

LIBERAL ARTS

Transnational Framing of the 2012 Case of Rape in India

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According to the United Nations, up to 70% of women experience violence in their lifetime. Feminist movements across countries target the state for laws to address violence against women. After the brutal 2012 gang rape in New Delhi, India, the country's potential "rape culture" was covered globally. Media coverage can directly influence the ways in which those who have little knowledge of India view this rape.

In a collaborative project, I am examining coverage of the 2012 rape case transnationally by focusing on two selected newspapers: *Chicago Tribune* (henceforth *Tribune*) published in the US and the *Hindu* published in India. We downloaded news reports, op-ed pieces, and letters to the editor that appeared for 30 days after the incident. These textual data are being coded using qualitative software. Women may be depicted as "endangered" (that is, passive) or as "agents" (women

with rights). The *Hindu* covered the rape immediately, while first reports in the *Tribune* appeared after protests in New Delhi gained worldwide attention. I analyzed fourteen items in the *Hindu* and the *Tribune*.

The exploratory analysis showed a mix of frames. The one news report about the rape in the *Tribune* described women protesting the 2012 rape. The rape was covered in an opinion piece and as news reports in the *Hindu*. While one item referred to women's right to work, most of the coverage was about the "endangered" woman. An in-depth analysis across media sources is expected to provide a more complete picture of frames used.

Research advisor Mangala Subramaniam writes, "In sociology, there is still much to understand about violence against women in the public sphere. Wynne's collaborative research will provide insight into transnational framing of violence by the media. It will enable interrogation of cultural notions of women as agents with rights. The research has policy implications for the formulation of laws and its enforcement."