

Sociology media and crime assignment



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Without structure and the examination of underlying causes Media overplay extraordinary crimes underplay ordinary crimes Felon – ‘dramatic fallacy’
Media images lead us to believe that to commit and solve crimes, one needs to be daring and clever Schlesinger and Tumbler – In the 1950s the focus had been on murders and petty crime; In the 1980s murder and petty crime were of less interest to the media; change due to the abolition of the death penalty for murder and because rising crime rates meant that a crime had to be ‘special’ to attract coverage Increasing preoccupation with sex crimes
Soothing and Wally – newspaper reporting of rape creases increased from under a quarter in 1951 to over a third in 1985; coverage consistently focuses on identifying a ‘sex blend/beast’ by use of labels News values and crime coverage Distorted picture of crime painted by the news media reflects the fact that news is a social construction – the outcome of a social process in which potential stories are selected and others are rejected Cohen and Young – news is manufactured A central aspect of the news is the notion of ‘news values’ – criteria by which

Immediacy Determination – action and excitement Personalization – human interest stories about individuals Higher-status – ; e celebrities Simplification Novelty or unexpectedness Risk Violence News give so much coverage to crime as it focuses on the unusual and extraordinary – makes deviance newsworthy since it is abnormal behavior Fictional representations of crime worldwide Fictional representation from TV, cinema and novels are important sources of our knowledge of crime as so much of their output is crime-related The media as a cause of crime Concern that the media have a negative effect on attitudes, values and behavior for vulnerable and influential groups

e. G. Young, lower classes and uneducated Ways in which the media might cause crime and deviance Imitation Arousal Dispensation – repeated viewing of violence Transmitting knowledge of criminal techniques Target for crime – theft of plasma TV's Stimulating desires for unaffordable goods – through advertising Portraying the police as incompetent Clamoring offending

Studies tend to find that exposure to media violence has at most a small and limited negative effect on audience Livingston – despite such conclusions, people continue to be preoccupied with the effects of the media on children because of our desire as a society to regard childhood as a time of uncontaminated innocence in the private sphere (the family) Fear of crime Concern that the media may be distorting the public's impression of crime and causing an unrealistic fear of crime Evidence to some extent supports the view that there is a link between media use and fear of crime Greener et al (USA) – heavy users of television (over 4 hours a day) had higher levels of fear of crime Schlesinger and Tumbler – found a correlation between media consumption and fear of crime – tabloid readers and heavy users of TV expressing greater fear of becoming a victim – especially physical attack and mugging Existence of such correlations doesn't prove that media viewing causes fear.

It may be that those who are already afraid of going out at night watch more TV because they stay in more Sparks – media effects research ignores the meanings that viewers give to media violence – may give efferent meanings to violence in cartoons, horror films and news bulletins (interpretative view that if we want to understand the possible effects of the media, we must look at the meanings people give to what they see and read) Media, relative

deprivation and crime How far media portrayals of ‘ normal’ rather than criminal lifestyles might also encourage people to commit crime Left realists argue that the mass media help to increase the sense of relative deprivation amongst poor and marginality social groups In today’s society, the media present everyone with images of a materialistic inform to.

The result is to stimulate the sense of relative deprivation and social exclusion felt by marginality groups who cannot afford these goods Morton – pressure to conform can cause deviant behavior when the opportunity to achieve by legitimate means is blocked (IEEE the media are instrumental in setting the norm and thus in promoting crime) Moral panics Media can cause crime and deviance through labeling Moral entrepreneurs who disapprove of some particular behavior may use the media to put pressures on the authorities. If successful, their campaigning will result n the negative labeling of the behavior and perhaps a change in the law E. G. The Marijuana Tax Law – labeled marijuana smoking as criminal; media helped to cause crime Creating of a moral panic – an exaggerated over-reaction by society to a perceived problem – usually driven or inspired by the media – where the reaction enlarges the problem out of all proportion to its real seriousness.

In a moral panic: The media identify a group as a folk devil or a threat to societal values The media present the group in a negative, stereotypical fashion and exaggerate the scale of the robber Moral entrepreneurs, editors, politicians, police chiefs, bishops and other ‘ respectable’ people condemn the group and its behavior This leads to calls for a ‘ crackdown’ on the group – may create a SSP that amplifies the problem that caused the panic in the first place Moods and Rockers Cohen – examines the media’s response to

disturbances between two groups of largely working-class teenagers Moods – smart dress and rode scooters; Rockers – leather jackets and rode motorbikes Initial confrontations started with scuffles, stone throwing, broken windows and wrecked beach huts Media over-rated the infiltrations which was minor.

Cohen uses the analogy of a disaster where the media produce an inventory of what happened containing: Exaggeration and distortion – media exaggerated numbers involved and the extent of the violence Prediction – media assumed and predicted further conflict and that violence would result Symbolization – symbols of moods and rockers were all negatively labeled and associated with deviance – media's use of the symbols allowed them to link unconnected events Cohen argues that the media's portrayal of events produced an evince amplification spiral by making it seem as if the problem was spreading and getting out of hand. Lead to calls for an increased control response from the police and courts.

Internet has been accused of undermining public morality and corrupting the young due to the speed with which it has developed and its scale – almost half the world's population is on the internet Thomas and Loader – arrival of the internet has led to fears of cyber-crime defined as computer-mediated activities – either illegal or illicit Jesses – internet created opportunities to commit conventional crimes – fraud – and new crimes using new tools – software piracy Wall – four categories of cybernetic Cyber-trespass – crossing boundaries into others cyber property including hacking, footage and spreading viruses Cyber-deception and theft – identity theft; 95% of music is downloaded illegally (Swash) Cyber-pornography – including minors and

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opportunities for children to access porn Cyber-violence – psychological harm and inciting physical harm including cyber-stalking Policing cyber-crime is difficult partly because of the scale of the internet and the limited resources – globalizes nature posing problems of Jurisdiction.