

UNDERSTANDING INDIAN AND PAKISTANI CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES AND  
ANALYZING U.S. NEWS COVERAGE OF MUKHTAR MAI  
AND JYOTI SINGH PANDEY

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A foreign country's positive or negative image in the U.S. media can influence public attitudes toward that country. The way U.S. media covers sex crimes from countries like India and Pakistan has a direct effect on the global image of these countries. This qualitative content analysis examined the coverage of two rape victims, Jyoti Singh Pandey and Mukhtar Mai in two mainstream U.S. newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Frames identified in the study include cultural differences, nationality and male patriarchy. The results revealed that while U.S. media was sensitive to both victims, Indian culture was portrayed in a favorable light than Pakistani culture. This study recommends that reporters and newsrooms need to be sensitive in reporting foreign cultures and refrain from perpetuating cultural stereotypes through reporting. The study also recommends developing training and understanding methodology when covering sex crimes so that journalists are aware of the rape myths and narratives that trap them into unfair coverage.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. And it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace*

Kofi Anan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

In the past few decades, violence against women has become recognized as a worldwide problem, which has crossed cultural, geographic, religious, social and economic boundaries. “Violence against women persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality” (Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study).

According to some surveys, “women worldwide between ages 15 through 44 are more likely to die or be maimed because of male violence than because of cancer, malaria, war and traffic accidents combined” (Kristof, 2013). Violence against women can take several forms such as physical or mental abuse, torture, or it can take dangerous forms such as acid attacks, bride burning honor killings and rape. In some cultures around the world, rape has become endemic. The seriousness of rape as a crime is universally accepted and is often linked with severe legal and social sanctions. The World Health Organization estimates that globally one in every five women will be the victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime (DCAF, 2005).

However, attitudes towards rape reflect norms, which vary cross-culturally, regarding, masculinity, aggression, privacy, women’s sexuality and chastity. Despite the partition of India and Pakistan into two separate nations in 1947, much of the customs, traditions, and taboos common in Indian society found their way in Pakistani culture. While Americans share a more

liberal stance towards chastity and female sexuality, both Indians and Pakistanis feel shame in talking about rape and are hesitant to cover rape in news media. Where Indian and Pakistani media share the need to hide the “dishonor” of a girl, American media covers rape cases in contrast to them (L’armand, Pepitone & Shahmugam, 1981).

The dominant patriarchal structure in both (India and Pakistan) nations usually restricts dialogue regarding rape laws. But Indians and Pakistanis are equally guilty in allowing violence (UNIFEM, 2003) against women to escalate in their respective countries. The stories of Mukhtar Mai (June, 2002) and Jyoti Singh Pandey (December, 2012) garnered international media attention, forcing India and Pakistan to come to terms with the reality of the situation in terms of the status of women. Both Mai and Pandey received titles such as “fearless,” “courageous,” and “inspiring” for their ordeal.

In this regard, it is essential to realize the role of Western media organizations to bring to light the violence on women in developing nations. For centuries, United States has made a mark as one of the most powerful media entities. Daily newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are heralded in the top newspapers of the world and are looked at as models of excellence in journalism. This qualitative study will look into the coverage of the Mukhtar Mai case from Pakistan and the Jyoti Singh Pandey case from India, in two mainstream newspapers from the United States: the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The purpose of this study is to understand how did American media frame the coverage of Mukhtar Mai and Jyoti Singh Pandey’s rape cases and how did the media attitude differ according to the victim and her nationality? Since India holds a more favorable position in Western audiences in comparison to Pakistan’s tarnished image of corruption and political instability it would be vital to study whether such notions affect journalistic reporting.

Previous research has focused on rape laws in India and Pakistan and on the perpetuation of rape myths by media that blame victims. This study touches on an unexplored area of research, which is analyzing the coverage of rape in light of the cultural perspective of India and Pakistan while simultaneously analyzing the American media coverage of the case. It is impossible to understand the case by only analyzing the American media coverage without cultural context. By providing the cultural context, the author hopes to bring depth to understanding the cases. The state of women in India and Pakistan is much more complex multi-faceted than is portrayed in international media. Economic factors such as class, caste, location and education play a vital role in understanding the dynamics and status of women in these countries.

As a woman, brought up in Pakistan, I understand the subtle social and cultural implications of being a woman in an Eastern society. Having lived in Pakistan for 25 years, I understand the social construct surrounding women and have personally experienced the dominant patriarchal structure that dictates the role and status of women. I hope my experience and understanding of the culture will give depth to this research. Before focusing on the American coverage of rape and rape victims, it is important to understand and realize the frequency of such attacks in India as well as Pakistan.

### Sex Crimes in India and Pakistan

Among cultural, economic and political markers, the measure of a civilized nation is gauged by its ability to protect its citizens, it is gauged by its ability to provide an impartial system of justice and finally is it gauged by its ability to provide equal rights and opportunities to

men and women. In impoverished communities around the world and developing countries like India and Pakistan, these basic rights are often denied to the citizens. But more importantly they are routinely denied to women who are part of the male-dominated structure of these societies. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women continue to be subordinated and marginalized (UNIFEM, 2003).

A 2010 report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reveals that there are as many as eight reported cases of gang rape a day in the Islamic Republic (Human Rights Commission Pakistan, 2010). According to the report, nearly 2,903 women were raped in 2010 — an estimated 244 rapes a month. A staggering majority of these rapes occurred in the province of Punjab, with as many as 2,581 registered cases. News organizations and women rights activists believe that these statistics misrepresent the reality on ground. The social stigma and taboo associated with rape means fewer victims choose to risk family honor and social humiliation and report the crime (Human Rights Commission Pakistan, 2010).

In India, 24,206 rape cases were reported in 2011 (Borpujari, 2013). Delhi, dubbed as the “rape capital of India,” reported as many as 568 cases in 2011(Narayan, 2012). Official statistics collected over the past 40 years from 1971 to 2011 show an 875% increase in rape cases (National Crime Records Bureau, 2011). While this may not be an actual percentage increase, it is however indicative of a rising awareness in reporting rape. According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), it is estimated that 54% of rape crimes are unreported. This percentage further decreases in India as social stigma becomes an important factor that decreases a victim’s willingness to report. India has been widely criticized internationally for its declining female-to-male ratio. According to an article in the *Economist*, a 2011 census revealed that 914 girls were born for every 1,000 boys (Kotla, 2011, para. 3). The article adds that a skewed sex ratio causes several problems, particularly for the women. Sociologists believe it encourages

abuse and trafficking. Reports circulate of unknown numbers of girls who are drugged, beaten and sometimes killed by traffickers. Others, willingly or not, are brought across India's borders, notably from Bangladesh and Myanmar. "Put bluntly, it's a competition over scarce women," says Ravinder Kaur of the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi. (Kotla, 2011, para. 8) that violence then, is a consequence of the skewed gender ratio. In India, much like Pakistan, boys are considered a matter of pride whereas girls are often thought of as an added responsibility.

### The Case of Jyoti Singh Pandey

On December 16, 2012, news of a gang rape involving a 23-year-old student in Delhi, India, gained international prominence. Initially, the name of the rape victim was withheld due to Indian criminal laws. During this time, Indian media gave her several names including Amanat, Damini and Nirbhaya (Roy, 2012). On January 6, 2013, the girl's father identified his daughter's name as Jyoti Singh Pandey. In an interview to *The Mirror*, a UK-based weekly newspaper, he said "we want the world to know her real name." He added that "[r]evealing her name will give courage to other women who survived these attacks. They will find strength from my daughter" (Farhoud, 2013).

Pandey belonged to a Kumri agrarian caste, considered lower on the Hindu hierarchy. Her family hails from Ballia in rural Uttar Pradesh state. The family moved to Delhi about 30 years ago to seek "a better life" (Pokharel, Chaturvedi, Agarwal, Lahiri, 2013). The family lived in a simple "small concrete-and-brick" house near Delhi airport where her father worked as a laborer (Pokharel, 2013). She was determined to be the first in her family to pursue a professional career (Pokharel, 2013). She was a good English speaker and an avid reader of Sidney Sheldon novels (Pokharel, 2013).

By day, Pandey attended classes for a 4½ year physiotherapy course at the Sai Institute of Paramedical and Allied Sciences from noon to 5 p.m. In the evening, from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m. she worked at a call center handling questions from Canadians about their mortgages (Pokharel, 2013). According to a friend, Pandey wanted to build a big house, buy a car, go abroad and work there. “She hoped to buy an Audi someday” (Pokharel, 2013). On December 16, Pandey had come out of the cinema after watching *Life of Pi* with her 28-year-old male friend but instead of waiting for a local bus or taking a rickshaw, Pandey and her friend boarded a private bus (BBC, 2013).

Over the next two hours, six men severely beat the two friends with metal rods and took turns raping the girl. Pandey and her male friend were eventually thrown out of the moving bus alongside a freeway (BBC, 2013). As Pandey underwent major surgeries, the next few days doctors speculated what might have happened. According to an article in the *Huffington Post*, sources inside the *Hindustan Times* revealed that one of the accused brought into the hospital for a medical examination confessed to “having seen a rope-like object—likely her intestines — being pulled out of the girl by other assailants on the bus.” Local sources also confirmed that the girl had bite marks on her body. Doctors at Safdarjung Hospital where Pandey was initially admitted confirmed:

It appears to be that a rod was inserted into her and it was pulled out with so much force that the act brought out her intestines along. That is probably the only thing that explains such severe damage to her intestines. (Mosbergen, 2012, para. 4)

Doctors further commented that:

[th]ere was permanent damage to her intestines, and with the intestines completely gone she will have to feed through intravenous fluids all her life. (Mosbergen, 2012 para 5-6)

After a two-week ordeal, Pandey died on December 28, 2012 in a Singapore hospital on where she was taken to undergo extensive surgery. As details of the case surfaced, she was just

another girl “making her way in India’s widening professional class” (Pokheral, 2013). A recent article by her male friend who was with her at that time describes the complicated relationship they were in. “She was the closest person to my heart” he is quoted. Both were bound by the class system and social norms of adhering to marrying within the class (Pokherel, 2013). Five men and a 17-year-old have been arrested in connection with Pandey’s case. The suspects named as Ram Singh, his brother Mukesh, Pawan Gupta, Vinay Sharma and Akshay Thakur are under arrest under 13 charges including rape, murder and abduction and a minor in the case will be tried in a juvenile court (BBC, 2013).

Since her death, protests and vigils honoring her have been organized all across India. International human rights organizations and women’s rights activists have appealed to improve and revise Indian laws for rape. A recent advertisement in the *Times of India* was directed toward changing public attitudes towards women. The advertisement read “If you do not respect a woman, you are only half a man,” with questions directed as “is manhood defined by a six-pack and gelled hair?” (Taylor, 2013).

In an interview with a local television station, Pandey’s friend said that the rapists were not the only ones to blame in the tragic case. He accused the society of not respecting women and urged that to make positive reforms, societal attitudes would have to change; only then can there be a decline in rape (Zee News, 2012). In an interview to the *Daily News* (the online edition of the *Daily Mirror*), Pandey’s father said:

She (Jyoti) has brought an awakening to society. Society cannot any longer turn a blind eye to these sorts of incidences that are happening every day. We have to change ourselves. If there are no changes then these horrible things won’t stop. The public has to wake up now. (Rankin, 2013, para. 12)

## The Case of Mukhtar Mai

On June, 22, 2002, in the village of Meerwala in the Muzaffargarh district of Pakistan, 28- year-old Mukhtar Mai was gang-raped on the orders of a local village council. The influential clan members of the Mastoi tribe avenged the honor of their clan that was supposedly upset by a misconduct by Mai’s brother (Mai, 2007, p. 1). The case attracted international media spotlight because Mai became the first woman in Pakistan to put a tribunal justice system on trial. She also became the first woman in Pakistan to have her rapists sentenced to death (Curran & Khan, 2008, p. 222). Popular media in the United States called Mai a “faceless, illiterate, peasant girl from a nowhere village” until she “transcended her role,” in Pakistani society (Kristof, 2009). The news of Mai’s rape was first released on the international platform on July 1, 2002 through a 239-word Agence France Presse dispatch. Below is the original dispatch Bronwyn Curran provides in her book titled *Into the Mirror: The Untold Story of Mukhtar Mai*.

### PAKISTAN- RAPE

Gang rape of teenager ordered as punishment for brother’s sins MULTAN, PAKISTAN, JULY1, 2002 (AFP) — A teenage girl was gang-raped in central Pakistan last month as a “punishment” meted out by a tribal jury for her brother’s alleged affair with a woman of a higher tribe, police said Monday.

A Panchayat or tribal jury ordered four men, including one of the jurists, to rape the 18-year-old girl on June 22 in the village of Meerwala, 120 kilometers (75 miles) southwest of here, police said.

Meerwala lies 610 kilometers southwest of the capital Islamabad.

District police chief Malik Saeed Awan said authorities were informed of the publicly ordered gang-rape several days after the incident.

He said four men took turns to sexually assault the girl inside a room. She was then ordered to return home naked before 1,000 onlookers.

The rape was to avenge the “insult” caused to a family of the Mastoi tribe by the girl’s brother’s alleged “illicit affair” with a woman of a higher social standing.

The girl and her brother were from the lower Gujar tribe.

The Panchayat had threatened that all women in the accused’s family would be raped unless the 18-year-old submitted herself to public gang-rape.

Awan said police were taking action against members of the Panchayat.

Lawyers visiting the tribal on Sunday urged the authorities to prosecute the rapists and the jury. (Curran & Khan, 2008, p. 107)

In rural areas of Pakistan, the hierarchy of caste systems is carefully maintained. Higher social classes must not mingle with the lower caste to maintain the status quo. In these areas, tribal juries usually mediate disputes but function separately from the common law. An unwritten code of law defines tradition that empowers the highly patriarchal system. The tribunal, or the Panchayat, usually is comprised of men only. In these rural areas, violence against women and gang-rapes are a common occurrence where women are treated as a “man’s property” and “honor.”

Mai was born into a Gujjar caste and spoke only Saraiki, a minority dialect of Punjabi (Mai, 2007, p. 10). “My childhood was a simple one of poverty, neither wonderful nor miserable, but full of joy,” (Mai, 2007, p. 22) she writes in her book, *In the Name of Honor*. From an early age girls are taught that men are to be “obeyed” and “feared” (Mai, 2007). On the evening of June 22, 2002, Mai went to confront the influential and aggressive Mastoi clan on behalf of her family. Holding on to the Quran to her breast, she thought, “I have committed no crime” (Mai, 2007, p. 6). Shakur, Mai’s brother, had been missing for a day and Mai was sent to the Mastois to find out where he might be. She soon learned that he was behind bars at a local police station, badly beaten. He was accused of supposedly having an illicit relationship with a girl from the Mastoi clan, Salma (Mai 2007). When Ghulam Farid Gujjar, Mai’s father, attempted to file a

police complain, the Mastois changed their story and accused Shakur of *zina-bil-jabar*, or having sexual relations with Salma before marriage (Mai, 2007). Court proceedings later revealed that in fact Shakur had been sodomized by the Mastois and to hide that fact, the Mastois wrongly accused him of raping Salma (Mai, 2007). Several versions exist that suggest that Shakur raped or talked or had an illicit relationship with Salma.

In her memoir Mai acknowledges the limited interactions between men and women in Meerwala. “If a woman encounters a man, she must lower her eyes and never address him under any pretext” (Mai, 2007, p. 14). Intricate unwritten customs dictate the behavior of men and women in rural Pakistan. When Mukhtar walked to the house of the Mastois some 300 yards from her home to appear before the Mastois, she was aware of their influential and superior position. “They are violent men, capable of invading anyone’s home with their guns to loot, rape and tear the place apart. The lower-caste Gujjars have no right to oppose them” (Mai, 2007, p. 3).

At the Mastois farm, Mai spread her shawl on the ground near their feet as a sign of allegiance and attempted to reason with them. Her attempts at resolving the conflict were met with silence (Mai, 2007).

We know that the Mastois always take their revenge on a woman of a lower caste. It’s the woman’s place to humiliate herself, to beg for forgiveness before all the men of the village assembled in a jirga in front of the Mastois farmhouse. (Mai, 2007, p. 4)

According to her account in her book, she writes that the silence around her was broken when Abdul Khaliq, Ghulam Farid Mastoi, Allah Ditta and Mohammad Faiz pushed and then dragged her into a room. Mai says she was dragged away “like a goat led to slaughter” as she screamed, “In the name of the Quran, release me! In the name of God, let me go!” (Mai, 2007, p. 9). “Escape is impossible. Prayer is impossible. That is where they rape me. On the beaten earth of an empty stable” (Mai, 2007, p. 9-10). In her memoir, she says, as she lay on the ground, four

men raped her, one after the other. She remembers being shoved half-naked out of the home and onto the ground in front of a crowd of people. Her father covered her with his shawl “to help [her] preserve the only dignity [she has] left” (Mai, 2007, p. 11).

The night of Mai’s rape, her family returned to the police station for Shakur. The police demanded 12,000 rupees, the equivalent of three or four month’s salary. All the Gujar cousins and neighbors collected the money to fulfill the demand in exchange for Shakur. When he was released, he told the family that he hadn’t touched Salma, and that he had been kidnapped, beaten and sodomized by the Mastois (Mai, 2007).

A few days after Mai’s rape, a local cleric addressed the Friday congregation about the gang rape and urged the villagers to speak to the police. He condemned the act and said it was “a sin, a disgrace for the entire community.” A reporter of a local newspaper was present in the congregation and wrote about the incident in his paper. Later, police came to Mai’s house and arrested her father, brother and herself to speak about the details of her case (Mai, 2007, p. 23).

As details of her case surfaced internationally, the Pakistani government’s portrayal of a positive Pakistan were seriously damaged. International pressure forced the government to give urgent orders for her attackers to be captured and lodged a full-scale inquiry into the case. On August 31, 2002 the court gave verdict. Eight of the 14 men arrested as suspects were released. Four men were convicted of rape and two were convicted for instigating the rape. The court cited lack of evidence for acquitting the other eight men (Human Rights Foundation, 2012).

The pressure from the international news community and human rights groups forced Pakistan to use the anti-terrorism court to ensure rapid results after the case received extensive coverage worldwide. The court case took place in the midst of negative international press against Pakistan and its lawless regions in 2002, just months after Daniel Pearl’s murder.

Pakistan's Chief Justice publicly condemned the rape and the Punjab Governor ordered an inquiry into the Panchayat's actions and possible police corruption. The special bench of the Supreme Court criticized police multiple times for their negligence in the investigation. The government of Pakistan awarded Mai 500,000 rupees (approximately 8,300 U.S. dollars) in compensation prior to the start of the trial.

On August 31, 2002, six men were sentenced to death, four for rape and two for being involved in the Panchayat. Eight men were released. Mai filed an appeal and on March 3, 2005, the Lahore High Court reversed the court's judgment on the basis of "insufficient evidence" and "faulty investigations." Five of the six men arrested were released. Mai filed another appeal to the Supreme Court of Pakistan — the highest court of law— but on April 21, 2011, the Court upheld the Lahore High Court decision. The court blamed Mai for "triple presumption of innocence." The Supreme Court questioned Mai on numerous accounts of her ability to correctly identify her rapists since the rape occurred during the night, the weight of her testimony was also questioned and the eight-day delay in reporting the incident to the police were used as evidence of against her. The court also refused to attach accomplice liability to the other council members of the crowd of 200 to 250 people that the court records acknowledge, were present at the time of the incident. The court used lack of evidence to uphold the decision (Human Rights Foundation, 2012).

Today, all but one rapist is free, while Mai has moved on with her life. She runs a girls' school and a non-governmental organization for abused women that she started with her compensation money and generous donations from aid agencies around the world (Mai, 2007).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Research regarding media coverage of rape and rape victims within United States has been largely focused on African American women or white women. Outside the United States, especially in developing countries like India and Pakistan, media coverage of rape victims differs greatly. Even though numerous studies have conducted research on how American media portray developing countries in news coverage, there is a dearth of research surrounding media coverage specifically targeting rape and rape victims from developing countries. Therefore it is important to understand five key elements in this study: the way American media cover news from developing countries, the relationship between American media and the coverage of rape and rape victims, voices from Indian feminism, the stance of Muslim feminists and the religious myths surrounding rape in both Hinduism and Islam that play an important part in determining how society views these crimes and how they ultimately are covered in the news (Zhang & Meadows, 2012).

#### Third World Coverage and Determinants of International News Coverage in U.S. Media

The Western media, and particularly the United States, has long been accused of ignoring and distorting the image of Third World countries. In recent decades, Third World nations have demanded “a balanced international news flow and a positive coverage of developing and underdeveloped nations” (Chang et al., 1987). Even though Third World countries account for nearly three quarters of the world’s population, they receive minimal news space and coverage.

Critics argue that Western news media “treat Third World nations in a negative manner, thus reinforcing stereotypes against those countries” (Chang, et al., 1987, p. 397).

Galtung and Ruge (1965) suggest that events tend to become news if they meet the following conditions: frequency, threshold, intensity, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, predictability, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, and relevance to elite nations, elite people, persons, or something negative. In the case of India and Pakistan and particularly in reference to Mai and Pandey, three conditions mentioned above meet the criteria that makes their respective cases newsworthy. Firstly, frequency is a critical factor, the rate at which violence against women is committed in India and Pakistan leads to a constant flow of news that is centered on injustices against women and the patriarchal structure that is dominant in both societies. Secondly, both Mai and Pandey’s cases are unexpected from the usual cases that occur daily. Mai, being a woman, stood up and raised a voice against the tribal council something no Pakistani woman had done before. In Pandey’s case, the brutality of the crime — a metal rode was forcefully inserted in her rectum leaving her intestines hanging out— caused a national outcry for tougher rape laws. And lastly, both cases shed light on the negative treatment of rape victims, rape and women in general in India and Pakistan. Gans (1979) argues that societal values will come into play when journalists decide which international events should get covered and subsequently be given more space and time.

Other critics of U.S. media coverage such as Shoemaker et al. argue, “deviance underlies many of the indicators of newsworthiness in international events coverage” (Chang et al., 1987, p. 399). The more deviant an international event is, the more likely it is to be covered in the U.S. mass media. Their research reveals two important deviance scales that serve as important predictors of the coverage of international events in the U.S.: (a) potential for social change

deviance — the extent to which the event threatens the status quo in the country in which the event occurs; and (b) normative deviance — the extent to which the event, if it occurred in the United States, would have broken U.S. norms.

Research reveals that international news coverage falls under two categories: context oriented versus event oriented. The context-oriented perspective looks at the origin of foreign news and its relation to factors such as economic relations, cultural similarity, political affiliation, social distance, and geographical proximity. The assumption is that foreign news coverage is determined by the context, both national and international in which the news events occur. The event-oriented perspective sheds light on the fact that some characteristics are inherent in foreign events, such as the degree of deviance and the negative nature of events, tend to determine whether a foreign news event will be covered in the mass media (Chang et al., 1987).

#### Definitions of Rape and U.S. Media's Role in Covering Sex Crimes

Rape and sexual assault remain among the most under reported crimes, with over 60% of those cases against women particularly left unreported (Brody, 2011; McBride, 2002; Rennison, 2002; Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network). The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) defines rape as “forced sexual intercourse including both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means penetration by the offender[s].” This includes gang rapes, verbal threats of rape and both heterosexual and homosexual rape.

Sexual assault on the other hand is defined as “a wide range of victimizations, separate from rape or attempted rape. These crimes include attacks or attempted attacks generally

involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender” (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics). Collins (2000) agrees that sex crimes are committed with the intent of making victims submit to their attacker’s will by making them submissive, passive and stripping them of their will to resist. Rape therefore according to several feminist theories is a “violent manifestation of the systems of subordination and domination that are prevalent in the society” (Moorti, 2002, p. 5). This practice of domination is highly reflective of the hegemony theory. Like the broad hegemonic theory suggests, masculinity is not imposed on the gender order, but gains control by prescribing its ideals as the norm in society (Howson, 2006).

A recent government survey of domestic violence and rape in the U.S. reveals that one out of every five women in the U.S. has suffered attempted or complete rape (Rabin, 2011). The Council on Women and Girls actually estimates that the number of unreported rape has increased over the years. Women are afraid, embarrassed and intimidated by the devastating crime they endured, thus they will never report the crime if they suspected their names might be released to the public (Lotozo, 2003). Callie Rennison, an associate professor at the University of Colorado, Denver and former statistician for the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics, states that “rape is the only crime in which victims have to explain that they didn’t want to be victimized” (as cited by Brody, 2011).

Brody (2011) also links the women’s reluctance to report the crime due to the fact that the legal system and sometimes the media treat them as liars until they are proven innocent. The distrust of the authenticity of rape allegations is not new, as women have been historically been portrayed as liars just so men could assume an innocent position (Yarbrough & Bennett, 2000). Reinert (2004) says that if it is problematic for American women to establish credibility in these cases, the situation is even more difficult for non-American women.

Rape victims are thus the most victimized victims in crime cases, as they are victimized first by their violator and then a second time once they report the crime to authorities (Brody, 2011; Madigan & Gamble, 1991). Madigan and Gamble (1991) refer to this as “second rape” (p. 5). Magowan (2002) in her article “The Shame of Rape” argues that:

The policy of hiding the rape survivor makes the media complicit in shaming and stigmatizing her. It reinforces the myth that women are too weak, traumatized and tainted to decide whether they want to tell their own stories — of victory, not victimhood. And this assumption becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. (Magowan, 2002, para. 9)

In her article, Magowan, contrasts the news coverage of Erica Pratt (a 7-year-old girl who was kidnapped and chewed through duct tape to escape) with that of Tamara Brooks and Jacqueline Marris (two teenage girls who devised a plan to stab their abductor who threatened to kill them). Magowan points out that while Erica Pratt was featured on front page newspapers and was hailed as *Time* magazine’s “Person of the Week,” Brooks and Marris became the center of a lopsided media coverage once the media found out that they were victims of sexual assault and rape.

The lopsided coverage was especially disorienting because early in the story, the girls’ identities were broadcast everywhere — constantly — as a means of saving their lives. The idea was to familiarize as many Americans as possible with the girls’ names and faces so that average citizens might assist in tracking them, and their kidnapper, down. And it worked. But once the teens went from being kidnapped youths to rescued rape survivors, their status changed. They were branded with the Scarlet R. They had been raped. It was suddenly better for them, and us, to contemplate this shame without fanfare. (Magowan, 2002, para. 7)

Overholser is of the opinion that withholding a rape victim’s name obscures the violent nature of rape, and prevents the eradication of the crime (Lotozo, 2003). Johnson (1999) postulates that one of the important functions of media is to inform and educate people about issues such as rape. Rape gained importance as an issue of policy only in the 1970s, and the women’s movement of the 1970s as well as media coverage are credited for playing a role in

legitimizing the importance of the issue, and redefining sexual violence as a public and not private problem (Chermak, 2010; Moorti, 2002).

The amount of influence of media on public opinion is still unknown, but it is acknowledged that media does have an influence on society and can influence the decision-making process, by creating awareness in policy makers of crime victims' grievances (Chermak, 2010; Park, 2001). The media's ability to publicly legitimize an issue stems from the fact that they amplify issues by reporting them to a large group (Schudson, 1995).

Though U.S. media has played an important role in promoting the cause of rape victims, the coverage, both locally and internationally leaves a lot to be desired for, in terms of policies and media practices that need to be sensitive to rape victims and their plight. Furthermore an understanding of local feminist movements within India and Pakistan is important to understand how and why rape victims are treated the way they are in India and Pakistan.

Third World and Spivak (1988)

#### *Indian Feminist Thought*

Indian feminist thought has evolved since the 1990s and has grown to include major research areas and important articles that define, frame and consolidate the meaning of feminism within India. Scholarship on patriarchal oppression, the women's movement and critical assessment of feminist intervention are pivotal areas that offer insight into a different brand of feminism than the West.

Indian feminists such as Madhu Kishwar refuse to associate themselves with the term feminism because it is "too tied up with its western origins, from where universal agendas emanate which are inapplicable elsewhere" (1991, p. 8). While Kishwar's analysis associates

western feminism with a certain power that has always been associated with it, her analysis does not provide justice to Indian feminism or contribute to western feminism, if anything it makes for even more confusing conclusions. The label of “being westernized” comes as a something that one cannot free oneself from. Furthermore, post-colonialists such as Spivak argue that “progressive” Western intellectuals such as Foucault and Deleuze offer gross universalizations when they speak on behalf of the Third World “masses” (1988, p. 272-274). In an influential essay titled “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points out how, by focusing on widow-sacrifice (sati) in colonial India, the British move to abolish the practice, which was justified on the basis of the British “civilizing mission” in India (a move which Spivak captures in the now famous phrase: “White men saving brown women from brown men” (1988, p. 297)). She contrasts this position with the then dominant Hindu one, which excused the practice by arguing that the widows wanted to die. Spivak indicates how each representation legitimizes the other: one purports to be a social mission, saving Hindu women from their own men, the other a reward, allowing the women to commit a “pure” and “courageous” act. But all the while, the widow's own voice is ignored (Spivak, 1988).

Kishwar (1991) believes that shunning western labels is required to attain a greater sense of freedom. However, the 1970s saw a new phase of Indian feminism that came through the women's movement that in an effort to separate themselves from western feminists, relied on the use of Hindu and Sanskrit iconography and communal ideologies to be able to address issues specific within India.

### *Pakistani Feminism*

Pakistan is a Muslim patriarchal society, where a feminist interpretation of Islam has not really developed. Furthermore, feminism in Pakistan has not yet been defined and loosely refers

to fighting for women's rights (Women Living Under Muslim Laws, 1997). Even though Muslim feminist scholars such as Amina Wadud have challenged male-dominated interpretations of Islam, their work has largely been ignored within Pakistan.

In order to understand the feminist framework in Pakistan's context, it is critical to shed light on the Islamization era under the dictatorship of Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988). Many characterize it as the most repressive period for women and argue that the imposition of these laws undid much that had been achieved in terms of women's rights until then. The imposition of Islamic laws promoted the view that women should stay inside their homes especially among middle class families, a popular slogan of that era was *chador* and *char dewari* referring to the fact that women should cover themselves and stay within the four walls of a house. Activist Farida Shaheed says that the laws created "an atmosphere in the country whereby all males became the judge of a woman's modesty and status in society" (Mughal, 2011, p. 6).

Therefore, it is not uncommon today for men to be moral judges of a woman's character and honor. The feudalistic and tribal culture is deeply rooted in tradition of honor justice or honor killing usually referred to as *karo kari*. In rural areas of Pakistan, the conduct of a woman is to be regulated and judged by men and transgressing those boundaries results in severe consequences.

Pakistan accounts for 25% of all honor killings in the world (Ali, 2001, p. 9). According to Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in 2000, there were 410 killings in Sindh, a consistently rising trend over the years – 432 in 1993, 776 in 1994, 864 in 1995, 864 in 1996, 750 in 1997, 800 in 1998 and 886 in 1999. In 2002, it was about 823, 938 in 2003, and around 1200 in 2004. According to official statistics in 2006, as many as 1261 women were murdered in the name of honor in Pakistan. But unofficially, it is believed that the number is much higher, because

according to some reports, up to 70% of the cases are not reported since close family members or villagers are involved in these killings (Ali, 2001).

Typically honor killing occurs when a male family member kills the “deviant female” in an attempt to restore family honor. In Mai’s case, she was used as an object to restore “honor” of the Mastoi clan. Women in these feudalistic communities are used as a commodity, bought or sold to settle disputes and pay off debts. Typically honor killing is associated with a girl’s alleged involvement in an illicit affair or sexual encounter outside of marriage that results in the loss of virginity, or pregnancy or her socialization with males outside the immediate family. Honor killing can be used as excuse to get rid of a wife that the husband no longer is interested in. As Mai explains:

For them [Mastois], a woman is simply an object of possession, honor, or revenge. They marry or rape them according to their conception of tribal pride. They know a woman humiliated in that way has no other recourse except suicide. They don’t even need to use their weapons. Rape kills her. (Mai, 2006, p. 10)

Data from Amnesty International reveals that the highest number of honor killings was perpetrated in Punjab province followed by Sindh, the north-west frontier province, and the southwestern province of Baluchistan (Amnesty International, 1999). Statistics from 2001 reveal that on average, two women are killed every day in Pakistan for what they deem as “defiling the family honor” (Ali, 2001, p. 8). Reasons for honor killing are not restricted to perceived sexual relations between men and women; it extends to marrying a man by choice, seeking divorce or not bringing enough dowry. A rape victim may also be killed for defiling the honor code since it is widely perceived that the woman would have provoked the man. Basically any action deemed by the family or village as bringing dishonor to the family or village becomes an excuse to use violence against women (Ali, 2001).

Mediterranean societies such as Jordan and Morocco have extensive scholarly work on the notion of honor, but in Pakistan, the sensitivity of the topic and the cultural insecurity of reporting such crimes has allowed for scant research into the area (Shain & Franiuk, 2011). The failure of the government to punish the perpetrators and condemn these practices has led to an increasing number of crimes committed against women. Cultural theorists believe that the post 9/11 era brought about a social, cultural and religious upheaval in Pakistan. International scrutiny of Pakistan's role in hiding and funding religious terrorist organizations allowed fundamental religious organizations to be skeptical of Western notions of freedom and rights of women. These factors play a vital role in understanding the plight of women and the rights they are denied (Shain & Franiuk, 2011).

The media was “manipulated, monopolized, and managed with strict censorship” during the Zia era (Kothari, 1997, p. 7). Activists such as Khawar Mumtaz (1987) argue that Zia’s campaign against obscenity and pornography that resulted in restrictions on women in the media was not targeted to prevent obscenity but was an attempt to promote more domesticated images of women. Historian Ayesha Jalal argues that many middle and upper class women in fact supported Zia’s Islamization. She says,

With a few notable exceptions of symbolic dissent—for instance refusal to accept the institution of arranged marriage, or the defiant pursuit of a professional career—most women drawn from these social segments have chosen the path of least resistance. (Kandiyoti, 1991, p. 80)

Other analysts such as Amy Weiss, Shaheed, and Mumtaz, argue that although the Islamization created legal and social challenges and unprecedented discrimination against women, the Zia period saw an increase in the women’s involvement in the public sphere. The increase in women’s involvement in the public sphere can partly be attributed to the Hudood

Ordinances. The Hudood Ordinances (1979) were a set of six ordinances that attempted to Islamize criminal law. The laws provided for criminal offences to be tried on the grounds of *hadd* punishments laid out in the Quran and *sunnah*, and *tazir*, which allowed the court to decide on the form and measurement of the punishment. The changes made by the Hudood Ordinances were discriminatory against women in many ways, most importantly, the new laws required evidence of four adult male witness for the crime of *zina* (sexual intercourse outside of marriage) and *zina bil jabr* (rape) to be liable to *hadd* punishment. In this way, cases of rape were turned around against the victim—particularly in rural areas where literacy rate was lower than in cities. Rather than the victim's perpetrators being charged for rape, she herself would be convicted for adultery. Furthermore, Zia's imposition of directives on Islamic dress created an active discourse between women's activist groups and orthodox interpretations of the Quran (Mughal, 2011).

Sabiha Sumar, a Pakistani writer argues that:

...the concept of rape as defined in the zina ordinance defies a basic biological fact that a woman can not rape a man. Rape laws all over the world carry a certain bias against women and the accused is often freed on the grounds that the woman may have seduced him. But since seduction implies consent on the man, as opposed to rape which is pure force, a woman can not be termed a rapist. Yet, ours is the only country where a woman can actually be punished for raping a man. (Mughal, 1997, p. 4)

In Pakistan, the structure of patriarchy has been justified by invoking Islamic doctrine. The current use of Islam has been reduced to deprive all women of their rights, regardless of class, religious and ethnic identity. While it is clear that Islam is being legitimized by men to exercise power over women, it is unclear why women have not raised a voice and demanded more modern interpretations of Islam to be applied to Pakistani society.

### *Relationship between Media and Rape Victims*

Rape and sexual assault crimes occur all across the world, irrespective of race, color or socio-economic status. Victims of rape and sexual assaults are usually women and while media coverage of such cases has increased over the years, the quality must be improved (Flanders, 1991). Studies show that most sex crime victims tend to keep their rape a secret from the authorities because they fear the identification by the media, and the way in which the media will portray them in the coverage (Brody, 2011; Lotozo, 2003).

### Rape Myths

Edwards et al. (2011) note that “rape ideologies emanate from a patriarchal system.” Research reveals that patriarchy and the status of women around the world are strongly linked to cultural and religious ties (Albee and Perry, 1998; Starr, 1991). It is debatable whether religion has a direct or indirect effect on laws depending on how secular or religious a country is. But it is widely believed that religion is a powerful instrument that influences lawmakers and eventually results in the treatment of women as second-class citizens worldwide (Shain & Franiuk, 2011).

The status of women is further dictated by the interpretation of religious texts and passages through a male dominant perspective. Feminist scholars argue that religious texts must be interpreted in the context in which they were written to make sense of the intent behind certain social and moral laws (An-Na’im, 1995; Scott, 2009). Furthermore, religious texts promote women in themes such as family honor, marriage and female chastity, therefore it is easy to blame women and label their actions inappropriate when they are acting outside of their prescribed roles. As Franiuk and Shain (2011) argue, it becomes

easy to see how expectations that a women's body is owned by a man or that a wife has certain sexual obligations to her husband contribute to myths that excuse men's rape of women. (p. 784)

India and Pakistan are both heavily religious societies and religion plays a vital role in establishing daily attitudes, social conduct and expectations. Therefore it is important to understand the rape myths surrounding Hinduism and Islam that have shaped interpretations and the status of women in these societies.

### Islam and Rape Myths

Islamic religious leaders (*ulema*) often hold authority and influence law in a way that is not understood in most Western countries (King, 2009). Since 96% of Pakistan's population is Muslim, sexist interpretations of Quran and *hadith* are routinely used to dictate appropriate dress code and prescribed behavior for women (Temperman, 2007). Scholars believe that the overlap of state and religion is common in Islamic and Hindu states. Muslim feminist scholars such as Amina Wadud have tried to reinterpret Quranic verses against women and wife beatings but their voices have largely been ignored. Much has been written about the link between Islam and the poor status of women (e.g., Badawi, 1994; Denmark, 2004; Engineer, 1992). Although Islamic countries vary in the way they allow religion to overlap with the state, it is noted that countries with looser religion/ state ties have better human rights (Temperman, 2007).

Family honor and strict adherence to moral behavior is common in most countries where Islam is the dominant religion. More importantly most Islamic countries follow Sharia law, which is derived from the Quran, believed to be the literal word of Allah, the words of Prophet Muhammad in the *hadith*, and the behavior of Muhammad in the *sunnah*, often governs the rights of men and women in Islamic countries, both informally and through legislation (An-

Naim, 1995). While there is a debate as to what extent the norms and laws governing women are accurate reflection of Islamic dogma, many scholars claim that Quran regards men and women as equals arguing that the advent of Islam brought about a positive change in the status and treatment of women (Badawi 1994; King 2009). The reality however is different since men have maintained authority in interpreting the words of the Quran and often dismissed voices supporting women's rights (Shaaban 1995). The lower status of women in countries where Islam is the state religion is well documented (e.g. King 2009) but many scholars believe that Quran and Islam have been wrongly used to justify male dominance and power to maintain the subjugation of women (Afkhami, 1995; Afshar, 1985; Denmark, 2004; Western, 2008).

A study by Muganyizi et al. (2010) of 1500 adults in Tanzania revealed that “Muslim identification was associated with more victim blame reactions to a rape victim than identification with other religions” (Franiuk & Shain, 2011, p. 784). Many researchers cite passages from the Quran such 4:34: “Men are appointed the guardians over women...so virtuous women are obedient and safeguard, with Allah’s help. Admonish those of them on whose part you apprehend disobedience, and leave them alone in their beds and chastise them” (Translation, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan). The phrase “chastise them” is often replaced by “beat them” (Douki et al. 2003, p. 168). Feminist voices that question male interpretations of the Quran, *hadith*, and *sunnah* have often been ignored and considered inaccurate and radical by the male dominated clergy (Bullock, 2002).

In most Islamic countries and in Pakistan particularly, a woman's sexual purity and family honor is of utmost importance. There are numerous phrases in Urdu and Arabic that speak about the honor of women, for example, “a man’s honor lies between the legs of a woman” (Vandello & Cohen 2003, p. 998). Many sexual behaviors including rape are considered as

“dishonoring” family and social status (Beyer, 1999). Regardless of the veracity of a woman’s claim to rape, she is viewed as having brought dishonor to the family due to *zina* — having sexual relations outside of marriage (Weaver, 2007). Haeri (1995) discusses how the rape of a woman robs the man (the father or husband of the victim) of his honor and to restore the honor and instead of punishing the rapist, the victim is often killed or punished in a brutal way.

Although the Quran clearly rejects notions surrounding murder and honor killing, it is explicit in its punishment for *zina* (Badawi 1994). In the Quran 24:2-5, “Flog the adulteress and the adulterer, each one of them, with a hundred stripes.” While this verse only mentions adultery, it is often used to include all kinds of sexual behavior outside of marriage (Badawi, 1994). The tragedy in these instances is that regardless of force, the rape is seen as act of sexual activity outside the institution of marriage. Kohat (2002), points out that women in Pakistan who report their case are eventually sentenced to death according to *Hudood* laws. Further more, Kohat (2002) points out that these women are not killed by the state but instead spend years in state prisons where they sometimes go through physical and sexual trauma at the hands of corrupt police officials (Kohat, 2002).

In most Muslim cultures like Pakistan, rape victims are mistreated and their voice is rarely heard. The patriarchal mindset blames the victim for inciting the rape through her immodest behavior, provocative dress or acting improperly. Shain and Franiuk (2011) believe there are few myths in the Quran that promote the idea that women ask to be raped. The Quran 24:31 directs that “believing women to restrain their looks... and should not disclose any part of their beauty or their adornments save to their husbands or fathers.” The Quran 33:59 further tells women to dress modestly and “pull down their outer cloaks from their heads over their faces... so that they will not be molested.” In 2006, a top Muslim cleric in Australia said about the rape

of women who do not wear the hijab “If you take out uncovered meat and place it outside on the street, or in the park, or in the garden or in the park, or in the backyard without a cover, and the cats come and eat it... whose fault is it, the cats or the uncovered meat?” (“Ethinic leaders,” 2006, para 4). In other words, it is the woman’s responsibility to cover herself modestly and not incite and invite the lusty eyes of men onto her.

In Pakistan however, much of the public backlash against Islam and rape is based on the Hudood Ordinance. The Hudood Ordinances were made into law by the military dictatorship under Zia ul-Haq in 1979 in an attempt to Islamize existing Pakistani law and bring it in conjunction to Sharia laws (Kennedy, 1988). Furthermore, these changes made by the Hudood ordinances were discriminatory against women in many ways. The ordinances set specific guidelines for the determination and punishment of *zina* (sex outside marriage) and *zina-bil-jabr* (rape). The law required a female rape victim to produce four male witnesses to support her claim (Weaver, 2007). If she is unable to produce the witnesses, she is guilty of *zina*. Furthermore, courts often dismiss claims of rape accusing the women of trying to prevent dishonoring the family with illicit sexual relations, thus falsely claiming to have been raped (Kennedy, 2007). The ordinances also eliminated marital rape as a crime (Weaver, 2007). In 2006, under much pressure from human rights organizations and feminist rights organizations in Pakistan, female rape victims were no longer required to produce four male witnesses. While human rights organizations saw this is a positive step towards women’s right, Islamic fundamentalists opposed these changes as “acting against Islam” (“Pakistan lawmakers,” 2006, para. 3). According to an Amnesty International report, more than one third of all Pakistani women in prison are being held due to having been accused or found guilty of *zina*. Although

95 % of the prisoners charged for *zina* are released upon trial, they face years of incarceration before trial and suffer various forms of emotional, physical and sexual torture (Agarwal, 2008).

### Hinduism and Rape Myths

Unlike Islam, which focuses primarily on one guiding text, Hinduism relies on numerous texts to establish the guiding principles of a Hindu's life. While this makes it easier to establish and find rape myths and the status of women as inferior, it poses a problem in terms of contradictions spread in multiple texts. It also makes it difficult to gauge as to what degree each text is influential.

Hinduism originated in India around 1500 BCE and was a male-dominated and family-centric religion (Sugirtharajah, 1994). It has been documented that women have a low status in countries where Hinduism is prominent (Human Rights Watch, 2011). In the Vedic period in Hinduism, women are clearly given a lower status than men (Sugirtharajah, 1994) in the *Brahma* texts men's value and women's inferiority is emphasized especially during pregnancy and menstruation (Sugirtharajah, 1994). The Dharma Sastras clearly justify patriarchy by accusing women of evil (Narasimhan-Madhavan, 2006).

Although women are usually given a lower status in Hindu texts, Hindu goddesses can have desirable characteristics. *Shakti* —meaning power— is often seen as a positive example for women, she is seen as the representation of female cosmic forces and sexual energy. Shakti gives women unrestrained (and dangerous) sexual energy until they are united with a man (Narasimhan-Madhavan, 2006). Some women believe that Shakti empowers them after violence

(Oldenburg, 2007). But it is easy to see how men can view this as a threat and thus feel the need to control female sexuality.

In various texts, including the Ramayana, men are warned, “as soon as a woman sees a handsome man, her vulva becomes moist.” Rape myths such as “women enjoy rape” and “women ask to be raped” are as much common in Indian culture as they are in Pakistani culture. In the Upanishads, the following passage essentially sanctions rape when a woman does not consent to a man’s wishes “[i]f she should not grant him his desire, he should bribe her. If she still does not grant him his desire, he should hit her with a stick or with his hand, and over come her” (Pinkham 1941, p. 68).

According to & Franiuk & Shain (2011), “to dismiss a rape, one could say that a women’s strong sexual desire indicates that she wanted sex or that a man would not be expected to restrain himself given a women’s *Shakti*” (p. 787). Stories in sacred Hindu texts often include stories that reflect men’s capture, rape and eventual marriage of their female captors (Philipose, 2005). In 2005, in Delhi a man on trial for rape appealed to the court to allow him to marry his victim. The judge eventually considered the request and allowed the victim to choose. Indian law does not recognize marital rape as a crime (unless the bride is under 15) and considers it a step towards nullifying or restoring the loss of honor (Pandey, 2013). In India and Pakistan both, forced sexual relations in marriage is less likely to be categorized as rape than having sexual ties with an acquaintance or stranger. These effects are stronger in India and Pakistan than in Western cultures (Kanekar, 2007).

Indian and Pakistani cultures are similar in placing a high value on sexual purity and burdening the woman in maintaining honor. Research shows that women in India and Pakistan are reluctant to report rape cases in fear of being characterized as “loose women.” Furthermore it

is proven that rape myths are more consistently applied in India and Pakistan than in Western countries where women have a higher status and female chastity is less important (Kanekar, 2007).

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

A content analysis of two leading American newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, was performed in order to analyze the coverage of Mukhtar Mai and Jyoti Singh Panday's case. Despite declining number of publications and recent claims that newspapers will soon be an outdated medium, newspapers were used for this study because Scott (2009, p. 535) affirms, that they "remain a distinct and important source of influence for its citizens." A foreign country's positive or negative image in the U.S. media can exert considerable influence on public attitudes toward that country (McNelly & Izcaray, 1986). This is why U.S. newspapers were chosen for the study rather than other Western newspapers. For example, Wanta and his colleagues (2004) examined whether U.S. news coverage of foreign nations was able to influence perceptions of other nations, and whether valence (positive or negative) in news reports had an influence on evaluations of the countries. They found that increased negative coverage of a nation resulted in more negative attitudes toward the country. Kiousis and Wu (2008) also found that media coverage was associated with U.S. public attitudes toward foreign countries. Specifically, the U.S. public formed greater negative perceptions of a country due to increased negative media coverage (Zhang & Meadows, 2012).

In particular, U.S. media was chosen over other western media, because of two reasons. Firstly, India and Pakistan are two integral U.S. allies, even though the two countries (India and Pakistan) have fought several wars amongst them, and consider each other enemies; it is vital to study how U.S. media frames the countries it considers its close allies. Secondly, Pakistan's involvement in fighting the War on Terror and post 9/11 image was widely publicized in U.S. media garnering a tarnished reputation for Islam and Pakistan while India's escalation into the

world's largest democracy was celebrated in U.S. mainstream media.

A total of 167 articles were used in this study. *New York Times* published 50 articles on Mai from June 2, 2002 (when the case first surfaced in the media) to June 2, 2012 (one week after the final verdict of the case). *Washington Post* published four articles in the same time frame. *New York Times* published 85 articles on Pandey from December 16, 2012 to February 16, 2013 whereas the *Washington Post* wrote 28 articles in the same time frame. News briefs from *Associated Press* (AP) and *Reuters* were eliminated from the sample because they do not represent the coverage and views of the publications respectively. Blogs associated with the newspapers, editorials, debates and columns were used to understand the how the stories were covered. Articles were chosen even if they mentioned Mai and Pandey in a cursory manner.

The articles were selected from the two major newspapers with circulation above 200,000. These articles were coded for length, frequency, descriptions in articles, focus of the articles and nature of the reports, especially checking for positive and negative comments in relation to the cultures of India and Pakistan. The articles were also coded for themes such as poverty, cultural depictions, social class, gender and how the media used these issues in framing Mai and Pandey's case.

This qualitative study borrows from Spivak's argument (1988) where she suggests that a woman, the 'other' in this case, cannot arrive at a sense of self without reproducing imperialist constructions. She writes, "no perspective critical of imperialism can turn the Other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always historically refracted what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other that consolidates the imperialist self" (Spivak, 1988, p. 28). The articles were coded for their references to India and Pakistan and the subsequent references made to Mai and Pandey as Pakistani and Indian.

The search for the content analysis was conducted by using the websites for both the publications as well as using the database *LexisNexis* to check if any of the articles may have been missed. Search terms used for the Mai's case were "Mukhtar Mai," "Pakistan gang rape" and "Meerwala rape." The search terms allowed generalized articles on other rape cases in Pakistan, those articles were not used. If articles mentioned Mukhtar Mai and the rape, only then they were included in the content analysis. For Pandey's case the search terms used were "Indian rape victim," "Jyoti Singh Pandey" and "Delhi rape victim." Since Indian law prohibits naming the victim of rape, the generalized search terms were used to yield results.

### Frame Analysis

Frame analysis was used in analyzing the data for this study. A frame can be described as "a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration" (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, & Ghanem, 1991). Domingo and Heinonen (2008) refer to frames as "conceptual tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret, and evaluate information."

Recent studies on climate change have indicated how frames are used selectively to add, eliminate or use information in a certain way. According to Entman (1993) "framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52). Journalists have often been accused of framing news particularly from Third World countries and cultures different from their own, this framing usually takes the form of

perpetuating misconceptions about foreign cultures and creating stereotypes to make the events more general and out of context.

Frames are core elements of every culture, although their presence is often subtle. Framing a culture allows stereotypes to breed and forces other audiences to view the culture through a closed lens. For Reese (2001) “frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (p. 299). Researchers such as Goffman (1974) believe that culture relies on frames to function, and that people can be trained to be sensitive to frames depending on their cultural background and depending on the persistence of the frame. Entman (2009) refers to this phenomenon as “cultural stock of frames.” Journalists use this type of framing to convey a certain message.

For researchers and journalists, an understanding of frames allows them to understand the power of a communicating text by allowing to define problems, identify the cause(s) and effect(s) and ultimately suggest solutions to those problems (Entman, 1993). Furthermore, the power of a text can be analyzed by the effect it has on an audience. Iorio and Huxman (1996) believe that the way information is structured undoubtedly affects cognitive processing. Gruber (1988) agrees that mass media packages news items in specific ways to generate specific meanings.

Zhondang and Kosicki (1993) recommend that news texts be regarded “as a system of organized signifying elements that both indicate the advocacy of certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing of the texts” (p. 55-56). While news media usually uses frames of “powerlessness,” audience members rely on frames of “human impact” and “moral value” (Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992).

Frames have an effect on the way we view the world around us. Gitlin (1980) describes frames as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse” (p. 7). Frames are therefore used by media, media professionals and their audiences to make sense of relevant events around them. By framing stories, cultures and profiles, media force audiences to understand important and relevant issues of their time (Baran & Davis, 2006; Gamson & Mogdigliani, 1989; Reese, Gandy & Grant, 2003).

The framing analysis is important as a method of analysis because it allows researchers to observe how media uses frames; it also allows researchers to observe how media uses power and influence to dominate ideas in a society (Tucker, 1998).

Another reason why frame analysis is valuable in analyzing the data for this study is because as Entman (1993) posits it allows the discovery of particular aspects of reality that are ignored or emphasized.

The newspaper articles selected for content analysis in the study will be analyzed using the four functions of frames (Entman, 1993; Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Tucker, 2008)

- a. Defining problems
- b. Diagnosing causes
- c. Evaluating actions
- d. Prescribing solutions

It is important to understand the U.S. media framing of India and Pakistan since how U.S. media cover the world — or ignore it — has been the focus of political and scholarly interest for nearly half a century. Particularly, the U.S. media plays a uniquely influential role in shaping

world opinion about foreign countries and culture and consequentially, foreign policy and international relations.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

A total of 167 articles from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were analyzed for both cases. The analysis highlighted several themes that were prevalent in the coverage of both the cases.

#### *Modern society vs. Traditional culture*

In analyzing the articles from the *New York Times* as well as *The Washington Post*, culture was used as an integral tool to help place the story in context. Journalists from both the newspapers explained the patriarchal structure and dogmas in place in both Indian and Pakistani society. While Indian society was generally portrayed in a transient mode, evolving from traditional to adapting modern ways of life, Pakistani society and culture were always portrayed as conservative and backward. A considerable number of articles in the *New York Times* portray India as “smartphone wielding, English-speaking, fast-growing democracy that prefers macchiatos to masala chai” (Khan, 2013, para. 1), on numerous occasions, India is referred to as “the world’s largest democracy.”

*The Washington Post* in an article titled “How India’s rapid changes are putting women at risk,” by Miranda Kennedy writes that “flush with the freedoms of the new India, many of its citizens have left traditional village life, but have not found a new set of ethics in urban areas” (Kennedy, 2013, para. 2). Both, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* use education, technology and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as markers of “urban” and “young” India.

In contrast to these images of urban India, both newspapers acknowledge the deep-rooted male chauvinistic culture that is parallel to the “emerging educated middle class.” Through their reporting, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* try to perpetuate that traditional culture and values clash with modernity and that modernity must be embraced to be considered a civilized nation. These words from a *Washington Post* story sum how both newspapers have framed India as embracing its new modernity:

India’s entrance onto the world stage has led to confusion about sexuality, morality and tradition. The rules are in flux, and no one is quite sure what is acceptable. “Sex and the City” reruns play on one Indian channel, half-dressed Bollywood divas pant into the camera on another, and a swami leads a fervent Hindu prayer on the next. None of these cultural influences were available even a generation ago: Until 1991, the only TV channels were state-run. Few Indians travelled outside the country for vacation or work or interacted with non-Indians. (Kennedy, 2013, para. 17)

The *New York Times* the *Washington Post* balance Indian reporting by providing the modern as well as traditional contrast to Indian culture. Pakistani culture on the other hand is painted incorrectly as one dimensional, completely traditional and primitive.

A *Washington Post* article published on April 21, 2011 reporting on the Supreme Court ruling of Mai reads “[t]he case exposed to the world a side of Pakistan’s tribal culture in which women are often punished harshly for affairs or sold as brides to settle disputes or compensate for the perceived sins of their relatives” (Constable, 2011, para. 3). Pakistani culture is routinely characterized as “traditional” and Pakistanis are often portrayed as illiterate. In a *Washington Post* article, Boustany describes Meerwala in these words:

Most of the residents of Meerwala, Mukhtar’s village in eastern Pakistan, eke out a living picking cotton or chopping woods for landowners. Harvests and cotton-picking season conflict with the school year, so most girls and boys—and the men and the women—are illiterate. (Boustany, 2005, para. 5)

Nicholas D. Kristof, a *New York Times* journalist who has written a lot about Mukhtar in his column, routinely points out Mai's illiteracy. Almost all stories from the *New York Times*, refer to the "illiteracy that is rampant in Pakistan," the Jirga or tribunal council is mentioned in all articles. The *Jirga* is seen as a parallel judicial system run by tribal chiefs that operates in contrast to civil laws. The decision of the *Jirga* which apparently ordered Mai's rape if another instance that directly sheds light on the traditional and savage nature of "Pakistan's rural tribal culture" (Constable, 2011, para. 7)

### *Role of Police*

In a number of articles, the *New York Times* along with the *Washington Post* commented on the corruption of police in India and Pakistan. The articles highlight the culture of bribery, poor pay structure and shoddy investigations that police undertake in cases where rape is reported. In the aftermath of Pandey's case, Indian police were portrayed in a negative light by the *Washington Post* as well as the *New York Times* but only a handful of articles from both newspapers mentioned that the police took more than half an hour to get to the scene and later argued under which jurisdiction the case fell under. Furthermore, the information regarding the delay by the police was not included by the journalist writing the story but was referenced to the interview given by the victim's friend who was present at the scene (Timmons & Vyawahare, 2013).

Nevertheless countless instances of negativity are present in both newspapers when describing the role of police in India. In a *New York Times* article titled "For Rape Victims in India, Police Are Often Part of the Problem" (2013) Harris reports "Indian police officers are few and poorly paid, and that makes them easily susceptible to corruption" (Harris, 2013, para.19).

The article reports in great detail the police to population ratio in India as “130 officers per 100,000 people” (Harris, 2013, para.19). He further highlights the police hierarchy system and the poor pay structure that force officers to accept bribes.

In the coverage of Pandey’s case, *The Washington Post* focused on the positive side of Indian police. The articles focused on the “swift and quick action by the police” and acknowledged that police cooperated in arresting the suspects. By including information such as “[t] he police took the victim’s testimony before her death and interviewed about 40 witnesses...” (Lakshmi, 2013, para. 11). *The Washington Post* was successful in depicting the Indian police as reliable and efficient. Other articles quote police sources that provide information about the suspects and that the police have charged the suspects under several charges. This sort of coverage paints a positive picture of Indian police. Only a handful of articles from *The Washington Post* acknowledged that “police manipulated evidence against the men accused of raping and killing a young woman in the Indian capital last month and even beat one suspect to extract a confession...” (Lakshmi, 2013, para. 1).

However, by including interviews and quotes from local residents in Delhi and other parts of India, the *New York Times*, in several articles such as “India’s Police Force Lags Much of the World” (2013), “The Unspeakable Truth about Rape in India” (2013), “Leaders’ Response Magnifies Outrage in India Rape Case” (2012), includes the general harassment, rudeness and distrust of police officials in the everyday life of Indians. Interviews reveal that Indians generally are not pleased with the role of police in providing protection and often feel threatened in reporting a rape case. An article in the *New York Times* focused on another rape case in India shed light on the how the police mistreated a victim when she reported the case (Mandhana, 2013). The victim’s sister acknowledges that “the police asked her to repeat the incident again

and again and in great detail” (Mandhana, 2013, para. 8), the victim felt as if she was “reliving the incident” (Mandhana, 2013, para. 9) the article is a sad reminder on the state of affairs, that eventually led the rape victim to kill herself and blaming the police for not taking action and believing her (Mandhana, 2013, para. 1).

Few articles in the *New York Times* use statistics to shed light on the fact that India has just “about 130 officers per 100,000 people” (Harris, 2013, para. 8). In a way, the *New York Times* offers a scientific explanation that the wide gap means that not all citizens can be duly protected.

In Mai’s case, Pakistani police are portrayed as corrupt and insensitive across the board in both newspapers. An article from the *New York Times*, titled “Seeing No Justice, a Rape Victim Chooses Death” Ian Fisher (2002) quotes a local police chief “every girl wants to be Mukhtar,” (Fisher, 2002, para. 10) paraphrasing the officer, Fisher adds that “most women want attention and money that have flowed Ms. Bibi’s (Mukhtar’s) way,” (Fisher, 2002, para. 11). Fisher writes, “police believe that money influences the course of justice” (Fisher, 2002, para. 11). In all the stories that were covered in Mai’s case, police were portrayed as uninterested in serving justice. A *Washington Post* article adds to this claim, “ police typically lack the resources and training – and often the motivation—to properly investigate rape” (Fisher, 2002, para. 28). Furthermore several stories such as “More from Mukhtar” (2006), “A Woman’s Work Earns Her Enemies” (2007) mention the threat Mai feels because of the police stationed outside her home, for her protection and the involvement of police in siding with the affluent feudals.

Missing from this reporting were statistics and the poor salary structure of Pakistani police officials. Both newspapers failed to acknowledge the poor pay structure of Pakistani police employees and failed to provide any argument that shed positive light on the police. In

Kristof's column for the *New York Times*, where Mai is routinely written about, police are often depicted in a negative light. The police only surface after citizens have taken some sort of stand or action by themselves. Kristof's column often tells the readers of the police involvement in cases of kidnapping and gang rapes, usually depicting the police as an equal criminal in the involvement of a crime, this was especially evident in the article "A Hero's Ordeal in Pakistan" (2009) and "Lay Off Thugs" (2006).

#### *Political and personal voices*

In the coverage following Mai's and Pandey's cases, local politics played a major part in determining the course of action the country would eventually take in dealing with the rape victim and laws. In Pandey's coverage, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* both included quotes from a wide range of politicians in India, including journalists, human rights activists and local people, regarding the incident. Articles that include these diverse voices include "India dramatically tightens laws on sexual assault, trafficking after gang rape" (2013), "Indian's debate role of juvenile crime laws in gang-rape cases" (2013) "Indian Women Celebrate 'Dented and Painted' Moniker" (2013). Except for three articles, two from the *New York Times* and one from the *Washington Post*, the newspapers avoided the mention of negative remarks in the press in the aftermath of Pandey's case. The *Washington Post* published an article on January 4, 2013 titled "Amid rape fiasco, India's leaders keep up insensitive remarks." The article lists down in a numbered list, eight instances where Indian leaders offered "insensitive and offensive remarks" (Khazan, 2013, para. 1) in regards to the rape case. The article is mostly comprised of quotes but is reflective of the values and mindset of the people, for example, the *Washington Post* article, quotes Abhijit Mukherjee (son of India's president) as referring to the

protesters as “highly dented and painted” women that go from “discos to demonstrations” (Khazan, 2013, para. 4). The remarks were targeted toward women that were wearing make up.

Although the *New York Times* did not dedicate two articles to the negative comments, it did mention Mukherjee’s comment and another comment by Banwari Lal Singhal (elected legislative member of Rajasthan), that appealed that girls should be banned from wearing skirts to school. His intention was quoted as “this demand is to keep girl students away from men’s lustful gazes and for their comfort in hot and cold weather conditions” adding that “its not a Talibani type of thinking or restriction on girl’s freedom or right but a concern for their safety” (Khazan, 2013, para. 7).

Other than these articles, both newspapers quoted Indian political figures as sensitive and willing to bring about a change in rape laws. The *New York Times* devoted one article entirely on the original text of the speech delivered by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The speech highlighted his sympathetic stance in which he promised swift measures against the perpetrators and vowed to make India a safe place for women. “As a father of three daughters myself, I feel strongly about this as each of you” (*New York Times*, 2012, para. 2) he is quoted in the article.

Only one article from *The Washington Post* published on January 9, 2013 used the personal experience of another woman living in Delhi. The article “India Needs to ‘Reset Its Moral Compass’ President Says” (2013) sheds light on daily instances that make Delhi an unsafe place for girls and women. One other article from *The Washington Post* “A day of protests and flash mobs for India’s movement to halt violence against women” (2013) used quotes from locals protestors, the quotes generally demanded a change in the laws and the silence that was now broken. The *New York Times* however, included more than 40 articles that quoted locals at the protests, what they felt and demanded. In an article in the *New York Times* titled “Protests

Across India Over Death of Gang Rape Victim” (2012), the authors included quotes from human rights activists operating in India, Indian feminists, activists, clinical psychologist, journalists, graphic designers, sociology, economics and engineering students. The voices were not only female; males were also interviewed and quoted and mostly demanded that women be treated equally as men. Several articles from the *New York Times* quoted a brother who equipped his sister with a pepper spray and Swiss knife after the incident. Reporting from the *New York Times* encompassed views from all walks of life from a housewife to an activist; it also included one on one-question answer conversations with a male clinical psychologist working for a nongovernmental organization in India on the psyche of why gang rapes occur so frequently in India, “A Conversation With: Psychologist Rajat Mitra” (2013). In the same format, another one on one interview was conducted with the head of Delhi Police Unit for women on the safety measures for women in India, on December 21, five days after Pandey’s case surfaced, “A Conversation With: Suman Nalwa, head of Delhi Police’s Unit for Women” (2013).

In general, both newspapers focused on using quotes from Indians that expressed their anger at the rape, often holding placards questioning what the state was doing in order to protect the citizens. The *New York Times* published four articles that highlighted the peaceful protests in India including dedicating an entire article on the One Billion Rising campaign in Delhi, “The ‘One Billion Rising’ on the Streets of Delhi” (2013). In this article, the reporters interviewed the choreographer that made the dance and posted on YouTube so that other Indians could learn it as well.

Sadly, the coverage for Mai’s case left a lot to be desired for in terms of diversity in the sources and unofficial voices from locals. Mai’s coverage also perpetuated stereotypical cultural misconceptions about Pakistani culture and Islam. Articles from both newspapers failed to

include positive voices regarding the case. The portrayal of Mai as a hapless woman wronged by the system was a dominant frame. The *New York Times* failed to interview other Pakistani activists or influential voices in the media. Few sources were interviews and mostly consisted of negative comments for the status of women, the *New York Times* failed to include any prominent progressive voices, allowing the reporting to be lopsided. In an article in The Washington Post on April 21, 2011, author Pamela Constable writes “the panel of justices found Mai’s tale of tribal abuses [as] implausible and flimsy” she adds that “they took her to task for making confusing statements about how her clothing was torn after the rape...” (Constable, 2011, para. 6). In another article in *The Washington Post* published on March 26, 2005, Mai is interviewed by Lancaster, in his reporting, he includes that the “court’s decision to release the convicted men ...set off joyful celebrations among the Mastoi, who blocked traffic and passed out sweets on the day of the acquittals...” (Lancaster, 2005, para.14).

The article does mention two quotes from local human rights, but they also shed light on the negative comments aimed at the government and judiciary. The absence of other voices that counter argue these statements means that Pakistan is seen through the eyes of those who have suffered at the hands of injustice with no alternating voice to question.

Nicholas Kristof in his column for the *New York Times* routinely expresses his concern surrounding the safety of Mai and the inability of the government to provide it. He often uses a mocking and casual tone in describing the government dealings. He allegedly smells “funny business” (Kristof, 2009, para. 1) and mentions that he is “trying to help out President Bush by tracking down Osama bin Laden” (Kristof, 2004, para.1). In another article published by the *New York Times* on September 24, 2005 “Pakistani Leader’s Comments on Rape Stir Outrage”, the journalist, interviewed President Musharraf and writes “General Musharraf suggested that

Pakistani women were making false claims or exaggerated claims of rape as a way of procuring financial support and visas from foreigners” (Masood, 2005, para. 2). The quote accompanying this text is:

[y]ou must understand the environment in Pakistan. This has become a moneymaking concern. A lot of people say ‘If you want to go abroad and get a visa for Canada or citizenship and be a millionaire, get yourself raped. (Masood, 2005, para. 3)

In all articles that quoted human rights activists in Pakistan, the quotes involved a negative image of the government and the power used by them to hush the case.

#### *Portrayal of victim*

In all articles published in the *New York Times*, the newspaper did not mention the victim’s name. Even though the victim’s father had revealed her name against Indian rape laws, the *Times* chose not to name the victim. Mainstream media outlets observe a self-imposed policy of withholding the names and faces of sexual assault victims. The idea behind this practice is that “rape is so intimate and horrendous that [victims] should be spared undue attention” (Magowan, 2002, para. 5). In a New York Times article titled “Is It Ever O.K. To Name Rape Victims?” (2010), Nicholas Kristof writes:

On the one hand, it’s impossible to get rape on the agenda when the victims are anonymous. Human beings just aren’t hard-wired to feel compassion for classes of victims, but for individuals. [...] So one challenge is that if we leave out names and faces, then there’s no outrage, and the rapes go on and on. (Kristof, 2010, para. 2)

He argues that:

On the other hand, rape victims are already often pariahs, and putting a name or face in print or on the web could make the stigmatization eternal. Where’s the humanitarianism in trying to prevent future rapes if the method risks causing anguish, isolation and life-long stigma to particular rape survivors? (Kristof, 2010, para. 3)

On December 31, 2012, the *New York Times* published an article “Portrait Emerges of Victim in New Delhi Gang Rape,” in the article; Pandey is described as “studious, ambitious and about to be married” (Mandhana, 2012, para. 1). The reporter describes Pandey as “brilliant”, “hardworking” and a “role model in her neighborhood”(Mandhana, 2012, para. 4) and adds that Pandey had a determination to succeed at an early age” (Mandhana, 2012, para. 4). The article then focuses on Pandey’s family background and how her family came to Delhi in search of a better life, like thousands of other Indians. Mandhana (2012), also acknowledges the bravery of the victim and adds that “she battled her attackers …and fought as hard as she could” (Mandhana, 2012, para. 10). All in all, the article focuses on positive aspects of the victim’s life with interviews from the father and brother of the victim. The article draws on the sympathetic side of human nature in describing her as a hard-working woman trying to fulfill her dreams and aspirations.

In another *New York Times* article published on January 9, 2013, Pandey is portrayed in a positive light (Trivedi, 2013). The article titled “An Ambitious Woman From a Delhi Neighborhood of Migrants” (2013) refers to Pandey as a “simple, soft-spoken and a quick learner,” she is also hailed as an “excellent student” who was also good in extracurricular activities (Trivedi, 2013, para. 11). The article describes Pandey as keenly interested in academics and ambitious. “She left early in the morning to work and got back at 6 p.m. everyday” (Trivedi, 2013, para. 3). Interviews in this article are by her childhood best friend and the principal of her college. In all other articles the *New York Times* referred to Pandey as “India’s gang rape victim,” or “ the 23-year-old victim, or “the young medical student from Delhi.”

*The Washington Post* followed a similar course of action and refrained from using Pandey's name except in one article. The standard practice of refraining to not name rape victims in U.S. media is part of the code of ethics for journalists. The Society of Professional Journalists in its code of ethics warns reporters to minimize harm by being "cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes" (SPJ Code of Ethics). In all other articles from *The Washington Post*, the victim was referred to "23-year-old gang rape victim" or "the gang rape of a 23-year-old girl." The paper did not include any articles on Pandey that give insight into her life, no articles from the *Post* covered personal interviews from friends and colleagues of the victim. A January 7 article in *The Washington Post* was the only article that published Pandey's name. In the article titled "Father of New Delhi rape victim: Tell the world my daughter's name," (2013), Diana Reese questions the logic behind why the name of rape victims cannot be published. She quotes Pandey's father saying "[w]e want the world to know her real name. My daughter didn't do anything wrong" (Reese, 2013, para. 3). The almost 600-word article includes statistics of rapes in India and United States and finally ends with these words "She was Jyoti Singh Pandey" (Reese, 2013, para 18).

In the coverage surrounding Mai's case, all articles from the *New York Times* reported Mai's full name. In a *New York Times* article on October 22, 2005, Mai is described as "a frail woman with dark eyes" (Masood, 2005, para.6). In another article titled "Sanctuary for Sex Slaves," Kristof refers to Mai as a "savior" for poor women that are victimized by the pimps and police (Kristof, 2007, para. 14). Most of the articles surrounding Mai's coverage are authored by Kristof and he routinely attributes her as his "hero," "an amazing woman" and "one of the gutsiest people on earth." In a foreword to Mai's book, Kristof writes, "I don't know whether people felt this when they were around Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King Jr., but around

Mukhtar Mai I can feel true greatness” (Mai, 2006, p. vii.). Through his column, Kristof appeals to the readers for donations through Mai’s fund to help rape victims and other needy women. Through his reporting Kristof sheds light on positive aspects of Mai’s work and appreciates her through his column. A few articles from the *New York Times* included quotes from Mai herself, even when they were included, they rarely covered her personality. Another article in the *New York Times* referred to her as a “resilient Pakistani” (Masood, 2009, para. 1) and “a symbol of hope for voiceless and oppressed women” (Masood, 2009, para. 1). In a few articles, Mai is hailed as “brave” for “defeat[ing] [the] stigma against rape victims in conservative Pakistani society” (Masood, 2009, para. 5).

The *Washington Post* also followed the *New York Times* in revealing Mai’s name. All articles from the *Washington Post* published Mai’s name. Lastly, in an article in the *Washington Post* published on March 26, 2005, Mai is described as “illiterate laborer’s daughter” (Lancaster, 2005, para. 3), in the interview, journalist John Lancaster describes Mai as “slender and soft spoken” (Lancaster, 2005, para. 10), he adds that she “ projects a quiet dignity” (Lancaster, 2005, para. 10). The author portrays her in a positive light by acknowledging her as “an agent of change” and “something of a celebrity” (Lancaster, 2005, para. 13). A *Washington Post* article “Pakistani Rape victim Learns, Teaches and Weeps as She Goes,” (2005) described Mai’s “dark, chiseled features and glossy black hair” (Boustany, 2005, para. 1) and her words as “barely a whisper” (Boustany, 2005, para. 1). In the article, journalist Nora Boustany describes the transformation of Mai’s character “from pariah to savior and protector” (Boustany, 2005, para. 9). In another article in *The Washington Post*, Mai is portrayed as “a symbol of hope for oppressed women”(Constable, 2011, para.1) and “a role model for the women of Pakistan”(Constable, 2011, para. 10).

### *Rape in Context*

In most of the coverage following Pandey's case, the *New York Times* published the rape in context with other rapes in India. In an article published on January 23, 2013, journalist Heather Timmons reports that:

[m]ore than 95,000 rape cases were awaiting trial in India at the beginning of 2011,..but just 16 percent of them were resolved by the end of the year. Of the cases that go to trial, about 26 percent yield a conviction, half the rate in the United States or Britain.  
(Timmons, 2013, para. 8)

In another article from the *New York Times*, journalist Jim Yardley reports that sexual violence is common and a “national scandal” (Yardley, 2012, para. 1). He quotes an Indian feminist writer “Rape happens everywhere...it happens inside homes, in families, in neighborhoods, in police stations, in towns and cities, in villages, and its incidence increases, as is happening in India” (Yardley, 2012, para. 10).

A considerable number of articles shed light on the increasing rape statistics in India. In a December 28, 2012 article titled “Rape in the World’s Largest Democracy,” the *New York Times* reports that “[r]ape cases have increased at an alarming rate, roughly 25 percent in six years. New Delhi recorded 572 rapes in 2011; a total that is up 17 percent this year” (Anonymous, 2012, para. 2). Other articles such as “India’s Man Problem” report on the imbalance of the gender ratio in Indian society due to female infanticide as a major reason for high sex crimes against women (Trivedi & Timmons, 2013). Several articles while a handful of articles such as “India’s New Focus on Rape Shows Only the Surface of Women’s Perils” shed light on the nearly “25,000 to 100,000” killed women over dowry disputes (Harris, 2013, para. 3). Furthermore, by including personal accounts of journalists who had lived in India, were gang raped and faced

daily harassment because of their gender, the *New York Times* reported sensitively through personal stories that shed light on the seriousness of the situation. The *New York Times* was successful in putting Pandey's case in context with other rapes that happened before and after her case such as the gang rape of a girl in Bihar and providing the context that Pandey's case was one of many that happens everyday in India.

The *Washington Post*'s coverage of Pandey's case failed to put the rape in context to India's growing problem. In only one article, "10 reasons why India has a sexual violence problem," (Khazan, 2012) did the newspaper list down reasons why rape and sexual violence are common in India; otherwise the newspaper refrained from using statistics in explaining the context of rape in relation to the others in India. In only two articles did the *Washington Post* addresses the issue of Indians wanting more sons than daughters. The article published on January 11, 2013 "India's rising middle class prefers sons" explains the skewed gender ratio of India and how it is problematic (Asokan, 2013). In most articles, the *Washington Post* does acknowledge the poor status of women in India.

Interestingly, in Mai's case the *Washington Post* did not address other gang rapes in Pakistan in any of the articles covering Mai's case. The newspaper only focused on the village council's decision of the gang rape and that it was a "common practice in rural Muslim societies" (Kristof, 2004, para. 8). Instead of putting the rape in context with other abuses on women in Pakistan, Mai's case was treated as an isolated incident.

The *New York Times* however took a slightly different approach. Although it did report other incidents of rape and torture against women, it did so by focusing on Mai. Every time an article mentioned a rape in rural Pakistan, the article would mention that either the victim went to Mai for help, was inspired by her, or Mai helped her get justice.

### *Protests for Justice*

All articles surrounding coverage of Pandey's case in the *Washington Post* reported on the wide scale protests in India. Even when the articles did not directly talk about the rape, and were focused on other gender issues in India, the articles reported on the protests. In an article published on December 29, 2012 the journalist acknowledges that the gang rape "sparked mass protests and demonstrations" and the author adds "the nation steels itself for further outpourings of grief and outrage..." (Bey, 2012, para. 3). Another article reports on "a deep sense of outrage," (Mandhana, 2013, para.1) and on how "thousands of Indians taking action, not as members of a particular party, cast or religion but as individuals joining to demand more responsiveness from their government"(Mandhana, 2013, para. 5). Furthermore, several articles referred to "unprecedented protests across India." While the *Washington Post* did not focus entirely on the protests, it did give the reader a fair sense of the public outcry and the subsequent protests in India

The *New York Times* however, dedicated a few articles on date and timings of various protests being held all over India. The One Billion Rising campaign was prominently featured during these articles and two entire articles wrote about One Billion Rising. In the article "The 'One Billion Rising' on the Streets of Delhi"(2013) the author reports that nearly 200 countries participated and "took to the streets to highlight violence against women" (Mandhana, 2013, para. 4). The article describes, "in India, the message [of the campaign] mirrored widespread public sentiment that swelled after the gang rape..." (Mandhana, 2013, para. 4). The articles included quotes from protestors present in those areas and what they felt about the situation of women and what they were demanding.

The *New York Times* used local names of the places where the protests were being held, and used descriptions of the young Indians holding placards, on a few occasions articles reported that the large number of protests were organized through Facebook and Twitter. The newspaper also reported on the hurdles and police clashes between protestors in some articles. It reported how the disruptions by the police such as blocking access to roads and halting public transport in the areas where protests were scheduled caused an outrage among the locals. The newspaper also reported on the methods used by police to disperse the protesters such as tear gas and water hoses.

In Mai's case, only one article from the *Washington Post* published on November 4, 2005 reported on the "national outrage" but failed to include any reporting on what the demands were or where the protests took place (Boustany, 2005, para.3). In most articles from the newspaper, protests surrounding Mai's case were not reported at all; instead interviews from human rights activists were covered to protest against Pakistani rape laws.

The *New York Times* also failed to provide reporting on local protests in Pakistan following Mai's case, instead most of the articles that did mention any form of protest, attributed it to "worldwide outrage" or "international outcry" failing to mention the local sentiments following the rape. By not covering the local sentiments of protestors, the *New York Times* chose to frame the news by portraying an indifferent image of Pakistanis that are mum about injustices on women.

### *Status of Women*

A considerable amount of coverage from both newspapers highlighted the demeaning role and lower status of women in Indian and Pakistani societies. Both newspapers focused on

the dominant patriarchal structures within the respective countries and that such structures exploit and mistreat women. In a *New York Times* article titled “*The Unspeakable Truth About Rape in India*,” Sonia Faleiro (2013) acknowledges that even though there are rape laws and reserved seats for women in buses, they are ineffective in the “face of a patriarchal and misogynistic culture”(Faleiro, 2013, para. 12). Elaborating on the Indian culture, she says “[i]t is a culture that believes that the worst aspect of rape is the defilement of the victim, who will no longer be able to find a man to marry her — and that the solution is to marry the rapist” (Faleiro, 2013, para. 12). Reading through the articles from the *New York Times* in regard to Pandey’s case, the advances of women are discussed as major social change. A quote from the *New York Times* article titled “India’s New Focus on Rape Shows Only the Surface of Women’s Perils” sheds light on the status of women in India in these words:

Women have made enormous strides in India in recent decades. Their schooling now matches that of men, and they have moved forcefully into many industries...women have become leaders in Indian politics. (Harris, 2013, para. 5)

Nearly 29 articles from the *New York Times* discuss that the changing roles of women in Indian society have led to an increase in rape cases and violence against women. In an article published on December 30, 2012, the *New York Times* reports that

Indian women have made impressive gains in recent years: maternal mortality rates have dropped, literacy rates and education levels have risen, and millions of women have joined the professional classes...(Timmons & Gottipati, 2012, para. 7)

Later the article mentions that the urban phenomenon that requires women to work late at night is the reason why more rapes occur. Several articles reported on the fact that at the cusp of modernity, Indian men still expect women to fulfill traditional roles and be subservient to the men, the new found freedom of women becomes a cause of insecurity for the men who still try to maintain the patriarchal structure.

The *Washington Post* was critical of the role of Indian women. In the aftermath of Pandey's case, the coverage did include that women were demanding more reforms against violence in regards to gender and amendment in rape laws but it did not discuss in detail the seriousness of the situation. General reporting from the article does provide a sense that women are mistreated because of flaws in rape laws but the newspaper fails to provide the seriousness of the problem. Instead, the focus is on the voices raised by other women to demand better laws

In the *New York Times* coverage of Mai's case, the status of women is not discussed through Pakistani cultural perceptions but more through the lens of a "traditional Muslim society." Nearly 15 articles are ripe with vivid details of women who were bought, sold, burnt, tortured and raped by husbands, neighbors and police. In all these stories, the women are portrayed as victims of poverty and social class. Furthermore the women are also victims of illiteracy and an unfair justice system in these articles. In all these articles, Mai is seen as a savior for these women who through her resources provides them a shelter and fights with them to get justice. Several articles in the newspaper focus on the threats received by Mai from senior government officials and also from then-president of Pakistan, General Pervaiz Musharraf. The coverage of Mai's placement on Pakistan's exit control list and the following quote by Musharraf "I don't want her to air Pakistan's dirty laundry in public" (Masood, 2005, para. 10) further clarifies the status of women in Pakistan through the reporting of this singular event. Another article titled "Feudals vs. Mukhtar" also focuses on the threat to Mai's life due to living in the same village where she was raped (Kristof, 2009).

The newspaper only includes rural Pakistani women in describing the status of women who are only responsible for running the house, cooking, cleaning and raising children.

Progressive voices of Pakistani women are missing from this dialogue, as are voices of human rights activists or lawyers or common Pakistani's who support Mai in her quest.

Similarly, articles from the *Washington Post* shed light on the rural status of women in Pakistan, “Mukhtar was gang-raped in Pakistan on the orders of an all-male tribal council” (Boustany, 2005, para. 4) wrote journalist Nora Boustany on November 4, 2005. The patriarchal structure of Pakistan is clearly evident in the coverage that reports that lawmakers and policemen are all corrupt and fail to provide justice to poor women who have been victimized.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how two leading American newspapers: the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* covered the case of Mukhtar Mai and Jyoti Singh Pandey and how they used nationality to determine the coverage of both the rapes. Through the use of frame analysis, the results show that gender and nationality played an integral role in framing the case of both Mai and Pandey. Analysis of the newspaper coverage can be broken down into four separate functions of frames: defining problems, diagnosing causes, evaluating actions and prescribing solutions. In both, Mai and Pandey's case, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, covered the events in ways that were representative of these four frame functions.

#### *Defining Problems*

In the coverage of both Mai and Pandey's gang rape, the media sometimes identified problems arising from the case, while at other times, the coverage exposed certain problems with the way they handled the coverage of the case, this was particularly evident in Pandey's case. Findings show that journalists from both newspapers defined the problems they believed were relevant to each case. Many articles published by the *New York Times* in relation to Pandey's case focused on court proceedings and the charges against the suspects. But in relation to Mai, the *New York Times* portrayed the proceedings as "another twist."

In Pandey's case the *New York Times* was successful in putting the rape in context to other rape cases in India and even drawing parallel to rape cases in America. The newspaper also

published an article based on the interview of the family of one of the suspects and also published several articles from the lawyers defending the suspects. This allowed the readers to hear the other side of the story.

In Mai's case, the *New York Times* published a few articles that focused on the problems surrounding the case. But mostly, it was sympathetic to Mai. The coverage of the *New York Times* in Mai's case did not include any coverage on her victims but was overall favorable in portraying Mai as a victim of feudalism and Islamic laws.

The *Washington Post* in both cases refrained from mentioning the problems associated with the case, but was very clear in depicting Pandey as progressive, modern and educated and Mai as traditional and illiterate.

It is important to understand that newspapers, in an effort to achieve objectivity, sometimes use fragmented news as part of the process of news production. Tight deadlines and the rush to get the story out, does not always allow journalists to put the story in context and analyze other factors that may shape the story differently. Thus fragmented news is part of a larger problem that is inherent in the structure of how journalism functions.

As Baran & Davis (2006) reveal, "the typical newspaper and news broadcast is made up of brief capsulized reports of events — snapshots of the social world" (p. 359). They argue that events are treated in isolation with little effort to interconnect them. This was evident in Mai's case, where snippets of information were loosely tied together to form the story and broad observations were minimal. The fact that making broader connections also allows speculation that may sometimes be considered controversial, journalists typically refrain from providing the contexts, instead, they compartmentalize news, making it difficult for the consumer to draw their

own connections. In Pandey's case, the rape was bundled together as India's larger problem of gender infanticide that had been widely criticized in both newspapers prior to Pandey's case.

Hegemony was used as another framing device in both Mai's and Pandey's cases.

Gramsci (1971) uses hegemony to denote the predominance of one social class over others (e.g. *bourgeois hegemony*). This represents not only political and economic control, but also the ability of the dominant class to project its own way of seeing the world so that those who are subordinated by it accept it as 'common sense' and 'natural' (Baran & Davis, 2006, p. 252).

Therefore in both cases, India and Pakistan were portrayed in accordance with the view of the dominant American elite.

Gramsci names journalists, politicians, sportsmen, and those in the academics among others as the "organizing intellectuals" of this system of thought (as cited in Donaldson, 1993, p.646). These "weavers of the fabric of hegemony" as Donaldson (1993) refers to them are considered the most influential agents in the spread of this theory because they are in positions where they "regulate and manage gender." The concept of hegemony is ingrained in journalists, the inability to understand other cultural and social perspectives stems from the fact that journalists hold an important position of power that influences people and they use this power — intentionally or unintentionally— to perpetuate their version of what the truth is or should be.

### *Diagnosing Causes*

Both newspapers addressed the fact that Indian and Pakistani patriarchal structures allow for continued violence against women. While the *New York Times* was more critical of India's declining gender ratio, where men outnumbered women and the opportunities for Indian women

allowed for resentment from men and thus causing rape. *The Washington Post* did not comment on the causes of rape but simply that they happened.

In Mai's case, the cause of the rape and ill treatment were attributed to traditional Muslim law and feudal based village councils. It must be noted that like all media commodities, news must be actively packaged. Edward Jay Epstein (1973) as quoted in Baran & Davis (2006), provides a policy memorandum written by a network television news producer:

Every news story should, without any sacrifice of probity or responsibility, display the attributes of fiction, of drama. It should have structure and conflict, problem and denouncement, rising action and falling action, a beginning a middle and an end. These are not only the essentials of drama; they are the essentials of narrative. (Baran & Davis, 2006, p. 358)

This active packaging of news, which is also part of the news production process, was evident in both cases but particularly in Pandey's case. Since the case is recent, the media zeroed in all these aspects of fiction and the rising drama from the first day she was raped to the day of her death, even after her death, media consistently created drama through the coverage of the trial of the rapists.

The personalization of news, another element in the daily news production cycle, creates an element of relatability among the audience. According to Bennett (1988), as quoted in Baran & Davis (2006, p. 357), "the focus on individual actor[s] who are easy to identify with positively or negatively invites members of the news audience to project their own private feelings and fantasies directly onto public life". Therefore Mai and Pandey were used as personalized individuals that helped the audience to make the situation more real for them.

### *Evaluating Actions*

The coverage of Mai's and Pandey's cases raises important points regarding the reporting of sex crimes. Sex crimes are considered private matters not only in India and Pakistan but also in the United States. Mai's reluctance in reporting her rape a week after it happened was due to the fact that no one from a lower class had challenged the powerful Mastoi's before.

Even though there are thousands of instances of rape everyday in India, in Pandey's case, the brutality of the rape came as a wake up call for Indians to demand better rape laws.

### *Prescribing Solutions*

An important issue that surfaced in the course of this study is that reporting rape helps in breaking the silence of other sex crime victims about their victimization. One victim's courage to report the crime, for example in the case of Mai, her courage to speak up against feudalism allowed others in the area to report the sex crimes that they were facing and eventually leading to fewer rape cases in the area. A victim's decision to reveal that she was victimized helps to ensure the prosecution of the cases, even though Mai claims she did not receive justice, her ordeal became a voice for millions who seek shelter at her home. Among the reasons that sex crime victims are hesitant to report the crime, one reason is the criticism from society and the other is the media depiction of the case. In Pakistani and Indian societies, the shame and dishonor associated with rape is also a big reason why most rape cases are not reported.

While the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* both named Mai, both publications refused to name Pandey. This can be attributed to the fact that both newspapers, along with other organizations in the United States "protect identities of complainants in sex crimes, while awaiting the court's judgment about the truth of their accusations" (Denno, 1003, p. 1128). In

Mai's case the case took several turns and sometimes she was acknowledged as a victim while eventually she was accused of fabricating the story.

One other aspect that surfaced in the coverage was that protests also help other victims stand up for their own rights, as was evident in the *New York Times* reporting of Pandey's case, the widespread protests in India were symbolic of all the gang rapes that were treated with silence, through the protests victims and families raised awareness against such crimes and may even be able to bring about the change in laws.

### Limitations and Future Research

The mark of well-researched academic studies is in their potential and ability to be applicable to a wider perspective. This thesis employs only two case studies on a particular incident and the media coverage surrounding the incident. The scope of this study is limited because it cannot be applied to international coverage of all rape stories from India and Pakistan or to all U.S. media coverage surrounding rape from the two countries. Future research can focus on the larger issue of how international media covers Third World countries in covering rape.

Interviewing journalists who covered these cases, could help understand if they intentionally used frames to portray a certain image for a country and how their own understanding of the culture of these countries affected reporting since journalists become indoctrinated to certain routines and practices which become part of how and why they write stories the way they do.

Lastly, by contrasting Indian and Pakistani newspapers along with other international newspapers, the study can understand how the cases are treated in their respective home

countries and would provide invaluable insight how the countries treat the case and subsequently the victim.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Within the context of globalization, national image has become unprecedently crucial for governments of countries and cities (Anholt, 2008), particularly for countries like India and Pakistan, framing of U.S. media effects their global image, foreign policy and international relations with other countries. Wang (2006) suggests that a nation's reputation consists of "collective judgments of a foreign country's image and character" (Wang, 2006, p. 91). In this regard, the coverage of rape, particularly from foreign countries needs to be culturally sensitive. Reports and editors need to be aware of the culture they are writing or portraying. This can only be achieved by diversifying the newsroom. The biases of race, class, gender and nationality can only be reduced if members of varying races, class structures and nationalities work side by side and contribute to the knowledge pool by including their unique and vantage position and understanding. As long as the newsroom is predominantly white, male and uninformed about rape, sex crimes will never be covered fairly.

Based on the findings from this study, it might be accurate to assume that rape victims not only in the United States, but in India and Pakistan might be discouraged from reporting their victimization due to fears about the media coverage they might receive. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* might give the impression that they will be judged according to the country they belong to.

It is important for journalists to uphold sex crimes to high ethical standards in reporting. The *Washington Post's* code of ethics reads that it is "pledged to an aggressive, responsible and fair pursuit of the truth without fear of any special interest with favor to none" however, in Mai's

case, Pakistani culture was not truthfully portrayed. Similarly, professional journalists that adhere to the code of ethics of the Society of Professional Journalism (SPJ) are encouraged to “examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.” Another code of ethic points towards “avoid[ing] stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status” These codes of ethics need to be recognized and actively applied across newsrooms to achieve a fair and balanced reporting particularly in relation to sex crimes.

Madigan and Gamble (1991) encourage women who are victims of sex crimes to report the crime to the authorities irrespective of the nature of the crime and how it happened. They believe that reporting crime could empower the victims.

The study revealed that while both newspapers were sympathetic to the rape victims, there was a marked difference in reporting the culture of India and Pakistan. The media should choose accuracy over speed and instead of perpetuating convenient cultural stereotypes, reporters should be encouraged to understand the intricate cultural values that would inform the public of the reality instead of feeding myths and fears.

Even though, Mai’s assailants were freed, and Pandey’s still have to undergo trial, it has created awareness of sex crimes within India and led to a larger debate to change rape laws. As Madigan and Gamble (1991) assert, the processes that ensue after a rape charge are “issues of judgment rather than truth” (p. 130).

This study was important because by analyzing the coverage of Mai and Pandey’s case, it identified the problems with media coverage of sex crimes from developing countries such as India and Pakistan. The problems include unbalanced reporting, out of context instances of rape

that fail to acknowledge the larger context and scope of the crime. The dearth of unofficial sources was also a major problem since it's easier to get access to official figures for quotes.

It is important for the reporters who cover sex crime cases to respect basic principles of their profession such as truth, accuracy and fairness. The media should focus on reporting the facts of the story, keeping in mind the need to show "compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage (SPJ Code of Ethics). Journalists should also educate their audience about other cultures by drawing connections and patterns that can help audiences understand the beliefs and values of a foreign culture. Secondly, the audiences can also be educated by allowing them to form their own opinion, this means that sex crime stories need to be clearly worded without judgment and opinion about the culture they are representing. Lastly, newsrooms need to prepare and develop a training and understanding methodology when covering sex crimes so that journalists and reporters are aware of the rape myths and narratives that trap them into unfair coverage.

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