Key points from *Framing the Victim* (chapter 4-6)

Women’s magazine articles about domestic violence overwhelmingly use the individual frame of responsibility (as opposed to institutional, cultural/structural or integrational frames). These articles, which place responsibility for domestic violence on the individual level, are more likely to focus on the victim, rather than the couple or the abuser.

These articles use a “victim empowerment perspective,” which has five common themes: (1) how victims should solve their own problems, (2) how “potential victims” should prevent abuse, (3) battered women who kill their abusers, (4) how family/friends can help victims, and (5) “life after abuse” stories.

The editorial guidelines of women’s magazines contribute to the dominance of the victim empowerment perspective. These magazines publish articles that: (1) provide a service to readers, (2) empower readers, (3) keep it personal, and (4) have uplifting, positive resolutions.

Victims who can’t be empowered, like children and the elderly, or unsympathetic victims, like drug users, poor women, or ugly/fat women, aren’t covered. Abusers aren’t covered.

This perspective mirrors shifts in media coverage from informational to emotional and from learning from experts to using them to promote a pre-determined conclusion.

Men’s and conservative political magazines use an “antifeminist frame.” Articles in these magazines tend not to be about the problem of domestic violence itself. Instead they focus on how the battered women movement has misframed the problem.

This is done by: (1) reframing the problem as “human violence,” (2) challenging the innocence of female victims, (3) critiquing tolerance for women’s violence, (4) claiming men are discriminated against in the criminal justice system, and (5) blaming feminist advocates. These strategies degender the problem but gender the blame.