

How the media influences our lives essay

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Macina 1 Marissa Macina Dr. Lori Maida Intro to Sociology Telecourse May 2, 2009 How Our Media Today Influences Our Lives, Socially Acceptable or Not High-risk behaviors in adolescence often experience multiple difficulties, often socialized in economically stressed families and communities.

Adolescent delinquent behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, failing in or dropping out of school, and unprotected sex are interrelated. An involvement in one problem is generally a sign of some participation in other socially undesirable actions, which are most likely underlined by a common factor. There are many factors that can influence an adolescent to go the wrong way, such as society, family life, the media, magazines, movies, and the internet.

The media, magazines and movies tend to focus on the bad, lower-class, and typical stereotypes of youth and young adults, and violence. Nothing sells like violence, depicted in a serious or comical way. Television seems to draw the most attention, since it is found in 98.

2 percent of American family homes and is the primary media source immediately accessible to youth on a day-to-day basis. For television is free, n 24/7, it is in the privacy of your own home, and acts like an electronic baby-sitter for parents who are too busy or too preoccupied to spend time with their children. Since television is so obviously the most influential media, I chose movies.

Movies are one step beyond reality. Production companies spend millions on taking a social norm and kicking it up a notch. Showing our delinquent youth in movies, such as *Boyz n' the Hood*, only lessens the impact of hardship and

true misfortune that the inner-city youth have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Throughout movie history there has always been movies etailing the cruel reality that African American's have had to withstand generation to generation. Early on there were movies about slavery and the degrading inequality between blacks and whites. Blacks were treated inhumanly and less than human from the whites and left to fend for themselves after being brought to America from Africa by-force. They were separated from their families stripped of their cultures and made to do whatever their owner's wanted them to whenever they wanted them to do it. The struggles they have conquered and the ones they are still fighting today are all seen in movies.

The movie Boyz n' the Hood is no exception. There are so many situations and stereotypes played out in this movie that sometimes I wanted to laugh. The ghetto African American stereotype has been so imbedded into my brain, let alone the rest of American societies that I knew what was coming next. In society today African American children are more likely to be poor; two Macina 3 out of five babies are born into poverty and face a losing struggle with poverty throughout childhood. As seen in this movie with the single mother verses the single father type families.

Almost 45 percent of African American women are eft to raise their children alone, or without a spouse, which leads to such things as dependency on Federal assistance, lack of supervision due to working overtime or two jobs, and families are more than twice as likely to live in overcrowded housing to help pay the bills. The female ran household is more likely to be considered

poverty level over a male ran household since females tend to make less money. The male headed household, almost 9 percent of African Americans, was portrayed in the movie to be more structured and have a more disciplined lifestyle with an inspiring role model to look up to, listen to and to know he cared about his son and loved him and wanted more for him than to live in the hood. The female-headed household was a bit different. There was not very many rules, the boys did what they wanted, had much less respect for others and the home was much more chaotic. Let's start with the age of the characters in the movie. There is a group of children around 12 years old and another group around 17.

The first resemblance is that they have their own little group, "gang", of friends that they hang out with everyday, but even in their own groups they have overt behaviors and fight. You see the younger groups walk by the older ones and watch how they brutally beat up others and how they act and talk and in turn try to be Macina 4 tougher than them, maybe because these older guys are all the "fatherly" role models they have in their lives. Youth crimes start at a very early age, peaking at age seventeen, for crimes such as breaking curfew, loitering, running away, arson, vandalism, motor vehicle theft, burglary, and larceny-theft. The youths in the movie started out with such crimes as loitering, authority conflict (hanging out all day with nothing to do but get in, or make trouble) to theft, covert behavior going to the store with no intentions of paying due to the absence of money) to ultimately murder, overt behavior. The cycle of the hood is youth expecting respect without giving any and the cycle of revenge for a friend or family member being murdered and repeating it over and over and over with no hope of a

solution. The two brothers were treated very different from the start, with the chubby boy demonstrating extrovert behaviors and getting in trouble at a very young age due to the fact that his mother favored his brother and paid little attention to his wants and needs.

The other brother had a dream to be a football player, which is one of two ways to get out of the hood, and the other, is the military. This dream is, what I believe, kept him focused and the fact that he could see a light at the end of the tunnel, to go to college with a football scholarship and eventually leave the hood and make something of his life. This is not to say that he never got in trouble or did anything wrong, he still had to grow up in the hood and be stereotyped in that fashion. He had a child out of Macina 5 Wedlock, which is very common for young African Americans, due to the black emale initiating intercourse at an earlier age therefore more likely having unprotected intercourse and resulting in a child by a child. He was trying to do his best with what he had to work with, but another gang had exchanged some words with him a few nights back (nothing really) and thought he disrespected them, therefore, he must pay with his life. They shot him in the back as he was running away and with no remorse drove off. His brother then in response to having his brother being killed went looking for the killer and ended up killing all three of them. What does this solve? In the movie there were a lot of " typical" hood occurrences such as helicopters hovering the neighborhood every night with the lights flashing in the windows for a more dramatic effect and the sound of gunshots in the background all throughout the movie.

The crack addicted single mother begging to do anything for some drugs all the while her infant child is out running in the street practically getting hit by cars. Black youth tend to have some degree of respect for their mothers, and expecting respect to them from others, but they do not have respect for the other ladies in the hood. Calling them hoes and bitches and treating them like they are less than equal human beings all the while using them for sexual favors and messing around behind their backs and not even caring. Another occurrence is the fact that everyone, even the good youth that are working towards getting out of the hood, posses a Macina 6 firearm. The single father pulls out his firearm when he hears an intruder and without even seeing the person shoots in the direction of the noise.

Possessing a firearm became a very easy task, when youth started selling rugs for adults they were easily in touch with the ability to purchase an illegal firearm for cheap. Studies have shown that violent crimes committed by youths are directly linked to the availability of handguns. Nowadays in the hood a firearm is pretty much mandatory in order to protect yourself, and they don't do it the old fashioned way with a good knock down fight. Although there are a lot of fights, that end with the use of a weapon or continue another day with a shooting.

There were a number more of ghetto hood occurrences happening throughout the movie, to name a few more, drinking a 40 oz. Il day long, driving the hydraulic cars, groups of youth hanging out and walking the streets all day. All of these stereotypes are detrimental to the African American society and how their progression into equality among the white

society plays out. Ultimately in the end of *Boyz n' the Hood*, the children that were raised by their fathers turned out to be the most successful of all the boys, excluding the soon to be jock that was killed. Perhaps if religion was brought into these children's lives they could have become more focused and more motivated to better their lives. Cross-culturally as well as historically, the relationship between the religious system and the family system has been reciprocal. Religious norms also influence speech patterns, non-marital sexuality, Macina 7 male and female roles, and parent-child relations. Young males who have religion in there lives are more likely to use protection and the females are more likely to use contraception if sexually active at all during adolescence.

All these and many more religious norms could have been very helpful in the lives of these children and helped keep them on the right track. Nowhere in the movie did I hear anything about religion or church, where as back in the day all the African American movies had a very strong relationship with their church, religion, family, and culture. Today, the media can be considered an emerging social system and social institution. The media presented to a widely dispersed public is a source of information, but it is far more than just information.

Movies, such as *Boyz n' the Hood*, influences our attitudes toward the legitimacy of different marital and family structures, education, difference in societies, single arenthood or same-sex marriages, and even our own definitions of self. The media reflects back to us our concerns, anxieties, and continually evolving values on such areas as relationships and family life, it's

a source of our social condition. In reality, the capitalistic society has control over the images we see, although the images they allow must, ultimately sell and therefore, do need to reflect the concerns and realities of the public.

There is a lot of room for excluding or altering images that are not consistent with those of the capitalistic society, but are obviously over looked.