

MEDIA PRESENTATIONS OF CRIME

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how crime is presented in local media. I hypothesized that white collar crime is under-represented in media and that it is viewed as less serious than street crime. Using content analysis I read and coded 151 news articles from the Indianapolis Star. I recorded all of my data with a code sheet. I divided my variables into manifest and latent variables, so I could adequately test my hypothesis. After running statistical tests in SPSS, my biggest finding was that white collar crime only made up 4% of the data I collected, however white collar crime actually makes up much more than 4% of crime today. While we cannot give an exact percentage of white collar crime due to underrepresentation, the data that we do have tells us in my findings that white collar crime was under-represented in Indianapolis media.

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Statement of Purpose

The goal of this project was to have a clearer understanding of how crime is presented in the Indianapolis Star. I wanted to know if white collar crime is presented by the media in the same way as other crimes. My hypothesis was that white collar crime is under-represented in media and is viewed as less serious. I tested my hypothesis by conducting a content analysis of Indianapolis news articles to determine if white collar and blue collar crime were equally reported, and to determine if one type of crime was presented as more serious than the other.

Introduction

White collar crime is a term originally coined in the 1940's by sociologist Edwin Sutherland (Podgor, 2007). Sutherland (1949) (as cited in Podgor, 2007) defined white collar crime as "crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation". On the other hand, blue collar crime is the opposite, often referred to as street crime. "Blue collar crime" or street crime generally includes drug crimes and the UCR Index I offenses, such as violent crimes, burglary, and larceny. In searching the terms white and blue collar crime, I found notable differences in the way the general public views these types of crime. As stated by Piquero, Carmichael, and Piquero (2008), we have a norm in our culture of how we view crime. The topic I will be reviewing is related to how the media presents crime today. I have found much research over the topic of white collar crime in general, but have had much difficulty in finding research comparing the two crime types. I hypothesize, mostly based

on news and media coverage, that street crime receives more coverage and is represented as more serious than white collar crime.

Literature

When Sutherland first used the term white collar crime, he did not formally define it. Eventually Sutherland (1949) (as cited in Cliff and Desilets, 2014) defined it as “crimes committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation”. This definition was completely offender-based, which at the time was alright because it was just used as a label (Cliff and Desilets, 2014). Although this definition was useful for the field of sociology, it needed to be developed a bit more for the field of criminal justice in order to answer practical questions, such as how often this crime is occurring and what prevention tools are working. In 1970, Herbert Edelhertz, a criminologist known for his studies of white collar crime, defined the term as “an illegal act or series of illegal acts committed by nonphysical means and by concealment or guile, to obtain money or property, to avoid the payment or loss of money or property, or to obtain business or personal advantage” (Cliff and Desilets, 2014). In contrast to Sutherland’s definition, this definition is focused on the crime itself, and ignores the offender. Because of this, this definition could be applied to lower class citizens (Cliff and Desilets, 2014). Edelhertz put white collar crime into four categories: personal crimes, trust crimes, business crimes, and con game crimes (Cliff and Desilets, 2014). Today, the FBI defines white collar crime as:

those illegal acts which are characterized by deceit, concealment, or violation of trust and which are not dependent upon the application or threat of physical force or violence.

Individuals and organizations commit these acts to obtain money, property, or services; to avoid the payment or loss of money or services; or to secure personal or business advantage (Cliff and Desilets, 2014, pg. 3).

This definition is written to fit both the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to more easily collect data and generate statistics (Cliff and Desilets, 2014).

According to Cliff and Desilets (2014), white collar crime is being committed more often than in the past, and also in comparison to blue collar crime. One reason for this is that white collar crime is simply becoming easier to commit. The skills and education that are needed to commit white collar crime are much more common, and in fact 61% of the workforce has the ability to commit this type of crime (Cliff and Desilets, 2014). For example, compared to the past, many more people are in positions today where embezzlement, fraud, money laundering, and tax evasion are possible. Computers are making white collar crimes easier to commit. Some of the information we save on our computers or put on the internet holds more value to us than our tangible items. With today's use of computers, that valuable information can easily be accessed or hacked (Cliff and Desilets, 2014). Essentially, computers are creating new ways to commit white collar crime.

Sutherland's original definition of white collar crime must be revisited due to the difficulty in reporting white collar crime. Rather than defining the crime by the type of offender, as Sutherland did, the FBI must define the crime by the offense in order to be able to measure it (Barnett, 2000). The only information available on white collar crime are arrest reports, because they are not index crimes (Barnett, 2000). Unfortunately, arrest records are not reliable means of measuring crime (Barnett, 2000).

Some assume that the people who are typically committing white collar crimes are of higher social class, are typically wealthier, and could use that wealth to their advantage, possibly even to keep them from being arrested. However, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) disagree. They claim "although by definition one must be in the white-collar world to be a white-collar offender, not all white-collar workers enjoy the power, income, and prestige to be found at the top of this world. In fact, most have little power, not much income, and only moderate prestige" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Media Presentations of Crime

Kohm, Waid-Lindberg, Weinrath, O'Connor Shelley, and Dobbs (2012) tell us that crime in both Canada and the United States, especially of violent nature, is decreasing, yet fear has not. Individuals start to feel like they are at risk for victimization because of the media's representation of crime (Kohm et al., 2012). Today's news station's main focus is profit. The media is a capitalistic industry, therefore news programs will focus on whatever brings in the most viewers. *Psychology Today* has a piece titled "If it Bleeds, it Leads," promoting the idea

that the news will present to us what they need to get viewers. In this article the author, Dr. Deborah Serani (2011), claims:

The success of fear-based news relies on presenting dramatic anecdotes in place of scientific evidence, promoting isolated events as trends, depicting categories of people as dangerous and replacing optimism with fatalistic thinking (pg. 1).

She tells us that media groups edit the presentation factors of the news stories to get the results they want, and some news stations even use pre-scripted topics that contain misleading information to produce fear and anxiety in the viewer. Again, this furthers the idea that the media is aiming for profit, not equal representation and truthfulness. Unfortunately, this form of media is a norm of our culture.

In the past, white collar crime has not been portrayed in the media as often as street crime (Levi, 2008). Research has shown that when reporting crime, the media exaggerates serious violence or possibility of it, focuses on crime scenarios that are not typical, and increases fear of crime (Levi, 2008). Crime media is slightly skewed, not 100% accurate. The media tends to focus on stories that incite fear or anxiety. White collar cases do not make the news media as often as violent crimes (Levi, 2008). Levi (2008) also notes that recently, the media tends to focus on white collar crimes only if they are committed by individuals or groups that are part of popular culture. Another study claims that typically news coverage over white collar crimes focus on the initial allegation, and nothing further, whereas street crime coverage focuses on the punishments and the criminal justice system processes (Benediktsson, 2010).

The media also affects how individuals see crime. George Gerbner's cultivation theory claims that those who watch television for more than four hours a day, tend to believe that they live in a society full of crime and also believe more in the television programs than actual real life (Boda & Szabo, 2011). It appears that fiction genres of television programs have a bigger effect than non-fiction (Boda & Szabo, 2011). Boda and Szabo (2011) made an interesting observation though. Those who watched more TV and news television say that they are more able to trust the police and government, whereas those who typically did not watch those programs lacked trust in the police and government (Boda & Szabo, 2011). Boda and Szabo (2011) admit though, that the correlation they found was weak, therefore it is possible that it is not a matter of causation, but simply the type of people that watch news TV are the type of people that already tend to have more trust in the government. They also found that those that watched more news TV were more fearful of crime (Boda & Szabo, 2011). This idea that news media is not accurate and creates fear and anxiety in the public is an important concept because it shapes society's perceptions of crime (Boda & Szabo, 2011).

Piquero et al. (2008) studied the perceptions of white collar and blue collar crime on the public and criminal justice system personnel. From their research, they found that norms of crime seriousness were different throughout different parts of society (Piquero et al., 2008). Overall, white collar crime was not viewed as more serious than blue collar crime (Piquero et al., 2008). It was not considered a serious crime at all. However, later research shows that might not be the case. One study Piquero et al. (2008) mentioned, said that injuries made a difference. When there were injuries, seriousness increased (Piquero et al., 2008). And when they looked at

perceptions from criminal justice system personnel, due to their higher level of education, they were more thorough and in-depth in their ratings of crime seriousness (Piquero et al., 2008).

Piquero et al. (2008) looked at two studies that suggest that white collar crime probably receives less attention than blue collar crime because the type of person committing white collar crime could be the ones that influence our views of crime. The authors conducted their own study by phone interviews using a random-digit dialing system, and the respondents were asked to choose which crime situation presented to them was more serious, or if they were equally as serious. Four out of six comparisons showed that white collar crime is viewed as more serious (Piquero et al., 2008). The others do note that this study does not look at which crimes are more harmful or wrongful, and they believe the research should continue in that direction. Overall, this study shows that the public is increasingly of the belief that white collar crime is more serious and the public wants harsher punishments (Piquero et al., 2008). This study also noted that public opinion likely changes after a big scandal has been released, which I believe to be very important.

Ellen Podgor takes a bit of a different view in her article, “The Challenge of White Collar Sentencing.” In general, Podgor claims that white collar sentences are too long and should be re-evaluated because they fail to look at the background of the offender (Podgor, 2007). She points out that in Sutherland’s definition of white collar crime, he really aimed to make the point that these wrongdoings are criminal acts, and the individuals need to be punished as criminals. Because he wanted to emphasize that point, you can conclude that in the past wealthy people or

people in positions of power typically got out of legal trouble (Podgor, 2007). Podgor (2007) focuses on the challenges of sentencing the offenders, stating that there is no specific list of crimes that are considered white collar. Therefore, when the FBI looks at the crimes based on type of offense and not offender, as mentioned earlier, some crimes could be questionable (Podgor, 2007).

Gottfredson and Hirschi argue, though, that any crimes committed by people with power and influence, could also be committed by someone not in that position (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Podgor believes that white collar criminals have more to lose by their harsh sentences. She mentions things such as not being able to return to their type of work, losing their social status, being put in the media, etc (Podgor, 2007). Where Podgor fails here is in comparison to blue collar crime. She claims that white collar criminals have more to lose, (assuming she means compared to other criminals), but does not explain why they have more to lose because all effects listed are able to happen to street criminals as well. Her conclusion is biased, considering she does not address the issues and consequences faced by blue collar offenders. She claims that sentences are too long for white collar criminals because if many of them cannot return to their positions at work, they are not likely to re-commit. But Frank Perri, author of “White Collar Criminals: The Kinder, Gentler Offender?” argues that white collar criminals tend to show similar mindsets to blue collar criminals (Podgor, 2007) (Perri, 2011). Again, Podgor only addresses the consequences for white collar criminals, but fails to discuss the longer sentences and permanent effects of a blue collar criminal.

Overall I found that there is a lot of information about white collar crime but believe more research needs to be done discussing the seriousness of it compared to street crime. Much literature is available over white collar crime, but it was difficult to find research comparing the two crime types. I hope that my research aids in showing the differences of how white collar crime is represented by the media in comparison to street crime. I also intend to highlight that more research is needed on white collar crime and its representation in the media.

Methods

The intent of my research is to explore some of the differences in how white collar and street crime are represented in local media. I expect to find that not only is white collar crime covered less than street crime, but also that it is represented as less serious than street crime. I expect to see an offender mentioned in news covering street crime at a higher rate than in news covering white collar crime. Additionally, I expect to find a victim mentioned in more street crime news articles, as a way to entice sympathy in the reader. I also expect to find that the news articles covering street crime may sometimes discuss the crimes in a way that presents them as more serious than street crime. Ways that the street crimes are presented as more serious may include the language used to discuss the crime. For example, I expect to often find words and adjectives describing the street crimes as “heinous”, “brutal”, “tragic”, and other like words. I use these expectations as guidelines to choose my manifest and latent variables.

I used content analysis as my method of research. With media being a big part of our culture today, I find content analysis to be the best fit for a research method because I want to

look at how our local media portrays these types of crime in a relevant social context. A code sheet was constructed to be used in analyzing each article.

Sample

I used the *Indianapolis Star* database, which provides coverage from 1991 to present, to retrieve my articles (ProQuest). I chose this source because I wanted to use local news media and because it is one of Indiana's largest news sources, with over half of a million readers (Daily Newspapers USA, 2015). The Indianapolis Star is broken up into sections, including national and world news, local news, sports, opinion, weather, and multiple others. A very large majority of my articles share the setting of Indiana, but a few are set elsewhere. I chose to include these articles because even though they do not take place in Indiana, they are being represented in Indianapolis media, which is the focus of my research.

I used "crime" as my search word, because I wanted to know how crime is presented in Indianapolis without limiting my results. I looked at articles for a timespan of one year, from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015. Searching "crime" with these parameters produced 753 articles. I selected 20% of the articles ($n = 151$), using systematic random sampling. I picked every 5th article to read and code.

Some articles were not used due to relevance, which I defined as articles that did not discuss crime or a specific case, but simply use the word crime. For example, one of the articles I had to reject discussed a football game, but it appeared in my search because the author referred

to one of the players as a criminal due to his mistake in the game. When an article was not used due to relevance, then I instead used the following article.

Measures

Manifest vs. Latent Content

In the past, content analysis mostly only consisted of manifest content, but recent research has included latent content as well (Neuendorf, 2002). Manifest content is the tangible or countable content, and latent content contains the deeper meanings in messages (Neuendorf, 2002).

Manifest Content

- # of search results
- Article location: Section and page number of the article
- Article length: word count
- Crime type: blue collar, white collar, or other
 - I will define white collar crime as fraud, embezzlement, money laundering, and tax evasion because summarized, Cornell University Law School labels these as the top white collar crimes (“White-collar crime”, 2016).
- If an offender is mentioned and the number of offenders mentioned
- If a victim is mentioned and the number of victims mentioned
- Who (if anyone) is interviewed about the crime

Latent Content

Articles may not explicitly address the seriousness of a type of crime but nevertheless make implicit judgments. Therefore latent content is important in my research in order to identify those implicit messages. I look for how the crime is described and if there are specific words/adjectives used and if those words/adjectives suggest seriousness of the crime or are relieving of the crime. For example, some articles described the crimes mentioned at tragedies, which implies that the crime mentioned is a serious crime. I also look for if they give a rationale or reasoning for the crime.

Reliability

In order to address the reliability of my variables and coding, Dr. Whiteacre and I each coded four cases (3% of the total sample) separately. Arguably, because I was the only coder for this study, reliability (or consistency) is not really an issue either way, so to code more than the small sample of four cases was deemed unnecessary. We then calculated the percentage of agreement in the codes. For the four cases, we coded the same in 98% of the variables. 90% agreement is considered sufficient according to Neuendorf (2002). We coded differently in only one observation, which was a latent variable. We discussed the difference, and Dr. Whiteacre agreed my code was the correct one. Given the high rate of agreement, I continued to code the remainder of the cases.

Analysis

After selecting my 151 articles, I read each one and coded them with a coding sheet that included all of my variables (see appendix A). Some of the articles mentioned more than one crime, so in total I coded 159 crimes. I then created a database in SPSS and transferred my data from the code sheets to the database. In SPSS I ran frequencies for each of my variables to get the means. I made tables for each of my variables showing the means for each variable, and also comparing means for certain variables.

Results

As I read and coded the articles, I realized that my results did not come back how I expected. While I did expect most of my articles to be referencing street crime, I was surprised when I found that street crime made up 96% of my articles. It was difficult to make conclusions about white collar crime, because it only made up 4% of my coded articles. While at first I was disappointed to find that my results came back with such a small number of white collar crimes, I realize that this is a significant finding. Of 159 crimes analyzed, only 6 were white collar crimes, which tells me that white collar crime is not being reported equally. I did expect to see less white collar crime than street crime, but if they were reported equally we would see much more white collar crime than this, because according to Cliff and Desilets (2014), white collar crime is increasing.

White collar crime is being committed more often than it was in the past, and it is increasing in comparison to street crime as well (Cliff and Desilets, 2014). John Wibey (2015),

tells us that from 2013 to 2014, fraud complaints increased 16%, and this does not include any of the other forms of white collar crime. That was 339,357 fraud complaints in just one year (Wihbey, 2015). According to the FBI, securities and commodities fraud (market manipulation, investment fraud, broker embezzlement, etc.) investigations have increased by 52% since 2008 (Financial Crimes Report 2010-2011). And that statistic is only relevant to investigations, so that does not include the crimes being committed that are not investigated. Federally insured financial institutions provide the FBI with “suspicious activity reports” to detect mortgage fraud, and these reports increased from 6,936 reports in 2003 to 93,508 reports in 2011, totaling a large increase of 86,572 reports in just 8 years (Financial Crimes Report 2010-2011). That is an average of 10,822 reports each year. The FBI has had to continue increasing the number of special agents assigned to these white collar crimes due to such a large and rapid increase (Financial Crimes Report 2010-2011).

It’s also important to note that of the 6 white collar crime articles, 50% (n = 3) referenced the same case, an infamous insurance fraud case from 2015. If it was not for that case making big headlines, I would have been left with even less coverage on white collar crime. While the results did not come back as I had hoped, this alone suggests that white collar crime is not receiving much coverage in the *Indianapolis Star*, particularly in relation to street crime.

After running frequencies using SPSS, I found that each article contained an average of 675 words. The majority (81%, n = 122) of articles were found in newspaper section A (sections ranged from A-D). Sixty-three percent (n = 100) of the articles mentioned a victim, while 57% of

articles mentioned an offender. Tables 1 and 2 below provide the frequencies listed for each variable.

Table 1. Manifest Variables

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Word Count | 675 (mean) 598 (median) |
| Page Number | 52 (mean) 3 (median) |
| Section | |
| A | 81% (n = 122) |
| B | 17 (n = 26) |
| C | 1 (n = 2) |
| D | 1 (n = 1) |
| Victim Mentioned | |
| Yes | 63% (n = 100) |
| No | 37 (n = 59) |
| Victim Interviewed | |
| Yes | 0% (n = 0) |
| No | 100 (n = 159) |
| Offender Mentioned | |
| Yes | 57% (n = 90) |
| No | 43 (n = 69) |
| Offender Interviewed | |
| Yes | 0% (n = 0) |
| No | 100 (n = 159) |
| Crime Type | |
| Street crime | 96% (n = 152) |
| White collar crime | 4 (n = 6) |

Table 2. Manifest Content by Crime Type

| | Street Crimes (n = 152) | White Collar Crime (n = 6) | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Word Count | 677 (mean) 592 (median) | 586 (mean) 667 (median) | t = .46 sig. = .65 |
| Page Number | 5 (mean) 3 (median) | 3 (mean) 3 (median) | t = 1.13 sig. = .26 |
| Section | | | |
| A | 80% (n = 122) | 83 % (n = 5) | |
| B | 17 (n = 26) | 17 (n = 1) | |
| C | 1 (n = 2) | 0 (n = 0) | |
| D | 1 (n = 1) | 0 (n = 0) | |
| Victim Mentioned | | | |
| Yes | 62% (n = 94) | 100% (n = 6) | Chi-sq = 3.62* sig. = .06 |
| No | 38 (n = 58) | 0 (n = 0) | |
| Victim Interviewed | | | |
| Yes | 0% (n = 0) | 0% (n = 0) | |
| No | 100 (n = 159) | 100 (n = 159) | |
| Offender Mentioned | | | |
| Yes | 55% (n = 84) | 100% (n = 0) | Chi-sq. = 4.91* sig. = .03 |
| No | 45 (n = 68) | 0 (n = 0) | |
| Offender Interviewed | | | |
| Yes | 0% (n = 0) | 0% (n = 0) | |
| No | 100 (n = 159) | 100 (n = 159) | |

Street crime has an average of 677 words per article and on average appears on the 5th page.

White collar crime on the other hand has an average of 586 words per article and on average appears on the 3rd page. This is interesting because I would have expected street crime to appear on a lower section number, or first in the newspaper in comparison to white collar crime. For street crime, 62% of the articles (n = 94) mentioned a victim and for white collar crime, 100% (n = 6) mentioned a victim.

For street crime, 55% of the articles (n = 84), mentioned an offender and for white collar crime, 100% (n = 6) mentioned an offender. This is a marginally significant finding at .06. For street crime, 62% (n = 94) mentioned the victim, and for white collar crime, 100% (n = 6) mentioned the victim. This finding was significant at .03. While white collar crime is represented far less than street crime, these findings can tell us that in order for a white collar crime to be represented in media, it needs to be a serious case.

While manifest content made up a large part of my findings, I also coded for latent content. The latent content is important for my research to help me identify the implicit messages of seriousness in each article. Tables 3 and 4 break down my latent content codes. In each article I looked for words, adjectives, phrases, etc. used to describe the crime. I looked at those words and also coded for if they were suggesting seriousness or if they were relieving of the crime. Based on what we know about the media manipulating the truths about crime, I expected many articles to include subjective descriptors of the crimes. I expected that street crimes would have a higher percentage of articles with words used that suggested seriousness, while white collar would have a higher percentage of articles with words used that are relieving of the crime. What I actually found was that only 11% (n = 16) of the articles contained any sort of words to describe the crime.

After researching how the media presents crime, I was surprised to find that many of the articles were very objective and contained nothing more than facts about the crimes. Of these 16 articles that use subjective descriptors, 100% (n = 16) of the cases were suggesting seriousness.

Table 4 shows that of these articles suggesting seriousness, 100% (n = 16) were street crime. I also coded for if a rationale or reasoning was given for the crimes, and I was surprised to find that only 1% (n = 2) of the articles contained any rationale or reasoning. Of these 2 articles, 100% (n = 2) of them were also street crime. Ultimately, many of the articles coded were very matter of fact about the crimes mentioned, and there were no significant findings in my latent content.

Table 3. Latent Variables

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Words or adjectives used to describe the crime | |
| Use words/adjectives to describe crime | 11% (n = 16) |
| Do not use words/adjectives to describe crime | 89 (n = 135) |
| Are words/adjectives suggesting seriousness or relieving of the crime? | |
| Seriousness | 11% (n = 16) |
| Relieving | 89 (n = 135) |
| Is a rationale or reasoning given? | |
| Yes | 1% (n = 2) |
| No | 99 (n = 149) |

Table 4. Latent Content by Crime Type

| | Street Crimes (n = 152) | White Collar Crime (n = 6) | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Words or adjectives used to describe the crime | | | |
| Use words/adjectives to describe crime | 11% (n = 16) | 0% (n = 0) | Chi-sq. = .75 |
| Do not use words/adjectives to describe crime | 89 (n = 136) | 100 (n = 6) | |
| Of articles including words/adjectives: Are words/adjectives suggesting seriousness or relieving of the crime? | | | |
| Seriousness | 100% (n = 16) | 0% (n = 0) | Chi-sq. = .75 |
| Relieving | 0 (n = 0) | 0 (n = 0) | |
| Is a rationale or reasoning given? | | | |
| Yes | 1% (n = 2) | 0% (n = 0) | Chi-sq. = .08 |
| No | 99 (n = 150) | 100 (n = 6) | |

Conclusion

White collar crime is definitely happening and increasingly, too (Wihbey, 2015). But is that how the media presents it? After reading and coding 151 articles from the *Indianapolis Star* using the search term “crime,” I found far more coverage of street crimes than white collar crimes. Ninety-six percent (n = 152) of all crimes analyzed were street crimes. Only 6 of 159 (4%) crimes were white collar. Not only did the white collar crimes make up such a small number, exactly half of the articles that mentioned a white collar crime discussed the same

crime. If it had not been for the infamous Richmond Hill insurance fraud case of 2015, I would have lost 50% of the white collar cases¹.

White collar crime statistics are hard to obtain due to the lack of data. Because of this, white collar crime statistics are pulled together from a range of sources, such as governmental agencies, financial reports, newspapers, journals, etc (Friedrichs, 2009). Corporate crime is only reported once it has been escalated and not immediately after the crime has been committed (Friedrichs, 2009). While street crimes are reported to the FBI by police departments, white collar crime is not (Friedrichs, 2009). Due to these challenges in measuring white collar crime, we cannot say what exact percentage of crime is white collar. However, the statistics we do have tell us that white collar crime definitely exceeds 4%, proving that the results I received in fact were not proportionate to actual crime. In February 2017, the Bureau of Prisons reported that 0.3% of inmates were in prison for “banking and insurance, counterfeit, and embezzlement” and 6.5% of inmates were in prison for “extortion, fraud, and bribery” (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2017). In total, almost 7% of inmates were in prison for white collar crimes (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2017). As mentioned above, we also know that fraud complaints increased 16% in the timespan of just one year and securities and commodities fraud investigations alone have increased 52% since 2008 (Financial Crimes Report 2010-2011) (Wibey, 2015).

¹ This crime could have been removed as it is an outlier, but was kept in the research because it further supports my point that white collar crime does not get the same coverage. This crime was so widespread due to the fact that it turned into a violent crime.

Having such a small number of white collar cases made this research difficult, but it still came back with important findings. It is clear through these numbers that white collar crime is not widely reported and represented in Indianapolis.

Through the process of completing this research I faced some limitations. First of all, I did not expect to have to reject as many articles that I did because they were not relevant to my research. Also, while I did not expect to get an exact 50/50 of street crime cases to white collar crime cases, I also did not expect to get such disproportionate results. This is an important finding, and it alone tells us that white collar crime is not being equally presented, however it caused some challenges. With only having 6 white collar cases, or 3 if you do not include those referencing the same crime, it made it difficult to find any correlations. Another limitation to this research is that 50% of the white collar cases mentioned were in reference to the same crime, due to large media exposure. Continuing this research, it would be interesting to see the differences if a more specific search term was used. My method used a more broad term to not limit my results. Using the search terms “robbery” and “fraud”, a larger crime for each crime type, it would be interesting to see how the results would change. I believe more research needs to be done on the lack of media exposure of white collar crime and it would be interesting to see if white collar crime simply had more media exposure and were represented equally, if the general public would then deem it as equally serious.

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Appendix A – Code Sheet

Code Sheet for Crime News Content Analysis

Case

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---|--------------|
| Number Click here to enter text. | Date | Section/Page# | Newspaper Indianapolis Star | State Indiana | Word count Click here to enter text. | Article Name |
|-------------------------------------|------|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---|--------------|

Crime Type

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Blue collar | White collar Click here to enter text. | Other Click here to enter text. |
| Crime Click here to enter text. | Crime Click here to enter text. | Crime Click here to enter text. |

Victims

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------|--|
| Victim(s) Mentioned? | Number of Victims | Interviewed? | If interviewed, how many times did he/she speak? |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------|--|

Offenders

| | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--|
| Offender(s) Mentioned? | Number of Offenders | Interviewed? | If interviewed, how many times did he/she speak? |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--|

Words/adjectives used to describe the crime/Are the adjectives suggesting seriousness or relieving of the crime:

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Word/Adjective | | | | |
| Suggesting Seriousness/Relieving | | | | |

Is a rationale or reasoning given?

| |
|--------|
| Yes/No |
|--------|