

UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA

Serious assault: news media reporting of convictions for serious assault - What picture is the public getting?

A Tasmanian Case Study

utas.edu.au

Dr Helen Cockburn, Dr Charlotte Hunn and Dr Claire Konkes





"It is important to ... monitor the newspaper coverage of crime to assess whether or not the overall picture of crime which newspapers ... produce is informative and balanced" (Ditton and Duffy, 1983).

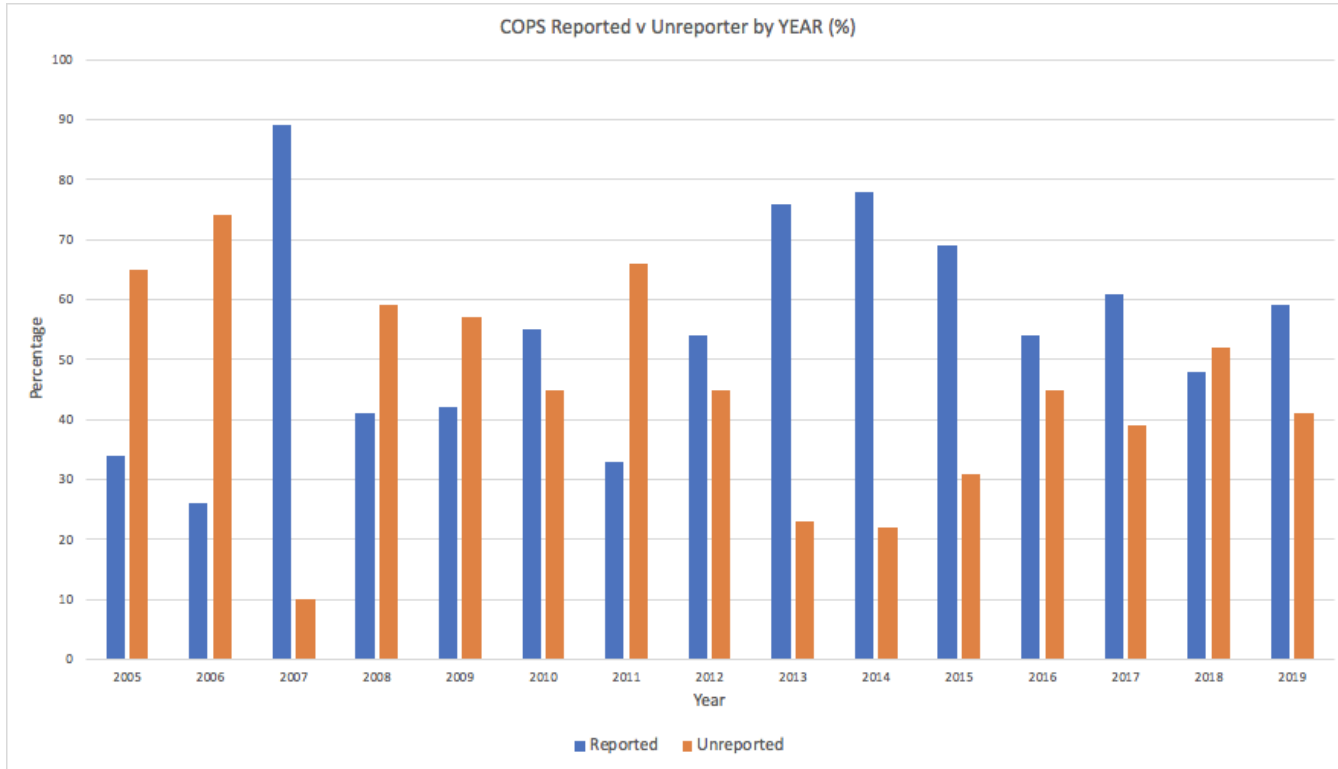




Current study



Findings



Offender characteristics

Offender characteristics	Variable	Total Sample	Reported Sample	+/- between Total Sample and Reported Sample	Proportion of variable reported
Offender sex					
	Male	79%	82.7%	+ 3.7%	56%
	Female	21%	17.3%	- 3.7%	44%
Total					
Offender age					
	Under 24 years old	57.7%	41%	- 16.7%	52.5%
	Over 24 years old	42.3%	59%	+ 16.7%	55.4%
Total					
Offender intoxication					
	Yes	57.5%	56.2%	- 1.3%	52%
	No*	42.5%	43.8%	+ 1.3%	55%
Total					

Incident characteristics

Incident characteristics	Variable	Total Sample	Reported Sample	+/- between Total Sample and Reported Sample	Proportion of variable reported
Type of injury*					
	Wound	68.5%	56.7%	- 11.8%	44%
	GBH	31.5%	43.2%	+ 11.7%	73%
Total					
Location of incident					
	Private	52.3%	50%	- 2.3%	53%
	Public	47.7%	50%	+ 2.3%	60%
Total					
Sex of victim					
	Male	81.8%	79.5%	- 2.3%	52%
	Female	18.2%	20.4%	+ 2.2%	60%
Total			100%		
Relationship					
	Known	61.5%	60.7%	- 0.8%	54%
	Unknown	38.4%	39.2%	+ 0.8%	56%
Total					

Mechanism of injury

Mechanism of injury	GBH	Wounding	Total Sample	Reported Sample	+/- in proportion between Total Sample and Reported Sample	Proportion of variable reported
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	%	(%)
Small blades	3.5%	29.1%	32.6%	28.1%	- 4.5%	47%
Body	13.8%	1.5%	15.3%	21.6%	+ 6.3%	77%
Drinking glass	0.6%	10%	10.6%	7.6%	- 3.0%	39%
Glass bottle	0.3%	8.2%	8.5%	7.6%	- 0.9%	48%
Blunt implement	3.2%	2.4%	5.6%	7%	+ 1.4%	68%
Tools	0.3%	5%	5.3%	6%	+ 0.7%	61%
Multiple	2.6%	2.1%	4.7%	3.2%	- 1.5%	37.5%
Firearm	2.1%	1.5%	3.5%	6.5%	+ 3.0%	100%
Sport equipment	1.5%	1.8%	3.2%	3.2% ~	-	54.5%
Scissors	0.3%	2.9%	3.2%	1.6%	- 1.6%	27%
Vehicle	2.6%	0.3%	2.9%	3.7%	+ 0.8%	70%
Large blades	0.6%	2.4%	2.9%	2.2%	- 0.7%	40%
Miscellaneous domestic objects	0.30%	1.2%	1.5%	1%	- 0.5%	40%

Implications



Limitations and where to next?



References i

- Beetham, D, *The Legitimation of Power* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1991)
- Cullen et al, 'Public Opinion about Punishment and Corrections' (2000) 27 *Crime and Justice* 1-79
- Davis B & Dossetor K 2010. (Mis)perceptions of crime in Australia. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* no. 396. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology
- Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (Tas), 2018-2019 Crime Supplement
- Ditton, J, & Duffy, J, 'Bias in the Newspaper Reporting of Crime News' (1983) 23 *The British Journal of Criminology*, 159
- Garland, D, 'The Culture of High Crime Societies' (2000) 40 *British Journal of Criminology* 347-375
- Gelb K, *Alternatives to Imprisonment: Community Views in Victoria* (Sentencing Advisory Council Victoria, 2011)
- Gelb, K, *Myths and Misconceptions: Public Opinion versus Public Judgment about Sentencing* (Sentencing Advisory Council Victoria, 2006)
- Graber, D, 'Mediated Politics and Citizenship in the Twenty-first Century' (2004) 55 *Annual Review of Psychology*, 545-571
- Hansen, Anders, and David Machin, 'Researching Visual Environmental Communication' (2013) 7(2) *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture* 151-168
- Hinds, L, 'Challenging Current Conceptions of Law and Order' (2006) 10(2) *Theoretical Criminology* 203
- Homel, R, & Tomsen, S (1993) *Hot spots for violence: the environment of pubs and clubs. Homicide: Patterns, Prevention and Control* Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, 53-66

References ii

- Indemauro, D, 'What Can We do to Engender a More Rational and Less Punitive Crime Policy? (2009) 14 *Eur J Crim Policy Res* 181
- Pratt, J 'Penal Populism and the Contemporary Role of Punishment' in Thalia Anthony & Chris Cunneen (eds), *Critical Criminology Companion* (Hawkins Press, 2008)
- Quilter, J, 'Populism and Criminal Justice Policy: an Australian Case Study of Non-punitive Responses to Alcohol-related Violence' (2015) 48(1) *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 48-52
- Quilter, J, et al, (2018). *'Intoxication' and Australian Criminal Law: Implications for Addressing Alcohol and Other Drug-Related Harms and Risks*. Canberra ACT Australia: Criminology Research Advisory Council
- Ray, Colleen M and Kort-Butler, Lisa A, 'What you See Is What you Get? Investigating how Survey Context Shapes the Association between Media Consumption and Attitudes about Crime' (2019) *Am J Crim Jus* 1-19
- Roberts J & Indermauro D (2009). *What Australians think about crime and justice: results from the 2007 Survey of Social Attitudes*. Research and public policy series no. 101. Canberra
- Roberts, J and Hough, M 'Understanding Public Attitudes to Criminal Justice' in Maguire, M (ed), *Crime and Justice Series* (Open University Press, 2005)
- Roberts, Julian V, Loretta J Stalans, David Indemauro, and Mike Hough, *Penal Populism and Public opinion: Lessons from Five Countries* (Oxford University Press, 2003)
- Webster, K, et al (2018). *Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality. Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)* (Research report, 03/2018). Sydney, NSW: ANROWS

References iii

Crime Statistics Australia (website) <https://www.crimestats.aic.gov.au/facts_figures/>

ABS 2019, Recorded Crime – Offenders, Australia, 2018, cat. No. 45190D

ABS 2019, Recorded Crime – Victims, Australia, 2018, cat. No. 45100DO002

ABS 2017, Personal Safety Survey, 2016, cat. No. 4906.0

Legal cases

Tranby [1991] 52 A Crim R 228

Devine [1982] 8 A Crim R 45