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Abstract

Research on crime and media demonstrates the media's role in influencing public perceptions of crime. Media consumers may unreasonably fear crime, in part, because the media typically over-represents crime. This study explores the portrayal of expert opinions in media coverage of crime. Expert opinions may have a greater influence on consumer opinions than those opinions not viewed as coming from authorities. In this qualitative content analysis, a sample of 500 news articles from local and national online newspapers across Canada was analyzed. An inductive approach was used to open code the data and discovered emerging themes. Preliminary themes include assertions that crime deserves more attention and resources, expert statements that provide solutions to crime problems, and comments that evaluate police practices. The themes of expert statements found have real implications for criminal justice policy.