

THE CONSTRUCTION, DECONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF CRIME NEWS: A CASE STUDY OF THE MALAYSIAN NEWSPAPERS.

Dr. Azman Azwan Azmawati
School of Communication
Universiti Sains Malaysia
azwan@usm.my

The mass media are important agents of socialization in that they reproduce dominant (and other) social norms, beliefs, discourses, ideologies and values. Although media are said to be an educator, most of the transmission of norms, beliefs, ideologies, discourses and values happen in an unconscious fashion. (Deverux, E. 2003: p10). In essence, the media select and process facts for us. Because they do so systematically, they necessarily affect the way we interpret what they are saying. As well as informing us, the media also shape us. In order to understand fully how the process works, we need to become literate in the various languages of the media. Media literacy means more than just responding to media messages. It also means understanding how they work, how they differ from personal experience and how they differ from each other. It means learning about their dominant style and being able, when necessary, to use them (Hart, A. 1991. pg 8-9)

The portrayal of CRIME in the news media has played a crucial role in creating public awareness and concern regarding crime issues in Malaysia. How crime is presented in the media and how media capitalized on crime news, affect how society view crime. The presentation of crime news in the media is a result of complex news gathering and news production. Hence, it is crucial to understand how crime news is being produced, presented and the impact it creates on the society. It will in turn help to shape public opinion and public policy which the end result becomes national concern.

This paper will look at what are the messages is the media forwarding to the society and what are the priorities given in constructing crime news on local media. It will be looking at news texts in order to understand how different types of crimes are covered and reported. It will also include the analysis of news narratives in order to understand how issues on crime are constructed and portrayed in Malaysian media.

Key Words: *Media, Crime, News.*