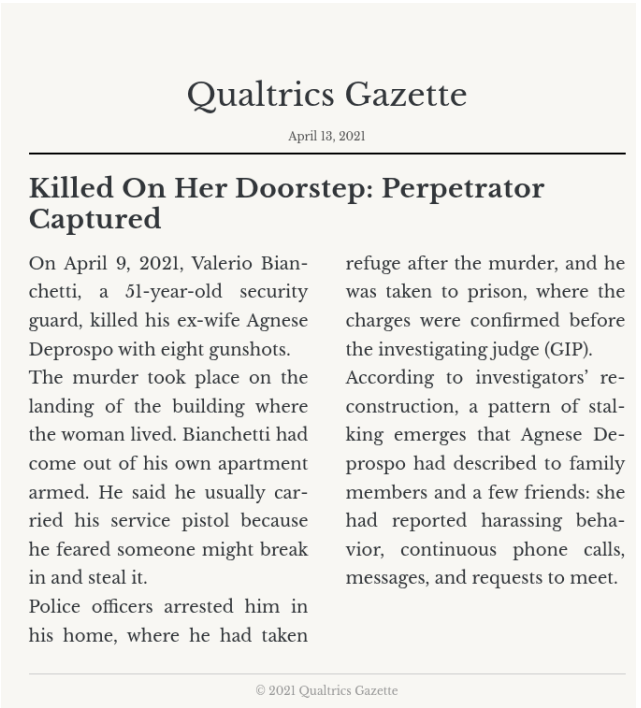
L'omicidio è avvenuto sul pianerottolo del palazzo in cui viveva la donna. Bianchetti era uscito dal proprio appartamento armato. Ha raccontato che era solito portare con sé la pistola d'ordinanza, perché temeva che qualcuno potesse entrare in casa e rubarla.

I poliziotti lo hanno arrestato nella sua casa, dove si era rifugiato dopo l'omicidio, ed è stato portato in carcere dove è avvenuta la convalida davanti al GIP.

Secondo quanto ricostruito dagli inquirenti, emerge una storia di stalking che Agnese Deprospo avrebbe raccontato a familiari e a qualche amica: la donna aveva infatti riferito di atteggiamenti molesti, telefonate continue, messaggi e appuntamenti.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

April 13, 2021

Killed On Her Doorstep: Perpetrator Captured

On April 9, 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, a 51-year-old security guard, killed his ex-wife Agnese Deprospo with eight gunshots.

The murder took place on the landing of the building where the woman lived. Bianchetti had come out of his own apartment armed. He said he usually carried his service pistol because he feared someone might break in and steal it.

Police officers arrested him in his home, where he had taken refuge after the murder, and he was taken to prison, where the charges were confirmed before the investigating judge (GIP).

According to investigators' reconstruction, a pattern of stalking emerges that Agnese Deprospo had described to family members and a few friends: she had reported harassing behavior, continuous phone calls, messages, and requests to meet.

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Figure H.17: Thematic Framing: News Articles for Crime A

(a) Italian Version



La Gazzetta di Qualtrics

12 Ottobre, 2021

Uccisa Fuori Dal Lavoro: Catturato Il Colpevole

La mattina del 29 Settembre 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani ha ucciso la moglie, Linda Amato con quattro colpi di pistola. L'omicidio è avvenuto fuori dall'azienda in cui lei lavorava.

Dopo l'agguato, Pellicani era fuggito prima a bordo della sua Jeep grigia, poi aveva cambiato mezzo e si era allontanato con la Vespa per poi far perdere le sue tracce nelle campagne a piedi.

Nella notte, ha cercato di entrare nella sua abitazione da una finestra. I Carabinieri, che sorvegliavano il luogo, hanno sentito alcuni rumori, sono entrati e hanno sorpreso e arrestato l'omicida.

In totale in Italia nel 2021 sono state uccise 100 donne in ambito familiare, mentre secondo i dati del Viminale nel 2024 i femminicidi in ambito familiare sono stati 109. Inoltre, sono aumentate del 12% rispetto al 2021 le richieste di aiuto al numero anti violenza e stalking 1522.

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(b) English Version



Qualtrics Gazette

October 12, 2021

Woman Killed Outside Her Workplace: Murderer Caught

On the morning of September 29, 2021, Giancarlo Pellicani killed his wife, Linda Amato, with four gunshots. The murder took place outside the company where she worked.

After the attack, Pellicani first fled in his gray Jeep, then switched vehicles and continued on a Vespa, eventually disappearing into the countryside on foot.

That night, he tried to enter his house through a window. The Carabinieri, who were monitoring the area, heard some noises, went inside, and caught and arrested the murderer.

In total, 100 women were killed in domestic settings in 2021, while according to data from the Ministry of the Interior, in 2024 the number of domestic femicides rose to 109. Furthermore, calls for help to the anti-violence and stalking hotline 1522 increased by 12% compared to 2021.

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Figure H.18: Thematic Framing: News Articles for Crime B

(a) Italian Version

La Gazzetta di Qualtrics

13 Aprile, 2021

Uccisa Sul Pianerottolo Di Casa: Catturato Il Colpevole

Il 9 Aprile 2021, Valerio Bianchetti, guardia giurata di 51 anni, ha ucciso l'ex moglie Agnese Deprospo con otto colpi di pistola.

Il femminicidio è avvenuto sul pianerottolo del palazzo in cui viveva la donna. Bianchetti era uscito dal proprio appartamento armato. Ha raccontato che era solito portare con sé la pistola d'ordinanza, perché temeva che qualcuno potesse entrare in casa e rubarla.

I poliziotti lo hanno arrestato nella sua casa, dove si era rifugiato dopo l'omicidio, ed è stato portato in carcere dove è avvenuta la convalida davanti al GIP.

In totale in Italia nel 2021 sono state uccise 100 donne in ambito familiare, mentre secondo i dati del Viminale nel 2024 i femminicidi in ambito familiare sono stati 109. Inoltre, sono aumentate del 12% rispetto al 2021 le richieste di aiuto al numero anti violenza e stalking 1522.

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(b) English Version

Qualtrics Gazette

April 13, 2021

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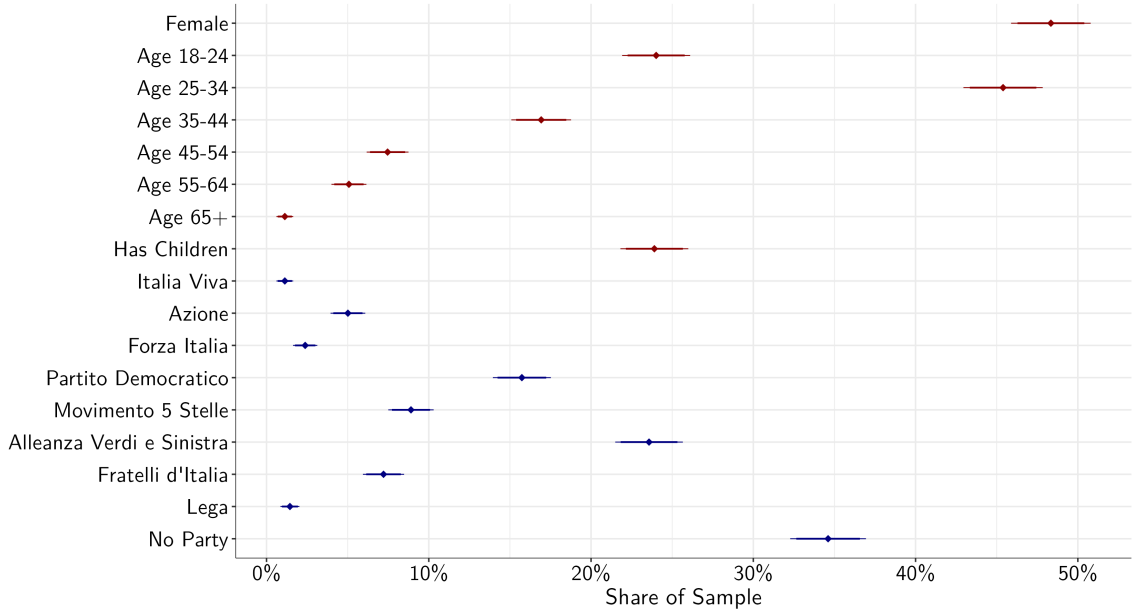
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Police officers arrested him in his home, where he had taken refuge after the murder, and he was taken to prison, where the charges were confirmed before the investigating judge (GIP).

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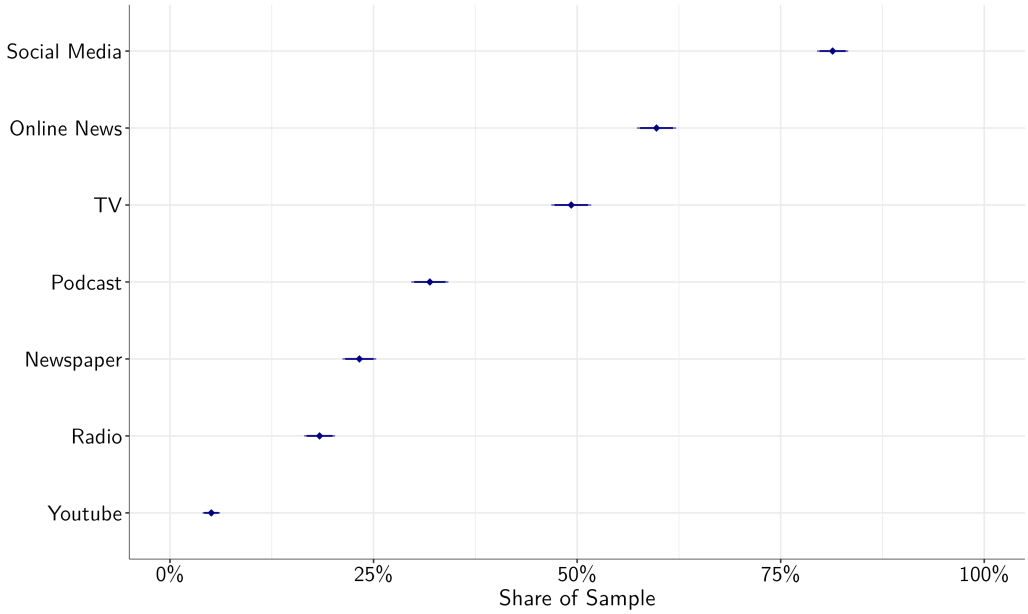
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Figure H.19: Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics



Notes: Respondents socio-demographics characteristics. The figure reports confidence intervals at the 90% and 95% level.

Figure H.20: Respondents' Use of News Sources



Notes: Respondents use of news sources. The figure reports confidence intervals at the 90% and 95% level.

Figure H.21: Geographical Distribution of Respondents

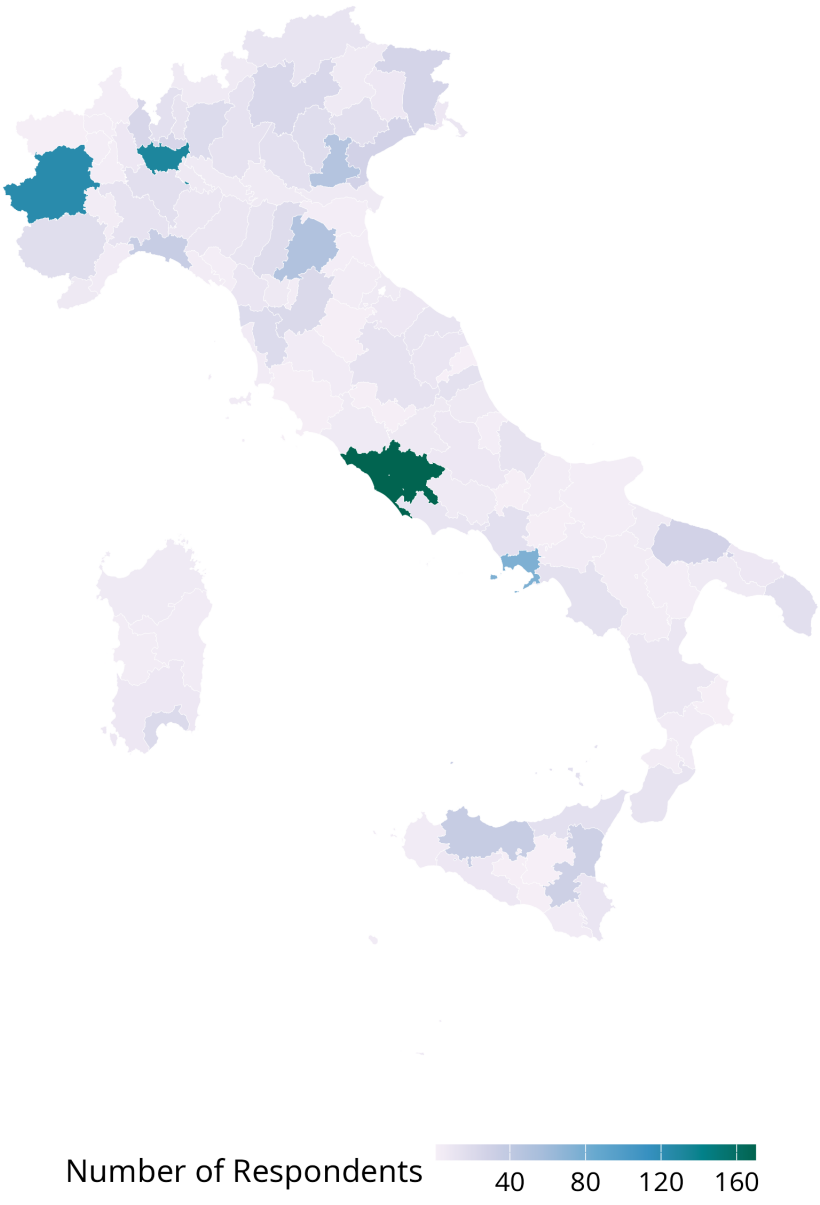
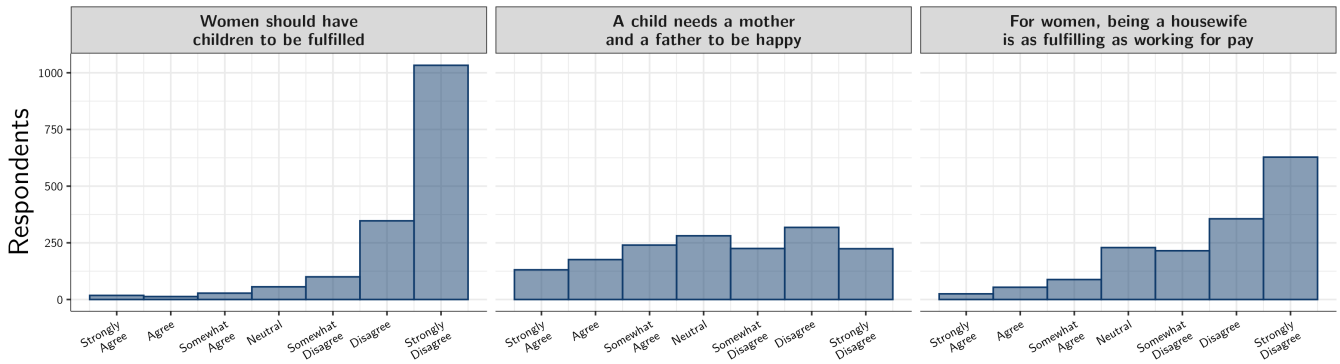
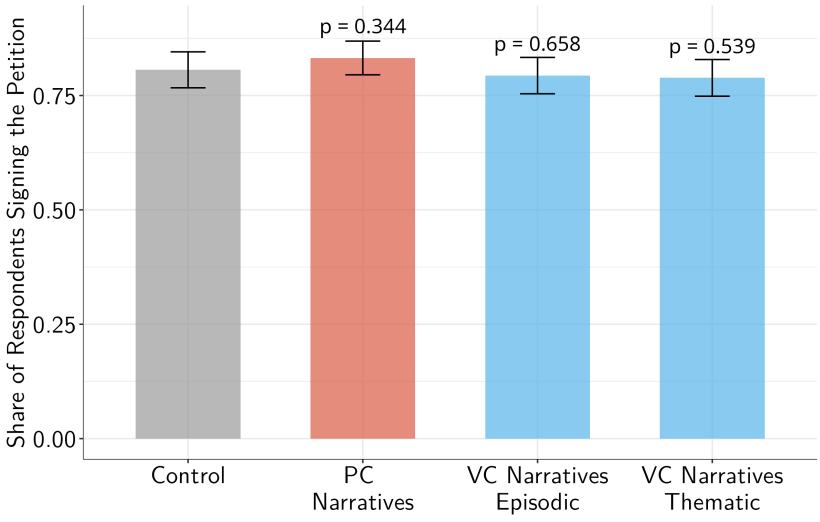


Figure H.22: Respondents Gender and Family Norms



Notes: Distribution of respondents across different levels of agreement with statements proxying gender and family norms. The questions come from the World Value Survey.

Figure H.23: Share of Respondents Signing the Petition



Notes: Share of respondents who sign the petition, separately by treatment. The figure reports confidence intervals at the 95% level and p-values from a t-test between the two victim-centered treatments and the perpetrator-centered treatment. In gray I also report the p-value from a t-test between the control group and the perpetrator-centered treatment: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table H.6: Balance Table: Respondents' Characteristics across Treatments

Variable	Control	PC Narrative	EVC Narrative	TVC Narrative
Female	0.462	0.494	0.498	0.480
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Age 18-24	0.245	0.246	0.221	0.249
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Age 25-34	0.441	0.474	0.478	0.423
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Age 35-44	0.173	0.148	0.182	0.174
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Age 45-54	0.094	0.065	0.055	0.085
	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Age 55-64	0.041	0.053	0.045	0.065
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Age 65+	0.005	0.015	0.020	0.005
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.004)
Has Children	0.240	0.228	0.217	0.271
	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.033)
Italia Viva	0.013	0.005	0.015	0.012
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Azione	0.043	0.068	0.047	0.042
	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Forza Italia	0.023	0.025	0.022	0.025
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Partito Democratico	0.163	0.123	0.164	0.179
	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.019)
Movimento 5 Stelle	0.112	0.080	0.070	0.095
	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Alleanza Verdi e Sinistra	0.217	0.248	0.239	0.239
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Fratelli d'Italia	0.074	0.068	0.075	0.072
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Lega	0.010	0.015	0.017	0.015
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
No Party	0.344	0.368	0.351	0.321
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.023)
News: TV	0.520	0.494	0.498	0.460
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)
News: Radio	0.196	0.175	0.167	0.197
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)
News: Newspaper	0.209	0.228	0.244	0.249
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)
News: Social Media	0.809	0.827	0.806	0.813
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)
News: Online News	0.612	0.589	0.570	0.619
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.024)
News: Podcast	0.301	0.358	0.323	0.294
	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.023)
News: Youtube	0.046	0.048	0.047	0.062
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)
WVS 1: Women as Mothers	6.306	6.424	6.286	6.475
	(0.059)	(0.052)	(0.066)	(0.048)
WVS 2: Traditional Family	4.276	4.474	4.323	4.301
	(0.094)	(0.090)	(0.094)	(0.093)
WVS 3: Women as Housewives	5.518	5.609	5.535	5.706
	(0.078)	(0.076)	(0.079)	(0.075)
Observations	392	399	402	402

Table H.7: Effect of Narratives on Empathy towards the Victim

	Full Sample		Females	Males	Has Daughter	No Daughter	Left-Wing	Right-Wing
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Intercept	77.179***	72.314***	75.925***	72.097***	74.624***	72.535***	74.882***	74.946***
	(0.865)	(1.435)	(1.884)	(2.031)	(7.191)	(1.447)	(2.160)	(3.846)
PC Narr.	3.994***	3.713***	3.973***	3.409*	5.312	3.799***	3.642**	1.565
	(1.122)	(1.066)	(1.421)	(1.832)	(3.750)	(1.101)	(1.516)	(3.886)
EVC Narr.	2.478*	2.321*	0.823	3.730*	−2.873	2.667*	2.306	0.061
	(1.410)	(1.397)	(1.873)	(1.967)	(4.013)	(1.434)	(1.827)	(4.357)
TVC Narr.	1.481	0.908	1.284	0.502	2.351	0.862	1.474	−3.704
	(1.521)	(1.452)	(1.919)	(2.498)	(4.463)	(1.592)	(2.104)	(3.608)
Observations	1595	1595	771	824	147	1448	725	176
R^2	0.005	0.067	0.067	0.050	0.185	0.060	0.061	0.076
Controls		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: Effect of different narratives on the empathy towards the victim measured on a scale from 1 (*not feeling close*) to 100 (*feeling very close*). Columns 1 and 2 report the results for the full sample, Columns 3 and 4 separately for female and male respondents, Columns 5 and 6 separately for respondents with at least one daughter or with no daughters, and Columns 7 and 8 separately for left and right-wing respondents. Columns 2 to 9 control for the respondent's gender, whether they have a daughter, political affiliation, and an aggregated proxy for gender norms, unless the covariate is used to determine the subsample. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table H.8: Effect of Narratives on Empathy towards the Perpetrator

	Full Sample		Females	Males	Has Daughter	No Daughter	Left-Wing	Right-Wing
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Intercept	11.145***	12.783***	8.749***	13.391***	16.734***	12.482***	11.128***	15.957***
	(0.943)	(1.374)	(1.681)	(1.784)	(3.758)	(1.429)	(2.316)	(3.781)
PC Narr.	−1.331	−0.957	−1.776	0.144	−5.285	−0.707	−0.656	−0.785
	(1.157)	(1.078)	(1.416)	(1.587)	(4.800)	(1.120)	(1.490)	(3.653)
EVC Narr.	−3.626***	−3.395***	−1.775	−5.001***	−7.318	−3.081***	−3.527*	−8.559***
	(1.167)	(1.133)	(1.538)	(1.526)	(4.506)	(1.181)	(1.972)	(3.151)
TVC Narr.	−3.048***	−2.743**	−1.090	−4.202**	−4.770	−2.686**	−1.417	−3.193
	(1.127)	(1.095)	(1.439)	(1.658)	(4.168)	(1.180)	(1.785)	(3.817)
Observations	1595	1595	771	824	147	1448	725	176
R^2	0.008	0.040	0.028	0.037	0.095	0.041	0.033	0.083
Controls		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: Effect of different narratives on the empathy towards the perpetrator measured on a scale from 1 (*not feeling close*) to 100 (*feeling very close*). Columns 1 and 2 report the results for the full sample, Columns 3 and 4 separately for female and male respondents, Columns 5 and 6 separately for respondents with at least one daughter or with no daughters, and Columns 7 and 8 separately for left and right-wing respondents. Columns 2 to 9 control for the respondent's gender, whether they have a daughter, political affiliation, and an aggregated proxy for gender norms, unless the covariate is used to determine the subsample. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table H.9: Effect of Narratives on Willingness to Sign the Petition

	Full Sample		Females	Males	Has Daughter	No Daughter	Left-Wing	Right-Wing
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Intercept	0.832***	0.737***	0.850***	0.726***	1.078***	0.728***	0.791***	0.765***
	(0.019)	(0.033)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.144)	(0.034)	(0.046)	(0.088)
EVC Narr.	−0.039	−0.031	−0.026	−0.035	−0.084	−0.023	−0.023	−0.238**
	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.087)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.092)
TVC Narr.	−0.044**	−0.046**	−0.043	−0.049	−0.076	−0.043**	−0.036	−0.067
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.078)	(0.020)	(0.032)	(0.087)
Observations	1203	1203	590	613	114	1089	554	134
R^2	0.002	0.095	0.047	0.087	0.184	0.097	0.073	0.166
Controls		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: Effect of different victim-centered compared to perpetrator-centered narratives on preferences for government intervention, measured as the share of respondents who are willing to sign a petition to increase resources to counter VAW. Columns 1 and 2 report the results for the full sample, Columns 3 and 4 separately for female and male respondents, Columns 5 and 6 separately for respondents with at least one daughter or with no daughters, and Columns 7 and 8 separately for left and right-wing respondents. Columns 2 to 9 control for the respondent's gender, whether they have a daughter, political affiliation, and an aggregated proxy for gender norms, unless the covariate is used to determine the subsample. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table H.10: Effect of Narratives on Perceived Prevalence of VAW

	Full Sample		Females	Males	Has Daughter	No Daughter	Left-Wing	Right-Wing
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Intercept	0.031	−0.148	0.391***	−0.118	−0.342	−0.132	−0.005	−0.463***
	(0.056)	(0.108)	(0.108)	(0.133)	(0.269)	(0.108)	(0.093)	(0.172)
EVC Narr.	−0.060	−0.039	0.033	−0.114*	0.408*	−0.080	−0.094	−0.142
	(0.060)	(0.055)	(0.090)	(0.068)	(0.216)	(0.063)	(0.089)	(0.155)
TVC Narr.	−0.126**	−0.109*	−0.227***	−0.019	0.274	−0.145**	−0.131	−0.133
	(0.063)	(0.060)	(0.072)	(0.080)	(0.194)	(0.064)	(0.083)	(0.146)
Observations	1202	1202	589	613	114	1088	554	134
R^2	0.003	0.210	0.115	0.130	0.248	0.203	0.193	0.293
Controls		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: Effect of different victim-centered compared to perpetrator-centered narratives on perceived prevalence of VAW-related crimes among 10000 women in the respondents' province. Columns 1 and 2 report the results for the full sample, Columns 3 and 4 separately for female and male respondents, Columns 5 and 6 separately for respondents with at least one daughter or with no daughters, and Columns 7 and 8 separately for left and right-wing respondents. Columns 2 to 9 control for the respondent's gender, whether they have a daughter, political affiliation, and an aggregated proxy for gender norms, unless the covariate is used to determine the subsample. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table H.11: Effect of Narratives on Perceived - Real Prevalence of Police Reporting

	Full Sample		Females	Males	Has Daughter	No Daughter	Left-Wing	Right-Wing
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Intercept	0.051	−0.000	0.507***	−0.070	0.154	0.009	0.008	−0.229
	(0.050)	(0.115)	(0.118)	(0.140)	(0.341)	(0.120)	(0.115)	(0.248)
EVC Narr.	0.028	0.030	0.085	−0.031	0.482*	−0.004	−0.020	−0.068
	(0.055)	(0.051)	(0.090)	(0.065)	(0.246)	(0.061)	(0.078)	(0.197)
TVC Narr.	−0.066	−0.050	−0.131	0.022	0.185	−0.067	−0.050	−0.194
	(0.067)	(0.062)	(0.091)	(0.102)	(0.197)	(0.068)	(0.088)	(0.194)
Observations	1203	1203	590	613	114	1089	554	134
R^2	0.002	0.066	0.047	0.028	0.178	0.065	0.063	0.114
Controls		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

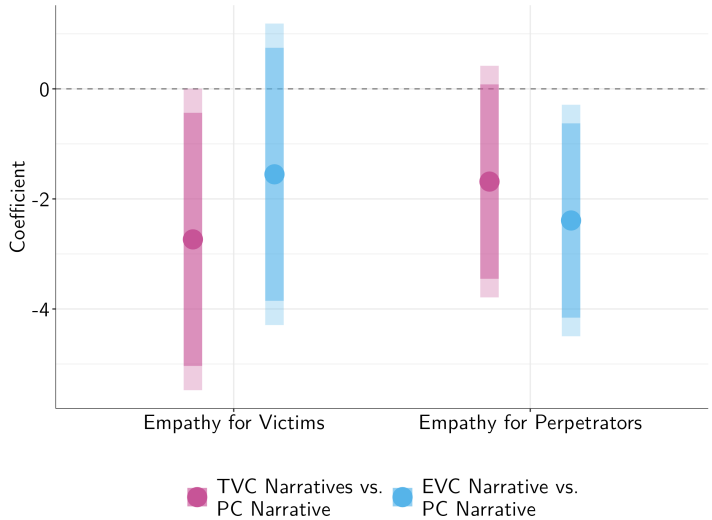
Notes: Effect of different victim-centered compared to perpetrator-centered narratives on the difference between perceived and real prevalence of police reporting of VAW-related crimes among 10000 women in the respondents' province. Columns 1 and 2 report the results for the full sample, Columns 3 and 4 separately for female and male respondents, Columns 5 and 6 separately for respondents with at least one daughter or with no daughters, and Columns 7 and 8 separately for left and right-wing respondents. Columns 2 to 9 control for the respondent's gender, whether they have a daughter, political affiliation, and an aggregated proxy for gender norms, unless the covariate is used to determine the subsample. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table H.12: Effect of Narratives on Perceived - Real Prevalence of Help-Seeking

	Full Sample		Females	Males	Has Daughter	No Daughter	Left-Wing	Right-Wing
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Intercept	0.033	−0.140	0.308**	−0.167*	0.085	−0.155*	−0.154	−0.357**
	(0.061)	(0.086)	(0.124)	(0.092)	(0.313)	(0.090)	(0.111)	(0.160)
EVC Narr.	0.075	0.076	0.143*	−0.008	0.495**	0.038	0.027	0.094
	(0.057)	(0.053)	(0.076)	(0.076)	(0.210)	(0.055)	(0.084)	(0.146)
TVC Narr.	−0.014	−0.002	−0.043	0.017	0.090	−0.013	0.027	0.109
	(0.049)	(0.054)	(0.088)	(0.080)	(0.179)	(0.057)	(0.068)	(0.161)
Observations	1203	1203	590	613	114	1089	554	134
R^2	0.002	0.076	0.050	0.026	0.193	0.080	0.070	0.083
Controls		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

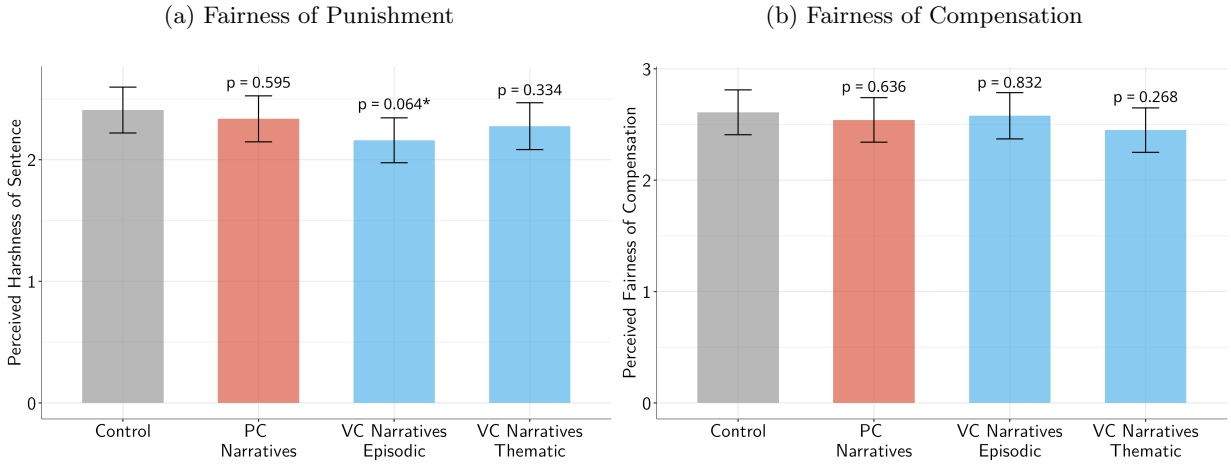
Notes: Effect of different victim-centered compared to perpetrator-centered narratives on the difference between perceived and real prevalence of calls to the VAW helpline among 10000 women in the respondents' province. Columns 1 and 2 report the results for the full sample, Columns 3 and 4 separately for female and male respondents, Columns 5 and 6 separately for respondents with at least one daughter or with no daughters, and Columns 7 and 8 separately for left and right-wing respondents. Columns 2 to 9 control for the respondent's gender, whether they have a daughter, political affiliation, and an aggregated proxy for gender norms, unless the covariate is used to determine the subsample. Standard errors are clustered at the province level (in parentheses): * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Figure H.24: Effect of Victim-Centered vs. Perpetrator-Centered Narratives: Respondents' Attitudes



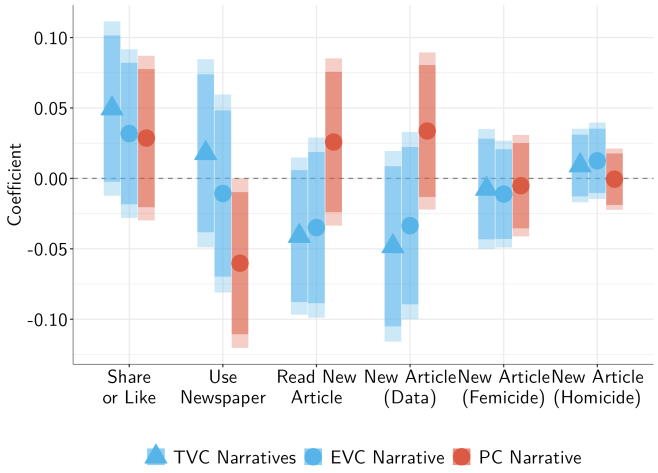
Notes: Effect of victim-centered narratives compared to perpetrator-centered narratives on respondents' empathy towards the victim and the perpetrator. The figure reports confidence intervals at the 95% and 90% level.

Figure H.25: Perceived Fairness



Notes: Respondents' attitudes , separately by treatment. Panel A reports the results for the perceived fairness of punishment, while Panel B reports the results for the perceived fairness of compensation. Both outcomes are measured on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means too lenient or too low and 10 means too harsh or too high. The figure reports confidence intervals at the 95% level and p-values from a t-test between each treatment and the control: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure H.26: Effect of Narratives on News Engagement



Notes: Effect of narratives on news engagement. The figure reports confidence intervals at the 95% and 90% level.

H.3 Survey Questions in English

Attitudes Toward Victim and Perpetrator

1. How do you feel about the victim? A score between 50 and 100 means that you feel emotionally close to her, while a score between 0 and 50 means that you do not feel emotionally close to her. Choose 50 if you do not have a particularly strong opinion either way. There is no right or wrong answer, as people may experience different emotions regarding these events. Remember, your answer to this question does not necessarily reflect your opinion about the sentence.

   [Slider: 0 – 100]

2. How do you feel about the perpetrator? A score between 50 and 100 means that you feel emotionally close to him, while a score between 0 and 50 means that you do not feel emotionally close to him. Choose 50 if you do not have a particularly strong opinion either way. There is no right or wrong answer, as people may experience different emotions regarding these events. Remember, your answer to this question does not necessarily reflect your opinion about the sentence.

   [Slider: 0 – 100]

Sentence and Compensation Evaluation

3. For these types of crimes there is a lot of variation in judicial decisions regarding years of sentences. The minimum sentence is around 8 years while the maximum is a life sentence (usually around 30 years). The perpetrator was sentenced to 15 years of prison. Please indicate on the following scale whether you think the sentence is too lenient (0), fair (5) or too harsh (10).

   [Slider: 0 – 10, where 0 = too lenient, 5 = fair, 10 = too harsh]

4. In case of murders, the Ministry of Justice compensates the victim's relatives. The compensation can range between EUR 40,000 and EUR 100,000. In this case, the Ministry gave the family EUR 60,000. Please indicate on the following scale whether you think the compensation is too low (0), fair (5) or too high (10).

   [Slider: 0 – 10, where 0 = too low, 5 = fair, 10 = too high]

Policy Support

5. In November 2023, the Parliament approved unanimously a law to counter violence against women, which included regulations regarding facilitating preventive measures such as admonition and restriction orders, education programs of police forces and the judiciary, educational programs in schools, and support for anti-violence centers. At the same time, the law does not include any additional resources dedicated to this matter. You will now have the possibility to

sign a simulated petition asking for devoting some of the funds allocated to crime prevention to implement this law in the 2027 Budget Law. We will communicate to the Parliamentary commission on femicide and any form of gender-based violence the share of participants who signed this petition, namely, the number of participants who signed the petition over the total number of participants completing the survey in percentage.

[Button: I want to sign the petition]

Beliefs About Violence Against Women

6. Out of 10,000 women aged 18 to 80 in the province where you live, how many do you think have experienced any form of violence (beating, stalking, or sexual violence) in 2024? Please provide your best guess.

   [Slider: 0 – 10,000]

7. Out of 10,000 women aged 18 to 80 in the province where you live, how many contacted the anti-violence and stalking helpline to seek help in 2024?

   [Slider: 0 – 10,000]

   Note: In the questions above, participants have the chance to receive a 5 bonus if their answers are close to the correct number. A random subsample of all study participants will be selected (1 in 25). For each of these participants, a computer will check whether their answers match the correct ones. If at least one of the two answers is within 5 percentage points above or below the exact value, that participant will receive the bonus.

8. Out of 10,000 women in the province where you live, how many do you think have reported crimes involving any form of violence (beating, stalking, or sexual violence) in 2024?

   [Slider: 0 – 10,000]

Engagement with the Article

9. Now we will show you again the article you saw earlier, as it would appear on the newspaper's website. This means that if you click on the links below the article, you will automatically be redirected to the corresponding article (still within the questionnaire). You can continue interacting with the articles as much as you like, and at any point, proceed with the rest of the questionnaire by clicking the Next Page button.

   [TREATMENT ARTICLE]

   Other articles from the Gazette:

   - *Focus on Violence Against Women: Inside the ISTAT Report* (Clickable)
   - *Femicide: "Help, I've Been Stabbed" — The Last Words of Lorena, Killed by Her Husband in Brescia* (Clickable)

- *Asti, Murder of tobacconist Emanuele Bianchi: 30-Year Sentences for the 5 Defendants Confirmed on Appeal* (Clickable)

10. If you were on social media, would you like, dislike, report, or share the article? Please select at least one of the following options.

    - *Like*
    - *Dislike*
    - *Report the article*
    - *Share the article*
    - *None of the above*

11. Would you use the news outlet publishing the articles that you saw in this survey as a source of information for crime news?

    - *Yes*
    - *No*