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# “Are You a Victim for Sure?” Media Framing on Sexual Violence and Secondary Victimization in Korea

*A thematic analysis of the Korean newspaper  
coverages for three high-profile cases*

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## **Abstract**

Sexual violence is ubiquitous. It occurs everywhere. Due to the very nature of sex crimes, however, victim-survivors from sexual violence are much more vulnerable from ‘secondary victimization’ which is also known as ‘post crime victimization’ or ‘double victimization.’ Given that people get common knowledge on human rights issues from newspapers, in particular online articles today, I focused on the role of media framing on this issue. Therefore, in this paper, I strived to answer two main research questions: (1) How do the Korean media coverage, especially newspapers, conceptualize sexual violence and frame public awareness towards victim-survivors? (2) How do they give a secondary victimization to victim-survivors? By conducting a thematic analysis of media coverages on three high-profile cases in Korea– Ahn Hee-jung; Oh Keo-don; Park Won-sun –, this paper identifies newspapers selectively choose specific types of headlines, specific language use for descriptors in describing perpetrators/victims, and the style of description for the case, which is based on their own focus and aims. Here, one important finding is that the ‘power imbalance’ derived from the sexual violence continues to the media coverage as illuminated in certain types of headlines, positive (+)/downgrading (–) descriptors for perpetrators/victims, and ‘perpetrator-centered’ highly detailed description of the case. It should be careful in a way that the media itself cannot be free from giving severe secondary suffering to victims. The media should report sex crimes with more carefulness with recognizing its great power enough to conceptualize and shape public awareness towards sexual violence and victim-survivors.

## **Keywords**

Sexual violence; power-based sexual violence; 1 victim-survivors; media framing; secondary victimization; #Me, Too; Korea

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1 All sexual violence is basically a gender violence derived from the imbalance of power. However, the keyword “Power-based sexual violence” here refers to committing sexual violence using one’s social authority or positional/occupational power. Such power-based sex crimes occur in all areas, including politics, schools, religions, and public institutions. All high-profile cases of three politicians are regarded as typical and representative ‘power-based sex crimes.’

Only when being outside of the planet,  
We can see the earth is a beautiful pale blue dot.  
Thank you, all the people I encountered during this journey!

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Sexual violence is ubiquitous. It occurs everywhere: in all the places we live, work, sleep, travel, play and pray, which is encapsulated as ‘the ubiquity of sexual violence’ by Kathleen Daly.<sup>2</sup> In this vein, Liz Kelly introduced the concept of ‘the continuum of sexual violence’ to highlight that all women experience sexual violence at some point in their lives.<sup>3</sup> Due to the very nature of sex crimes, victim-survivors of sexual violence are much more vulnerable and traumatized not only from primary victimization<sup>4</sup> but also from secondary victimization such as additional sufferings from the criminal investigation procedures, social stigma, further assault by the media coverages, et cetera. Especially, ‘secondary victimization’ also known as ‘post crime victimization’<sup>5</sup> or ‘double victimization’<sup>6</sup> has been addressed as a serious problem when it comes to crime victim’s right and victim protection.

However, regarding victim protection and their rights, this issue has started to be addressed quite recently. After the United Nations adopted the ‘Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power’<sup>7</sup> in 1985, it is quite recent

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2 K. Daly, 'Sexual Violence and Justice: How and Why Context Matters', in A. Powell, N. Henry, and A. Flynn (eds.), *Rape Justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 36.

3 L. Kelly, “The Continuum of Sexual Violence,” in J. Hanmer and M. Maynard, *Women, violence and social control* (Humanities Press International), 1987, pp. 58-59.

Continuum was defined as a basic common character underlying many different events and as a continuous series of elements or events that pass into one another. The common underlying factor is that men use a variety of methods of abuse, coercion and force to control women. The continuum should not be seen as a linear connection, nor can inferences be made from it concerning seriousness or the impact on women.

4 N. Tandon, Secondary Victimization of Children by the Media: An Analysis of Perceptions of Victims and Journalists. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 2(2), 2007, p. 119.

Primary victimization: Primary victimization comes from being a victim of the crime itself (e.g., through the physical suffering and psychological damage)

5 "Post-crime victimization or secondary victimization". *Comprehensive Criminal Justice Terminology*. Prentice Hall. Archived from the original on 10 March 2013.

6 W. G. Doerner and S. P. Lab, *Victimology* (seventh), Waltham: Anderson Publishing, 2014.

7 The United Nations. (1985). *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse*

that this gave an influence for meaningful reform to criminal justice system in the late twentieth century.<sup>8</sup>

In strong waves of international #Me, Too movement, there was also the Korean version of #Me, Too movement in broad fields prompted by an incumbent prosecutor Seo Ji-hyun.<sup>9</sup> Especially for the last three years from 2018, the whole Korean society experienced three influential politicians' sexual violence cases – Ahn Hee-Jung (Chungnam province governor), Oh Keo-don (Busan city mayor), and Park Won-sun (Seoul city mayor) – revealed by # Me, Too disclosures and keeps an eye on how these cases have been proceeded. While experiencing these three cases, the whole society has started to critically contemplate on important issues such as 'victim protection', 'victim-centeredness', 'power-based sexual violence', 'secondary victimization', and 'additional assault/suffering towards the victim-survivors'. In particular, the problem of severe secondary victimization towards the victim-survivors has been addressed as serious task to be eradicated.

There are various specific kinds of assaults in secondary victimization, however, most of them are derived from the people's false or biased perception on the sexual violence and wrong stereotypes towards the victims such as 'rape myths' or 'the desirable figure of victimhood.' Given that widespread information about human rights or certain issues comes mostly from the mass media, if the media fails to report fairly, accurately, or consistently, public perceptions will be unfair, inaccurate or inconsistent.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, according to Heinze and Freedman, public awareness of human rights will be influenced

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*of Power.*

[Http://Unordc.Org](http://Unordc.Org) [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/compendium/compendium\\_2006\\_part\\_03\\_02.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/compendium/compendium_2006_part_03_02.pdf)

8 J. Doak, *Victims' rights, human rights and criminal justice: reconceiving the role of third parties*. Oxford: Hart, 2008.

9 Prosecutor Seo Ji-hyun disclosed a sexual harassment case on the e-pros bulletin board of the prosecution's internal network on January 29, 2018, and later confessed to sexual harassment in JTBC's newsroom. Her disclosure prompted the Korean version of # Me, Too movement in broad areas such as cultural, film, theatrical, broadcasting, sports, political, religious, and education fields.

10 E. Heinze and R. Freedman, *Public awareness of human rights: distortions in the mass media, the international journal of human rights*, 2010, p. 492.

by the frequency, intensity, and style of media reporting.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2. Purpose and Research Questions

Therefore, in this paper, I set up a frame of this research based on two leading research questions and two supportive sub-questions added under the first question:

- 1) How do the Korean media coverages, especially newspapers, contextualize sexual violence and frame public awareness towards the victim-survivors?
  - a. In coverages of sexual violence cases, which parts do they focus on?
  - b. How do they consider and elaborate the specific context of each violence case?
- 2) How do Korean newspapers give a secondary victimization/further harm to victim-survivors?

By doing so, I would aim to reach two major research purposes: For journalism and the common readership. Firstly, in terms of journalism, it aims to emphasize the importance of reporting sexual violence cases and urge the media to respect media ethics when covering these issues with carefulness. Secondly, for the public, it aims to help common readership to have keen insight or discerning eyes to understand that the media choose specific factors they focus on and use selectively chosen language in reporting. Given that normal citizens get common information on human rights issues mainly from newspapers, especially online articles in electronic world of today, media coverages on sexual violence cases have great power enough to conceptualize the concept of sexual violence and public awareness towards the victim-survivors.

In this paper, I will analyze newspaper articles which cover each high-profile case as primary sources. The dataset is comprised of ten reportages per one high-profile case, therefore, it will be thirty newspaper articles in total from five major Korean newspaper outlets which are searched and collected from a news searching/analysis engine 'BIG KINDS.' If necessary, I will use other newspaper articles and a memoir book from a

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 495.



victim who only revealed her identity as secondary sources. For the analysis, I adopt qualitative analysis approach, in particular ‘thematic analysis’ by Braun and Clarke (2006)<sup>12</sup> as a major research toolkit to investigate media samples.

Media samples searched and collected from those five newspaper outlets called as ‘중앙지(Jung-angji)’ are the ones regarded as the most major influential papers. They are disseminated to all parts of the country in ‘reporting’ ‘general’ issues of society at large and displayed in Korean main portal websites with great exposures to the public. Considering most people get common information on the related issues from online articles with their smart phones or PCs, those collected data would be reasonably worthy and influential enough to be analyzed for this research.

## **1.3. Three High Profile Cases**

### **1.3.1. Ahn Hee-jung Case**

This is the only case in which the victim revealed her identity in #Me,Too disclosures among three high profile cases. In 2018, Kim Ji-eun attended on JTBC news interview with her name and face and confessed that she had been sexually assaulted by her boss and governor Ahn Hee-jung. Ahn claimed that it was a sexual affair based on mutual consent, not a sexual violence. However, on 9<sup>th</sup> September in 2019, the Supreme Court ruled that Ahn was guilty of this case and sentenced him in prison three years and six months with forty-hour of sexual education and five-year occupational restrictions for child/juvenile institutions. The sentence for this case provides a significant implication on “gender sensitivity”, by which clarifies that there is no fixed ‘appropriate’ and ‘apprehensible’ figure of victims in sexual violence since it differs in every individual’s

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12 V. Braun and V. Clarke, ‘Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology’, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 3., NO,2, 2006.

personality, the relationship with the perpetrator and specific situations.

### **1.3.2. Oh Keo-don Case**

Oh Keo-don, the former mayor of Busan city resigned on 23rd April in 2020 with mentioning a brief reason for his resignation. The victim, a female employee working in Busan city urged the perpetrator to admit his sexual assault and resign from the position. He stepped down with admitting that there was ‘an unnecessary physical contact with a female employee during a short interview’ according to his own words. However, even after that, there were controversies about his statement based on his wordings which can be understood as minimalizing or downgrading the gravity of the case itself. Oh Keo-don was sentenced three years in prison for the sexual assault and now under the court custody waiting for a trial of appeal on 18<sup>th</sup> August in 2021.

### **1.3.3. Park Won-sun Case**

It was revealed that previous Seoul Mayor Park Won-sun was accused by his former secretary for sexual harassment on July 12 in 2020. With the death of the perpetrator Park Won-sun, the case was not indicted for "no rights to indict" and the investigation was closed. On January 14, 2021, however, in another case of sexual harassment in Seoul city secretary's office involving the victim, the court acknowledged that Park Won-sun sent text messages of sexual harassment to the victim, stressing that "It is evident that the victim must have suffered considerable mental distress from Park's sexual harassment." In addition, after 180 days of investigation, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea concluded that Park Won-sun's behavior constituted sexual harassment on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. His funeral was held as a special Seoul city funeral, which also brought controversies on whether it was proper to commemorate and beautify the perpetrator of sexual violence.

## **1.4. Ethical Considerations**

Since this research deals with highly sensitive topic ‘sexual violence’, it is quite important to be more cautious and careful to do the research not to invade victim-survivors’ privacy and to avoid secondary victimization. Firstly, for this research design, I chose a ‘detour’ way to collect data by gathering already published news articles as media samples, instead of directly interviewing the victims. Also for the secondary sources, I used the memoir book or other articles based on voluntary interviews instead of directly contacting them to avoid potential further victimization. Secondly, I chose articles which disclose the # Me, Too cases based on the participation of interviewees’ voluntary participation and consents. Lastly, when it comes to dealing with articles which cause secondary victimization, I did not transcribe or quote as it is. Rather, in that case, I filtered and organized them into moderate forms by mentioning why they were troublesome and how they were edited to avoid further victimization. This research is also in line with the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council.<sup>13</sup>

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Justice for Victim-survivors of Sexual Violence**

As Daly has addressed, it is needed to shed light on the fact that sexual violence is ubiquitous. It occurs everywhere: in all the places we live, work, sleep, travel, play and pray. Not only for the location, victim ranges from infants to the elderly. Victim-offender relations are highly varied as well: by family members, peers and those unknown to each other; by those in positions of occupational and organizational authority. Furthermore, no

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<sup>13</sup> Swedish Research Council, Good research practice, 2017, (accessed 12 August 2021)

<https://www.vr.se/english/analysis/reports/our-reports/2017-08-31-good-research-practice.html>

occupation of the perpetrator is likely to be exempt. To put it simply, it can be ‘ordinary’ and ‘extraordinary’, referring respectively to everyday forms of sexual violence.<sup>14</sup>

Given that this ubiquitous sexual violence leaves huge scars for victim-survivors, it is important to examine justice interests from victim-survivors’ perspectives. In this vein, especially regarding secondary victimization and responses to sexual violence, there has been research on justice needs from victims-survivors’ perspectives. In this section, I will briefly look into previous literature from Daly and Flynn.

K. Daly has argued for a reconceptualization of sexual victimization and justice by suggesting ‘Victimization and Justice Model’, which emphasizes the understanding of specific contexts of victimization, justice mechanisms and victim’s justice interests.<sup>15</sup> By doing so, Daly has claimed that to assess responses to sexual victimization, we should focus on justice mechanisms, not on ‘types of justice’.<sup>16</sup> According to this argument, it is needed to pay attention to what is optimal and feasible in these specific victimization contexts, and not assure there is just one of desirable justice responses.<sup>17</sup> I have adopted this theoretical framework for analyzing the research topic: How these specific contexts of three cases are well-considered and elaborated in media coverage, therefore, it will be illuminated in more detailed level in the theoretical discussions part later.

Indeed, responses to sexual violence are key problems for victim-survivors’ justice needs and secondary victimization. A lot of scholars have pointed out that the conventional criminal justice system fails to respond properly to sexual violence and blame victims for the crime and these failings lead to secondary victimization. In this vein, Flynn has highlighted the need to interrupt the ‘Recognizable Narratives’. Flynn sees the discourses around sexual violence are no exception to the Foucault’s view on social and cultural

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14 K. Daly, ‘Sexual Violence and Justice: How and Why Context Matters’, in A. Powell, N. Henry, and A. Flynn (eds.), *Rape Justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 36.

15 Ibid. p. 37.

16 Ibid. p. 38.

17 K. Daly, ‘Sexual Violence and Justice: How and Why Context Matters’, in A. Powell, N. Henry, and A. Flynn (eds.), *Rape Justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 42.

discourses. According to Foucault, our social and cultural lives are ordered through discourses that produce and reproduce knowledge and understanding about particular events, based on hierarchies of social norms. Accordingly, the discourses around sexual violence are the outcomes of these hierarchies of social norms and these put victim-survivors in a weak status by so-called 'rape myths' and 'recognizable narratives.'

The persistent victim-blaming attitudes and so-called 'rape myths' which assign responsibility to the victim for the assault and failing to prevent it from occurring, they reinforce a 'real rape' narrative.<sup>18</sup> Rape myths and this kind of 'acceptable' rape narrative divides victim-survivors whether they fit to this label or not based on this 'logic.' Therefore, Flynn has argued that innovative justice responses can demonstrate the ways to interrupt the accepted 'logic' of the narratives which permeate social understandings of knowledge of sexual violence.<sup>19</sup> Sexual violence is un-coded: It does not fit into one specific narrative.

## 2.2 Secondary Victimization

The issue of secondary victimization also known as 'post crime victimization' or 'double victimization' has been addressed as a serious problem in the criminal justice system. While primary victimization comes from being a victim of the crime itself, for instance, through the physical suffering and psychological damage, secondary victimization has a difference. Doak has argued that the psychological impact of victimization can be exacerbated by intensive treatment and a lack of understanding of victims' needs by agencies, organizations, and social surroundings. To put it simply, secondary victimization is closely related to 'responses to the sexual violence and victim-survivors.' Therefore, secondary victimization occurs when the victim suffers further harm not as a direct result of the criminal act but due to the manner in which institutions and other

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<sup>18</sup> A. Flynn, 'Sexual Violence and Innovative Responses to Justice: Interrupting the 'Recognizable' Narrative, in A. Powell, N. Henry, and A. Flynn (eds.), *Rape Justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 93.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 107.

individuals with the victim.

Unfortunately, crime victims are highly vulnerable and traumatized group from the past experiences of crimes. This especially gets much more severe when it comes to victim-survivors of sex crimes due to the very nature of sex crime itself. During the investigation process, it has been reported often that the victims of sex crimes and domestic violence suffer from secondary victimization and feel stress and shame due to the manner of conversation, lack of understanding or empathy, and not enough consideration of their trauma.<sup>20</sup> This also happens and gets even aggravated by media coverage due to the strong influence of the media.

Relatedly, Tandon has focused on secondary victimization especially by the media: Mass media, whether print or electronic, is very powerful since it reaches out to entire communities, states, or country.<sup>21</sup> In a race for 'Breaking News', insensitivity on the part of journalists often results in further victimization of victims. According to Tandon, the manner in which media reports are published, also tend to sensationalize issues because the newspapers and channels attempt to increase their rating points and attract greater viewership by creating hype.<sup>22</sup> This can explain for this research topic of how and why the media coverage focuses on certain parts of the sexual violence case when reporting. The author has emphasized that 'insensitivity' by journalists is one of the foremost reasons which result in victimization by the media.<sup>23</sup> Tandon highlights the importance to strike the right balance while gathering information and reporting such issues without exaggeration. When this balance is not kept, media ends up re-victimizing victim-survivors.<sup>24</sup>

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20 J. Doak, *Victims' rights, human rights and criminal justice: reconceiving the role of third parties*. Oxford: Hart, 2008, p. 51.

21 N. Tandon, *Secondary Victimization of Children by the Media: An Analysis of Perceptions of Victims and Journalists*. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 2(2), 2007, p. 119.

22 *Ibid.* p. 120.

23 *Ibid.* p. 121.

24 *Ibid.* p. 120.

## 2.3. Media Framing

It is also needed to clarify theoretical lens from media studies since this research has adopted thematic analysis of news articles to discuss how the media coverage frame/contextualize sexual violence and public awareness towards victim-survivors. Drawing upon discourses on ‘media framing’, Gitlin defines media frames as ‘persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual.’<sup>25</sup>

According to Saleem, media frames are central in determining audience perception of a given event or issue as largely positive or critical, which primarily derives from the fact that media frames tend to offer ‘moral judgement’ reflective of ‘specific ideology’, forwarded through the use of carefully selected words, metaphors and phrases, which set the “tone” of media coverage.’<sup>26</sup> Based on these, I set my research focus on ‘media framing’ towards ‘power based sexual violence’ as persistent patterned coverage of selection, emphasis, and exclusion. I would strive to investigate how carefully selected words, metaphors, or descriptors set the “tone” of coverage and eventually, how it frames/conceptualize sexual violence and public awareness towards victim-survivors.

## 3. Theoretic Discussion

To discuss and answer the research questions stated above, this research has adopted theoretical frameworks as major axis from related fields. In this research, on the one hand, I set the theoretical framework from K. Daly’s previous research on sexual violence. On the other hand, I draw upon the theoretical concept ‘Kaleidoscopic justice’ introduced by

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25 T. Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left, With a New Preface* (First Edition, With a New Preface ed.). University of California Press, 2003, p. 7.

26 N. Saleem, ‘U.S. media framing of foreign countries’ image: an analytical perspective’, *Canadian Journal of Media Studies* 2(1), 2007, pp. 134-135.

### 3.1 K. Daly’s Justice Matrix Model

Drawing upon K. Daly’s *Sexual Violence and Justice Matrix* (hereafter, ‘*Matrix*’) model would help to shed light on the related issue and understand how and why the ‘context’ matters in sexual violence<sup>27</sup>. Especially this ‘Matrix’ model is highly helpful to understand ‘power based sexual violence’ represented in all three high profile cases. Since the ‘Matrix’ model arrays country contexts (developed, developing at war/post-conflict) by victimization contexts (individual, occupational-organizational, institutional, institutional-symbolic and collective) with 15 cells,<sup>28</sup> it would help to identify the specific context of sexual violence in each case and examine how this context is elaborated in media coverage.

Table 1. Sexual Violence and Justice Matrix, A and C country contexts (B country contexts, developing country at peace, excluded for reasons of space)

Offending-victimisation context of sexual violence	Country A Developed country at peace	Country C Conflict, post-conflict or post-authoritarian regime
(1) Person acting alone	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A1</b></p> <p><b>Relations:</b> peer, familial, known and (atypically) stranger relations</p> <p><b>Place:</b> mainly residential</p> <p><b>Problem:</b> must fit ‘real rape’ template (stranger relations, injury)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>C1</b></p> <p><b>Relations:</b> peer, familial, known and (atypically) stranger relations</p> <p><b>Place:</b> mainly residential</p> <p><b>Problem:</b> must fit ‘rape as weapon of war’ template</p>
(2) Person using	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A2</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>C2</b></p>

<sup>27</sup> K. Daly, ‘Sexual Violence and Justice: How and Why Context Matters’, in A. Powell, N. Henry, and A. Flynn (eds.), *Rape Justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 37.



<p><b>position of organizational authority in community-based settings</b></p>	<p><b>Relations:</b> religious, medical or state official (clergy, doctor, police) and child/adult victim</p> <p><b>Place:</b> residential and occupational</p> <p><b>Problem:</b> trusted person or state official is the abuser</p>	<p><b>Relations:</b> foreign peacekeepers, aid workers and soldiers, in addition to</p> <p><b>A2</b></p> <p><b>Place:</b> residential and occupational</p> <p><b>Problem:</b> legal jurisdiction, police or peacekeeper is the abuser, zero tolerance policy</p>
<p><b>(3) Person using position of organizational-occupational authority in closed institutions (includes peer relations in institutions)</b></p>	<p><b>A3</b></p> <p><b>Relations:</b> religious or state official having duty of care and child/adult victims</p> <p><b>Place:</b> residential schools, prisons, detention centres, armed forces facilities</p> <p><b>Problem:</b> trusted person of state official is the abuser, unable to escape, inmate code of silence</p>	<p><b>C3</b></p> <p><b>Relations:</b> state official having duty of care and refugee/prisoner</p> <p><b>Place:</b> refugee camps and detention centres, in addition to <b>A3</b></p> <p><b>Problem:</b> official is the abuser, unable to escape, inmate code of silence</p>
<p><b>(4) Offending in symbolically closed communities</b></p>	<p><b>A4</b></p> <p><b>Relations:</b> peer, familial and known relations</p> <p><b>Place:</b> remote communities or segregated urban enclaves</p> <p><b>Problem:</b> fear and negative community consequences of disclosing; unable to escape</p>	<p><b>C4</b></p> <p>Limited documentation; but relations, place and problem are likely similar to A4</p>
<p><b>(5) Offending by loosely or well-organised groups</b></p>	<p><b>A5</b></p> <p><b>Relations:</b> gangs, criminal enterprises, human trafficking groups</p> <p><b>Place:</b> residential</p> <p><b>Problem:</b> serious reprisals by offenders if reported, repatriation to home country</p>	<p><b>C5</b></p> <p><b>Relations:</b> gangs, state or quasi-state combatants, militia, armed forces</p> <p><b>Place:</b> everywhere</p> <p><b>Problem:</b> scale of mass violence, civilian terror, no security presence, fear and negative consequences of disclosure</p>

Firstly, according to the ‘Matrix’ model (Table 1 attached above)<sup>29</sup>, all high-profile cases categorized as ‘power based sexual violence’ could be located in the extended areas from A2 to A4. In three cases, perpetrators committed sexual violence using organizational-occupational authority as bosses and influential politicians who have the authority for personnel, mostly at workplace (A2). At the same time, for victim-survivors, the perpetrators were trusted as capable politicians at the closed hierarchical workplaces in which inmate code of silence was pervasive (A3). However, the context of sexual violence could be regarded as ‘symbolically closed communities’, since it happened among known relations and more to the point, fear and negative community consequences of disclosing (A4) are expected as victim-survivors testified,<sup>30</sup> which makes it hard to reveal or escape from the violence. Based on this model, I will examine how these specific contexts are considered and elaborated in media coverage reporting power based sexual violence.

## **3.2. Kaleidoscopic Justice**

A second theoretical discussion which will be drawn upon is ‘Kaleidoscopic Justice.’ As discussed above in the literature review, responses to sexual violence and justice interests from victim-survivors’ perspective are important in sex crimes. Kaleidoscopic Justice is a theoretical concept devised to focus on victims’ justice interests from their perspectives. McGlynn and Westermarland have proposed in their article, a more multifaceted way of thinking about victim-survivors’ perceptions of justice; what they have termed ‘Kaleidoscopic Justice’.

To understand this ‘Kaleidoscopic Justice’ lens, it would be helpful to think a kaleidoscope, often produced as a children’s toy. It is an optical instrument with two or

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. pp. 40 – 41.

<sup>30</sup> J. Kim, *I am Kim Ji-eun*. Bonalarm, 2020, p. 122.

Courageously, I sent SOS to people around me. They told me to avoid such occasions and calls. Those who gave that advice were people who knew too well that I was not in an avoidable situation. Nevertheless, the told me, "It's you who should be careful."

more reflecting surfaces (usually mirrors) inclined to each other in an angle, which produces an ever-changing viewed pattern by rotating it.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, as can be guessed from the term, Kaleidoscopic justice is justice as a continually shifting pattern, constantly refracted through new circumstances and understandings. McGlynn and Westmarland see the variety of patterning resonates with victim-survivors' sense that justice is not linear, but rather has multiple beginning and possible endings. Based on this, justice is highly complex, nuanced and difficult to (pre)determine feeling. From victim-survivors' view, justice should be seen as a lived, ongoing and ever-evolving experience and process rather than an ending or result.<sup>32</sup>

This view on justice is in line with scholars who were previously illuminated in the literature review. As Flynn has pointed out that 'taken-for-granted' assumption of what constitutes justice described as a 'recognizable rape narrative',<sup>33</sup> it does not meet the victim-survivors' sense of justice. In this vein, Daly has categorized the empirical and conceptual framework identifying the justice interests of victim-survivors, covering a variety of offence types in each specific context. Besides the theoretical framework 'Justice Matrix Model', Daly has suggested that the main justice interests of victim-survivors: Participation, voice, validation, vindication and offender accountability.<sup>34</sup>

Kaleidoscopic justice can be applied in investigating how these specific justice interests of victims are elaborated or infringed by the media coverages while paying attention to the fact that their perspectives of justice are multifaceted, nuanced, lived, and ongoing experiences. This theoretical framework is an attempt to shift debate from the conventional discussion to innovative fora to focus better on victim-survivors' perspectives of justice. Therefore, it would provide keen insight into the analysis to

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31 C. McGlynn, & N. Westmarland, Kaleidoscopic Justice: Sexual Violence and Victim-Survivors' Perceptions of Justice. *Social & Legal Studies*, 28(2), 2018, p. 185

32 Ibid. p. 186.

33 A. Flynn, 'Sexual Violence and Innovative Responses to Justice: Interrupting the 'Recognizable' Narrative, in A. Powell, N. Henry, and A. Flynn (eds.), *Rape Justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 107.

34 K. Daly, Conventional and innovative justice responses to sexual violence. *Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault*, 12, 2011, pp. 1–35.

answer the research questions.

## 4. Thematic Analysis

### 4.1. Thematic Analysis

This research has conducted a thematic analysis as explicated by Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify how the Korean major newspapers conceptualize power based sexual violence and shape public opinion towards victim-survivors. Thematic Analysis is a proper and effective research toolkit for this research as it is flexible method which works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of ‘reality’.<sup>35</sup> Given that this research aims to unravel the hidden nuanced intention for media coverage, thematic analysis is an optimal toolkit for this research. More to the point, it is highly flexible and helpful to identify the underlying themes in the datasets.

### 4.2. Data Sources

#### 4.2.1. Primary Sources

This research paper identifies how the media covers and frame/conceptualize sexual violence cases, more specifically, ‘power based sexual violence’ represented in three high profile cases by five major newspaper outlets called as 중앙지 (Jung-angji/) in Korea: 경향신문(Kyunghyang Shinmun), 국민일보(Kukmin Ilbo), 내일신문(Naeil Shinmun), 동아일보(Dong-A Ilbo), 문화일보(Munhwa Ilbo), 서울신문(Seoul Shinmun), 세계일보(Segye Ilbo), 조선일보(Chosun Ilbo), 중앙일보(Joongang Ilbo), 한겨레(Hankyoreh), 한국일보

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<sup>35</sup> V. Braun and V. Clarke, ‘Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology’, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 3., NO,2, 2006, p. 81.

(Hankook Ilbo). These newspaper outlets called as 중앙지(Jung-angji) whose headquarters are in Seoul refer to newspapers disseminated to all parts of the country. These newspaper outlets are regarded as the most major and influential ones which report ‘general’ issues in both national and international level since articles are displayed in Korean main portal websites, which leads to great exposures and could contribute to public knowledge and awareness on this issue. In this vein, newspaper outlets which are only based in certain local areas (지역종합지 ‘local newspapers’) and have aims to deliver specific topics or special fields (경제지 ‘Financial and business papers’, 전문지 (‘specialized papers’) were excluded. Especially considering electronic world of today, it is important to collect data from online news articles which play a huge role in human rights issues.

#### **4.2.2. Secondary Sources**

Besides the primary sources, I will use secondary sources to support for my analysis as such: *Standards for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes 36* and *Detailed Recommendations Criteria for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes 37* issued by Journalists Association of Korea. These guidelines set specific ethical guidelines for journalism and clarify detailed practices when reporting sexual crimes, which provides important criteria to analyze the media samples. Also, one memoir book written by Kim Ji-eun, the victim of Ahn Hee-jung case, will be used as a secondary material to add one more layer to the analysis.

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36 Journalists Association of Korea. (2018). *Standards for empathy and guidelines for reporting sexual harassment cases*.

[https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=11](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=11).

37 Journalists Association of Korea & National Human Rights Commission of Korea. (2012, December 12). *Detailed Recommendation Criteria for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes*. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=9](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=9)

### **4.3. Data Collection**

To collect data, I searched articles which cover each high-profile case using a newspaper searching/analysis system ‘BIG KINDS (Korea Integrated News Database System)’ based on integrated news big data from various media outlets. For each high-profile case, I searched articles with a keyword (a politician’s name) within a certain period of time (from the incident date to April in 2021) from major five newspaper outlets. Through investigating searched articles, certain regular patterns are identified, thus, I selected articles representing each pattern from reportages as media samples. Therefore, my dataset is comprised of ten reportage articles, to put it simply, thirty articles in total for three high profile cases.

### **4.4. Data Analysis Procedures**

#### **4.4.1. Coding Categories**

In this section, the approach to analyze the media samples engaged in conducting thematic analysis as addressed by Braun and Clark (2006) to identify the primary themes in specific language used to describe perpetrators and victims in each case: Descriptors. Regarding the definition of descriptor, lexically, it means “a word or phrase used to describe or refer to something.”<sup>38</sup> In this research, regarding the terminology ‘descriptors’, I define descriptors as “all kinds of modifiers which are used to describe or refer to perpetrators and victims.” I did not confine the scope of the descriptors to verbs or adjectives, therefore, they can mean any words, phrases, or idioms only if they are used to describe or refer to persons directly involved in each case. Especially by investigating specific descriptors by coding, it would be possible to understand which part does the media coverage focus on

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38 Cambridge University Press. (2021). Descriptor. In *Cambridge English Dictionary*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/descriptor>

describing both parties.

#### **4.4.2. Identification of Themes**

Regarding themes, a theme could be defined as that which ‘captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.’<sup>39</sup> In this research, I coded themes in relation to the specific types of descriptors used when describing/depicting perpetrators and victims in each case. The media samples used for analyzing each case are the same datasets which were selected as representatives for each case’s regular patterns. This coding process focusing on descriptors used to describe both sides in news coverage, was conducted, following the guidelines set out in Braun and Clarke (2006). I would introduce specific codes used as descriptors for both sides and present themes for each high-profile case. The thematic analysis identified each main theme of descriptors in high profile cases: (1) Ah Hee-jung case: An influential politician with good personality vs a female secretary with a good education, (2) Oh Keo-don: A self-made man with strong will vs A young female employee in her low post, (3) Park Won-sun: A hero of an age who combines personality and ability vs an alleged victim.

### **4.5. Limitations of the Study**

Regarding the limitations of this research, there are inevitable concerns from translation issues. Since this research analyzes newspaper media samples written in Korean language, I translated necessary parts from the original texts into English to quote. However, no matter how hard one tries with careful consideration, it is essentially impossible to translate the original texts wholly with very nuanced and specific context of the original

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<sup>39</sup> V. Braun and V. Clarke, ‘Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology’, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 3., NO,2, 2006, p. 82.

language use. Therefore, when citing specific quotes from the original text, if necessary, I added some additional explanation and mostly discussed necessary parts with my own translation in English. In addition, I added links in footnotes for getting access to full articles and attached the original texts with English translations in the appendices. In addition, due to the limitation of time and wordcounts of this research, I focused on investigating media framing on sexual violence and secondary victimization, however, it would have been more enriching if I were able to include other characteristics of newspaper outlets such as the political leaning, gender of each reporters/editors, et cetera.

## **5. Analysis**

### **5.1. Headlines**

A headline is the highly important element in every newspaper. To begin with the issue of headlines, as Steuter and Wills has argued ‘newspaper headlines represent especially influential components of journalism’ in that they play a significant role not only in communicating and encapsulating article content, but in ‘inflex[ing] and direct[ing]’ audience interpretation, perception and evaluation of the reported issue.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, a large proportion of newspaper readers decide whether to read the full article or not by scanning through headlines, which is more true when a lot of various articles are displayed on the portal website with just headlines. As Steuter and Wills have pointed out a large proportion of a newspaper’s readership will form an understanding of reported topics based on a scanning of headlines, rather than a full reading of featuring articles.<sup>41</sup> This is why headlines are important indicators worthy to be investigated how the newspapers cover specific sexual violence cases and to be studied on which factor they focus since a

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40 E. Steuter and D. Wills, ‘Discourses of dehumanization: enemy construction and Canadian media complicity in the framing of the War on Terror’, *Global Media Journal Canadian Edition*, vol. 2, no.2, 2009, p. 13.

41 Ibid.



headline is the most clear and condensed sentence which encapsulates reporter/editor's focus or emphasis. Furthermore, a headline itself can cause an additional harm to victim-survivors since it often uses provocative wordings to attract readership.

In this section, headlines from each high-profile case's dataset would be presented and analyzed by criteria of its focus/emphasis and structure of how they are constructed. I will discuss and analyze headlines from each case and move on to specific noteworthy features.

### 5.1.1. Ahn Hee-jung case

This is the only case whose victim, Kim Ji-eun revealed her identity when disclosing the sexual violence from the Chung-nam province governor Ahn Hee-jung. Right after this #Me,Too disclosure, all newspaper outlets reported this shocking case of an influential politician's unexpected sexual violence. Focusing on headlines of the coverage for this case (See Table 2 below), several major patterns are clearly illustrated in newspaper articles: (1) Representative of both sides (2) Summary type (3) Citing reaction of perpetrator's acquaintances (4) Victim's claim/testimony citation type (5) Mixed type.

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Table 2. Headlines in Ahn Hee-jung case<sup>42</sup>

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Representative of both sides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [2-1] Female secretary Kim Ji-eun said, "Governor Ahn Hee-jung's sexual assault four times while his mentioning ME TOO movement" VS. "Relationship Under Agreement" (<i>Segye</i>, 5 March 2018)</li> <li>▪ [2-2] "Trap like a hunter and call a victim to room." vs. "Smart woman with good academic background." There was no power (<i>Kukmin</i>, 3 July 2018)</li> <li>▪ [2-3] Ahn Hee-jung's wife, "Kim Ji-eun, not a victim" ... Kim Ji-eun's "Second Assault" (<i>Joongang</i>, 14 February 2019)</li> </ul>
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<sup>42</sup> See Appendix. 1 for the original texts in Korean and in English

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Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [2-4] [Breaking News] Ahn Hee-jung victim of sexual assault, filed a complaint with the Seoul Western District Prosecutors' Office (<i>Joongang</i>, 6 March 2018)</li> </ul>
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Citing reaction of perpetrator's acquaintances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [2-5] "Being stabbed in the back by trusting axe, Ahn Hee-jung." Chungcheongnam-do officialdom is shocked (<i>Hankook</i>, 6 March 2018)</li> <li>▪ [2-6] "Kim Ji-eun, surprisingly close to Ahn Hee-jung" (<i>Seoul</i>, 11 July 2018)</li> </ul>
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Victim's claim citation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [2-7] "An Hee-jung's think tank researcher, claimed to have been sexually assaulted" (<i>Hankyoreh</i>, 7 March 2018)</li> <li>▪ [2-8] "An Hee-jung, called her to the hotel and sexually assaulted with saying "too tough position" "(<i>Chosun</i>, 8 March 2018)</li> <li>▪ [2-9] "An Hee-jung, hugs with saying 'pretty'" additional disclosures (<i>Joongang</i>, 25 March 2018)</li> </ul>
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Mixed type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [2-10] Former Governor Ahn Hee-jung's additional victim disclosure, think tank female employee "several times" (<i>Dong-A</i>, 8 March 2018)</li> </ul>
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## Representative of both sides

This type of headline focuses on reporting arguments – mostly contradictory to each other or refuting each other's claims – from both the perpetrator and the victim. Like most penal offenses do, sexual violence cases can also have contradictory claims from both sides. This type of headline puts its focus on delivering main arguments from each

side especially on core aspect highly important to determine whether it is a punishable crime or just immoral sexual affair with mutual consent.

Indeed, one of the most common arguments from the perpetrator on sexual assault is claiming ‘sexual affair based on mutual consent.’ Even though it is immoral for the married perpetrator, by claiming as such it can downgrade this matter from punishable crime area to unpunishable ethical area. It is also found in Ahn’s case as elaborated in one headline sample: [2-1] *Female secretary Kim Ji-eun said, "Governor Ahn Hee-jung's sexual assault four times while his mentioning ME TOO movement" VS. "Relationship Under Agreement"*. In covering another core issue “victimhood” has adopted this type of headline format to deliver each contradictory argument from both sides: [2-3] *Ahn Hee-jung's wife, "Kim Ji-eun, not a victim" ...Kim Ji-eun's "Second Assault"*.

Another example of this type reports core counter arguments in the trial citing remarks from the prosecutor who urge the court to judge for the crime and the lawyer who defended the perpetrator: [2-2] *"Trap like a hunter and call a victim to room." vs. "Smart woman with good academic background... There was no power.* This type of headline is helpful to show readers contradictory but decisive factor to know about the case. This headline example shows that it focuses on the existence of ‘power’ which could decide whether the violence was committed by using authority power, namely, power-based sexual violence. However, it also contains the lawyer’s problematic remark which can cause additional harm and force ‘the desirable figure of victim.’ It was asserted by the perpetrator’s side to support his argument that the victim was a smart woman with good academic background who had a strong will to say no, therefore, the perpetrator’s power was not enough to suppress the victim. This phrase ‘smart woman with good academic background’ became a huge headline right away, however, it can give readers rather false impression on victims’ image. It could give wrong nuanced impression that victims of sexual violence usually do not have a strong will on their own sexual autonomy and women with higher education background are excluded from the victimhood by imposing more rigid criteria to be qualified as victims.

## Summary type

Headlines which focus on summarizing the content are typical to report and deliver ‘what happened’ in a neutral tone. In principle, reportages are basically aimed to report and deliver the news to readers in an objective way, therefore, this type of headlines deliver a neutral simple fact to readers. Readers can have a basic grasp of information on the issue even without reading the whole article. For example, it is well elaborated in the headline sample as such: [2-4] *[Breaking News] Ahn Hee-jung victim of sexual assault, filed a complaint with the Seoul Western District Prosecutors' Office.* It is based on the basic structure of the reporting news on ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘to whom’, et cetera.

## Citing reaction of perpetrator’s acquaintances

Given the fact that the perpetrator is a well-known figure to public, this type of headlines puts an emphasis on showing his acquaintances’ reaction on the related issue. This type cites the remarks from the acquaintances on the issue, which usually delivers people’s emotional reactions. For example, one headline sample shows emotions of shock and disappointment on Ahn Hee-jung’s sexual assault case using a metaphor: [2-5] *"Being stabbed in the back by trusting axe, Ahn Hee-jung." Chungcheongnam-do officialdom is shocked.* Referring Ahn by using a traditional metaphor “trusting axe”, it shows people in Chungcheongnam-do were shocked about this case, which implies this case was unexpected in terms of his personality. This nuanced implication gets clearer when reading through the full article which describes the perpetrator by using phrases as such: *“usually women-friendly”, “public officers say unimaginable”, “having good communication with female employees”, “his personality which is thorough in self-discipline.”*<sup>43</sup>

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43 J. Lee and D. Hong, 2018. "Being stabbed in the back by trusting axe, Ahn Hee-jung." Chungcheongnam-do officialdom is shocked. *Hankuk Ilbo*, [online] Available at: <<https://www.hankookilbo.com/News/Read/201803061083551834>> [Accessed 22 May 2021].

This type of headline citing positive remarks about the perpetrator's personality could be problematic especially in a situation when both sides' argument on the case is contradictory. In power based sexual violence, perpetrators are usually influential figures who are well-known to the public while victims are just normal people. Power based sexual violence is basically based on the imbalance of power between both sides, however, this imbalance of power is continued even in the media coverage. It is noteworthy that there are quite substantial headlines citing the reaction of the perpetrators' side, which is usually positive assessment or defending the perpetrator's side. Headlines depicting perpetrator's personality in a positive way are more common than that of victims, which makes victims are invisible in this type.

Another media example is a headline which cites a remark from the close acquaintance from the perpetrator's side: [2-6] "*Kim Ji-eun, was surprisingly close to Ahn Hee-jung*". This is a sentence which can defend and support the perpetrator's claim arguing there was no exercise of power for the sexual affair. This remark just became a huge headline by citing without elaborating the context.<sup>44</sup> Reading the full article, it was a testimony from a witness in a perpetrator's side who said that "*Kim (the victim) treated Ahn so candidly/without reserve to make people around to be surprised*", which supports the perpetrator's argument that they were a couple and contradicts the victim's testimony that she was victimized by his authority power. The full article also just cited remarks from the interviews which support that they looked like in a very close relationship without explaining specific context of the situation. Given that the strong influence and power of the headlines, this type of headlines supporting and defending only one side can give false information on the issue and cause a wrong frame towards the victim. According to the guideline for reporting sex crimes, the media should not report on the privacy of victims unrelated to the nature of sex crime cases so not to allow victims to be perceived as responsible for causing crimes including a reputation on the victim.<sup>45</sup>

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44 J. Kim, *I am Kim Ji-eun*. Bonalarm, 2020, p. 263.

"As wide as Ahn Hee-jung's power, his extensive social influence has been exercised in sexual violence cases as well. The trial process was broadcast LIVE. The lies of perjured witnesses were published by the media."

45 Journalists Association of Korea. (2018), *Standards for empathy and guidelines for reporting sexual*

## **Victim's claim/testimony citation type**

This type of headlines puts weight on the victim's claim and testimony on the related issue. Given the fact that the ME Too movement started from the testimony/disclosure from the victim's side, this type focuses on the content of their disclosure. As mentioned above, there is a tendency that the power imbalance between perpetrators and victims continues in the media coverage, therefore, headlines based on the victim's claim could be a way of balancing each side. In Ahn's case, headline samples of this type are quite specific: [2-7] "*An Hee-jung's think tank researcher, claimed to have been sexually assaulted*", [2-8] "*An Hee-jung, called her to the hotel and sexually assault with saying 'too tough position'*", [2-9] "*An Hee-jung, hugs with saying 'pretty'*" additional disclosures. They are citing specific content of the victim's disclosure on the violence itself much in detail, for instance, including the subjects of the additional disclosures, the excuse of the perpetrator ('too tough position'), the place ('hotel'), and specific behavior with words ('rape', 'hug with saying 'pretty)'). Especially, by revealing the perpetrator's excuse by quoting his remarks "too tough position", it could provide a hint for readers that the perpetrator Ahn was in a higher position who could call the victim to come to the hotel and use occupational power from his 'tough' position, which could be understood in *Matrix* model (A2). They are catchy for readership and can deliver the content of the sexual violence itself to normal citizens by only scanning the titles.

## **Mixed/Combination Type**

Headlines can adopt different types of formation on certain intention or purposes.

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*harassment cases.*

<https://www.journalist.or.kr/>. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=11](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=11)

Headlines formed by a combination of different types can take advantages from each. For example, in Ahn’s case, one media sample shows the headline by a combination of summary and the citation of victim’s claim type: [2-10] *Former Governor Ahn Hee-jung’s additional victim disclosure, think tank female employee “several times”*. It gives a summary of the case based on the victim’s claim/testimony. However, it is emphasizing the phrase “several times” from the victim’s words and citing it directly with the quotation marks. Steuter and Wills have argued that ‘[w]hile such editorial choices about things like punctuation may be subtle, they have a powerful cumulative effect, eliding the distance between speaker and content so that the newspaper’s voice comes to seem neutral, common sense and obvious rather than ideological’.<sup>46</sup> By emphasizing the specific phrase with punctuation (“several times”) in the headline, it shows its focus on delivering the brief information on the issue and emphasizing a specific part of victim’s claim; Repeatability of the violence.

### 5.1.2. Oh Keo-don case

Headlines covering Oh’s case (See Table 3 below) show several major patterns as such: (1) Perpetrator focused type (2) Citing victim’s claim/testimony (3) Summary type (4) Mixed type (Perpetrator focused/Victim-focused)

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Table 3. Headlines in Oh Keo-don case<sup>47</sup>

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46 E. Steuter and D. Wills, ‘Discourses of dehumanization: enemy construction and Canadian media complicity in the framing of the War on Terror’, *Global Media Journal Canadian Edition*, vol. 2, no.2, 2009, p. 10.

47 See Appendix. 2 for the original texts in Korean and in English

<p>Perpetrator focused type</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [3-1] 'Sexual harassment' Busan Mayor's overall 'poor municipal administration' (<i>Munhwa</i>, 24 April 2020)</li> <li>▪ [3-2] 'Sexual harassment' dishonorable resignation...3 trials and 4 attempts. Who's the Oh Keo-don? (<i>Segye</i>, 23 April 2018)</li> <li>▪ [3-3] Oh Keo-don, who overturned Busan's power in 23 years, is facing criminal punishment (<i>Hankyoreh</i>, 23 April 2020)</li> <li>▪ [3-4] He changed "30 years of Conservative" Busan, but ...Oh Geo-don, a 'Roly poly' who collapsed in sexual harassment (<i>Joongang</i>, 23 April 2020)</li> </ul>
<p>Citing victim's claim</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [3-5] Victims of Oh Keo-don's sexual harassment "was called by his secretary and harassed in the office" (<i>Joongang</i>, 23 April 2020)</li> </ul>
<p>Summary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [3-6] Oh Keo-don molested a young female employee on the 7th (<i>Chosun</i>, 23 April 2020)</li> <li>▪ [3-7] Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don sexually harassed a female employee...Resign from mayoral position (<i>Hankyoreh</i>, 23 April 2020)</li> <li>▪ [3-8] Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don resigned suddenly ··Admit sexual harassment of "inappropriate physical contact during interviews with a female employee" (<i>Kyunghyang</i>, 23 April 2020)</li> </ul>
<p>Mixed type (Perpetrator/Victim focused)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [3-9] Resignation due to sexual harassment of Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don, who was elected at fourth attempt (<i>Seoul</i>, 23 April 2020)</li> <li>▪ [3-10] Oh Keo-don's molestation victim, is a woman in Busan city election camp...Demanding the resignation of Busan mayor by setting a deadline (<i>Chosun</i>, 23 April 2020)</li> </ul>



## Perpetrator focused type

It is noticeable that perpetrator focused type is prominent in news headlines covering Oh's case. As could be guessed from the name, it is the type which focuses on the personal figure of perpetrator. There are several headlines which illuminate 'who the perpetrator is.' For example, one sample directly arouses a question on the perpetrator himself: [3-2] *'Sexual harassment' dishonorable resignation... '3 failures, 4 attempts' Who is Oh Keo-don?* It focuses on the perpetrator's aspect that he was elected after several failures and at the same time emphasizes his strong will with a metaphor '3전 4기'(a Korean idiom that means three failures and fourth trial, which is symbolically used for "dogged perseverance.") This could be combined with other type, for example, with summary type: [3-9] *Resignation due to sexual harassment of Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don, who was elected at fourth attempt.* It briefly summarizes that the perpetrator resigned, however, emphasizes that he was the person elected at fourth attempt at the same time.

Also, in Oh's case, perpetrator focused headlines show a pattern by emphasizing the perpetrator's character represented by the metaphor "Roly Poly": [3-4] *"He Changed "30 years of Conservative" Busan, but ...Oh Geo-don, a 'Roly poly' who collapsed in sexual harassment."* It is also highlighted several times that he overturned the previous vested political power in Busan city: [3-3] *"Oh Keo-don, who overturned Busan's power in 23 years, is facing criminal punishment."* These headlines are all focusing on the perpetrator and framing him as a symbol of self-made man.

Besides focusing on the perpetrator's own election/political history, another media sample shows that its focus is on the 'political capability' of the perpetrator: [3-1] *'Sexual harassment' Busan Mayor's overall 'poor municipal administration'.* When referring to the sexual harassment case, this headline emphasizes the perpetrator's insufficient capability to govern the city. In full article, it delineates his misconducts or failure as a mayor by pointing out improper personnel administration, conflicts between public officials, low gender-related sensitivity, unsuccessful policy, and so on.<sup>48</sup>

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48 K. Kim, & M. Yoon (2020, April 24). 'Sexual harassment' Busan Mayor's overall "poor municipal administration." *Munhwa Ilbo*. <http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2020042401070127098001>.

## Citing victim's claim/testimony

In Oh's case, perpetrator focused type headlines are noticeable which focus on the perpetrator himself and his story. However, there are also victim focused type of headlines by citing victim's claim/testimony. In this case, a lot of news coverages were primarily based on the perpetrator's own statement and directly cited without further collecting data or investigation in articles. Accordingly, there was an inevitable tendency of being perpetrator-centered in coverage of this case. In this vein, citing victim's claim/testimony is quite helpful to deliver the victim's claim to the readership and relieve the power imbalance in coverage as well.

Headlines citing victim's testimony elaborate highly specific and detailed information on the violence case itself: [3-5] *Victims of sexual harassment Oh Keo-don "was called by his secretary and harassed in the office."* This headline based on the victim's statement provides detailed context of the violence. Simultaneously it shows that this case is a power based sexual violence since the victim was called by a mayor's secretary during working hours and harassed at the mayor's office, which considers the very specific context of the sexual violence elaborated in *Matrix* model. It clarifies the perpetrator Oh was in a high position enough to have own secretary and could exercise his 'professional/occupational power' to make the victim to come to his mayor office 'an occupational place.' (A2)

Reading this full article, it is based on the statement from the victim which expresses a pity on the perpetrator's wording and news coverage based on his side. Indeed, when admitting the sexual violence, Oh remarked "*I made an unnecessary physical contact with a female employee during a short five-minute interview. I realized that this could be recognized as a forced molestation which should not be done. Regardless of gravity, it cannot be forgiven by any words or actions.*"<sup>49</sup> Majority of news coverage reported this

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[Accessed 22 May 2021].

49 K. Kwon(2020, April 23). Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don resigned suddenly ·· Admit sexual harassment of "inappropriate physical contact during interviews with a female employee." *Kyunghyang Shinmun*.

case by citing the perpetrator's own statement and wording since it was just revealed and admitted by his own words, not by the victim's direct disclosure or investigation authorities. However, the victim made a statement criticizing Oh's wording and the coverage which could be interpreted as downsizing the case. For instance, specific phrases such as "unnecessary physical contact" without mentioning specific misbehavior, "during a short five-minute interview", "I realized this could be recognized as a crime", and "regardless of gravity" could be interpreted as downsizing the violence case.

In this sense, victim expressed her pity by stating that *"I cannot weigh what happened there. It was an obvious sexual harassment and sex crime subject to legal punishment. But due to phrases such as 'regardless of gravity' and 'I realized that it could be recognized as a forced assault', I am afraid whether I could be considered as rather unusual."*<sup>50</sup> When dealing with the victim's statement, this article also addresses another important request from the victim on additional harm by the press and the media. Citing victim's own words, it addresses the victim's plea on stopping 'doxing' of private information and gossip news coverage.<sup>51</sup> Given the content of the article, this type of headlines citing victim's own statement is effective to give knowledge on this issue to readers and relieve the power imbalance in media when coverage is mainly dependent on the perpetrator's side.

## Summary type

This type focuses on briefly summarizing the fact so readers could get the grasp of what

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[http://news.khan.co.kr/kh\\_news/khan\\_art\\_view.html?artid=202004231133001&code=620100](http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=202004231133001&code=620100). [Accessed 22 May 2021].

50 S. Wi, & E. Lee (2020, April 23). Victims of sexual harassment Oh Keo-don "was called by his secretary and harassed in the office." *Joongang Ilbo*. <https://news.joins.com/article/23761537>. [Accessed 22 May 2021].

51 Ibid.

happened on the issue even by scanning a headline. It is common given reportage news articles primarily aim at reporting the case in an objective and neutral way. Several samples show this type in this case: [3-6] *“Oh Keo-don molested a young female employee on the 7th”*, [3-7] *“Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don sexually harassed a female employee...Resign from mayoral position”*, [3-8] *Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don resigned suddenly ..Admit sexual harassment of “inappropriate physical contact during interviews with a female employee.”* All these headlines focus on briefly summarizing the information and inform readership in a concise style.

### **Mixed type (Perpetrator focused/Victim focused)**

Mixed type is a combination of different types of headlines, which could take merits from each type by combining. In Oh’s case, two specific sub-categories are noteworthy: Perpetrator focused and victim focused type. For instance, in Oh’s case, one sample shows the mixed type with the perpetrator focused type and the summary type: [3-9] *Resignation due to sexual harassment of Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don, who was elected at fourth attempt.* This conveys a brief summary of the fact with a clear focus on ‘who the perpetrator is’ by adding a descriptor “who was elected at fourth attempt.”

Another sample combines a summary type with victim focused information: [3-10] *Oh Keo-don’s molestation victim, is a woman in Busan city election camp...Demanding the resignation of Busan mayor by setting a deadline.* It delivers the brief summary on the fact that the victim demanded the perpetrator to resign from the position within a deadline, however, it reveals “who the victim is” by forming a clear sentence such as “the victim is a woman in Busan city election camp.” Among floods of headlines focusing on the perpetrator and his story, this type is uncommon, however, there could be concerns on whether this example specifies the identity of a victim so can give an additional harm to the victim especially when the victim does not want to open her identity. The media should not disclose information to identify victims of sex crimes and their families in order to prevent secondary damage during the reporting its process.<sup>52</sup>

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52 Journalists Association of Korea. (2018). *Standards for empathy and guidelines for reporting sexual*

### 5.1.3. Park Won-sun case

Patterns of headlines represented in Park’s case (See Table 4 below) could be categorized as such: (1) Victim Perspective Summary (2) Perpetrator focused type (3) Citing reaction of perpetrator’s acquaintances (4) Summary type.

Table 4. Headlines in Park Won-sun case<sup>53</sup>

Victim perspective summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [4-1] "Park Won-sun sexually harassed for 4 years, asked for a hug in the office bedroom and kissed the knee" (<i>Chosun</i>, 13 July 2020)</li> <li>▪ [4-2] "I said no, but...Park, years of sexual harassment" Accusation (<i>Munhwa</i>, 10 July 2020)</li> </ul>
Perpetrator focused type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [4-3] Park Won-sun, “Sexual harassment is illegal” a human rights lawyer who made sexual harassment public in the world for the first time (<i>Joongang</i>, 9 July 2020)</li> <li>▪ [4-4] The first lawyer for sexual harassment lawsuits in Korea, he was Park Won-sun (<i>Chosun</i>, 9 July 2020)</li> <li>▪ [4-5] A civic activist, longest-serving Seoul mayor, suspicions of Me Too...Park Won-sun’s life story (<i>Joongang</i>, 10 July 2020)</li> <li>▪ [4-6] Seoul Mayor Park Won-sun... Human rights lawyer, civil rights activist, mayor serving the third consecutive terms to extreme choices (<i>Seoul</i>, 10 July 2020)</li> </ul>

harassment cases.

<https://www.journalist.or.kr/>. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=11](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=11).

<sup>53</sup> See Appendix. 3 for the original texts in Korean and in English

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Citing reaction of perpetrator's acquaintances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [4-7] Mayor Park's drastic choice why? Employees in Seoul city "want to believe it's not true" (<i>Hankyoreh</i>, 10 July 2020)</li> <li>▪ [4-8] Former secretary of the Blue House, "Park Won-sun, who I've seen so far, He's not the one to undermine women's personality" (<i>Kukmin</i>, 11 July 2020)</li> </ul>
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [4-9] "Find Mayor Park's secretary who sued sexual harassment." Concerns about secondary abuse by doxing the personal information (<i>Chosun</i>, 10 July 2020)</li> <li>▪ [4-10] The Court "It is true that the victim of Park Won-sun suffered from mental pain" (<i>Hankyoreh</i>, 14 January 2021)</li> </ul>

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## Victim Perspective Summary

This victim perspective summary type provides a brief information/description on the issue from a victim's perspective. It is different from the summary type explained above in other profile case since it summarizes the fact from the victim's viewpoint. In Park's case, headline samples delineate quite specific context of the sexual harassment: [4-1] *"Park Won-sun sexually harassed for 4 years, asked for a hug in the office bedroom and kissed the knee."* This headline contains highly specific content of the violence by clarifying the period of harassment (4 years), the location (in the office bedroom), the specific kinds of harassment (asking for a hug, kissed victim's knees), which citing the victim's testimony.

Another sample highlights the context of the long continuance: [4-2] *"I said no, but...Park, years of sexual harassment"* Accusation. It explains the fact that the victim brought criminal charges for the perpetrator for sexual harassment and highlights it continued for years despite the victim's intention of refusal. This headline adopts a form of citing victim's statement from her perspective ("I said no, but"), which could be an effective way to address that it is a criminal case without mutual consent.

## **Perpetrator focused type**

It is noteworthy that perpetrator focused type is outstanding in news coverages for Park's case. It is understandable given that he is a highly important figure in Korean society as a well-known human rights lawyer, civic activist, and mayor of the capital Seoul city serving for the third consecutive terms. Therefore, the Me Too disclosure on him was shocking to the whole society since it is completely against his past careers as a human rights lawyer who led to win the sexual violence case and a leader who emphasized women-friendly policies in Seoul. Accordingly, the type of headlines which focuses on the perpetrator places emphasis on his life career, which makes it more contradictory to his sexual harassment disclosure.

For example, there are headline samples that focuses on his career as a human rights lawyer: [4-3] "*Park Won-sun, a human rights lawyer who made public sexual harassment public in the world for the first time*", [4-4] "*The first lawyer for sexual harassment lawsuits in Korea, he was Park Won-sun.*" These are all highlighting the fact that the perpetrator was a person who had contributed to human rights, more specifically, women's rights regarding sexual violence. Eventually it maximizes the gravity of this case by pointing out that a human rights lawyer who defended women's rights committed sexual violence himself.

Other samples of the perpetrator focused type are illuminating his overall career as such: [4-5] "*Civic activist, longest-serving Seoul mayor, suspicions of Me Too...Park Won-sun's life story*", [4-6] "*Seoul Mayor Park Won-sun... Human rights lawyer, civil rights activist, mayor serving the third consecutive terms to extreme choices.*" These headlines put their focus on the perpetrator's overall life-time career in a biographical style. In these articles, the perpetrator becomes a main character who has his own narratives. Reading through these articles, the primary focus is on illuminating the life story of the perpetrator from the birth to his death including his achievements as a mayor, civic activists, and lawyer. Rather, the portion of the article allotted to cover the case and victim is relatively small.

## **Citing reaction of perpetrator's acquaintances**

Citing reaction of other people, on the topic of being covered, is also found in Park's case. Samples of this type cite vivid reactions from Park's acquaintances: [4-7] *Mayor Park's drastic choice why? Employees in Seoul city "want to believe it's not true."* This headline concentrates on the perpetrator's suicide related to the sexual violence case. Park left his official residence and eventually was found dead, which was concluded as a suicide since there was no official suspicion of a murder and his suicide note was found. Reading this full article, it delivers a remark from one Seoul city official in a direct quote saying that Park emphasized morality so much, so he has never imagined this could have happened. Citing acquaintances' reaction on the issue shows that the case is shocking as much as that to the whole society.

Another sample of this headline quotes a positive remark about the perpetrator's personality: [4-8] *Former secretary of the Blue House, "Park Won-sun, who I've seen so far, He's not the one to undermine women's personality."* It cites a positive personal evaluation on the perpetrator's personality in a direct quote in the headline. However, this could be highly problematic in a way that it can give an additional or further harm to the victim. Obviously, there exists a victim who has been suffered from his sexual assault and she took courage to disclose this case. Even after it was revealed by testimonies and submitted evidence, there are a lot of new articles which cite positive remarks on the perpetrator in the headlines. If the victim faces headlines like "He is not that kind of person who abuses women", it is evident that it can cause additional harm to the victim. Careless quoting especially in headlines could lead to a result of beautifying the perpetrator regardless of the editor's intention. It goes without saying that it can contribute to framing and shaping public opinion on the issue.

Taken all together, as the headlines evaluating the perpetrator in a positive way, it is possible to reasonably guess on the glimpse atmosphere about the context of this violence case. As the victim confessed in another coverage that she asked a movement of her department to escape from the violence, but it was impossible without Park's permission. Furthermore, according to the victim's statement, even when she asked for help about this issue within Seoul city government, but the reply was like "Park is not that kind of person",



“just accept that it was a mistake”, and “the role of secretary is to assist the mayor’s mood.”<sup>54</sup> This says something about the context in a way that it was hard to escape from the situation in which inmate code of silence was pervasive (*Matrix A3*) and shows a characteristic of ‘symbolically closed communities’ in which negative community consequences of disclosing is expected (*Matrix A4*).

## Summary type

Headlines which concisely summarize are effective when delivering the fact to the readership even without reading full article. Sometimes it conveys a message or urge in a summarized format: [4-9] *"Find Mayor Park's secretary who sued sexual harassment!"* Concerns about secondary abuse by doxing the personal information. This is the headline which briefly notifies that there is a secondary harm for the victim-survivors. However, this headline of seemingly summarizing the current phenomena, indeed spreads a message which urges people to stop secondary victimization such as doxing victim’s personal information or trying to reveal her identity. To put it simply, this headline reads like a normal summary of the current phenomenon, however, the intention of the editor or journalist is reflected in it to urge readership on the related issue.

Another sample of this type is more focused on delivering the core information in a more objective way: [4-10] *The Court "It is true that the victim of Park Won-sun suffered from mental pain."* This headline provides a key sentence or main point of the ruling from the court in a concise way. Readers can get knowledge that Park’s case is an evidently proved harm as sexual violence, not just a controversy or alleged scandal by #Me Too.

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<sup>54</sup> W. Lee (2020, July 17). *Seven-time refusals for the secretary’s movement of department . . . Five chief of staffs “I didn’t know.”* Joongang Ilbo. <https://news.joins.com/article/23827387>. [Accessed 22 May 2021].

## 5.2. Descriptors

Language has great power. It is not just a medium to deliver one's thoughts or information. Rather, words have power enough to shape and frame people's awareness, the common opinions and knowledge on a certain issue. Thus, I argue that it can have a huge influence on conceptualizing/faming the concept of sexual violence by using specific language to describe the topic. In this research, more specifically, I argue that descriptors are decisive factors which can shape the public awareness/opinions on the concept "the desirable or ideal figure of victims." Therefore, the second approach is identifying descriptors used for perpetrators and victims in reportage articles which cover power based sexual violence represented in three high profile cases.

Descriptors in news articles, especially in coverage of sexual violence cases are not just phrases which were used off the top of the editor's head. They are carefully selected words, phrases, and idioms, which shows the reporter's or editor's underlying focus when describing perpetrators and victims. Regarding the definition of descriptor, lexically, it means "a word or phrase used to describe or refer to something."<sup>55</sup> In this research, regarding the terminology 'descriptors', I define descriptors as 'all kinds of modifiers which are used to describe or refer to perpetrators and victims.' I did not confine the scope of the descriptors to verbs or adjectives, therefore, they can mean any words, phrases, or idioms only if they are used to describe or refer to persons directly involved in each case. Especially by investigating specific language used to describe perpetrators and victims, it would be possible to understand which part does the media coverage focus on describing both parties. More to the point, through identifying descriptors, it will help to examine whether the media coverage considers the 'power relation of the power- based sexual violence between perpetrators and victims.' If so, an analytical focus would be on identifying how the specific power-related contexts are elaborated in reportages.

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<sup>55</sup> Cambridge University Press. (2021). Descriptor. In *Cambridge English Dictionary*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/descriptor>

### 5.2.1. Ahn Hee-jung case

#### **Ahn as an influential politician with good personality**

Besides the official position of the perpetrator such as ‘Chung-nam (previous) governor’, dominant codes of descriptors used to describe Ahn are mainly two: Political ability and good personality (See Table 5 attached below).

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Table 5. Ahn Hee-jung case/ Descriptors of the perpetrator

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- Name: Ahn Hee-jung
  
  - Position: governor Ahn Hee-jung; former Chung-nam governor
  
  - Political ability: being bandied as the next leader; showing a formidable political competence, who has social/political influence, a strong candidate for the next presidency
  
  - Personality: has been evaluated positively with women-friendly image, had smooth communication with female employees, has been strict about self-management than anyone else, never imaginable for him to do such a thing, a personality with a thorough self-discipline
-

## Political ability/influence

Specific words or phrases used to describe the perpetrator as an influential politician are as such: *“being bandied as the next leader”*, *“showing a formidable political competence”*, *“who has social/political influence”*, and *“a strong candidate for the next presidency.”* All these descriptors refer to the perpetrator as a capable politician who is being named as a strong candidate for the next presidency. Given the perpetrator is the governor of one big province in Korea, it is understandable the articles allotted substantial space to describe him in terms of political capabilities. Especially, this case is a typical power-based sexual violence in which the perpetrator used his powerful position in a conservative hierarchy to abuse the victim under his influence, these descriptors consider and elaborate the context of this case by describing the perpetrator. This also matches with the victim Kim Ji-eun’s testimony in her memoir, in which she confessed that it was like his kingdom with saying that *“we are here to make him as the next president.”*<sup>56</sup>

## Personality

It is noteworthy that other main descriptors refer to him as the one with a good personality. Specific phrases which were used in describing his personality were mostly positive evaluation from his acquaintances, which implies a nuanced meaning that he is ‘too good person to commit the violence.’ For instance, specific phrases are elaborated in news samples: *“Has been evaluated positively with women-friendly image”*, *“had smooth communication with female employees”*, *“has been strict about self-management than anyone else”*, and *“never imaginable for him to do such a thing.”* Especially in reporting the perpetrator’s sexual abuse, these positive descriptors are all highlighting the perpetrator’s personality seemingly conflicting with his committing sexual violence. It adds a layer of emphasis that this news is so shocking in terms of his ‘women-friendly’ personality with ‘a thorough self-discipline.’

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56 J. Kim, *I am Kim Ji-eun*. Bonalarm, 2020, p. 327.

“But the presence of power and the exercise are simultaneous. The position of a supervisor remains the same 24 hours a day for a 24-hour business secretary.”

### **Victim as a female secretary with good education**

Among these three high profile cases, this is the only case in which the victim Kim Ji-eun, disclosed the case by revealing her own identity to the public. Generally, descriptors for the victim Kim Ji-eun are more or less such as referring to her by her name, previous job position, the status of an accuser and the victim. However, there are a few specific descriptors to be illuminated (See Table 6 attached below).

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Table 6. Ahn Hee-jung case/ Descriptors of the victim

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- Name: Kim Ji-eun
  
  - Gender: female
  
  - Age: 33; in her thirties
  
  - Victim: the victim of Ahn Hee-jung's sexual violence
  
  - Position: a female secretary; a secretary for political affairs; a press secretary; an accompanying secretary
  
  - Accuser: an accuser who accused former Chung-nam governor Ahn
  
  - Education: a smart woman who has a good academic background
  
  - Marital: already with a marital experience
-

### **A female secretary in her thirties**

In media samples, it was general and common to name the victim by her specific position such as “a secretary for political affairs”, “a press secretary”, and “an accompanying secretary” Kim Ji-eun. However, it is noticeable that several news articles obstinately refer to the victim by a “female” secretary with her specific age, for example: “*a female secretary Kim Ji-eun (33)*” In this Me Too case, the victim attended on one of the most major and influential TV news with her own name, face, and identity. Therefore, even without mentioning the gender, anyone who reads the news articles can know she is a female secretary since articles mostly posted her picture on its reportage. This needs to be understood in a unique specific Korean linguistic context. Generally, Korean vocabularies for profession and job mean gender-neutral, which means, for example, words “secretary” or “police” includes both gender of people who work in these professions. However, when it comes to a woman, especially the word “여(女, female)” is added in front of those vocabularies, for instance, such as “여비서 (a female secretary)”, “여경 (a female police)”, or “여교사 (a female teacher)”. It is not true for the vice versa, which means the word “남(男, male)” is not added to refer to a male secretary, a male police officer, or a male teacher.

These days there are controversies on this issue and how to refer to the related parties in terms of gender equality, especially in the press area. Namely, this could be said that it has been based on the traditional stereotype on profession, thus, referring jobs as male’s general profession, and regard it as exceptional when it comes to a woman’s job by adding the word “여(女, female).” In this case, even still in the situation when the victim already opened her identity, it is not neutral to depict her obstinately as “a female secretary.” Rather it could be read as a degrading descriptor since these phrases tacitly and subtly are regarded as not that professional and can frame the job ‘secretary’ as exclusively women’s profession. Given the sexual violence is basically a gender violence, this nuanced wording related to the gender should be more carefully selected and used. It is also noteworthy that age is provided as a basic element in reporting this case only when referring to the

victim, not for the perpetrator. It could be interpreted that more basic demographic descriptors are used for the victim in comparison to the perpetrator.

### **Academic background and marital status**

A descriptor which mentions the victim's academic background and marital status derived from the defender's remark in the trial. The defender on the perpetrator's side spoke this sentence *"The victim is a smart woman who has a good academic background with a marital experience already and could he (the perpetrator) have had the power to subdue such an independent woman's intention?"* in a context of proving whether 'the power' of Ahn's position was exercised indeed in sexual abuse. Ahn's defender strongly argued that he admitted an inappropriate affair with the victim, but it is different from whether it can be a crime or not. This remark directly became a headline and reported in news articles, consequentially, her academic background and marital status became so public even though these are not essentially related to the violence itself.

According to the guidelines for reporting sexual crimes, it clearly states that the media should not disclose victim's information on the privacy of victims unrelated to the nature of sex crimes.<sup>57</sup> Even though it was an information from the trial, the media should judge the appropriateness for the disclosure of information under its own responsibility.<sup>58</sup> To put it simply, the media should not report in a way of mentioning non-essential content unrelated to sexual violence such as the victim's usual behavior and 'marital status.'<sup>59</sup> More to the point, it could be highly problematic in a way that it can contribute to framing the concept of power based sexual violence in a wrong way and "the desirable or ideal figure of victims." This can shape public awareness/opinion on the concept of sexual violence in a wrong way, especially in power based sexual violence. This might narrow

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57 Journalists Association of Korea & National Human Rights Commission of Korea. (2012, December 12). *Detailed Recommendation Criteria for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes*. <https://www.journalist.or.kr/>. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=9](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=9). Practice guideline 2

58 Ibid. Practice 5

59 Ibid. Practice 5

down the scope of a crime committed to women in terms of education and marital status, which eventually leads to require more strict conditions for those in this category to be admitted as rape victims. As Kim Ji-eun confessed about this in her memoir, this descriptor is not only unrelated but also giving an additional harm to the victim.<sup>60</sup>

### 5.2.2. Oh Keo-don case

#### Oh as s self-made man with strong will

Neutral descriptors based on his name, position, and the political party which he belongs to are also found in media samples. However, in this section, I would shed light on some noteworthy descriptors outstanding in Oh Keo-don’s case: Valuation of a person and political career, which leads to describing the perpetrator as a self-made man with strong will (See Table 7 attached below).

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Table 7. Oh Keo-don case/ Descriptors of the perpetrator

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- Name: Oh Keo-don
  
  - Position: a mayor of Busan city
  
  - Political party: Oh Keo-don from ‘The Minjoo Party of Korea’
  
  - Age: 72
  
  - Education: graduated from the Seoul National University
- 

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<sup>60</sup> J. Kim, I am Kim Ji-eun. Bonalarm, 2020, p. 303.

“Why does Ahn Hee-jung's defender think my marriage experience, educational background, and age have an impact on this case? Is it right to create conditions for victims of sexual violence?”



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- Valuation of a person: just like as a Roly Poly; has been receiving a positive reputation with his outstanding work and a smooth communication with staffs

- Political career: who passed the Public Administration Examinations and started his career as an administrative official; an administrative and maritime professional who has been through important posts in the government; was elected as a mayor after three failures and fourth trials; the main character who replaced Busan's conservative regional power which lasted 23 years

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### **Valuation of a person**

Some descriptors are phrases of evaluating the perpetrator's personality or abilities. Specific phrases used for evaluating the perpetrator in medial samples as such: *"just like as a Roly Poly"* and *"has been receiving a positive reputation with his outstanding work and a smooth communication with staffs."* Using a metaphor "Roly Poly", it assesses the perpetrator's characteristic as resilient and not giving up easily after continuous fails in the election. Also, the perpetrator is in the position as a leader, valuation about his work ability and communication skills in workplace are also identified as descriptors.

### **Political career**

For Oh's case, prominently, it is noticeable that the descriptors refer to his political career and history, which contributes to depicting the perpetrator as "a self-made man with strong will." Starting from his academic background (*"graduated from Seoul National University"*), a lot of descriptors used to describe him are shedding light on his political career full of ups and downs especially in the election. For instance, they illuminate him as a professional figure in the related public sector as a marine expert. Descriptors start from his entrance in the public sector by phrases *"who passed the Public Administration*

*Examinations and started his career as an administrative official.” Then, by delineating his previous positions, it depicts him as “an administrative and maritime professional who has been through important posts in the government.”*

Regarding his current position as a mayor in Busan city, specific phrases were used to illuminate him as a figure with a tumultuous political history in election: “*3전 4기 (three failures and fourth trials)*”, “*Roly Poly*”, and “*the main character who replaced Busan’s conservative regional power which lasted 23 years.*” All these descriptors have a thread of connection since they all emphasize his character as a figure who has strong will and achieve success even after several trials. Indeed, substantial part of news articles was dedicated to illuminate his political career rather than reporting the sexual violence case itself. Even reporting ‘what happened’ was reported primarily based on his own statement not through any further cover by the reporters. It could be understandable in a way since he is a politician, however, it can be read as more like a biography than reporting a fact on the abuse. At the same time, leading an image of the perpetrator would maximize a sense of shame to see this Roly Poly-like man collapse due to a sexual harassment accident.

### **Victim as a young female employee in a lower post**

In this case, the portion of mentioning the victim was quite small since a lot of reportages’ coverage focused on the perpetrator and his narratives. It is identified that value-equal or neutral descriptors were used when mentioning the victim such as using the gender, the age group, job position, the victim status, and the workplace she belongs to (See Table 8 attached below).

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Table 8. Oh Keo-don case/ Descriptors of the victim

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- Gender: female
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- 
- Age: in her twenties; young
  
  - Victim: a female victim
  
  - Workplace: Busan city; Busan City Hall; Busan city election camp
  
  - Position: a government employee in a lower post; low-ranking government employee; a female staff; a female staff
- 

However, one of the noticeable descriptors is a degrading or underscoring expression which points out her low position in public official's hierarchy. I argue that the power imbalance in a hierarchy which made the perpetrator possible to abuse the victim is insistent even in coverages when they put the victim in a low-ranking position in a hierarchy again by using specific terms "*in a lower post*" or "*low-ranking government employee.*"

In reportages for Oh, there was scarce mentioning about the perpetrator's age in articles, however, referring to age group was used only for describing the victim such as "*in her twenties*" or "*young.*" Especially, it is noteworthy that the victim was referred to as "*a female employee in a lower post/ low-ranking in her twenties.*" To understand this specific phrase use, it is important to clarify specific Korean public/governmental sector's hierarchies. Korean government is characterized as having distinct order of rank in its hierarchy.<sup>61</sup>

Firstly, in one way, it can be read as an expression which considers the context of the sexual violence occurred in a power-based hierarchy using occupational authority (*Matrix model A2*) by mentioning the positional status instead of just describing her as "an employee." Secondly, more likely, it is rather downgrading or underscoring expression to

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61 K. Yoon, The Origins of Korean Administrative Culture: Jari Culture. *Korean Journal of Public Administration*, 49(4), 2015, pp. 1–28.

refer to the public official in Korea. When considering the common awareness on the public sectors in Korea, it is class-rooted and strictly stratified, therefore, a government employee ‘in a low-ranking position’ could mean a civil servant who performs the work “petty, less important, or less responsible.” Therefore, it is not a neutral phrase, rather downgrading or underscoring way to refer to the victim. Through using specific phrases necessarily ‘in a lower post/low-ranking’ and specifying her position in public hierarchies, it re-puts the victim within the power of pyramids or applies a standard of power to the victims injured from power-based violence.

### **5.2.3. Park Won-sun case**

#### **Park as a hero of an age that combines personality and ability**

Besides neutral descriptive phrases such as name and position as a mayor, for Park’s case, more descriptor codes were added to describe Park Won-sun. Taken it into consideration that Park was a highly symbolic figure in the Korean society, it could not seem strange. However, for this case, it makes the image of him as a hero of an age with various descriptors by depicting him as a pioneer in women’s rights movement, civic activist, and a politician with capabilities and good personality. A wide range of descriptors (See Table 9 below) were used in a biographical style of a hero of an age from his birth to death.

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Table 9. Park Won-sun case/ Descriptors of the perpetrator

---

- Name: Park Won-sun
  
  - Age: 64
  
  - Position: mayor of Seoul city
-

- 
- Women’s rights lawyer: a feminist; women-friendly leader; women’s rights lawyer; the country’s first lawyer in sexual harassment; winner of the Women’s Movement of the Year award
  
  - Civic activist: who was interested in civic movement; who established a civic organization and contributed to spreading the donation culture; who led the anti-campaign against corrupted politicians
  
  - Political capability: the longest-serving mayor in Seoul; the first mayor who serves three consecutive terms in Seoul city; a liberal presidential candidate; who has been named as one of the next presidential candidates from the ruling party; a leading democratic politician from civil association; who has been active in developing women-friendly policies; who has been taking major steps in women related issues; who has made many changes in Seoul city regarding urban planning and personnel administration; who has opened the way for civilians to participate in the city administration; who has been evaluated as breaking from the previous developmentalism in urban planning and development; who pushed away with an urban regeneration project
  
  - Positive personality: who based on commitment and morality; who has emphasized morality so much than anything else; not a person who would do anything to undermine the character of a young and weak woman; who has stronger self-esteem and a sense of calling than anyone else; always through everything
- 

### **Women’s rights lawyer**

Specific phrases used for describing him as a human rights lawyer who especially dedicated himself to women’s rights are as such: a *“feminist”*, *“women-friendly leader”*, *“women’s rights lawyer”*, *“the country’s first lawyer in sexual harassment”*, and *“winner of the Women’s Movement of the Year award.”* These are describing the perpetrator’s previous career as a figure who contributed to women’s rights, especially “to eradicate sexual violence against women”, however, at the same time give contrast to the current

committed sexual violence.

### **Civic activist**

Highlighting his career as a civic activist was also prominent in Park's case. While delineating his contributions and civic movement histories, related descriptors all point out that he was a civic activist who contributed to the society: "*who was interested in civic movement*", "*who established a civic organization and contributed to spreading the donation culture*", and "*who leaded the anti-campaign against corrupted politicians.*" These descriptors were adopted to describe one of his important career features which emphasizes the perpetrator as a figure who is meaningful in the Korean society.

### **Political capability**

As a mayor of the capital city, Seoul in Korea, Park Won-sun is a well-known and highly influential politician. Accordingly, specific words were used to highlight his political ability as a politician: "*The longest-serving mayor in Seoul*", "*the first mayor who serves three consecutive terms in Seoul city*", "*a liberal presidential candidate*", "*who has been named as one of the next presidential candidates from the ruling party*", and "*a leading democratic politician from civil association.*" Within this category, descriptors which delineate his governing ability as an administrator were also used in a positive way: "*who has been active in developing women-friendly policies*", "*who has been taking major steps in women related issues*", "*who has made many changes in Seoul city regarding urban planning and personnel administration*", "*who has opened the way for civilians to participate in the city administration*", "*who has been evaluated as breaking from the previous developmentalism in urban planning and development*", and "*who pushed away with an urban regeneration project.*" Including specific gender-related policies, these descriptors are modifying Park by sentences which depict him and provide a basic information on his political ability at the same time.

## Positive personality

Specific descriptors addressing the perpetrator's personality were adopted in coverage as well. More to the point, all these specific phrases are evaluating his personality in a positive way and mostly quoted from his acquaintances: "*(who is) Based on commitment and morality*", "*who has emphasized morality so much than anything else*", "*not a person who would do anything to undermine the character of a young and weak woman*", "*who has stronger self-esteem and a sense of calling than anyone else*", and "*it is unbelievable since he is always through about everything.*" Especially, specific words such as "commitment", "morality", and "a strong self-esteem and a sense of calling" describe the perpetrator's image as not the person to do such a thing, as elaborated such as "it is unbelievable." I would point out that these could mislead public reactions towards the perpetrator with neglecting the committed violence, and just directly quoting his close acquaintance's remark of potentially beautifying the perpetrator can deepen the victim's suffering. Consequently, these descriptors are conflict with the happened violence itself, however, it is noticeable that more and more various types of descriptors are added to describe the perpetrator in Park's case, which also makes the perpetrator's story much deeper with vast scopes.

## Victim as an 'alleged victim'

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Table 10. Park Won-sun case/ Descriptors of the victim

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- Accuser: an accuser; who accused mayor Park of sexual assault
  
  - Victim: a victim; the victim of Park Won-sun' sexual harassment
  
  - Gender: female
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- Position: a female secretary; a former secretary (of mayor Park); an employee who worked as a secretary for mayor Park; Seoul city employee

- Workplace: who belonged to the Seoul City Hall

- Alleged victim: an alleged victim; who claims as a victim; a woman who insists sexual harassment

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Besides basic descriptors such as the victim/accuser status, job position, gender, pseudonym (See Table 10 above), one noteworthy descriptor in this case is the term “an alleged victim.” This term “alleged victim” became well-known in the public due to the Park Won-soon’s sexual harassment case. There is a huge difference between the victim and the “alleged victim.” While the victim means a person evidently proved as harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, “an alleged victim” refers to a person who ‘insists’ he or she got victimized by a crime. In this Park’s case, the political party ‘더불어민주당 (The democratic party of Korea)’ which the perpetrator belongs to used this term “an alleged victim” or “a woman who appeals/claims as a victim” in describing the victim. It is not just the matter of a term or descriptor. By calling her as “an alleged victim”, it turns the #Me, Too disclosure on a strict presumption of innocence, and silently shapes the public awareness on this issue into a matter of a suspicion or scandal instead of crimes. To put it simply, it is from the side who argues that we cannot call her victim because the harm is not evidently proved enough.

Accordingly, it is not deniable that this descriptor does not admit the victim status and make the case uncertain to be admitted as a crime or not. It could have been used for the party to protect the honor of the perpetrator who committed suicide given the impact of this case was huge in the society. Regardless of the reason, the descriptor “an alleged victim” provides a further suffering to the victim by assuming that the victimization as unproved and denying the victim status. This could be seen as downgrading this case from the crime level to the suspicion by denying calling the victim as victim. Not to mention



various kinds of other secondary victimization for the victim in this case, using this descriptor “an alleged victim” itself is severely harming the victim.

### 5.3. Description of Sexual Violence

According to the Detailed Recommendation Criteria for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes set up by Journalists Association of Korea, the media’s reporting of crime cases is a duty to achieve public interest purposes, including crime prevention and social policy measures. However, reporting crimes inevitably can conflict with the basic rights of certain people and are likely to cause various human rights issues. In particular, covering sexual violence crimes should be approached very carefully in that victims and their families can suffer secondary harm during the reporting processes and it can have a large impact on society as a whole.<sup>62</sup> The description of the violence itself is necessarily an important but tricky part to report and inform readers about ‘what actually happened.’

Nevertheless, it is important that the media should not report in too much detail on the case including very specific methods used in committing crimes, processes, patterns, and on-the-spot verification of crimes unrelated to the understanding of the sex crime cases.<sup>63</sup> It also should be stopped to cover sexual crimes in a sensational and provocative way. Furthermore, it should avoid sensational or provocative descriptions on how sexual harassment was perpetrated, which can make victims perceived as “subjects of sexual activity.”<sup>64</sup> In this section, I would examine how the media reports and describes the sexual violence in each high-profile case based on the specific criteria by the Journalists Association of Korea. More to the point, the main focus would be on how much in detail they were described and whether the specific context of sexual violence is carefully

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62 Journalists Association of Korea & National Human Rights Commission of Korea. (2012, December 12). *Detailed Recommendation Criteria for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes*. <https://www.journalist.or.kr/>. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=9](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=9)

63 Ibid. Practice 4

64 Journalists Association of Korea. (2018). *Standards for empathy and guidelines for reporting sexual harassment cases*. <https://www.journalist.or.kr/>. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=11](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=11). Standards 3

considered in the reportages in media samples.

### 5.3.1. Ahn Hee-jung case

In this case, descriptions of the sexual violence were elaborated in a way of brief summaries in general and objective level not too specific such as when, who, to whom, how many times, and where. For instance, one sample briefly describes the violence based on the victim Kim Ji-eun's interview such as "*Governor Ahn sexually assaulted four times in eight months including a business trip to Russia in July and a business trip to Switzerland in September*",<sup>65</sup> which delineates not too much in detail or in a sensational way to cause a secondary harm. Based on the statement from the victim, it reveals that the perpetrator's sexual assault was committed "in a business trip" and elaborates the specific context of this case in which the violence occurred to her in a workplace during the working process by her superior (*Matrix* model A2).

Meanwhile, more specific descriptions were also identified from additional victims' disclosures: *A (pseudonym) claimed that Ahn sexually assaulted in January last year when he asked to come to a hotel in Yeouido, Seoul, when he was drawing attention as a strong candidate for the next presidential election. She also claimed that he touched her body part at a party after an event in 2015, and attempted sexual assault at a religious facility in Nonsan, South Chungcheong Province, in July 2016, and she was raped in August, December, and January in 2017.*<sup>66</sup> This description is elaborated much in detail sometimes revealing the perpetrator's excuses when he used when committing crimes, for example, "*he committed sexual assault with asking me to bring him beer or appealing that his position is too tough.*"<sup>67</sup> Specifying the exact words of perpetrator used in

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65 T. Park (2018, May 3). Female secretary Kim Ji-eun said, "Governor Ahn Hee-jung's sexual assault four times while his mentioning ME TOO movement" VS. "Relationship Under Agreement." *Segye Ilbo*. <https://www.segye.com/newsView/20180305021416>. [Accessed 22 May 2021].

66 T. Park (2018a, March 8). Former Governor Ahn Hee-jung's additional victim disclosure, think tank female employee "several times." *Dong-A Ilbo*. <https://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20180308/89003179/2>. [Accessed 22 May 2021].

67 S. Kim, E. Seong, & H. Park (2018, March 8). "An Hee-jung, call her to the hotel and sexually assault

crimes reveals the specific context that the victim was in a position under his supervision and follow his order and then shows Ahn made an excuse using his positional burden in this assault, which delivers it happened in a power-based context. This could be assessed as compliant with the criteria which urges that the media should approach sex crime in terms of violence against victims in relatively weaker position than themselves in social, economic, and physical terms.<sup>68</sup>

### 5.3.2. Oh Keo-don case

For Oh's case, in news coverages, there is a noticeable tendency that they are mainly more focused on reporting the figure of perpetrator and his stories than the case. Also, the description of the case itself was primarily based on the perpetrator's statement. In media samples, the proportion of mentioning the case and the victim was outstandingly scarce. Besides, the description of the case was reported based on the perpetrator's own words from his perspectives mostly without further news gathering, which inevitably reproduced the perpetrator's words from his side and led the victim to issue a refuting statement.

Firstly, the description of the crime itself was briefly elaborated based on Oh's statement: *"I made an unnecessary physical contact with an employee during a five-minute short interview. I realized that this could be recognized as a sexual assault that should not be done. Regardless of the gravity, it cannot be forgiven with any words or actions."* Most articles briefly delineated 'what happened' just citing this sentence from the perpetrator. However, it could be problematic given that the media should be careful not to report

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with saying "too tough position" ". Chosun Ilbo.  
[https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2018/03/08/2018030800355.html](https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2018/03/08/2018030800355.html). [Accessed 22 May 2021].

68 Journalists Association of Korea & National Human Rights Commission of Korea. (2012, December 12). *Detailed Recommendation Criteria for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes*. <https://www.journalist.or.kr/>. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=9](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=9). General Instruction

what the perpetrator or victim unilaterally claims as if it were a confirmed truth.<sup>69</sup>

In this vein, specific wording such as “during a five-minute short interview”, “regardless of the gravity”, “I got to realize” could be understood as minimizing the case itself when especially they are the words from the perpetrator in his perspectives. In addition, these descriptions do not elaborate specific context of the occurrence since it was a short sentence selected and edited by the perpetrator’s side. Even a few articles described the violence briefly through their own investigation, however, it is not regarded that it considered the specific context of the violence in workplace committed by a boss in higher position: According to Hankyoreh reports, “*Mayor Oh attempted physical contact during an interview with a female employee. Although the victim resisted, Mayor Oh continued physical contact for about five minutes.*”<sup>70</sup> Resultingly, the media coverage reproduces a lot of articles which are “perpetrator-centered” “minimized” description of the case by citing his own words, not considering the victim’s side. According to the guideline for reporting sex crimes, it clearly states that the media shall not just convey the perpetrator’s excuse as it is, causing discomfort to the victim,<sup>71</sup> however, this way or reporting could not be different from just delivering the perpetrator’s excuses.

Consequently, this caused the victim to feel uncomfortable on this issue and she made a refuting statement herself to correct it.<sup>72</sup> Only reading another media sample covering the victim’s refuting statement could make readers understand the context enough. One sample whose headline reads like “*I was called on a secretary’s call and got assaulted in the mayor’s office*” shows power-based context enough that the perpetrator made the

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69 Journalists Association of Korea. (2018). *Standards for empathy and guidelines for reporting sexual harassment cases*. <https://www.journalist.or.kr/>. Standard 4

70 K. Kim (2020, April 23). Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don sexually harassed a female employee. . .Resign from mayoral position. *Hankyoreh*. <https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/area/yeongnam/941686.html>. [Accessed 22 May 2021].

71 Journalists Association of Korea & National Human Rights Commission of Korea. (2012, December 12). *Detailed Recommendation Criteria for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes*. <https://www.journalist.or.kr/>. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=9](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=9). Practice 2

72 S. Wi, & E. Lee (2020, April 23). Victims of sexual harassment Oh Keo-don “was called by his secretary and harassed in the office.” *Joongang Ilbo*. <https://news.joins.com/article/23761537>. [Accessed 22 May 2021].

victim to come to his workplace “office” by “a secretary’s call using his positional status.” In this article, it reported the victim’s statement on Oh’s wording and articles: *“It cannot weight or evaluate the gravity of what happened there. It was an obvious sexual harassment which could be punished legally as a sex crime. (Nevertheless, in the press conference the mayor Oh) His wordings such as “got to realize that it could be recognized as a sexual harassment” and “regardless of the gravity” could make me afraid of whether I could be seen as rather unusual.”*<sup>73</sup>

In addition, the victim appealed to the media and the public on the secondary victimization through this statement. Among tons of news coverages based on the perpetrator’s statement, the only way to make it more balanced from the victim’s side is by issuing her statement and reportages based on this. She expressed strong pities on the reportages especially by Busan Ilbo and Hankyoreh and urged the media and public to stop doxing her information and gossip news. Indeed, Hankyoreh corrected its article by admitting that it contained information to be used for inferring the victim’s identity and apologized to the victim while promising it will make efforts to prevent secondary victimization in sexual violence coverages.<sup>74</sup>

### **5.3.3. Park Won-sun case**

In media samples of Park’s case, the description of the violence was mostly delineated in a concise and neutral way. Usually, a lot of spaces in the reportages were allotted for focusing on the perpetrator and his career, however, they summarized ‘what happened’ in a general and objective level including the timing, location, and methods not too specific

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73 Ibid.

74 K. Kim(2020, April 23). Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don sexually harassed a female employee. . .Resign from mayoral position. *Hankyoreh*. <https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/area/yeongnam/941686.html>. [Accessed 22 May 2021].

to cause uneasiness. For example, descriptions in a very general level are identified: “An employee who worked as Mayor Park's secretary stated that Mayor Park's sexual harassment has continued since she began working as a secretary, and that Mayor Park has sent personal photos several times through Telegram Messenger. It is also reported that she submitted a considerable amount of evidence to the police to prove her damage, including the telegram messenger conversation with Mayor Park, and said there were more victims of sexual violence than herself.”<sup>75</sup> It reports the brief occurrence based on the police investigation but in not too much in detail, rather through self-filtering and consideration, which is compliant with the criteria; Even the media get information from the investigation authorities, it should be careful in reporting with based on the need and appropriateness.<sup>76</sup>

However, a few samples delineate the description of violence in a quite specific way, some of which makes the content of violence as big headlines or at least sub-headlines. For example, one media sample whose headline reads like “Park asked a hug in his office bed and kissed on the victim's knee” with sub-headlines “Contacted his lips to protect a wound on her knee” show some of coverages reported it quite specifically. Especially headlines using the description of violence tend to describe in a more sensational way to attract readership, which could dilute the gravity of the crime case. Given the very nature of the sex crime itself, focusing on the perpetrators' violence too much in detail can lead the victim to be associated and perceived as the subject of such provocative sexual acts, therefore, it can entrench negative images and make victims to re-experience the sexual humiliation.<sup>77</sup>

Indeed, the description part is the most sensitive one in sex crime reportages because it

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75 K. Song, & K. Ok (2020, July 10). Mayor Park's drastic choice why? Employees in Seoul city “want to believe it's not true.” *Hankyoreh*. [https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society\\_general/953064.html](https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/953064.html). [Accessed 22 May 2021].

76 Journalists Association of Korea. (2018). *Standards for empathy and guidelines for reporting sexual harassment cases*. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=11](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=11). Standard 4

77 Journalists Association of Korea & National Human Rights Commission of Korea. (2012, December 12). *Detailed Recommendation Criteria for Reporting Sexual Violence Crimes*. [https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p\\_num=9](https://www.journalist.or.kr/news/section4.html?p_num=9). Practice 6

can give an additional/further/secondary harm to the victim by making them to re-experience the trauma. Also, describing sexual crimes can contribute to the public awareness and framing of sexual violence depending on how much in detail they cover and which factor they focus on. According to the criteria set up by Journalists Association of Korea, it clearly states five practice rules as such: 1) Escape from the common wrong conception, 2) Prioritizing Victim Protection 3) Avoid sensational and provocative reporting 4) Report Carefully 5) Make efforts to prevent sexual violence and solve structural problems.

Unfortunately, one media sample from Hankyoreh deleted and corrected the description of violence according to the Press Arbitration Commission's decision on recommendations for correction. In the original article, it reported the excessively specific content of messages which the mayor Park sent to the victim, however, got the feedback that it delineated the perpetrator's methods of committing a crime so much in detail so it can cause a secondary suffering to the victim. Ironically, it is also problematic that editorials under more loosened control from the criteria of reporting are more apprehended that they can cover it too much in detail. For instance, one sample reported highly specific contents of the violence with a summary table presenting the exact text message sentences with a specific emoji<sup>78</sup> that the perpetrator sent to the victim, which could around public displeasure and a secondary harm to the victim.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

### **6.1. Discussion**

In this research, I strived to answer two main research questions: (1) How do the Korean media coverage, especially newspapers, conceptualize sexual violence and frame public

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<sup>78</sup> Chosun, Cannot bear to read, Human Rights Commission's decision for Park Won-sun's sexual harassment. [https://www.chosun.com/opinion/editorial/2021/03/20/6EDU63YTH5DY7DGEK2KGD62DQQ/?utm\\_source=bigkinds&utm\\_medium=original&utm\\_campaign=news](https://www.chosun.com/opinion/editorial/2021/03/20/6EDU63YTH5DY7DGEK2KGD62DQQ/?utm_source=bigkinds&utm_medium=original&utm_campaign=news). [Accessed 22 May 2021].

awareness towards victim-survivors? (2) How do they give a secondary victimization to victim-survivors? By conducting a thematic analysis of media coverages on three high-profile cases in Korea—Ahn Hee-jung; Oh Keo-don; Park Won-sun —, this paper identified newspapers selectively choose specific types of headlines, specific language use for descriptors in describing perpetrators/victims, and the style of description for the case, which is based on their own focus and aims. Here, one important finding is that the “power imbalance” derived from the sexual violence continues to the media coverage as illuminated in certain types of headlines, positive (+)/downgrading (–) descriptors for perpetrators/victims, and ‘perpetrator-centered’ highly detailed description of the case.

What we can draw from these findings is that media coverage, specifically reportages on sexual crimes does not fully reflect the justice interests of victim-survivors from their perspectives. Rather, it even may lead to shaping public awareness towards sexual violence and victim-survivors in biased ways as elaborated in the analysis above. Relatedly, specific justice interests of victim-survivors categorized by Daly were not well-considered and less elaborated in media coverages in three high-profile cases. Headlines, descriptors, and even description of the case themselves did not consider the specific context of each crime case enough, which leads to news reporting in sensationalizing or perpetrator-centered way.

With detailed media samples from the datasets, this research clearly shows that media coverage on these high-profile cases is not free from ‘Recognizable narratives’ of rape as Flynn has termed. The way of media reporting sexual violence is processed with filtered lens of ‘Recognizable narratives’ of sex crimes. Rather it even solidifies the frame of so-called ‘rape myths’ or ‘desirable figure of victims.’ During this process, the media itself gives severe secondary victimization to victim-survivors and make them suffer from long-term psychological trauma.

Therefore, the important conclusion could be derived from these findings: Firstly, Journalism should be more careful and bear the heavy responsibility for reporting sexual crimes. Not only for preventing a secondary victimization towards the victim-survivors, but also for the media’s role of shaping public awareness and educating citizens on the issue, it is highly important for the media to keep a viewpoint from ‘Kaleidoscopic justice’.



Secondly, the common readership also should have keen eyes to discern the related problems when reading news articles.

## 6.2. Conclusion

Analysis of Korean newspapers of covering sexual cases shows a clear implication regarding the concept of sexual violence and victim-survivors. Especially, in recent three years, while experiencing three influential politicians' # Me, Too cases, the Korean society not only got shocked but also started to contemplate this issue and victim-survivor's rights in the flood of media coverages and secondary victimization. In this research, two major research aims were set out to lead a structure of the analysis: For journalism and the common readership. Firstly, in terms of journalism, it aims to emphasize the importance of reporting sexual violence cases and urge the media to respect media ethics when covering these issues. Secondly, for the public, it aims to help common readership to have keen insight or discerning eyes to understand that the media choose specific factors they focus on and use selectively chosen language in reporting. Given that normal citizens get common information on human rights issues mainly from newspapers, especially online articles in electronic world of today, media coverages on sexual violence cases have great power enough to conceptualize the concept of sexual violence and public awareness towards the victim-survivors.

Therefore, in this paper, I set up a frame of this research based on two leading research questions: How do the Korean media coverages, especially newspapers, conceptualize sexual violence and frame public awareness towards the victim-survivors? How do Korean newspapers give a secondary victimization/further harm to victim-survivors? To investigate and answer the research questions above, it was helpful to draw upon theoretical lenses from sexual violence, justice of victim-survivors of sexual violence, and media framing.

Firstly, drawing upon K. Daly's Justice Matrix model helps to understand the specific context of sexual violence presented in all three high-profile cases. Secondly, frameworks

from Gitlin and Saleem has helped to set the research focus on ‘media framing’ towards power-based sexual violence as persistent patterned coverage of selection, emphasis, and exclusion. Therefore, I strived to investigate how carefully selected words, metaphors, or descriptors set the “tone” of coverage and how it conceptualizes sexual violence and public awareness towards victim-survivors. I adopted ‘thematic analysis’ addressed by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a major research toolkit to analyze the dataset comprised of sixty media samples including reportages and editorials collected from a newspaper searching engine ‘BIG KINDS.’

Above all, for reportages, the analytical focus was put on three indicators: Headlines, descriptors for perpetrators/victims, and the description of sexual violence. Firstly, headlines of newspapers covering three high-profile cases were categorized by the criteria of their focus and the way of formation: Representative of both sides; Summary type/victim perspective summary; citing reaction of perpetrator’s acquaintances; victim’s claim citation; mixed type (perpetrator focused/victim-focused); perpetrator focused type. Each type of headlines is carefully selected and constructed by the media according to their main focuses and intention. For example, ‘representative of both sides’ type puts its priority to deliver contradictory main arguments and ‘summary type’ focuses on providing a brief information even by scanning titles.

More to the point, it is noteworthy that certain headlines encapsulated the specific context of sexual violence cases, noticeably in citing victim’s claim type of headlines. However, the headlines can contribute to generating a biased image of the victimhood and give further assault to victims-survivors by quoting directly from the perpetrator’s acquaintances or containing the victims’ private information unrelated to the case such as an educational background and marital status. Besides, it is also a severe additional harm to make headlines in a sensational and provocative way to attract readership, which eventually could dilute the gravity of the case and make victims perceived as just “subjects of sexual activity.”

Secondly, when it comes to descriptors, I coded themes in relation to the specific types of descriptors used when describing perpetrator and victims in each case and identified main theme of descriptors in high-profile cases: (1) Ah Hee-jung case: An influential politician

with good personality vs a female secretary with a good education, (2) Oh Keo-don: A self-made man with strong will vs A young female employee in her low post, (3) Park Won-sun: A hero of an age who combines personality and ability vs An alleged victim.

Besides the neutral descriptors such as position and demographic basic information, it is noteworthy more various 'positive (+)' codes of descriptors were used to describe the perpetrators. The more influential the perpetrators are, the more various and wider scope of descriptors were used. This makes the perpetrators as figures who have grand narratives like in biography. In the contrary, almost invisible victims in articles are described by rather 'downgrading (-)' codes of descriptors such as 'low-ranking government employee', 'an alleged victim'. Even when the victim appeared in the article with her identity in Ahn's case, her private information essentially unrelated to the case was mentioned in descriptors to describe her such as 'with a good educational background with marital experience', which could lead to a false image and shape 'rape myths' or 'the desirable figure of victimhood.' I would strongly argue that the "power imbalance" from the power-based sexual violence is continued even to the media coverage.

Thirdly, the description of sexual violence is important but highly tricky part. I examined how the media reports and describes the sexual violence in each high-profile case based on the specific guidelines by the Journalists Association of Korea. In all high-profile cases, there were objective and general descriptions on 'what happened' not too much in detail to cause a further harm. However, there were a few media samples which deleted and corrected their original articles since they provided excessively specific methods of the perpetrator's committing a crime so they can cause secondary suffering to the victim in Park's case. Meanwhile, in Oh's case, it is noteworthy that reporting the violence case was heavily based on the perpetrator's statement without sufficient further newsgathering, which eventually leads to reproducing the 'perpetrator-centered', 'minimized' description from his perspectives. It could be problematic in a way that it does not elaborate the specific context of violence in coverages. Also, it can cause discomfort to the victim since it is not different from just delivering the perpetrator's excuse as it is.

As elaborated above, I examined how the Korean media, especially newspapers conceptualize the sexual violence and frame public awareness towards victim-survivors.

Analyzing power-based sexual violence represented in three high profile cases identified several meaningful implications in the line of ‘the continuum of power imbalance.’ For the journalism, given the very nature of sex crimes, it is highly required to realize the importance and responsibility in reporting sexual violence cases by accepting that the media has great power to shape the common awareness and even re-victimize victim-survivors. For common public or readers who get information through newspapers, it is important to have keen insight or discerning eyes to understand the way of the media’s selective coverages and specific language uses. In closing, starting from the implications of my research, I wish more further research with delicate eyes could be conducted for helping victims to recover from trauma and return to their daily lives. I deliver my sincere support and solidarity to victim-survivors of sexual violence.

# 7. Bibliography and appendices

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# Appendices

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## Appendix 1. Headlines in original text and English translation/ Ahn Hee-Jung case

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1. 女비서 김지은 "안희정 지사 4차례 성폭행, 미투 거론하면서도 또~" VS 安 "합의아래 관계" (세계, 2018. 3.5.)

Female secretary Kim Ji-eun said, "Governor Ahn Hee-jung's sexual assault four times while his mentioning ME TOO movement" VS. "Relationship Under Agreement" (*Segye*, 5 March 2018)

2. [속보] 안희정 성폭행 피해자, 서울서부지검에 고소장 제출 (중앙, 2018. 3. 6.)

[Breaking News] Ahn Hee-jung victim of sexual assault, filed a complaint with the Seoul Western District Prosecutors' Office (*Joongang*, 6 March 2018)

3. “믿는 도끼, 안희정에 발등 찍혔다” 충남 공식사회는 충격 (한국, 2018. 3. 6.)

"Being stabbed in the back by trusting axe, Ahn Hee-jung." Chungcheongnam-do officialdom is shocked (*Hankook*, 6 March 2018)

4. 안희정 전 지사 추가 피해자 폭로, 싱크탱크 女직원 “수 차례” (동아, 2018. 3. 8.)

Former Governor Ahn Hee-jung's additional victim disclosure, think tank female employee "several times" (*Dong-A*, 8 March 2018)

5. “안희정 싱크탱크 연구원 ‘나도 성폭행 당했다’ 주장” (한겨레, 2018. 3. 7.)

"An Hee-jung's think tank researcher, claimed to have been sexually assaulted" (*Hankyoreh*, 7 March 2018)



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6. "안희정, 호텔로 불러 자기 지위가 버겁다며 성폭행" (조선, 2018. 3. 8.)

"An Hee-jung, called her to the hotel and sexually assaulted with saying "too tough position"  
"(Chosun, 8 March 2018)

7. "안희정, 평소에 '예쁘다'며 끌어안아' 추가 폭로 나와 (중앙, 2018. 3. 25.)

"An Hee-jung, hugs with saying 'pretty'" additional disclosures (Joongang, 25 March 2018)

8. "사냥꾼처럼 덫 놓고 방으로 피해자 불러" vs "학벌 좋은 스마트한 여성... 위력 없었다"(국민, 2018. 7. 3.)

"Trap like a hunter and call a victim to room." vs. "Smart woman with good academic  
background." There was no power (Kukmin, 3 July 2018)

9. "김지은, 주변서 깜짝 놀랄 만큼 안희정과 친밀했다"(서울, 2018. 7. 11.)

"Kim Ji-eun, surprisingly close to Ahn Hee-jung" (Seoul, 11 July 2018)

10. 안희정 부인 "김지은, 피해자 아니다"...김지은측 "2차 가해"(중앙, 2019. 2. 14.)

Ahn Hee-jung's wife, "Kim Ji-eun, not a victim" ···Kim Ji-eun's "Second Assault" (Joongang,  
14 February 2019)

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Appendix 2. Headlines in original text and English translation/ Oh Keo-don case

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1. '성추행' 부산시장의 총체적 '부실 市政' (문화, 2020. 4. 24.)

'Sexual harassment' Busan Mayor's overall 'poor municipal administration' (*Munhwa*, 24 April 2020)

2. '성추행' 불명예 퇴진...3전 4기 오거돈은 누구? (세계, 2018. 4. 23.)

'Sexual harassment' dishonorable resignation...3 trials and 4 attempts. Who's the Oh Keo-don? (*Segye*, 23 April 2018)

3. 오거돈 성추행 피해자 "비서 호출로 불려가 집무실서 당했다" (중앙, 2020. 4. 23.)

Victims of Oh Keo-don's sexual harassment "was called by his secretary and harassed in the office" (*Joongang*, 23 April 2020)

4. '성추행' 오거돈, 23년 만에 부산권력 뒤엎고 형사처벌 신세 (한겨레, 2020. 4. 23.)

Oh Keo-don, who overturned Busan's power in 23 years, is facing criminal punishment (*Hankyoreh*, 23 April 2020)

5. '30년 보수' 부산 바꿨지만...추행에 무너진 '오뎅이' 오거돈 (중앙, 2020. 4. 23.)

He changed "30 years of Conservative" Busan, but ...Oh Geo-don, a 'Roly poly' who collapsed in sexual harassment (*Joongang*, 23 April 2020)

6. 오거돈, 젊은 여직원 지난 7일 성추행" (조선, 2020. 4. 23.)

Oh Keo-don molested a young female employee on the 7th (*Chosun*, 23 April 2020)

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7. 오거돈 '추행 피해자'는 부산시 선거캠프 여성...시한 정해 부산시장 사퇴 요구 (조선, 2020. 4. 23.)

Oh Keo-don' molestation victim, is a woman in Busan city election camp...Demanding the resignation of Busan mayor by setting a deadline (*Chosun*, 23 April 2020)

8. 오거돈 부산시장, 여성 직원 성추행...시장직 사퇴 (한겨레, 2020. 4. 23.)

Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don sexually harassed a female employee...Resign from mayoral position (*Hankyoreh*, 23 April 2020)

9. 오거돈 부산시장 전격 사퇴...“여성 직원 면담 중 부적절한 신체 접촉” 성추행 인정

Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don resigned suddenly ··Admit sexual harassment of "inappropriate physical contact during interviews with a female employee" (*Kyunghyang*, 23 April 2020)

10. 4수 끝에 당선된 오거돈 부산시장 성추행으로 사퇴 (서울, 2020. 4. 23.)

Resignation due to sexual harassment of Busan Mayor Oh Keo-don, who was elected at fourth attempt (*Seoul*, 23 April 2020)

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Appendix 3. Headlines in original text and English translation/ Park Won-sun case

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1. "박원순 4년간 성추행, 집무실 침실서 안아달라 하고 무릎에 입맞춰" (조선, 2020. 7. 13.)

"Park Won-sun sexually harassed for 4 years, asked for a hug in the office bedroom and kissed the knee" (*Chosun*, 13 July 2020)

2. '성희롱은 불법' 세상에 처음 알린 인권 변호사였던 박원순 (중앙, 2020. 7. 9.)

Park Won-sun, "Sexual harassment is illegal" a human rights lawyer who made sexual harassment public in the world for the first time (*Joongang*, 9 July 2020)

3. 국내 첫 성희롱 소송 변호인, 그가 박원순이었다 (조선, 2020. 7. 9.)

The first lawyer for sexual harassment lawsuits in Korea, he was Park Won-sun (*Chosun*, 9 July 2020)

4. 시민운동가, 최장수 서울시장, 미투 의혹...故박원순 인생역정 (중앙, 2020. 7. 10.)

A civic activist, longest-serving Seoul mayor, suspicions of Me Too...Park Won-sun's life story (*Joongang*, 10 July 2020)

5. 박 시장 극단적 선택 왜?...서울시 직원들 "사실 아니라고 믿고 싶다" (한겨레, 2020. 7. 10.)

Mayor Park's drastic choice why? Employees in Seoul city "want to believe it's not true" (*Hankyoreh*, 10 July 2020)

6. "거부의사 밝혔지만...朴, 수년간 성추행 지속" 고소 (문화, 2020. 7. 10.)

"I said no, but...Park, years of sexual harassment" Accusation (*Munhwa*, 10 July 2020)

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7. "성추행 고소한 차시장 비서 찾아라" 신상털기로 2차 가해 우려 (조선, 2020. 7. 10.)

"Find Mayor Park's secretary who sued sexual harassment." Concerns about secondary abuse by doxing the personal information (*Chosun*, 10 July 2020)

8. 박원순 서울시장... 인권변호사, 시민운동가, 3선 시장에서 극단적 선택까지 (서울, 2020. 7. 10.)

Seoul Mayor Park Won-sun... Human rights lawyer, civil rights activist, mayor serving the third consecutive terms to extreme choices (*Seoul*, 10 July 2020)

9. 전직 靑비서관 “내가 봐온 박원순, 女 인격 훼손할 분 아냐”(국민, 2020. 7. 11.)

Former secretary of the Blue House, "Park Won-sun, who I've seen so far, He's not the one to undermine women's personality" (*Kukmin*, 11 July 2020)

10. 법원 “박원순 성추행 피해자, 정신적 고통받은 건 사실”(한겨레, 2021. 1. 14.)

The Court "It is true that the victim of Park Won-suffered from mental pain" (*Hankyoreh*, 14 January 2021)

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