

# Framing tolerance to violence: mass media debate in Post- Soviet Latvia

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# The aim

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- My presentation will explain how articles and comments frame tolerance of violence and how these different frames impact the perception of violence in everyday life.
- Tolerance of violence is support, justification of violence or positive assessment of it.

# Methodology

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- The presentation will be based on media analysis from between 2010 and 2018 using frame analysis. Frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies.
- Frame means the culturally determined definitions of reality that allow people to make sense of objects and events. (Goffman 1974)
- It is the specific construction of situation or some aspect of life that will be interpreted by others in a particular manner and have similar meaning. (Kuypers 1997)

# Frames for tolerance of violence

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- Direct support to violence and blaming the victim;
- Punishing for violent person should be violent;
- Violence is part of human/men nature;
- Reporting is wrong practice and family conflict need to be deal quietly.
- Injuries and death are results of tolerance to violence;



## Direct support to violence and blaming the victim;

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- Uneducated, rude, aggressive
- violence is perceived as a result of their own (wrong) action towards parents, teachers or other children.



## Direct support to violence and blaming the victim;

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- sexually provocative to the abuser, but other reasons are also used: feminism, mental health, they are characterized as greedy, silly, domineering, ugly, not feminine enough, violent, whining etc.
- Women are perceived as somehow earned violence, it is a punishment from men.



## Direct support to violence and blaming the victim;

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- dog is self-responsible for its situation because it barks and will not allow the neighbors to sleep.

# Punishing for violent person should be violent

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- In the comments people ask for the torture, murder and rape and other violence towards violent persons.
- This narrative justifies violence as a measure for the prevention of violence and shows a high level of tolerance. There is rare criticism in the media debate to this frame which can mean that others support this attitude or pretend that do not see it.

# Violence is part of human/men's nature

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- People in general but especially teenagers are viewed as naturally aggressive: it is human nature or part of human psychology and there are no tools to prevent it. In some texts, violence is justified because it shows the existing world order:

*It is [about violence] always has been and will be in future. Only people call the wrong reasons. The reason is always the same: human nature.*

# Reporting is wrong practice and conflict need to be deal quietly

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- The reason for hiding violence is shame for an institution and the victim. This frame used when speaking about ignorance of children punishing, domestic violence and conflicts in schools. For example:

*The high tolerance of violence in Latvian society is also evidenced by the fact that 39 percent of respondents in their daily lives see physical punishment of children at least a few times a year. Most respondents (76 percent) do not seek to stop an adult because they do not know how to do it (42 percent) or consider it a private family problem (34 percent).*



## Injuries and death are results of tolerance of violence

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- The frame of **“injuries and death are results of tolerance of violence”** is a critique of tolerance to violence and often used by journalists, NGO and state representatives, and less often used in below the line comments.
- Tolerance of violence is described as a practice of not report to police on violence situations. But in comments this is expressed differently: “no one sees”, “no one knows”, “don’t hear”.

# Responsibility

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- Who is responsible for tolerance of violence in Latvia:
  - result of our history in the Soviet period;
  - comes from the EU,
  - state policy,
  - human personal responsibility?

# Conclusion

- Only one frame criticizes tolerance to violence, but all the rest support or even seek violence. In media articles “tolerance to violence” may be mentioned, but not always explained as to what it means. Articles on tolerance more likely include statistical analyses that show the prevalence of this attitude in our society, moral judgment and shaming, but comments often demonstrate quite the opposite, that is, they are more likely support or justify violence.
- The tolerance of violence frames attitude to persons that suffer from violence, justifies violence in interpersonal relationship and makes violence present in everyday life. Therefore, it important to reduce it. Some violence tolerance frames can be affected by public activities; therefore, it is important to continue debate on violence.
- Methodologically, not all what we count as tolerance is really tolerance, example of reasons why persons do not report.



# Thank you

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