

ETHICS IN (ROAD SAFETY) JOURNALISM: HOW CRASH REPORTING CONTROLS THE NARRATIVE

Dr. Tara Goddard
Texas A&M University
Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning
Velo-city 2019

Professor Ziegler Stresses Importance

DR. PARK TO SPEAK

Campus Notes

re. University of Pennsylvania
l Bryn Mawr for the purpose
interesting them in the project.
ly one of these schools. Bryn

to patrons of the Little Theatre
attend. No admission will be
charged for this debate.
On February 7 the Harvard

11 of 12 with a debate with the
Y. U. freshman team on the sub-
ject, "Resolved, That higher edu-
cation should be limited to those

tion is concerned. Reports on
this year's freshman class will be
sent to the Registrar's office at
the end of each semester with

kick a pillow as a football, give
every evidence of playing a banjo
although holding a broom, and
nurse a pillow as a baby. The ope-

increase game or track meet could
then be the main attraction for
the visiting fathers. It was be-
lieved that this latter plan would,

WR, has ever been represented
colleges to debate the question.
China. The use of this early
man who probably takes an

Five New Members are
to Press Club
were elected to mem-
bership in the Press Club.

on the subject, resolved: That
the men who will take part in
these debates will be chosen by
separate trials from the group

status should report to the office
at once to clear up their records.
Intramural activities will count
only for two voluntary periods

in a state of inebriation and asked
if he had ever been in a
state of inebriation.

program at a time when the
weather would be more pleasant.
Announcement was made of the
voting today upon this proposi-

ch college represents one mem-
ber of the League of Nations
to Geneva for the purpose of
discussing the League of Nations

At a regular meeting on Wed-
nesday night, the following men
were elected: J. Bronner Proce-
dure, Albert Kennon, Jr., Ed-

The men who will take part in
these debates will be chosen by
separate trials from the group
composed of the following fresh-

at once to clear up their records.
Intramural activities will count
only for two voluntary periods
while varsity and freshman team

**GLEE CLUB PREPARES
FOR COMING MEET**
Regular Practices Held by Glee
Club in Preparation for In-
tercollegiate Contest

**ZIEGLER TO TALK
AT THREE MEETINGS**
Will Speak Twice at Scranton and
Once at Doylestown Within
The Next Two Weeks
Doctor Carl W. Ziegler, of the
department of philosophy and edu-

tech. At Geneva the opening
dress is given in French, while
the model convention it will be
en in English and interpreted
French.

ward E. Answalt, Walter C.
Pierce, and Rocco G. Lapenta, all
of '32.

debate, to be held later in the se-
son.
**DR. LEWIS ELECTED
TREASURER OF A.A.C.**

the gymnasium during the week
of January 20. Any corrections
may be made at that time and
then the grades for the semester
will be sent to the Registrar's of-
fice.

The Lafayette college glee club
under the direction of Professor
J. Warren Erb is practicing regu-
larly in preparation for the inter-
collegiate glee club contest which

College Club of Scranton, which
will be held at the Century Club,
of that city. His subject will be,
"The Drama of Education." Profes-
sor Ziegler will be one of the
speakers at the Bucks County In-

Purpose Not Political
The purpose of the Model
League, said Dr. Harris, is not as
propaganda but merely to ac-
quaint the colleges with the pres-
ent work
of the League of Na-
tions. Although the United States
not officially a member, Dr.
Harris believes that, through its
official delegates at Geneva it
vitality interested in the organ-

At the same meeting the follow-
ing men were dropped from the
club because of irregular attend-
ance: Stanley I. Cundey, John D.
Morgan, Edward G. Wink, all of
'30, and Ray R. Willauer, '31.

He and His Family Lunched With
President Hoover While
Dr. W. Lewis, Treasurer of the
Association of American Colleges
at their annual meeting in Wash-
ington, D. C., yesterday and
today.

**Moravian String Quartet
to Entertain at Vespers**
The Moravian String Quartet
will entertain at vespers in the
gymnasium during the week of
January 20.

required to sing the prize song,
"Hark, Jolly Shepherd" an op-
tional number, and one of the
college's own songs. Mr. Erb will
soon announce the numbers that
the Lafayette club will sing.

"Religion in Education" on Sun-
day evening, January 26, at the
Providence Presbyterian Church of
Scranton.
Attend Debate Tonight

Illanova Freshmen Ex-
press Opinions on Ethics
Freshmen in Villanova College
recently stated their opinions on
the practice of "fixing" traffic vi-
sions, of attempting to convert
cars to smoke cigarettes, of "bluf-
g" to obtain employment and si-
lar questions of practical morals
and ethics.

**Dyson, '33, Confined by
Infection in Hospital**
Dyson, '33, is at present recuperating
in the Easton Hospital where he re-
cently underwent an operation to
check an infection that had spread
throughout his face. Dyson was
operated on last Sunday, January
12, and is reported to be conval-
escing rapidly.

Lewis, ate luncheon with President
Herbert Hoover. President Lewis
today addressed the Washington
Alumni Association of Lafayette
College at their weekly luncheon.

several others during the second
term. Refreshments will be serv-
ed this Sunday by the Sigma Chi
Fraternity from 5 to 5.30 o'clock.
All are welcome.

Quartet to Entertain at Vespers
The Moravian String Quartet
will entertain at vespers in the
gymnasium during the week of
January 20.

their sureness and accuracy of
performance in the Allegretto and
the Allegro assai vivace ma serio-
so; and their brilliance of tone in
the Larghetto espressivo, allegro
agitato.
The Brahms "Quartet in A Mi-
nor" which followed, verified this
first impression with its four
movements, Allegro non troppo,

Professor Ziegler Stresses Importance

DR. PARK TO SPEAK

Campus Notes

By Lament Moore

Attend Debate Tonight

re, University of Pennsylvania
Bryn Mawr for the purpose
interesting them in the project.
ly one of these schools, Bryn
wr, has ever been represented
a previous conference. Dr.
ris thinks this is because the
ee previous conventions have
m held in New York State, at
racuse, Cornell, and Vassar.
Dr. Harris, explained that in
ler to procure a delegation it

to patrons of the Little Theatre
to attend. No admission will be
charged for this debate.
On February 7 the Harvard
Chinese team will come to the
college to debate the question,
"Resolved: That the United
States Should Take the Lead in
Abolishing Extraterritoriality in
China." Those of the varsity
team who will probably debate are
J. Hutchison, '32; E. McCluskey,

11 of 12 with a debate with the N.
Y. U. freshman team on the sub-
ject, "Resolved, That higher edu-
cation should be limited to those
having special abilities." Lafay-
ette will probably take the affir-
mative.
On February 19 there will be a
debate with the Rutgers freshmen
on the subject, "Resolved: That
the evils of the machine age out-
weigh its benefits." This will be a

tion is concerned. Reports on
this year's freshman class will be
sent to the Registrar's office at
the end of each semester with
each student marked either "pass"
or "fail." Those in the upper
three classes, whose requirements
are not filled, may continue on
the quarter term basis.
There are a number of students
in the junior and senior classes
who have not completed their re-

kick a pillow as a football, give
every evidence of playing a banjo
although holding a broom, and
nurse a pillow as a baby. The op-
erator caused his subjects to appear
in a state of inebriation and asked
them about their experiences ten
or more years ago. The subjects
instantly told of happenings which
occurred in early childhood.
Illustrating post-hypnotic sug-
gestion, the professor caused one

increase game or track meet could
then be the main attraction for
the visiting fathers. It was be-
lieved that this latter plan would,
if adopted, present a diversified
program at a time when the
weather would be more pleasant.
Announcement was made of the
voting today upon this proposi-
tion.

**DR. ZIEGLER TO TALK
AT MEETINGS**

stanton and
Within
Weeks
er, of the
and edu-
ee differ-
next two
e will ad-
ing of the
n, which
ary Club,
it will be,
on." Profe-
ne of the
ounty In-
January
time will
h School
speak on
on Sun-
6, at the

Ralph, K., Iacobucci, E., Thigpen, C. G., & Goddard, T. (2019). Editorial Patterns in Bicyclist and Pedestrian Crash Reporting. *Transportation Research Record*, 0361198119825637.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0361198119825637>

not officially a member, Dr.
rris believes that, through its
official delegates at Geneva it
vitaly interested in the organ-
ization.

will be outlined and Thomas Pom-
erooy will give a talk on "College
Publicity."

**Dyson, '33, Confined by
Infection to Hospital**

James L. Dyson, '33, of Landes-
burg, is at present recuperating in
the Easton Hospital where he re-
cently underwent an operation to
check an infection that had spread
throughout his face. Dyson was
operated on last Sunday, January
12, and is reported to be conval-
escing rapidly.

ected treasurer of the Associa-
tion of American Colleges at their
annual meeting in Washington, D.
C., yesterday. During the past
year President Lewis has served as
vice-president of the association
and has been a member of the ex-
ecutive committee. As treasurer,
he is expected to continue on the
executive committee in the com-
ing year.

Yesterday Dr. and Mrs. Lewis
with their daughter, Miss Sarah
Lewis, ate luncheon with President
Herbert Hoover. President Lewis
today addressed the Washington
Alumni Association of Lafayette
College at their weekly luncheon.

DR. PARK TO SPEAK

tet will provide a musical program,
including both instrumental and
vocal selections, at the vesper ser-
vice, Sunday evening, in Brainerd
Hall, at 5.30 o'clock. The quar-
tet, composed of Messrs. Biro, first
violin; Mickey, second violin;
Green, viola, and Pfoahl, cello,
will include in their program sev-
eral groups of solos.

Because of the great interest
shown in a musicale held earlier in
the year, plans have been made for
several others during the second
term. Refreshments will be served
this Sunday by the Sigma Chi
Fraternity from 5 to 5.30 o'clock.
All are welcome.

Campus Notes

tional number, and one of the
college's own songs. Mr. Erb will
soon announce the numbers that
the Lafayette club will sing.

Providence Presbyterian Church of
Scranton.

Attend Debate Tonight

**Concert by the Kneisel String Quartet
Pleases Audience in Pardee Hall**

By Lamont Moore
When the Flonzaley Quartet
announced its farewell tour which
actually proved to be such, lovers
of chamber music eagerly
went to hear the final concerts
and then resigned themselves to
the condition of affairs until an-
other group of this kind should
appear on the musical horizon.

their sureness and accuracy of
performance in the Allegretto and
the Allegro assai vivace ma serio-
so; and their brilliance of tone in
the Larghetto espressivo, allegro
agitato.
The Brahms "Quartet in A Mi-
nor" which followed, verified this
first impression with its four
movements, Allegro non troppo,

Professor Ziegler Stresses Importance

Motivation:

Traffic Crashes -- The US Numbers

In 2017:

- Pedestrians:
 - 5,977 killed (more than 16 per day)
 - 7,950 killed when driveways/parking lots included
 - 65,000 injured* (one injury every 8 minutes)
- Bicyclists:
 - 783 people killed (>2 per day)
 - 53 children under the age of 14 killed while bicycling
 - 50,000 injured* (one injury every 10.5 minutes)

*Known to be underreported in police data

Ralph, Iacobucci, Thigpen, & Goddard 2019

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration Traffic Safety Facts 2019
National Safety Council; PBIC



The Role of the Media

- Field of media studies suggests that media coverage:
 - helps determine which issues merit attention
 - shapes how issues get framed

Bicyclist critically injured in crash with open car door in Arlington Heights



Fatal bicycle crash investigated in Concord



A Concord police officer takes photos at the scene of a bike accident on North State Street on Wednesday.

Officials ID bicyclist killed in crash

Port Huron Times Herald Published 10:31 a.m. ET Sept. 5, 2018



Buy Photo

CONNECT TWEET LINKEDIN COMMENT EMAIL MORE

Officials have identified a cyclist killed in a Thursday crash as 69-year-old Philip Sevin of Macomb Township.

(Photo: Liz Shepard/Times Herald)

Sevin was southbound on M-19 just south of Old Emmett Road in Emmett Township when he was struck by a pickup about 3:40 p.m., according to the St. Clair County Sheriff Department.

The driver of the truck remained on scene and has been identified as a 73-year-old Sandusky man.

Sevin's obituary describes him as an "avid sports fan, a bicycling enthusiast and enjoyed swimming."

No arrests were made at the scene and the crash remains under investigation.



Research Questions

How does the media portray and represent bicyclist and pedestrian crashes?

–What are the implications?

–How can we help reporters do better?



Our Study

We examined local news coverage of vehicle crashes involving someone walking or biking.

Measurable Questions:

1. How do articles apportion blame between Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs) and drivers?
2. How often do articles frame crashes as a public health issue?
3. How often do articles humanize—or dehumanize—victims?



Methods – Content Analysis

LOCAL

'He died doing what he loved' I Loved ones remember Austin bicyclist/writer killed in crash

Two people were sent to the hospital after a bicycle and vehicle crashed.

Author: Shelby Kimball, Paul Livengood, Pattrik Perez
Published: 6:56 PM CST February 18, 2018
Updated: 7:11 PM CST February 18, 2018

Friends and family are mourning the death of a beloved Austin cyclist and writer.

Andrew Tilin, 52, died Saturday, after a driver hit him while he was changing a flat tire on his bike.

The crash happened about 9:14 a.m. near Marshall Ford Road and North FM 620, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety.



Methods – Coding for Blame Attribution

Sentence Types

Type	Agentive	Focus	Obj/Pers: Auto	Obj/Pers:VRU	Examples
1	Agentive	Auto	Object	Object	A car struck a bike.
2	Agentive	Auto	Person	Object	A driver struck a bike.
3	Agentive	Auto	Object	Person	A car struck a bicyclist.
4	Agentive	Auto	Person	Person	A driver struck a bicyclist.
5	Agentive	VRU	Object	Object	A bike was struck by a car.
6	Agentive	VRU	Person	Object	A bicyclist was struck by a car.
7	Agentive	VRU	Object	Person	A bike was struck by a driver.
8	Agentive	VRU	Person	Person	A bicyclist was struck by a driver.
9	Non	N/A	Object	Object	A bike and a car collided.
10	Non	N/A	Person	Object	A driver and a bike collided.
11	Non	N/A	Object	Person	A car and a bicyclist collided.
12	Non	N/A	Person	Person	A driver and a bicyclist collided.
13	Non	Auto	Object	N/A	A car was in a crash.
14	Non	Auto	Person	N/A	A driver was in a crash.
15	Non	VRU	N/A	Object	A bike was in a crash.
16	Non	VRU	N/A	Person	A bicyclist was in a crash.



Methods – Coding for Blame Attribution

Sentence Types

Type	Agentive	Focus	Obj/Person: Auto	Obj/Person: VRU	Example
4	Agentive	Auto	Person	Person	A driver struck a bicyclist.
6	Agentive	VRU	Person	Object	A bicyclist was struck by a car.
16	Non	VRU	N/A	Person	A bicyclist was in a crash.

“A bicyclist was severely injured after she was struck by a SUV on Saturday evening, sheriff’s officials said.” [Type 6; passive voice]

“Officials say a bicyclist was severely injured on Saturday evening after a SUV driver struck her.” [Type 4; passive voice]



Methods – Coding for Public Health Framing

- Presence of the following thematic elements:
 - the number of crashes in the area
 - Vision Zero or similar programs
 - road design
 - any methods for reducing crashes
- Overall framing as either thematic or episodic.
- Information from a planner, engineer, or other expert to provide context behind a crash.



Methods – Coding for Humanizing Elements

- Measured three ways:
 - How often articles referred to VRUs as a pedestrian/bicyclist instead of as a person walking or biking.
 - How often articles included details about the victim.
 - How often articles mentioned traffic and road closures.



Results

- 35% of stories had no agent at all
- Only 13% referred to a driver instead of a car
- Over half had a counterfactual about the victim that was not necessarily relevant



Results

- 72% used the terms bicyclist or pedestrian instead of “person on a bike” or “[name] was walking”
- 24% mentioned the road closure



Discussion

- Local news coverage subtly, but consistently, blames vulnerable road users for crashes
- Coverage almost always treated crashes as isolated incidents
- Coverage tends to de-humanize victims by using “othering” language and omitting humanizing details



Discussion

- Coverage often paraphrases or quotes police officers (on scene) or police press releases, so problem may be “upstream” of media
- Coverage may be updated later but damage may be done, message-wise



Suggestions for journalists

- Include humanizing elements whenever possible:
 - Victim as a “person walking/biking”, not a “pedestrian” or “bicyclist”
 - Victim’s name and a few personal details
- Awareness of grammatical choices and impacts
 - Avoid attributing blame to inanimate objects – the hammer analogy!
- Provide a public health frame to crashes
 - Contextualize the crash by providing data on the number of crashes, fatalities, and injuries



Suggestions for planners and engineers

- Expert commentary was nonexistent in our sample of articles.
- Planners and engineers can help by making their expertise readily available to journalists, but . . .
 - Media training needed to understand how reporting works and what format in which to present complex information in “small slices”



Suggestions for advocates

- Be mindful of word choices (e.g. “accident”), active voice, and agency when discussing crashes
- Get comfortable with an “elevator pitch” on why it matters
- Help journalists, planners, engineers, and policy-makers focus on the issues by using specific, accurate language



Next steps

- An experiment to test whether these experimental patterns matter
- How does it effect assignment of blame? Of punishment?
- How does it affect support for road safety programs, and what type?



Thank you! Go raibh maith agaibh!

<http://bit.ly/CrashReporting>

Tara Goddard

Assistant Professor

Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning



@GoddardTara

