

Sociology media and crime assignment



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 different 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 marginal’s social groups In today’s society, the media present everyone with images of a materialistic ‘ good life’ of leisure, fun and consumer goods ND the norm to which they should conform to.

The result is to stimulate the sense of relative deprivation and social exclusion felt by marginal’s groups who cannot afford these goods Morton – pressure to conform can cause deviant behavior when the opportunity to achieve by legitimate means is blocked (ii 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 in 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 problem. 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. Cohen (1972) may create a SSP that amplifies the problem that caused the panic in the first place. Moods and Rockers. Cohen (1972) 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 confrontations which was minor.

Cohen uses the analogy of a disaster where the media produce and 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. Produced further normalization and stimulation of the moods and rockers as deviants and less tolerance of them.

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Media further amplified the deviance by defining the two groups and their subculture styles – youths adopting the styles – media crystallites two distinct identities, encouraging popularization, creating a SSP of escalating conflict Cohen notes that media definitions of the situation are crucial in reading a moral panic as most people have no direct experience of the events themselves and thus have to rely on the media.

This allowed the media to portray them as folk devils – major threats to public order and social values Cohen argues that moral panics often occur at times of social change, reflecting the anxieties people feel when accepted values are undermined; moral panic was a result of a boundary crisis – uncertainty about where the boundary lay between acceptable and unacceptable behavior Functionalist perspective – moral panics seen as Ways of responding to the sense of anomie created by change. By dramatist's the threat to society, the media raises the collective consciousness and reasserts social controls when central values are threatened. Hall – neo Marxist approach locating the role of moral panics in the context of capitalism (distracted attention from the crisis or capitalism) CRITICISMS – Assumes that the societal reaction is a disproportionate over reaction (relates to left realist view that peoples fear or crime is rational) Microbes and Thornton – moral panics are now routine and have less impact; in late modern society there is little consensus about what is deviant.