

Crime in america notes



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The social construction of myths/why Americans fear the wrong things By learning the techniques for identifying the mythology of crime

1. Why do we need to study social problems?? In an effort to find solutions- of we do not study then we cannot find solutions
2. Why do these exist in the first place?? Maybe because someone sees a benefit or someone has a vested interest. People should earn a living wage however most people do not want to pay a \$9 for a Big Mac. Sometimes it is an economical compromise
3. What is a Crime Myth?? Nearly speaking a Crime Myth is created from a non-scientific forum. I. E. TV, FEB. generally includes sensationalism and evolve over time Many times it is because the media wants to be the first to report

The Functions of Crime Myths

1. Catalog Social Actors even if the myth is inaccurate people adjust their behavior as if it were true

E. When there is a natural disaster then people stock up on groceries and gas One function of crime myths is to put people in categories- victims, criminals, law abiding citizens, crime fighters The problem is that these categories are not mutually exclusive- people may belong to multiple categories The labeling has a consequence and can effect social relationships- then people look to define others who may fit the category

- 2.

Reinforce Existing Social Arrangements It will reinforce existing social relationships, it is a good was to maintain the status quo Racial profiling is a good example- Most people do not believe it is a good idea or just believe it is onto good idea for them, one idea is terrorist

3. Reconcile Contradictions Individuals who go to prison will roofed. The crime myth is a tool for other social institutions.
4. Create a Collective Belief System Most people fall under

the law abiding citizen category, however if we use a myth to create the belief system the it can be false.

If enough people can be rallied together then the belief structure can change if the myth is false. The Media as Myth-makers 1. The Power of the Media Very powerful, mass communication is a formalized This has evolved greatly in the last 20-25 years Because the news is on a 24 hour cycle news is almost real Tim 2. Are the Media biased- Yes It depends on the channel you are watching it depends on the bias a. What is a Bias?? We are talking about the idea that there is a slanted view awards a media event, that all sides of the story are not being told b.

Factual and selection bias - Factual bias is the worst- they lie- a factual or empirically based claim - media can be led astray by experts - most of the time it is accidental - Selection Bias- being selective in how the story is told and what stories are told in the first place - Part of it is ratings based and another part is based on the opinions of the organization like no seeing pro Obama on Fox or seeing anti Obama on MASC.- it depends - it can also be a way of splitting statistical hairs - it is common and also expected C. Is tit bad thing?? Most agree that factual bias is a bad thing - Selective bias- it depends on how you think Factual bias are worse selection bias may not be as bad if the viewer understands that it exists and is willing to get the rest of the story 3. Theories of Media Bias a. The Ruling Elitist/ Top Down Theory Media is a tool for the top of the social hierarchy- so it becomes a tool to maintain the ruling elite; Getting individuals to believe what the ruling elite want them to believe - Institutional dominance/hegemony- Either the media is complicit or coerced by the ruling elite b.

The Money Machine Theory- more off ratings issue- we are a ratings driven environment, to maximize profit- it is about the bottom line- I will craft and tailor stories to increase my bottom line- economic profit. C. The Grass Roots Theory- d. The professional Subculture Theory Finish reading chapter 1 grant. Du Feb. 4 The Media as Myth-makers count. C. The Grass Roots Theory- AKA the populist or bottom up perspective- It is a numbers game, how can I drive the highest viewers or the highest audience. Does not concern about helping the elitist or the bottom line. . The Professional Subculture theory- The media has a duty to do certain things, the media needs to build trust with the public. They do not want to public to lose faith in them. There are times they get it wrong though. A criticism is the theory is that the story takes too long to get out because the media wants to verify sources. 1. What is sensationalism? - the desire to amaze, thrill or evoke an intense reaction the attempt to entice an intense reaction and increase viewers. This could be by selection bias. 2. How does this relate to media bias?

The sensational stories get more ad money and drives more people viewing, also take away from the ruling elite Tories that they want told. 3. Does the media sensationalism crime?? Yes, they over exaggerate crime and they also give good news and follow it by something bad like a problem with the good news. Sports get the most reporting time Another category as myth-makers is the government. 1. Why should they be part of this process?? Because the government has an agenda as well. The rationale is that they have an interest in keeping a common message and keeping the status quo.

They have the ability to control the message. 2. The Government and the media Saga's Public Service Announcements are funded by the government. There are meetings everyday at the White House informing the media what stories they would like them to focus on. 3. The government media connection The government is often the primary source for the media This is also the plasticization of issues and helps form public opinion The media can be used to focus the public attention to another are, or direct the public focus in another area- I.

E. 9/11 turned into a war in Iraq Merging Myth-makers 1. Early merging- primarily took place on a local level in the ' ass. We saw a blending of crime program with a public official, it was not about sensationalistic but more of public information or educational format. 2. The New format- started in the late ' ass but became popular in the ' ass. It became less off public information but more of a sensationalism and these were more of a national format, 2 popular shows are MAW America's Most Wanted and Cops.

So the New Format is focused on entertainment and sensationalism. These were the beginnings of reality TV. There are also procedural shows like Law and Order, CSS and the First 48. 3. What is the problem?? These shows can be very helpful but they give the public the wrong perception of crime. They tend to focus on the wrong things like that we have a childhood of being attacked by a stranger but most people are attacked by someone they know. Creating Crime Myths 1. How to create a crime myths. A.

Decision to Cover- what is going to draw viewers- what is going to be the most attention grabbing b. Social Context- put into a direction of what the

public expects to see, if there is a bombing then it must be international terrorism c. Social/Economic conditions- property values going down because of crime and I do not feel safe walking down the street at night d. Marketing- any good crime myth is marketed, after a news segment then they stay to find out about what is coming up 2.

Exaggeration- leave a lot of ambiguity, crime is an epidemic- they create fear by informing the public that these are not isolated events school shooting are a prime example- the media tie together all of the school shooting when in fact that children are actually more safe at school. 3. Media images- how does the media portray the information, things that are more statistically rare will typically garner more coverage: mass shooting, officer killings, juvenile crimes, crimes against law abiding citizens, home invasions.

Minority offenders tend to get more coverage especially if the victim is not a minority. 4. Statistics- miss use of statistics- the public is not given the raw data or not given the full context of how the data is generated.

Characterizations of Crime Myths 1. Theme of Difference- it plays on the idea of differences- the people who commit the crimes are different than us- minorities(racial or numerical), foreigners, a counter- culture; the focus of the difference may change but there is always the theme of difference 2.

Theme of innocence- It is a lot easier to get behind someone if someone is innocent.

This is the reason that the media often focuses on children because children are innocent and how can they be victimized. 3. Theme of threatened values- this criminal behavior affect our life and destroy American Society, it

will destroy life as we know it. Selection and Dissemination of Myths 1.

Influence of Reporters/ editors- determine how a story is selected and disseminated and produced- if they have an interview then they will select an individual with the same political or social values as them or the media outlet 2.

Media themes- there are certain themes that the media look for, what is most national and will drive the most viewers Feb. 6 3. Public Selective Retention-

Both the fault of the media and the public- the public tends to focus on (remember) the sensational aspects of the story 4. Techniques of myth construction- There is a clear process in which this is done. 1. Create a Stereotype- could be a criminal stereotype such as race and ethnicity, immigrants 2. Massing opinions through sources- collecting experts that have the same opinion as one does 3. Using value loaded terminology- I. E. Rimming v. Suspect, evil 4. Selective presentation of facts- selective bias, information management 5. Undocumented sources- someone who is not willing to go onto record 6. Ambiguous sources stringing a bunch of sources together and not properly identifying which source made the comment

Lecture 2 Crime Waves, Crime Fears and Crime Waves as an Ideology It is more important to know trends rather than percentages Fears about Crime and Criminal 1. What is our perception of crime? A typical question that is asked in social surveys is " What do you see as a primary problem in our society? Crime is usually in the top 3 as far as our concerns. People are more fearful than they need to be as far as being a victim of a violent crime. A lot of our ideas of crime and criminals are usually are from coverage selection bias 2. How do crime myths shape our fears? -The media plays into/out fears,

by targeting our fears- a circular process Facts about Crimes and Criminals 1. Fear off crime wave - take isolated events and report them as they are related, which creates more public fear - it is an epidemic- in reality they are cyclical based on economical conditions 2.

Fear of serious and violent crime- the reality is that we are more likely to be a victim of violent crime 3. The danger is from strangers- the general perception is that if we re going to be victimize that it will be from a stranger but in reality it will be from someone we know. - Victim offender relationships- the closest sphere is intimate relationship, then is acquaintances, in the outer sphere is strangers- this is like a bulls eye target - If one is going to be victimized then it will likely be a be someone we know 4.

Watch out for a gun (weapon)- a perception is that criminals are likely to have a weapons, very few crimes occur with a weapon even if one is present. Another myth is that violent crime results in serious injury but it is not necessarily the case 5. Look ere, not there- Not all crime is given equal attention, the I-JAR does not even report White Collar crime 6. Why do these myths persist? They persist because of the theme of difference, someone who is different than us; the group that it targets is in a position to where they can't refute it.

Uniform Crime Report I-JAR- A collection of Crimes reported to police and arrest at the local level, crimes are not capture from federal or state agencies. 1. Exaggeration of Serious Crime- First the police must be called and the police must file a report. Police are more likely to be called when

more property has been stolen or damaged or when the crime is more violent. Victims also exaggerate their factorization, they inflate the seriousness themselves. 2.

Statistics can be Manipulated- - Crime rates can go up or down based on independent factors such as raising and lowering the value of the property stolen especially if it close to the cut-off for petty and grand larceny. There also can be clerical errors and mistakes. 3. Collateral effects- is something that causes crime rates to go up or down but crime has not actually change, such as departmental changes such as being more professional and the introduction of new technology. Now we have police cars with multiple cameras, this can cause crime rates to go up.

Another example is the implementation of the 911 system. 4. Unscientific Presentation- an example is a Crime clock, this gives the idea that crime is a consistent event across time and space. Crime can be more prevalent at certain times and areas. Tuesday NCSC 13 Feb. Quiz scheduled a week from today- Feb. 20- it will be only on lecture 2 Article due- articles need to be within past decade death penalty, prostitution, school shootings Journal must be academic- I. E. Astor make sure it is an article and not a book review r something Crime Waves as Ideology 1.

Introduction 2. Focus of Study 3. Views of the Crime Wave a. A view from the outside b. A view from the inside 4. From crime Theme to Crime Wave Action or inaction can make a crime wave persist action= overly vocal inaction= not doing anything Crime waves do not just appear- they are created - Journalist take various stories and tie them together by a common thread

which creates a crime wave There must be a steady flow of similar cases to make the crime wave persist Crime waves make the public fearful The media can create misdirection I. . School shootings- there are usually different reasons that these shootings occur as well as different types of offenders The misdirection occurs because children are more likely to be victimized outside of school This ends the material that will be on the quiz Lecture 3 Read in Boundaries- Types of Crime, Production of Crime Rates Types of Crime Crime can come in several different forms with subtle nuances people react to different crimes differently there can be differences in a crime such as homicide 1st degree murder v. Manslaughter Black says there are 3 different reason we should look at scholarly material on crime . We lack first hand experience either as a victim or an offender - scholarly material has been vetted/ peer reviewed to ensure accuracy 2. Allows for beyond the classroom experience - studying primary sources allows for full examination of the material which has not been editorialist which happens in textbooks 3. Will examine multiple viewpoints- pros and cons as well as different political viewpoints - it also allows one to look at material at different times and places(America v. There countries) Categories of Crime 1. Offender specific category- relationship between the crime and offending pending on the characteristics of the offender I. E. Difference between a crime and a status offense (minors)- alcohol/ cigarettes; other examples- sex offenders, - things that are only illegal for people who fall in the specific category 2. Felonies and Misdemeanors (less than 1 year in Jail)- Crimes are categorized based on the severances of the crime - 3 strikes law - felonies loose certain rights such as carrying a firearm 3.

Index v. Non-index crimes- how statistically we categorize data - Crime that the FBI collect data on and creates statistics on that is reported 4. Crimes defined by harm . Crimes based on motivation- why was the crime committed- punishment is depending on why the crime was committed The production of Crime Statistics many people believe that a crime rate is a true picture of crime rates - it gives us some picture of what is going on but not completely accurate people do not look at how the data is produced 1.

Actually measures how much crime and deviance in an area, the study relies in Calls for service, but it is not accurate for people who do not call and report the crime - actually crime known to law enforcement in a local area not State or Federal 2. Actual measure of social control What happens when we have more crime one year will arrests go up the next or will they go down?? A proposed new method Call it something different such as crimes known to law enforcement Re-categorize crime such as 1. Undetected deviance/ crime- not captured in official statistics 2. Detected unsanctioned deviance- the behavior is observed but nothing done 3.

Sanctioned deviance- the info is captured in official statistics Crime reports only capture Sanctioned deviance If we took into account the other categories the sanctioned deviance percentage would go down more specifically the petty crimes would go up and the serious crimes would go down. Look at production of crime rates and finish all 3 by Thursday Quiz this Thursday- material from lecture 2 Exam Feb. 27th cover lectures 1-3 Article selection due no later than pm Thursday Feb. 27 School shootings Social Organization of Crime Detection 1. Detection of deviance: tend to rely on the reactive definition of deviance a. Here has to be a discovery of the Deviant

Act b. Linkage off Person to the Acts 2. Why the Link is important without anyone to link the act to there is nothing that can be done- we cannot inaction or characterize the crime 3. Law Enforcement and Crime Detection mostly what the police do is reactive in nature- they respond to a citizen who calls the police The main reason the police are reactive is because it saves resources, identifying patterns in behavior is very time intensive Proactive policing is more about public relations- the community puts pressure on law enforcement Creating the Crime Rates 1.

Methodology observational research- selected areas that were demographically similar They only examined Calls For Service and not crimes in progress for uniformity They found that he calls for service were mostly felony level crimes They are usually getting the victims perspective because the offender usually is not around 2. The legal seriousness of the crime is the predominating factor for an official report being filed - for misdemeanors a report was filed about 50% of the time 3.

Complainant's Preference- whether the victim or complainant wants a report filed or an arrest - in every case that a misdemeanors and the complainant did not want an arrest the police did not arrest For felonies in about 1/3 of the cases the police did not file a report and in about 2/3 of the cases they did file a report Citizens are more likely to call the police when the crime is a stranger and less likely as there are closer relationships between the victim and offender the less likely they will call the police 4.

Relational Distance- how close the people are related- if they are related, friends or strangers - People do not typically call police if another family

member, friend or acquaintance commits a crime against them 5.

Complainant's Demeanor- calm/ nice, or a Jerk - offenders that were respectful or civil then the police were more likely to cut hem a break, either the charges were reduced or no charges at all- for both felonies and misdemeanors 6. Complainant's Status- race of victim v. He offender- for felony crimes race does not really factor into the decision to file a report - For misdemeanors crimes there was more of a racial bias, the same for social class status There is more off class bias for law enforcement than a racial bias 1. Legal seriousness of a crime are more likely to effect the production of the crime rate 2. What the victim wants 3. The greater the relational distance the more likely to be part of the official crime ate 4. Complainants demeanor 5.

No real issue of racial bias but there is a bias on social class The predicting of Crime Booms and Busts 1. Focus of the Study- a longitudinal (over time) analysis 2. Crime Trends Since WI From WI to the mid-late ass's the crime rates were relatively low From 1960- mid ass's during this time frame there were 3 movements: Civil rights, Viet name War and Women's Rights movement. Within the anti war movement there was a big inimitableness movement and with the war vets returning there was also increased drug us A. Ass's to sass's Between 1960-ass's the murder rate doubled, robbery rates went up 225% There was a recession going on from the late ass's to ass's and politically liberal time B. Late sass's and late sass's Between late ass's late sass's- politically conservative anti-drug movement, stock market crash in 1987 Crime rates are going up but not as quickly At this time the 3

strikes laws became popular Also the early myth makers came C. Busts 20 Feb. C.

Busts 1992-1994 a crime bust occurred Likely economically driven D. By the mid to late sass's crime rates began to drop From the late sass's to mid-sass's a trend of declining crime rates continued however round 03-04 the crime rates began to level off One thing not remember about crime rates is that this is nationally, in some areas the rates may be different Explaining Crime Trends by Exogenous effects 1. Define- broad category, anything that is independent of crime policy(police policy, new laws)- I. . Stock market crashing, tech and housing bubble trashing 2. Economic stress- is a prime factor which is ongoing- this is an exogenous effect - this worked from 1945-1987, this is still a factor but not as strong How do we measure economic stress? Is it relative or absolute? Absolute poverty is in a pure tactical sense- if one makes less than a determined amount then they are impoverished Relative is if one is poor compared to the others around them 3.

Political Legitimacy Power or Authority, I. E. A law enforcement official - Whether or not people should or have to submit to authority - If you look at the civil rights movement this is an example of when people do not give law enforcement legitimacy and law enforcement did not give the civil rights protesters legitimacy either. 4. Family disorientation- After WI there was a rise in single parent households and a rise in divorce rates.

Family is the first Agent of Colonization and therefore an Agent of Social Control - Rising divorce rates reduces the families as an agent of social control - Family can act as a protector- they insulate them from factorization;

therefore not only does the family protect society from the child but also the child from society Other Exogenous Effects 1 . Age structure- certain ages commit more crimes, younger people between mid- teens- late ass's - One reason crime rate went up in the ass's and ass's was a result of the baby boom, then drops as these get older from 1985-1989- is a result of the baby boomers 2.

Drug Markets- in 1984 Crack hits the drug market which allowed more people to afford cocaine. Also meet, heroin, and prescription drugs abuse 3. Changes in routine activities- more targets become available- the opportunity to offend goes up. As people guard property better then crime goes down- an example is better technology in cars and video cameras in homes. People do not carry cash with them as often as they did, we are a plastic society.