

## Complicating Representations of Domestic Violence Perpetration through a Qualitative Content Analysis and Socio-Ecological Approach

**Authors :** Charlotte Lucke

**Abstract :** This study contributes to the body of literature that analyzes and complicates oversimplified and sensationalized representations of trauma and violence through a close examination and complication of representations of perpetrators of domestic violence in the mass media. This study determines the ways the media frames perpetrators of domestic violence through a qualitative content analysis and socio-ecological approach to the perpetration of violence. While the qualitative analysis has not been carried out, through preliminary research, this study hypothesizes that the media represents perpetrators through tropes such as the 'predator' or 'offender,' or as a demonized 'other.' It is necessary to expose and work through such stereotypes because cultivation theory demonstrates that the mass media determines societal beliefs about and perceptions of the world. Thus, representations of domestic violence in the mass media can lead people to believe that perpetrators of violence are mere animals or criminals and overlook the trauma that many perpetrators experience. When the media represents perpetrators as pure evil, monsters, or absolute 'others,' it leaves out the complexities of what moves people to commit domestic violence. By analyzing and placing media representations of perpetrators into conversation with the socio-ecological approach to violence perpetration, this study complicates domestic violence stereotypes. The socio-ecological model allows researchers to consider the way the interplay between individuals and their families, friends, communities, and cultures can move people to act violently. Using this model, along with psychological and psychoanalytic approaches to the etiology of domestic violence, this paper argues that media stereotypes conceal the way people's experiences of trauma, along with community and cultural norms, perpetuates the cycle of systemic trauma and violence in the home.

**Keywords :** domestic violence, media images, representing trauma, theorising trauma

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